“30,000 FATE”

By

Clint Chandler

expendablefilms@yahoo.com
FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE  LATE AFTERNOON

James, early 30’s, puts his suitcase in the overhead bin then takes a seat next to the aisle. Danelle reaches the same row a few seconds later.

DANELLE
Uhh I think you’re in my seat.

JAMES
Oh….sorry….I must have the window.

Danelle is a younger woman, late 20’s, average looking girl. Carried on more bags than she should’ve. James slides down to the window seat, takes a quick look outside, then watches Danelle settle in.

JAMES
I’m James.

James reaches out his hand.
Preoccupied and with a slight hesitation Danelle offers her hand in return.

DANELLE
Danelle.

Danelle pretends to dig through her purse. Obviously trying to not get caught up in conversation with James.

JAMES
So is Denver your final stop?

DANELLE
No. I’m changing planes in Denver then heading to Minneapolis.

JAMES
Going for vacation or is Minneapolis home?
DANELLE
I’m going to visit my sister

JAMES
Oh ok!

(beat)

I like Minneapolis. Haven’t been there in…
7 or 8 years I guess.

Danelle nods then thumbs through a magazine.

JAMES
I used to play in a band and we’d get gigs up there a lot.
And always in the winter time. I think our booking agent
hated us. But, that was a lifetime ago.

Danelle gives the first sign of a truly friendly smile but it quickly fades.
Flight attendant appears but mostly off screen.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)
Would you like something to drink?

JAMES
I’ll just have a diet coke.

DANELLE
I’d like a vodka tonic please.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
No problem. That will be four dollars please.

Danelle opens her large purse and pulls out her wallet. She lays the open wallet on the
open middle seat between her and James then pays the Attendant.
James looks down at the wallet and notices a picture of a young boy.

JAMES
Is that your son?
DANELLE
No, that’s my sister’s little boy.

JAMES
He’s a cutie!

DANELLE
Yeah, he’s great.

Danelle puts away her wallet.

DANELLE
Riley.

Danelle grins then looks at James.

DANELLE
Riley is my nephew’s name.

JAMES
Ah….great name.

(beat)

JAMES
I don’t have any kids.
Guess I need to get married first, huh.

DANELLE
Well you don’t HAVE to….my sister is not
married and she’s doing great!

JAMES
Well yeah, I guess you’re right. But I’m sure it’s much
easier if you’re married and have a little help.

DANELLE
Oh I’m sure it is.

Flight attendant brings their drinks. James and Danelle put their tray tables down to get
situated.
4.

DANELLE
What band?

James looks over at Danelle with a puzzled look.
Danelle offers her biggest smile yet.

DANELLE
You said you played in Minneapolis with a band.
I used to live up there with my sister. What band was it?
Maybe I heard you play.

JAMES
Oh! Ok. Well don't laugh. We were called the
Egyptian Kingsmen. Kinda funny, I know.

Danelle interrupts.

DANELLE
Shut up! No way!!

JAMES
You've heard of us?

DANELLE
Me and my sister would go watch you guys at a little
bar called Murphy’s Lab.

JAMES
Oh yeah, I remember that place. They had a tiny stage
and a really low ceiling.

DANELLE
Yes!! Oh my God. We watched you guys several times
there. You were good!

JAMES
Man, that's cool.

DANELLE
That's crazy!
DANELLE
What’s your name again?

JAMES
Well it’s James, but back then they called me Stick.
The guys started calling me that when we first started
the band. We used to play these pool halls and I would
always run the tables after the gigs.

Danelle is listening with a smile then slowly looks down. Her smile fades as her face
turns to concentration.

DANELLE
Oh my God.

(beat)

Do you remember one fourth of July, after Murphy’s a few
of us went to a lake cabin to hang out? A couple of you
guys ended up staying the night.

JAMES
Yeah, I think I remember that.

DANELLE
My sister is Vanessa Wyatt.

(beat)

That night, you two….hooked up.

JAMES
Wow. You have a good memory.

Danelle interrupts.

DANELLE
You’re the father.

(beat)

Riley is your son.

JAMES
What??? But….I….how do you know?
DANELLE
I remember it! She found out, she was 3 months pregnant. You were the only person she’d been with. Not to mention the name Stick. I could never forget that.

JAMES
Oh my God…

DANELLE
She called me crying, scared to death. It took her a long time to decide she didn’t want to contact you.

JAMES
But why? Didn’t she think I had a right to know.

DANELLE
Well….yes….but, we all talked about it, we even had a family meeting about it. We just thought that with your lifestyle it was best to not get you involved.

JAMES
I can’t believe this.

DANELLE
I probably shouldn’t have even told you this.

JAMES
No. I’m glad you did.

They sit in silence. James stares out the window.

JAMES
May I see the picture again?

DANELLE
Of course!

Danelle gets her purse and takes the picture out of her wallet and hands it over to James.
JAMES
He’s beautiful.

Danelle smiles.

JAMES
Would you mind…can I keep this?

DANELLE
Sure.

James stares at the picture of Riley, looks out the window, then looks back at the picture.

INT. AIRPORT EVENING

Danelle and James are standing at the gate. People are passing by them exiting the plane they just arrived on.

DANELLE
Here’s the number. I’ll talk to Vanessa and, uh, let her know.

JAMES
Thank you. For everything. I mean it.

DANELLE
It was my pleasure. Thank YOU.

JAMES
Well you’d better get to your next flight. You don’t want to miss it.

DANELLE
I know, I should go.

Danelle leans in and hugs James.

JAMES
Tell her what I said.
DANELLE
I definitely will. And I’ll talk to you soon.

JAMES
You take care. Be safe.

DANELLE
Bye James.

James waves one last goodbye to Dannelle. He watches her back away, she waves, then turns to head to her next gate. James lifts up the picture that’s been in his hand the whole time. He takes another look then walks over to the agent at the counter.

AGENT
Hi. May I help you?

JAMES
Hi, I’d like to buy a ticket to Minneapolis.

AGENT
Well you’ve come to the right place.

Agent starts typing on the computer keyboard. James smiles.

FADE OUT:

THE END