

DRIVING THE RELM

WGA Registered

FADE IN:

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

A showroom of driverless electric vehicles. A sign on the wall reads: **THE RELM -- THE CAR THAT DRIVES AMERICA**

HAROLD WINSLOW, 30, neatly dressed, brochure in hand, stands proudly next to a lime green car he's recently purchased.

JOHN, 40, salesman approaches with paperwork.

JOHN

You're all set, Mr. Winslow. Here's your temporary registration and verification of insurance. Any questions?

HAROLD

I think you'd better go over the procedures once more with me. I still can't imagine being in a car that drives itself?

JOHN

The RELM self-driving car is state-of-the-art technology, Mr. Winslow. This is the first self-driving car to be fully programmed and automated with AI - artificial intelligence. Now then...

(demonstrating)

...your instrument panel here is essentially a laptop -- you're familiar with GPS, right?

HAROLD

Of course.

JOHN

Right. You start the car with your thumb print on this ON/OFF button in the center of the steering wheel. Once you type in your destination on the GPS, you push the DRIVE icon next to the ON/OFF button. That engages the self-drive system. The car does the rest -- even backs out of parking if necessary. All you have to do is sit back and enjoy the ride.

HAROLD

And if I want to slow down or  
change my destination...?

JOHN

See that yellow circle at the top  
of the instrument panel? That turns  
on the VAC - your voice activation  
consult. You can talk to it.

HAROLD

Like Alexa?

JOHN

Only much more sophisticated. It's  
like having another passenger in  
the car.

HAROLD

What happens if I get a flat?

JOHN

Good question. Then you just tap  
the blue button to the left there -  
one with the wrench symbol. You'll  
be automatically connected to the  
nearest service facility 24//7 no  
matter where you are.

HAROLD

All right. But what happens if the  
computer goes out and --

JOHN

(interrupting)

Trust me, Mr. Winslow, the chances  
of that happening are slim and  
none!

HAROLD

Right. Right. But just for  
argument's sake -- let's suppose it  
does?

JOHN

In that case you just push the red  
button to the right of the steering  
wheel there. You see it..?

HAROLD

And that releases the steering and  
the brakes?

JOHN

Puts you back in complete control.  
But unless you just like hands-on  
driving, there's no reason to ever  
disengage the self-drive mechanism.  
After all the research and  
development thats been put into  
this car--? For the computer to go  
out would have to be an act of God.

HAROLD

Well that wouldn't apply to me  
-- I'm an atheist.

(beat)

The brochure says I can go six  
hundred miles on a single charge?

JOHN

And at 180 miles-per-hour no less!

HAROLD

Now that's a road trip! I think  
I'll drive up to Big Sur. Put this  
state-of-the-art baby through its  
paces!

JOHN

You might drive around town for a  
while before Big Sur, Mr. Winslow.  
Get used to the feeling. Let the  
car get to know you. It's got AI,  
don't forget? The better it knows  
your habits, the more efficient it  
becomes.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. MONTEREY - PACIFIC COAST HWY - BIG SUR - TWILIGHT

Vistas of steep mountains, angry ocean surf below.

The RELM speeds rapidly along a narrow and dangerous  
two-lane highway.

Dark menacing rain clouds shut down the sunset.

INT. HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Harold sits comfortably behind the steering wheel. The speed SHOWS 60mph. JAZZ music is HEARD on the radio o.s.

Harold leafs through a magazine as it begins to sprinkle. The windshield wipers come ON.

EXT. MONTEREY - PACIFIC COAST HWY - 15 MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

It is raining heavily now. Thunder and lightening IS SEEN. Headlights of sparse traffic in both directions are SEEN.

INT. HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The instrument panel is brightly lit.

The speed now SHOWS 40mph as the rain becomes more fierce and intense.

The windshield wipers at full speed barely able to reveal the headlights of oncoming cars.

EXT. MONTEREY - PACIFIC COAST HWY - CONTINUOUS

Harold's car passes a sign that reads: **REST AREA AHEAD - 1/2 MILE**

INT. HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Harold pushes the red button, takes the wheel, steers the car into the rest area. He presses the OFF/ON circle on the steering wheel and the car shuts down.

Harold returns to the magazine.

INT. HAROLD'S CAR - 30 MINUTES LATER - CONTINUOUS

The rain has eased up slightly. Harold puts the magazine aside, pushes the ON/OFF circle and the car comes to life. It returns to the two-lane highway. Speed SHOWS 40mph.

