

CHEWING ON BOWSTRINGS

Written by
Little Indian

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Draft
Deadline panic draft

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OVER BLACK

Multiple GUN SHOTS. A cross fire. Shotguns. Rifles. Pistols.
Panicked SCREAMS. Angry SHOUTS. GROANS of agony.

A car door SLAMS SHUT. An engine ROARS. Wheels SCREECH.

FADE IN:

EXT. ROUTE 50 (NEVADA) - DAY

A long, lonely road bisects the vast, barren lands. It stretches toward the horizon like an upward path to heaven.

FAR AHEAD, ON THE ROAD SIDE...

Lurking behind a dry bush, LITTLE INDIAN (6) scans the road with his toy binocular for the next victim. He spots a car.

Shirtless, war-face paint, a feather sticking up from his headband, he loads an arrow in his toy bow. Cocks it. Takes aim. The zooming Cadillac Sedan won't know what hit it.

Almost within range, but it's doing a 140 at least. He aims ahead of the moving target. Pulls at the bowstring. Fires.

A tire explodes. The Cadillac deviates off the road. Hits a boulder. The two tons of metal spins in the air like a toy.

Little Indian chews on his bowstring. Nervous. *Did I hit it?*

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

STEVEN (early 30s), rough around the edges, wearing a face of a warrior, slams the wheel, angry about something.

CHERRY (O.S.)
It wasn't you, you know.

CHERRY (mid 20s) puts her foot up on the dashboard. Her big sunglasses hide a bruised eye. Vulnerable but resilient.

CHERRY
I wanted out a long time ago.

She sticks her tongue out while painting her toenails, concentrating. A delicate task inside a moving car. She puts a different shade of red on each toe.

STEVEN

Bullshit. You very much enjoyed that lifestyle. You were happy.

CHERRY

Only on the outside, baby. I swear.
(re: the nails)
How is it?

Steven peeks at them.

STEVEN

Nice. You run away so fast from a billion dollar heritage your toes caught fire.

Cherry eyes widen in amazement. The toes do resemble flames. She caps the nail polish, embraces his upper arm, sighs.

CHERRY

Fuck their money. I got you.

STEVEN

(Beat)
Oh shit.

Confused, Cherry raises her head to look at him, then ahead.

EXT. ROUTE 50 - CONTINUOUS

Cherry and Steven get out of their car. Walk toward the aftermath of the opening scene accident.

Smokes billow from the capsized Cadillac. The bloodied DRIVER's head sticks out of the windshield. A WOMAN lies motionless, like a discarded doll, yards away from the car.

A duffle bag full of money dangles from the inverted, open trunk. As if baiting them.

Cherry stares at Steven inquisitively. He shakes his head.

STEVEN

No. They might be still alive.

Cherry grabs his shirt angrily and whispers...

CHERRY

Help who? Look at these!

She points at the bullet holes peppering the Cadillac's doors. His heart racing, Steven rubs his neck as greed and fear fight for control inside. Cherry pulls at his arm.

CHERRY (cont'd)
We need to get out of here. Now.

STEVEN
(re: the money)
We leave it then.

Cherry checks the road for upcoming vehicles. She grits her teeth, chewing on hard choices. *Fear stood no chance inside.*

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

Dry, yellow weeds hug the abandoned, dusty pumps.

Glasses on, leaning on his car, Steven surveys the area as--

INT/EXT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

--Cherry's, in the backseat, flips through the bills of a money brick, checking them for trackers. Nothing. Picks the next one.

CHERRY
We should've burned the bag.

Furious Steven exhales. Anger management is a bitch.

The unchecked pile of money dwindles. Cherry checks Steven outside through the window as he keeps watch. She smiles.

CHERRY (cont'd)
Just like old times. Remember when we sneaked inside the teachers' lounge to peek at the exams? You were the lookout. You were the best lookout.

As Cherry flips through the last one. The resurfaced memories stir up mixed emotions in her. Her lips quiver.

CHERRY (cont'd)
My guardian angel.

STEVEN
Here they come.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

A GROUP of BIKERS close in on the couple with a trailing cloud of dust behind. They seem to carry some sort of black sticks behind their back like Ninja's Katana.

Cherry stands beside Steven facing the unwelcome newcomers.

CHERRY
What should we do?

STEVEN
(unfazed)
Nothing.

