

TO RIDE OR NOT TO RIDE

By
Ronald Pergola

Ronperg17@gmail.com

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FADE IN:

SUPER: SUBURBIA 1990

EXT. RAINBOW PARK - DAY

BERNIE (45), medium height, fit, casually dressed; Converse high tops, jeans and tee shirt, stands between a parked bicycle and a picnic table.

A wrench and removed training wheels lie, on the grass, next to the bike.

TOMMY (6), is seated on the picnic table with feet on the bench. He faces Bernie, his Dad.

His chartreuse summer shorts, sneakers and Star Wars tee shirt are barely visible;

OVERSHADOWED by a brightly colored helmet, gloves, knee pads, elbow pads, wrist bands, hip pads and shin guards.

Bernie addresses Tommy.

BERNIE

Okay, Tommy Boy, easy peezezy, lemon
squeezezy. You can do it!

Tommy's lips quiver. His head shakes left to right, back and forth, every five seconds; a silent, repetitive response of noncompliance.

Eyes staring through his Dad not at his Dad. Tommy's entire body trembles.

BERNIE

Peter, Brian, Bradley all were two
wheeling on their fifth birthday.
No probs, no sweat. . . Now, one
time, here we go "feel the
force, Luke".

Tommy clasps his hands underneath his knees. Eyes closed, head down.

BODY IN FULL SHIVER MODE

BERNIE

Tom, no worries, this is a Schwinn,
700 Power Glide. . .

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

You just have to pedal. It pretty much steers itself.

Tommy raises his feet from the bench and spins around on the table.

He faces completely in the opposite direction from Bernie. Arms and legs crossed defiantly.

Bernie's expression and demeanor turn dour.

BERNIE

You've been riding this bike for a year. It's the same bike, just two fewer wheels. Let's go, son.

Bernie places his hands under Tommy's arm pits. He lifts his son from behind and places him on the ground, standing.

The table and Tommy's pant's seat are noticeably saturated. Tommy takes off in a sprint.

TOMMY

No, o o o o o o o o o o o o !!!!!

INT. SPORT UTILITY VEHICLE - DAY

Bernie behind the wheel and Tommy in the rear seat behind his Dad. The SUV is parked in the driveway of their home.

BERNIE

Okay, Tom. Inside. Change your clothes and we'll try it again. Fifteen minutes should do it. Right? We'll try the backyard. You know, grass, no worries. AND Tom, no dawdling. I want you up and riding before game time.

EXT. CAPE COD - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Tommy exits the SUV. Head down, he slowly shuffles to the front door. One look back to the SUV and he enters the house.

INT. SPORT UTILITY VEHICLE - DAY

Bernie checks his wristwatch.

He opens the glove compartment and organizes the interior.

Bernie checks his wristwatch again. He presses the rear hatch-back button and exits the car.

EXT. CAPE COD - DRIVEWAY - DAY

From the rear of the SUV, Bernie removes the bicycle and sets the kick stand.

He sits on the rear bumper beneath the hatch, checks his wristwatch and shakes his head.

Bernie's hands go up. He looks to the sky and rises. The hatch back slams shut.

A quick walk to the front door and he enters.

INT. CAPE COD - HALLWAY - DAY

Bernie knocks on Tommy's bedroom door. There is no response. He knocks again.

HARDER

Additional knocks in rapid succession.

Bernie turns the doorknob. The door is locked.

BERNIE

Tommy! Open the door.

No response.

BERNIE

Come on son. Open the door. We'll get through this. You can do it. Luke and Han had to do it... once.

No response; continued knocking.

RITA (44) Bernie's wife, Tommy's mom, dressed in workout apparel, appears from around the corner; a concerned expression.

RITA

What's going on?

BERNIE

Door's locked. He won't open it. Your son is changing his clothes.

Rita stabs Bernie with a stare.

RITA
What happened?

BERNIE
Today was "learn to ride your bike"
day. Tommy kept refusing and...
had an unexpected accident.

Rita begins knocking.

RITA
Tommy, it's mom, honey. Open the
door.

No response. Rita reaches above the door and takes a small
key from the molding.

RITA
What's wrong with you? He's only
six. Did you ever think he may not
be ready?

BERNIE
His brothers were all ready at
five... Maybe, you don't
understand, Rita. It's a guy
thing.

RITA
(shouting)
A guy thing?!?! A guy thing?!?!
I'll "guy thing" you later!
Sometimes you're such a jerk...
Tommy, come on sweetie, open the
door.

Rita uses the key and opens the door. The only window in the
room is wide open.

NO TOMMY

EXT. WHITE COLONIAL - DAY

Tommy sits on the bottom step of the, eight step, front
porch.

SUE ELLEN (6) summer outfit, sandals, pig tails, rides her
two wheeler round and round the large driveway.