EXT. MONTEREY - PACIFIC COAST HWY - 15 MINUTES LATER

Harold's car passes a sign that reads: **DOWN HILL NEXT 7 MILES. TRUCKS CHECK YOUR BRAKES. NO GUARDRAILS.**

The rain storm picks up in ferocity. Thunder and lightening.

A bolt of **LIGHTENING** suddenly STRIKES Harold's car.

INT. HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Every light on the instrument panel begins flashing.

VAC (V.O.)  
WARNING! WARNING! SHUTDOWN  
IMMINENT!

HAROLD  
What the...???

VAC (V.O.)  
WARNING! WARNING! WARNING! WAR---

Harold's car shuts down and slows to a complete stop. The instrument panel goes DARK. The headlights SHUT OFF.

Harold presses the ON/OFF circle on the steering wheel. Nothing. He repeats the process several times. Nothing.

HAROLD  
This is crazy!

Harold pushes the yellow circle on the instrument panel.

HAROLD (CONT'D)  
Relm, start this car!

Nothing.

Suddenly a truck horn BLARES several times from behind.

EXT. MONTEREY - PACIFIC COAST HWY - CONTINUOUS

A big-rig truck just barely manages to get around Harold's car without colliding with an oncoming car.

INT. HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

HAROLD

This is nonsense! A brand new car?

Harold tries to open the door. It's frozen.

Harold tries to lower the window. Nothing.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Relm, open the goddamn door!!!

The car remains silent.

Harold pushes the blue button for roadside help. Nothing.

Suddenly the instrument panel lights come ON.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Finally! This car is dangerous!

Harold tries the door. It's frozen. He tries the passenger side door. It's frozen. He pushes on the yellow circle.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Relm, open this door, please?

The car starts up spontaneously. Harold pushes the red button on the instrument panel. No response.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I don't believe this!

Harold's car starts down the highway, picking up speed.

VAC (V.O.)

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING! SYSTEM  
MALFUNCTION! SYSTEM MALFUNCTION!

The speed SHOWS 70mph.

VAC (V.O.)

SYSTEM MALFUNCTION! DISENGAGE!  
DISENGAGE!

Harold pushes the red circle frantically. No response.

The speed SHOWS 100mph.

Harold pushes the yellow circle.

HAROLD  
 Relm, it won't disengage? Help!

VAC (V.O.)  
 WARNING! SYSTEM MALFUNCTION!  
 DISENGAGE IMMEDIATELY!

The speed SHOWS 120mph. The windshield wipers barely clear enough rain to see ahead.

HAROLD  
 It won't stop! Help! HELP! HELP!

VAC (V.O.)  
 WARNING! WARNING, EXCESSIVE SPEED  
 DANGEROUS! DISENGAGE! DISENGAGE!

Harold tries to turn the steering wheel. No response.

HAROLD  
 (screaming)  
 RELM, WHAT DO I DO? How DO I TURN  
 IT OFF???

VAC (V.O.)  
 WARNING! SYSTEM MALFUNCTION! SYSTEM  
 MALFUNCTION! EXCESSIVE SPEED!  
 EXCESSIVE SPEED! DISENGAGE!  
 DISENGAGE! DISENGAGE!

The speed SHOWS 160mph. Harold is panic stricken. He presses every button on the instrument panel. No response.

EXT. MONTEREY - PACIFIC COAST HWY - CONTINUOUS

Harold's car is approaching a sharp curve at 170mph.

It doesn't take the curb as it hurtles off the highway into the stormy night air, and falls slowly into the ocean.

HAROLD  
 (screaming)  
 OH NO! JESUS, NO! NO! NO! NO, NOT  
 LIKE THIS??? NO.....

FADE TO BLACK:



FADE UP:

UNDERWATER - OCEAN FLOOR - HAROLD'S CAR - 30 MINUTES LATER

Harold's car rests right-side up on the ocean floor. The headlights are still ON.

INT. OCEAN - UNDER WATER - HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The water has reached the level of the seats.

The engine is OFF. The instrument panel lights are ON.

Still strapped in his seat belt, Harold slowly regains consciousness. A stream of blood drips from a cut on his forehead.

HAROLD

(weakly)

Help... Help me, please...somebody.  
please...

VAC (V.O.)

Are you injured?

HAROLD

Wha...? What...?

(touches his head)

Wha...What happened?

VAC (V.O.)

There was a system malfunction. I'm  
not programmed to override unknown  
electrical failures.

Harold tries to undo his seat belt. It's jammed.

HAROLD

Can you help me? My seat belt is  
jammed! If I don't get help I'll  
drown!