The Bikers skid to a halt in a perfect sync. The leader, ED (mid 40s), slides up his visor. He squints. Adjusting to the sun's glare.

ED
You guys lost?

STEVEN
Yes. Kinda. We thought we could find someone in this station to get some advice or at least kick start a horror adventure.

Ed smiles, stays silent for a bit, then gets off his bike.

BEHIND THE COUPLE, INSIDE THE CAR...

The money lay naked at the floor of the backseat.

Cold sweat tickles Cherry's neck. Steven clears his throat.

Ed removes one glove and reaches inside his leather jacket. Steven tenses up. Ed approaches them, draws a folded map.

He spreads it over the hood. Steven relaxes and joins him.

ED
You're right here. This X here is the only decent motel within two hundred miles radius. We're heading there. More will be joining us soon. We're good company. That's my advice.

He folds the map. Pockets it. Puts on his glove.

STEVEN
What about the other motels?

ED
Well, they're the ones if you're fixing to kick start a horror adventure.

He rides his bike.

CHERRY
Is there some sort of event? I mean,
you said more will be joining.

ED
Yeah.

CHERRY
What is it?

ED
(with a grin)
Treasure hunting.

He slides down his visor.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The dim light helps make it seem cozier and cleaner.

The couple, Cherry and Steven, occupy two separate beds.

Steven throws darts at a dartboard leaning against the wall
between the table and wall TV.

Cherry, one hand under her head and the other between her
thighs, watches him. She seems lonely. An apparent longing
in her sad expression.

CHERRY
Didn't know you brought it with you.

STEVEN
Never go anywhere without it.

His darts encircle the bulls-eye. He's good. Cherry senses
anger and frustration in every throw. She tries an opening.

CHERRY
I forgot how good you're at this.

STEVEN
I forgot how good you're at making me
do stupid shit that I regret later.

Cherry closes her eyes. Hurt. But she swallows her, gets off
her bed, invades his. He moves aside to give her some space.
She rests her head on his chest. He throws another dart.

CHERRY
Steven, baby, we need this money. We
were meant to take it.
(MORE)

CHERRY (cont'd)
 If we play this right, it'll help us
 start the life we've always dreamed
 about.

Out of darts, Steven sits up suddenly and rather harshly. He
 walks toward dartboard. He yanks the darts.

STEVEN
 Hell of a start, Cherry. Hell of a --

TAPTAPTAP! THE KNOCKING puts them both on high alert.

Steven opens the door. It's SHERIFF ISAAC (late 50s). He
 removes his hat and greets them with a warm smile.

SHERIFF ISAAC
 Sorry to bother you that light at
 night.

STEVEN
 No bother at all. How can I help you?

SHERIFF ISAAC
 Just wanted to know if you guys came
 across a car crash this morning when
 you drove here?

Steven cocks his head, faux-remembering. Glances at Cherry.

STEVEN
 Honey?

Cherry nervously shakes her head.

STEVEN (cont'd)
 No. Why?

Sheriff Isaac bites his lip, reading Steven's body language.

SHERIFF ISAAC
 Any suspicious hitchhikers?

STEVEN
 All hitchhikers look suspicious to
 me. Saw none of them, this morning,
 though.

Cherry jumps to her feet and joins Steven at the door.

CHERRY
 What happened? Is there anything we
 should be worried about?

Sheriff Isaac eye's dart between the two of them.

SHERIFF ISAAC

It depends.

(gauges for reaction)

It was a getaway ride. Two robbers died. One's still on the loose. And the money is nowhere to be found.

Cherry reacts to the third robber news. He catches that.

CHERRY

Third one must've took it.

SHERIFF ISAAC

Evidence at the crash site suggests otherwise. So I kinda hoped I'd come across the unlucky fools who might've been tempted to steal from murderers.

STEVEN

(offended)

Sorry you mistook us for fools. Try the next room.

Sheriff Isaac holds his gaze. He shakes his head and scoffs. Puts his hat back on. Walks away. Then turns back.

SHERIFF ISAAC

One last thing. It wasn't a bank they robbed. They crossed the kinda folks who won't take it to the court.

Life dries out of Cherry's face.

ED (PRELAP)

We're screwed--

INT. DINNER - SAME NIGHT

It's packed. The small time dinner has more people than tiles tonight. The Bikers we saw before, among OTHER PEOPLE, cram themselves in seats meant for less numbers.

