

Pick-Up

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A single car sits on the side of the road, steam spilling from the seams of its hood. The sedan's hazard lights TIC-TIC in flashes of yellow, fighting against the surrounding darkness.

The car's owner, JULIE (28), good looking and dressed for a night out, leans against the door. She angrily stamps out her cigarette.

Julie rubs her arms, pushing against both the cold evening air and the oppressive solitude. Beyond the road lays a thick line of trees. From within, a far-off HOWL resonates.

Julie pulls out her cellphone, studying the device, as if unsure of how to use it. She returns it to her purse.

From above, she hears a THIP-THIP, like the sound of a sheet blowing on a clothesline. She cranes her neck, but sees only the cloudy nighttime sky.

She pulls her phone from her bag again and instantly begins typing.

TELEPHONE SCREEN:

TO: NICK MSG: Are you almost here?

Julie's thumb hovers over the send button for a moment, before moving toward the DEL key. She erases the message.

From down the road, she hears an engine RUMBLING. Twin headlights pierce the darkness, idling toward her. An older model pickup truck stops beside her.

Sitting behind the wheel is NICK (29), dressed casually with an old baseball cap over unkempt hair. He doesn't regard Julie, just scowls, his eyes on the empty road ahead.

Julie opens the truck's passenger door and climbs inside.

INT. TRUCK

The pair sit in silence for an awkward beat before Nick puts the vehicle in drive. Through the rear window, Julie watches her car shrink in the distance.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The sedan's hazards continue to blink. In the periphery of the lights' glow a figure steps out and watches the truck drive down the road. The shape steps back into the

darkness.

INT. TRUCK

Jill turns from the rear window toward the worn interior dashboard. She looks to Nick.

JULIE

Thanks for picking me up Nick.
It's creepy out here at night.

Nick continues to stare straight ahead. He responds with a curt nod.

JULIE

I mean, I'm sure you had something better to do on a Saturday. So really, thank you.

NICK

(monotone)

Sure.

Julie sighs and leans back in her seat, staring straight ahead. The road outside zooms past.

JULIE

You know I tried to get a ride from someone else. You were my last resort.

Another awkward beat. The only sound in the cab is the WHISTLING of the outside air and the SWOOSH of the tires on the pavement.

Nick glances at Julie from the corner of his eye. He notices her bare legs sticking out from the bottom of her dress.

NICK

What were you up to tonight?

JULIE

Lisa and I were at a party.

NICK

All the way out here? Who's party?

JULIE

Some friend's.

NICK

Ahhh. "Some friend's" huh?

Julie rolls her eyes and reaches into her bag. She pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

NICK

No smoking.

JULIE

What? You let me smoke in here all the time.

NICK

Not anymore.

Julie drops the cigarettes back into her bag.

JULIE

If that's what you want. Fine.

Nick smirks.

NICK

So does this friend have a name?

JULIE

Just fucking say it Nick. It's clear that you're dying to, so just fucking say it.

NICK

Say what Julie?

JULIE

You know perfectly goddamn well where I was tonight. Did you honestly think that asking everyone of my friends about my comings and goings wasn't going to get back to me?

Nick swivels his head toward Julie, finally facing her.

NICK

And do you think I don't deserve to be pissed when I find out you're going to party at Billy Newman's house?!?

JULIE

Yes, I went to Billy's party. So what?

NICK

I just find it pretty convenient
(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

that two weeks after we break up,
you're at that piece of shit's
house!

JULIE

Not that it's any of your business,
but he's my friend.

NICK

Yeah, a friend that's been trying
to fuck you since high school.

Julie slams her palms onto the dashboard.

JULIE

You know what? Forget this. Stop
the truck, I'd rather walk.

NICK

Classic Julie. The second someone
calls her on her shit, she's ready
to bail.

JULIE

Oh you just know everything,
right?!? You're never spent more
than a night away from this town,
but you're the goddamn expert on
all things.

Nick's hands tighten on the steering wheel. His jaw
clenches.

The truck's bed suddenly dips low, pressing against the
vehicle's shocks. The cab jostles.

Concern crosses over Julie. She whips her head around and
squints out the cab's rear window.

JULIE

What was that?

Beyond the window she sees only darkness.

NICK

Pothole.

JULIE

It didn't feel like a pothole. It
felt like someone jumped in the
back of the truck.

NICK

I'm driving 60 miles per hour.
There's no way someone jumped in
the back.

JULIE

I'm not saying that someone jumped
in, I just said it FELT like
someone did.

NICK

It was pothole. Drop it already.

JULIE

Fine. You're right, it was a
pothole. You're always right so
why bother even-

TAP. TAP-TAP-TAP.

Julie and Nick both look up. Something is tapping on the roof.

NICK

Now what in the hell is that?

The truck's speedometer needle begins to move to the left.