VAC (V.O.)

I've notified the Coast Guard and  
activated your transponder locator  
beacon. Help is on the way. The  
lights will help guide the divers  
to your location.

HAROLD  
(panicky)  
But I can't swim? The water is  
rising! I'm running out of air!

VAC (V.O.)  
Do not open the door or the window  
until the divers reach you. The air  
bubble will keep you alive until  
help arrives.

HAROLD  
How long will the batteries last?

VAC (V.O.)  
Until the water seeps into the  
seals. An hour or two. Maybe  
longer...

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - 30 MINUTES LATER - CONTINUOUS

Coast Guard rescue boats and helicopters are beginning to  
arrive on scene. Searchlights plow the choppy waves.

INT. BRIDGE - COAST GUARD VESSEL - CONTINUOUS

The Commander is DONOVAN, 40. The Lieutenant is GREEN, 30'S.

DONOVAN  
How long since the crash?

GREEN  
We got the call about 30 minutes  
ago. A passing witness called 911  
when she saw the car crash into the  
ocean. Said it left the cliff like  
it was shot out of a canon!

DONOVAN  
Suicide by drowning. I doubt we'll  
find anything in this weather until  
daybreak.

GREEN  
We could send down the divers? Car  
was equipped with a specially made  
location beacon like on planes.

DONOVAN  
All right. Give the frequency to  
the divers. Lets see what they  
find.

INT. OCEAN - UNDER WATER - HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The water level has now reached Harold's chest.

A large amorphous mass temporarily blocks the headlights.

A violent swirling of water tips the car up and forward until Harold is upside down in his seat belt.

Another violent swirl of water spins the car back around as it settles back on four wheels.

A massive school of dead fish floats motionless in the headlights.

The decomposing carcass of a large great white shark and the remains of a half-eaten sea lion floats motionless in the headlights.

HAROLD

(panicky)

What the --? Christ almighty?

VAC (V.O.)

Did something happen?

HAROLD

A bunch of dead fish just came out of nowhere? I'm running out of air!

VAC (V.O.)

My data indicates you are moving?  
Did the engine start back up?

HAROLD

No! But the lights are still on!  
Please get help! This air bubble is getting smaller! I'm gonna drown!

VAC (V.O.)

If the engine isn't running, how are you moving? I'm not programmed to understand this malfunction?

INT. BRIDGE - COAST GUARD VESSEL - CONTINUOUS

Donovan and Green watching the video monitors as three wetsuit-clad divers search the ocean floor.

DIVER (V.O.)

We're right where the signal put us, Commander. But we don't see any vehicle?

DONOVAN

Well, keep looking. Car manufacture says the location beam is stronger than the black boxes on planes. If you can hear it, the vehicle is there. Somewhere?

Watching the computer is Ensign NASH, 30.

NASH

Not necessarily, Commander. You need to see this. The signal keeps moving further away from shore.

DONOVAN

Moving?

NASH

Yes sir. At about 10 knots per hour. Considerably faster than our divers can follow.

Donovan looks at the computer with Nash.

DONOVAN

It was a small car. If it broke apart when it hit the water, maybe a shark grabbed at the location device.

NASH

No evidence the vehicle broke apart, Commander. And it's not a shark that grabbed the device. It's a whale. A whale big enough to swallow the entire car intact!

DONOVAN

A car -- swallowed by a whale? Isn't that a little far fetched, Ensign?

NASH

Not at all, Commander. I'm thinking it's a blue whale. Largest mammal on earth. At a hundred feet long and two hundred tons in weight--? It's entirely possible. And would explain the movement out to sea.

(alarmed))

And look...it's tracking deeper now. Down about 400 feet...

DONOVAN

That means it's just past the one mile limit where it drops off to a trench three miles in depth.

(to Green)

Lieutenant, call our divers back. I don't want to risk any lives tonight. We'll send a submersible at daybreak if the weather clears!

INT. OCEAN - UNDER WATER - HAROLD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The water has now reached Harold's neck.

A partially decomposed body of a man in the torn remnants of a wetsuit floats past the headlights.

HAROLD

Oh my God! My God, no! No! No! This can't be happening? It can't be real? It just can't be??

VAC (V.O.)

My data shows that you are still moving. I do not understand this malfunction? I can no longer help you because ---

The VAC's speech abruptly cuts OFF.

The headlights start to flicker rapidly and cut OFF.

The instrument panel lights start to flicker and cut OFF.

HAROLD

Oh, God, no! No! Please help me! God in heaven, will someone please help me? Please...

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END