The WAITRESS (mid 40s) holds up a tray overflowing with plates and navigates her way masterfully through the crowd.

Ed stands in the center, addressing his event attendees.

ED

-- if we stick to the original plan. The power lines are closer than we assumed to the search area.

(MORE)

ED (cont'd)
 Which means we've got to dial down
 sensitivity and sacrifice some
 depth's range with the detectors.

He holds a metal detector in his hand. Kisses it. It's the
 sticks we thought were swords on the Bikers' backs.

ED (cont'd)
 (re:detector)
 But these bad boys won't fail us.
 Tomorrow at eight AM sharp, everyone
 will be ordering breakfast from this
 doll--

The Waitress smiles at the casual compliment.

ED (cont'd)
 --and each team should cover their
 assigned area before sunset.

The crowd murmur in both agreement and understanding.
 Sheriff Isaac stands up. Pats Ed on the back.

SHERIFF ISAAC
 I wanna say something.

Silence befalls the dinner again.

SHERIFF ISAAC (cont'd)
 I wish you the best of luck with your
 hunt but please be on your guard. And
 let me tell you a little story.

EXT. MOTEL/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bikes, cars, and wagons still occupy the lot. Everyone must
 have walked to the dinner. A FLASH OF LIGHT disturbs the
 darkness somewhere between the different parked rides. A
 long beat passes. The flash ignites again in different spot.

SHERIFF ISAAC (V.O.)
 It's some sort of a fairytale, I
 think. About a hunter who shot a boar
 with an arrow. The boar, being pissed
 and all, ran toward him and buried
 his long, pointy tusks in the his
 guts. Not giving him any time to fire
 the second arrow that he loaded.

A SMARTPHONE SCREEN...

shows a photos gallery. A THUMB picks one.

A photo or a tire's tread marks taken at night. It lingers on screen for a beat before the thumb flips through other photos till it lands on another. Tread marks also but taken in daylight. They seem similar. *It's a match.*

SHERIFF ISAAC (V.O)

But the first shot was a good shot. So they both ended up dead. And here came the wolf. It was a feast. So much meat the wolf got confused where to begin. Then he noticed the bow string. Back in those days, them strings were made out of animals intestines. And yeah, he chose to chew on that first. The loaded arrow went straight through his chest. What's the moral of the story?

ED (V.O.)

Don't chew on loaded bowstrings.

The dinners LAUGH (V.O).

EXT. ROUTE 50 - DAY

A patrol car rests on the road side. A fly BUZZES around. Sheriff Isaac occupies the driver's seat. A bullet hole decorates his forehead. His brain adorns the backseat.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

Cherry chews on her nails, the cogs in her brain churning.

CHERRY

That was the stupidest decision you've ever made in your life. It took the title away from marrying me.

STEVEN

Funny you said that. 'cause, to me, these two were the smartest.

It forces a smile out of her. She punches his shoulder.

CHERRY

What the hell.

She spots the parked patrol car. Steven touches the brakes, slowing down. The deserted car seems eerily suspicious.

STEVEN

He's taking a piss?

She gives him a look, considering it. Shakes her head.

CHERRY

Don't slow down. Could be an ambush.

Steven shifts up the gear and push the gas pedal down.

STEVEN

Seat belt.

The speed needle goes up as they close in on the ambush.

At the most perfect moment for it, a FIGURE stands up and hurls open a SPIKE STRIP full force.

BABABANG! As the unlucky tires explode we...

CUT TO BLACK

Blurred arguing VOICES. It's tense. They slowly get into focus. The blackness becomes a blurred, cloudless, blue sky.

STEVEN (O.S.)

Hey! Hey! I said don't touch her. You touch her, I will never -like ever- tell you where I buried it.

The blurred vision tilts to the side. Less blurry now and at ground level. A belly-up car. Smoke. Two FIGURES.

STEVEN (O.S.) (cont'd)

You take me! I'll get you your money. I'll get you your fucking money. It's a good deal. It's the only deal. You touch her, You get *nothing from me*.

The vision blurs again but with water. Salty, warm water.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Little Indian finds Cherry unconscious on the ground.
- He pedals fast on his dirt bicycle across the desert.
- He speaks to Ed with urgency pointing at a direction.
- A FIGURE watches The Bikers attending to Cherry from a distance. He walks back to his car trunk, throws a shotgun in next to Steven's corpse, then closes the trunk.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END