JULIE

Don't stop.

Nick notices he's begun to decelerate. He pushes on the gas and the needle goes back to 60 mph.

NICK

Calm down, it's probably just a
branch or something.

The tapping becomes a SCRATCHING.

JULIE

That's no fucking branch.

Julie begins straining around the cab, looking out each window and peering into the rearview and side mirrors. She sees nothing.

NICK

Are you messing with me? Was there
someone else with you?

JULIE

Are you kidding me? Of course I'm
(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

not-

Julie's face goes slack before contorting in pure terror.

Nick stares at her, oblivious to the taloned claw just outside his window. It TAPS the glass. Nick spins toward it, glimpsing it for a moment before the hand retracts.

He swerves wildly.

NICK

What the fuck?!?

Julie grabs Nick by his coat, her knuckles white.

JULIE

(whispered)

It's not human.

Nick opens his mouth, but closes it again. For the first time in his life he's at a complete loss. He stares straight ahead.

JULIE

We need to get back to town.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The pickup truck cuts through the night. Through the window, Julie and Nick stare straight ahead, their eyes wide with fear.

INT. TRUCK

The speedometer is pushing 70 mph. Inside the truck's cab, the engine REVS.

Julie's face brightens. Through the windshield she can make out the first lights from town far off in the distance.

JULIE

We're almost there!

Nick visibly relaxes.

NICK

Thank god.

From above, heavy footfalls scurry over the truck's roof and onto the passenger door.

Julie looks out the side window.

JULIE

Holy shit! I think it's clinging
to the side!

From beyond the door, they hear a loud POP. The vehicle lurches to one side, instantly slowing.

Nick barely straightens the wheel.

NICK

Damn it! It's the tire!

JULIE

We can't stop! We have to keep going!

NICK

(straining)

I can barely keep it on the road...

Julie begins pounding on the roof of the truck.

JULIE

(screaming)

LEAVE US ALONE!

Nick follows suit and starts BLARING the horn.

JULIE

GO AWAY!!!

The steering wheel spins out of Nick's grip.

NICK

I'm losing it! We must be on the rim!

Julie turns to Nick.

JULIE

I'm so sorry I got you involved in this Nick. I'm sorry...for everything.

Nick meets her gaze.

NICK

No, you were right. I'm sor-

The truck violently rocks to one side, as if about to tip, before screeching to a halt. Something POUNDS on the roof and then the hood before THUMPING on the pavement in front of the truck.

The engine dies.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

Nick and Julie peer out the windshield of the truck. In a heap before them on the road lays a large humanoid figure, wrapped in a tangled mess of filthy rags.

NICK

Is it dead?

JULIE

Let's not wait around to find out.

The truck's engine GRINDS, but doesn't turn over.

The pile of rags shifts. A monstrous hand pokes out from the mound, attempting to push itself up.

INT. TRUCK

Nick cranks the engine again. It sputters then dies.

Julie grabs his shoulder.

JULIE

It's moving!

Through the window, the pair can see the creature spasm as it tries to lift itself.

NICK

C'mon...

Nick twists the keys again. The engine coughs weakly before revving to life.

Nick throws the truck into drive. Before them, a bulbous eye peaks through the tangle of rags. It fixes its murderous gaze on the truck.

JULIE

Hit it.

The truck rolls forward, jostling as it plows over the shape. From below erupts an inhuman SQUEAL. Nick stops the truck and reverses. Another bloodcurdling scream.

Nick looks to Julie and she nods. He shifts and punches the gas, running over the creature again. This time it remains silent, save for its bones CRACKING.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The truck's rear lights fade in the distance. Black blood pools on the pavement from the shape's ruined body.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

The truck limps into the driveway of an old farm house. It idles near the walkway to the front door.

INT. TRUCK

Nick and Julie sit in silence. Julie glances toward her house. It's dark.

JULIE

I don't know if I'll be able to sleep tonight...or ever again.

NICK

I just hope I can get home. The truck is probably shot.

JULIE

Why don't you stay here tonight? I'd feel safer.

NICK

Are you sure that's a good idea?

JULIE

Stay. On the couch. And in the morning we can talk...about everything.

NICK

I'd like that.

Nick steps out of the truck, but turns back and leans in the door frame.

NICK

Now for all my trouble I will be expecting pancakes tomorrow.

Julie tries to open her door, but the damage to the truck has wedged it shut. She smiles, in spite of herself.

JULIE

Is that so? Well I guess-

The creature flies down from above, landing behind Nick in the blink of an eye. Its talon tears across the man's throat.

Still in her seat, Julie is sprayed with blood. She struggles again with her door.

JULIE

NO!!!

EXT. HOUSE

The creature is a blur as it jumps in through drivers side, the door slamming behind it. The truck rocks back and forth as Julie's muffled SCREAM is cut off.

FADE TO BLACK.