Tommy observes intently.

Sue Ellen comes to a stop. She, adeptly, slides off the seat
and gently lays the bicycle on the front lawn.

Joining Tommy on the porch, they execute a quick fist bump.

TOMMY
How'd you learn?

SUE ELLEN
Taught myself.

TOMMY
Weren't you scared?

SUE ELLEN
Nah...Yeah... A little I guess.
Even fell a few times.

TOMMY
Hurt?

SUE ELLEN
A little but I wanted it, ya know,
so I'd get up and do it again.
Even learned how to fall without
the hurt.

TOMMY
I don't know.

SUE ELLEN
It's all about BALANCE.

TOMMY
Balance?

SUE ELLEN
Follow me.

Tommy follows Sue Ellen around the house and into a spacious backyard; patio, barbecue, swing set.

Three railroad ties are lying end to end down the center of the backyard lawn.

Sue Ellen steps onto the end of the nearest railroad tie. She balances by spreading her arms.

Adroitly, with arms spread, Sue Ellen tip toes down the length of the three ties.

SUE ELLEN
Now you.

Tommy, completes the task, teetering several times but without having to step off.

SUE ELLEN

When you got tipsy, you used your arms a little to stay up... right? That was BALANCE.

TOMMY

Let me try it again. Why are these here, anyway?

SUE ELLEN

My sister started Gymnastics last month so my Dad put them down so she could get the hang of the balance beam.

Tommy repeats the crossing, totally balanced.

SUE ELLEN

When you ride, sit up tall, start pedalling and turn the handle bars a little left or right to keep balanced. Just take it slow at first. You'll feel the balance.

EXT. WHITE COLONIAL - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Tommy rolls Sue Ellen's bicycle back to Sue Ellen.

Sue Ellen completes the hand-off and accepts the bike. Tommy begins walking away. He turns back to Sue Ellen.

TOMMY

Hey, Sue Ellen... We don't need to tell anybody at school about this. Okay?

SUE ELLEN

Wha...? Oh, as my sister would say, "Get over it". **You're such a jerk.**

TOMMY

Yeah...anyway, thanks.

INT. CAPE COD - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bernie sits on the sofa. Rita in the kitchen; on her phone.

RITA (O.S.)

Thanks, Jackie. I already tried the Thompson's. Yeah, I know. I know. I'm sure you're right.

Rita enters the living room from the kitchen.

RITA

That's the sixth one. What about that new boy down the block? The family that just...

Tommy slowly enters through the front door.

RITA

Tommy! Thank goodness. Where were you? We were worried.

TOMMY

Just needed some quiet time. So, I went for a stroll.

BERNIE

A two hour stroll? Son, you've got to let us know before you take off like that. Your mom was worried sick. So are you ready to get back at it? The bike riding? You be Han Solo and the Schwinn 700 Power Glide is the Millennium Falcon. You know, the jump to hyperspace?

RITA

Bern, let it go. Let's put the whole bicycle thing on the back burner for now.

BERNIE

Nonsense. The Schwinn is parked in the driveway and ready to go. Tom, get your gear back on. Let's go!

Tommy waits a moment too long.

BERNIE

Now!

RITA

Tommy, if you're not sure and want more time to think about it, it's okay.

BERNIE

Rita! Enough!

Tommy gives his father an icy stare and walks toward the hallway.

EXT. CAPE COD - DRIVEWAY - DAY

The Schwinn 700 Power Glide is leaning against the driver's side of the SUV. Tommy sits tall on the seat, dressed for action.

Bernie stands next to the bicycle. His mouth; inches from Tommy's ear.

BERNIE

I'll stay with you the whole way.
I won't let go. We roll together.
Nothing to be afraid of.
Piece of cake. Easy as pie. Like
shooting fish in a barrel. Nothing
to it. I'm telling you. One, Two
Three, A, B, C. A walk in the...

TOMMY

Dad, will you fetch my water
bottle? It's on the front seat.

BERNIE

Uh... sure.

Bernie releases his right hand from the seat and his left hand from the handle bar grip.

He walks around the front of the SUV to the opposite side and opens the passenger door.

Tommy takes off on the Schwinn Power Glide; down the driveway, left onto the sidewalk and down the street.

Rita exits the house just in time to witness Tommy's departure.

Awestruck, water bottle in hand, Bernie runs to the end of the driveway. He shouts towards Tommy's disappearing image.

BERNIE

The, the, the... FORCE BE WITH YOU!

Bernie walks over to Rita; arms raised, jumping up and down looking to the heavens.

RITA

Well, Obi Wan.
Mrs. McGovern called. Sue Ellen
took care of your "guy thing".
You're such a jerk.

FADE OUT

