

Roadside

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED ROAD - NIGHT

A stalled car is on the shoulder of a paved two-lane road with its hood up. Both sides of the road are lined with trees and there's not a building or other automobile in sight.

An African-American MAN in his 40's examines the car engine with his flashlight. Traces of steam are rising from the block. He's wearing a hooded light-green jacket to keep the DRIZZLE of rain from dampening his clothes.

The man SHUTS the car hood. A slightly pensive looking WHITE WOMAN in her 40's is now visible in the car's driver seat thanks to its interior light. He heads toward her door.

LATER

The man is by himself walking alongside another wooded street and the drizzle of rain has turned into a DOWNPOUR. There's no sign of the stalled automobile or its driver anywhere.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A different white WOMAN in her 30's is driving her four-door automobile down this same street. The windshield wipers and car headlights only allow for a few feet of road visibility due to the RAIN and darkness. Her purse sits on the passenger seat.

The woman catches the shape of the walking man from the corner of her eye. She probably wouldn't have noticed him at all if not for the stand out color of his rain jacket.

She looks toward him as she drives past.

WOMAN

What the?

She continues about a dozen feet further before her brain processes the scene fully enough to stop the car.

EXT. WOODED ROAD - NIGHT

The man trots toward the stopped car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The woman picks up her purse from the passenger seat and places it out of sight in the space under her feet.

EXT. WOODED ROAD - NIGHT

The man OPENS the passenger side door and gets inside.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

He SHUTS the car door.

MAN

Thanks for stopping. Not many people would have.

He pulls off the hood of his rain-jacket.

The woman briefly startles. She's probably the liberal-minded yet privileged sort that has an instant nervous reaction towards an unknown black male but quickly feels guilty about it.

WOMAN

No problem -- It sure is raining isn't it?

MAN

Thought I was going to have to start looking for two of every animal.

The woman smiles a bit.

WOMAN

I'm JULIE.

MAN

Hello Julie. My name's TRAVIS.

Julie starts the car moving again.

JULIE

What were you doing out there anyway?

TRAVIS

My car broke down around five miles back and I couldn't get a cell phone signal. Figured I'd just hike it until I reached a gas station or someplace where I could call out.

JULIE

Yeah, the reception around here isn't very good. Although you probably could have just stayed in your car.

TRAVIS

I don't know this area very well and was a little nervous about sleeping right on the side of the road. Just felt safer to keep moving.

JULIE

Not if you get pneumonia.

Travis LAUGHS.

TRAVIS

I suppose you're right. Hopefully it doesn't come to that.

JULIE

You traveling alone?

TRAVIS

Yes.

JULIE

I'm just driving back from visiting my Mother. She lives in Silverdale.

A brief pause in conversation.

JULIE (CONT'D)

I was actually gonna stop at this Bed and Breakfast that's not much further up. You could get a room there too and use their phone in the morning if you want.

TRAVIS

That would probably work.

EXT. WOODED ROAD - NIGHT

Julie's car travels down the road.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Julie points out the front window toward a large road-sign reading 'WHITE EAGLE BED AND BREAKFAST 1 MILE'.

JULIE  
There's the sign.

TRAVIS  
(smiles)  
'White Eagle'? Not sure I quite  
like the sound of that.

Julie LAUGHS.

JULIE  
It's just poetic license I think.  
The Klan doesn't actually stop in  
or anything.

A pause.

TRAVIS  
How about you just keep driving?

JULIE  
What?

Travis pulls a large switchblade out of his jacket pocket and FLIPS it open. He raises the blade and holds it within a foot of Julie.

TRAVIS  
Keep driving.

JULIE  
(all of her worst suspicions  
confirmed)  
Shit.

EXT. DIFFERENT WOODED ROAD - LATER

On the roadside is a dirt driveway leading into the trees. A weathered 'FOR SALE BY OWNER' sign stands solemnly nearby. There doesn't appear to be any neighbors.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Travis still holds the knife on Julie as they approach the sign.

TRAVIS  
Slow down and turn into that  
driveway.

Julie follows orders. The trees continue for a couple hundred feet before opening up onto a dirt lot in front of a house.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
Park in front of the house.

She pulls in front of the house and shuts the engine off.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
Get out of the car.

Julie reaches for the keys.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
Leave those here. You're not going  
to need them. Your purse either.

She looks like she's about ready to cry.

JULIE  
Please. I have a husband and  
daughter.

TRAVIS  
If you don't get out of the car  
she's not going to have a mother.

Julie and Travis both OPEN their doors and exit the vehicle.

EXT. YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Travis stands behind Julie on the house porch. It is now noticeable that Julie is wearing high-heel shoes.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
Inside. Door's unlocked.

Julie OPENS the front door and they both step into the darkness within.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Total blackness.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)(O.S.)

This way.

FOOTSTEPS followed by the sound of a door OPENING and FOOTSTEPS yet again.

A light comes on. Julie is standing in a lit bedroom and Travis is nearby in the dimly lit hall outside its doorway.

JULIE

If you just let me go I promise --

Travis SHUTS the bedroom door. Julie can then hear the door LOCKING from the outside and the sound of Travis WALKING away.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julie is a bit surprised at this turn of events. She waits a few seconds before trying the doorknob. Locked. The door itself is made of very solid wood and looks too tough to break open.

She turns her attention to the room itself. No windows and very little in the way of furniture. Just a dresser drawer and a small bed with unmade blankets. Also another closed door leading somewhere.

