

AUTOMATIC DRIVE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FUTURISTIC SUPER-HIGHWAY - DAY

SUPER: 2035

Advanced vehicles with blacked-out windows travel incredibly fast. They traverse from lane-to-lane gracefully.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Three PASSENGERS are sat on high-tech swivel seats surrounded by screens which depict a myriad of TV channels and games.

At the front sit EMILY and RYAN(50's). They watch TV while in the back sits their son ETHAN(18). He is playing a first-person shooter game.

EMILY
(singing)
Never gonna give you up!

RYAN
(singing)
Never gonna let you down.

Ethan pauses his game, he presses a device in his ear.

EMILY
(singing)
Never gonna run around and desert
you.

ETHAN
What the blue shmeck are you two
doing?

Both parents activate a similar device in their ears. A panel in front of them changes to a view of Ethan.

RYAN
(to the image of
Ethan)
Ethan my boy, glad you could join
us!

ETHAN
What was that...noise you two were
making?

EMILY
You've been Rick Rolled!

Both parents laugh. Ethan frowns.

ETHAN
What's a Rick roll?

RYAN
Google it!

They laugh harder. Ethan slaps his legs in frustration.

ETHAN
Argh you guys are the zeesh!
What's that number got to do with
anything and why do I never
understand a word you two say? I
wish I was with Karl, at least he
speaks normal Splingish.

EMILY
(sarcastically)
Is Splingish the new leet? Can you
make a meme of it?

ETHAN
I give up!
Are...we..nearly..there..yet? Do
you understand that?

RYAN
(sarcastically)
Well if you could just manage to
extend your finger like so.

Ryan presses the device in his ear. A new panel opens up on the view-screen which shows a countdown timer.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Then you'd see it's eighteen
minutes thirty-two seconds until
we reach our destination.

ETHAN
Zurchnack! Why does it take so
long?

Dad swivels his chair around to face Ethan.

RYAN
Long? You are too young to
remember this but it used to take
two days to travel from New York
(MORE)

RYAN (cont'd)
to Los Angeles, now it's just over
eight hours and you think that's
long?

ETHAN
That's like forever! Why couldn't
we...

SUDDENLY: All the panels in the car lose power. It is pitch
black.

EMILY
(nervously)
What just happened?

CUT TO:

EXT. FUTURISTIC SUPER-HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

One car amongst the myriad of fast moving vehicles suddenly
swerves. The other vehicles correct their course to avoid a
collison.

The car flips onto its side. It rolls over repeatedly.

The other vehicles grind to a halt behind it.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CAR - MOMENTS LATER

ABIGAIL(22) and LUCAS(41) are dressed in beach gear. Their
seats are set in a reclined position. The panels surrounding
them depict a beautiful beach next to cascading waves.

The background flickers. It is replaced by the image of a
damaged vehicle on the highway.

A family is stood by the scene of the accident. They do not
appear to be seriously hurt.

The chairs flip to an upright position, the couple remove
their sunglasses.

ABIGAIL
What's going on?

The words GRIDLOCK WARNING flash on the screen. A countdown
timer is displayed. It shows less than four minutes
remaining.

COMPUTER VOICE (O.S.)
 Gridlock warning. Gridlock will
 occur in T-Minus four minutes.
 Please vote for your preferred
 course of action.

On the main view-screen two options are presented. One to wait for the emergency services to arrive, the second to move the vehicle immediately to an off-road breakdown area.

LUCAS
 Oh come on, there's nothing wrong
 with them! We'll be here hours if
 we wait!

ABIGAIL
 I don't know, I think that lady
 might have a concussion.

LUCAS
 (laughs)
 You serious?

Ignoring her concerns he presses option 'Two'. Within seconds a final figure appears. 96 percent have chosen Option Two.

LUCAS
 Yeah for democracy!

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

A scene of carnage. The car is nothing more than a lump of twisted metal.

The highway is clear in front of the accident. Behind there are hundreds of vehicles with more queuing up in the distance.

Emily lies dead on the highway, her lifeless eyes stare up into nothingness. Ryan SOBS over her body. He is covered in cuts and bleeding.

ETHAN (OS)
 (painfully)
 Mom? Dad?

Ryan limps over to the wreckage. Peering inside he can see Ethan. He is badly injured and trapped inside a mass of twisted metal and wires.

RYAN

Hold on son, help will be here
soon.

At the side of the road a huge panel opens up. From underneath two large robot arms emerge and extend towards the crash site.

RYAN

No! No!

He stands directly in the path of the arms. They swerve around him and clamp onto the remains of the car.

RYAN (CONT'D)

(shouting)

There's someone still in there! My
son is in there! You are not
supposed to move injured people!
Stop it!

He limps over to the nearest car and bangs on the hood.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Help me, for the love of god help
me! Tell them to stop! Vote no,
vote Option One! Can't you see
this is serious?

The robot arms drag the car towards the open panel. Ethan SCREAMS. Ryan limps over as fast as he can, wincing in pain with every step.

He grabs the vehicle, trying with all his remaining strength to stop it moving. He BASHES at the arms with his uninjured arm to no avail.

INT. ANOTHER CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucas and Abigail view the clean-up operation.

Their view screen depicts the car being moved slowly by the robot arms while the family are led to a seating area by some androids.

LUCAS

Come on, come on. We've not got
all day!

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE - CONTINUOUS

Ryan limps to the other side of the car. He pushes against it with all his remaining strength.

RYAN
(screaming)
Stop! Please stop!

Ryan is dragged along with the car. He glances over at the other vehicles. They hover motionless. The sun glistens off their black windows.

RYAN
One of you, just one of you
please! For the love of god take a
look for yourself. Please, help
me!

His pleas are not answered. He never stops trying, never stops shouting. Slowly he is pushed into the dark depths and falls under the panel.

The car falls on top of him.

Ethan's SCREAMS slowly fade as the panels close.

INT. ANOTHER FUTURISTIC CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The view screen shows the family seated on benches at the side of the road. They wave at the cars as they go by.

COMPUTER VOICE
Your journey will resume in three,
two, one, now!

LUCAS
See, everyone's happy!

The accident scene is replaced by the beautiful beach setting. Ethan and Abigail relax again as their seats return to their reclined position.

COMPUTER VOICE
The TechStorm Corporation would
like to apologies for the
temporary delay and any
inconvenience this may have caused
you. TechStorm, keeping the
Highways gridlock free since two
thousand and thirty three.

LUCAS

Whatever.

SUDDENLY: All the panels in the lose power. It is pitch black.

LUCAS

(nervously)

What just happened?

FADE OUT.