Julie opens each of the dresser drawers. All of them are empty.

She opens the unknown door. It's a bathroom which Julie enters.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Not much in the bathroom either. Nothing on the sink or in the clear mirror cabinet. The bathtub doesn't even have a shower curtain or pole.

Julie tries the bathroom sink. The pipes GROAN before the water flows. She uses some of it to splash her face before shutting the sink off.

She SHUTS the bathroom door and twists the knob.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Doesn't lock, damn it.

Julie sits down on the closed toilet. She pauses and then bends down to take off one of her high-heel shoes. Julie holds this shoe out like a weapon and faces the closed bathroom door.

LATER

Julie is really tired. Her head nods and she snaps it back up. She then drags herself off the toilet and sits down on the bathroom floor with her back against the bathtub; her shoe still at the ready.

FADE TO BLACK.

The O.S. sound of a GUNSHOT!

FLASH TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Julie STARTS awake and looks around startled. She's still in the bathroom with the door shut. Her shoe lays on the floor beside her.

Julie YAWNS and puts her shoe back on. She's obviously still in a fix but feels calmer than she was last night.

Julie opens the bathroom door and enters -

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Something strange. She looks at the bed. It is now made up and covered with a plastic sheet.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
What the?

Julie goes to the bedroom door and tries it again. Unlocked! She opens it and steps out.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

An empty hallway leading to a near empty living room. Just a couch and sitting chair covered with plastic sheets. Light shines through the windows.

Julie peers around for signs of her abductor but doesn't see anyone. She goes to the front door and quietly exits the house.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Julie runs to her car as fast as her shoes will carry her and gets inside.

INT. CAR - DAY

She looks for her keys. They're not in the ignition anymore!

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Keys! Fuck!

Julie runs her hand along the car dash. Frantic! Then an idea comes to her and she reaches under her seat. She discovers that her purse is still there.

She opens the purse, reaches inside and pulls out her cell phone.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Please God. Just one bar.

She turns on the phone. A message reads 'NO SIGNAL'.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
No. No! No! No!

Julie slumps and dejectedly drops the phone back into her purse -- and she hears the faintest JINGLE.

She tears through the purse and finds her keys.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Yes!

Julie puts her car key in the ignition and is just about to turn it when she has a sudden thought. She whips around and scans her back seat. Nobody's hiding there.

She STARTS the car and maneuvers it down the driveway while peering off into the woods. Julie half-expects to see Travis run out of the trees at her waving a machete or chainsaw but this doesn't happen.

She turns onto the main road and drives away.

MOMENTS LATER

Julie lets out a relieved SIGH and turns on the radio.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 ...and the Kitsap County SHERIFF  
 announced that the five people  
 murdered at the 'White Eagle Bed  
 and Breakfast' last night were the  
 elderly owner and two visiting  
 couples. Robbery appears to have  
 been the motive and a memorial  
 service is scheduled for this  
 Friday. Now back to forty-five  
 minutes of uninterrupted music on  
 K-C-L-P.

Julie's eyes widen.

LATER

Julie is parked in the lot of a Cafe. A bus stop is visible nearby. She's talking on her cell phone.

JULIE  
 Yes sheriff -- I know who killed  
 those people at 'White Eagle'.

SHERIFF (O.S.)  
 You do?

JULIE  
 His name is Travis. He's an African  
 American male in his 40's. I picked  
 him up on the roadside and he tried  
 to abduct me! We drove by the  
 'White Eagle' and he must have gone  
 back there later on and killed  
 them!

SHERIFF (O.S.)  
 Is this a prank?

JULIE  
 What?! No!

SHERIFF (O.S.)  
 Miss, we already caught the  
 perpetrators of that crime.

JULIE  
 Perpetrators?

SHERIFF (O.S.)

Yes, two Hispanic males in their early 20's. We pulled them over about a mile from the crime scene. The gun was in their car and they've both confessed.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The sound of a GUNSHOT wakes Julie up from her sleep in the bathroom.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The Kitsap County sheriff is on the telephone at a desk in his private office. The station view from his office windows indicate that this is a small-time outfit.

JULIE (O.S.)

A gun?

SHERIFF

Look, if this isn't a prank then you should still come in and file a report regarding this kidnapping business. That's serious stuff too.

JULIE (O.S.)

OK, I'll think it over. Bye.

The sheriff hangs up his phone.

SHERIFF

(to himself)

When it rains it pours.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Julie sits on a counter stool looking a touch mystified. An EMPLOYEE is patiently taking her order. A few CAFE PATRONS are seated in different booths around the building.

CAFE EMPLOYEE

You want cream and sugar with your coffee?

JULIE

No thanks. Just black -- and a danish.

The employee pours Julie's coffee and sets it down for her. Afterward he hands her a plate with the danish sitting on top of a napkin.

Julie takes a sip of her coffee and sets the cup down. She then picks up the danish.

A message is written in black marker on the napkin where the danish sat! She sees 'THANK YOU FOR THE RIDE'.

Julie visibly starts and looks all around the cafe. Nothing is out of the ordinary.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

An ELDERLY PASSENGER exists from a bus that's at the stop near the cafe. The bus doors SHUT and it begins to move again.

A scan of the PASSENGERS. In one aisle seat sits a BLACK MALE that could be in his 40's -- but he's mostly obscured by another PASSENGER at the window so it's hard to tell for sure.

The bus pulls out from the stop and drives away.

FADE OUT.

THE END