

GUILT TRIP

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SATELLITE POV OF NEW YORK CITY - 7:05pm

We see the USGS Landsat image of New York City from 438 miles in space. The view begins to rapidly zoom in and descend to the sidewalk in front of 40 Wall Street (The Trump Building) in lower Manhattan. The camera zeros in and follows a thirty-something EXECUTIVE into the back seat of a Yellow Cab.

The man is dressed in a grey Armani suit and carries a matching croc patterned satchel. It's mid-summer, hot & humid.

INT. YELLOW CAB BACK SEAT - SAME

We see the executive slide to the center of the back seat with his satchel placed on the seat behind the DRIVER.

The thirty-something driver wears a NY Mets jersey and ball cap with 'Top Gun' Ray-Ban sunglasses. He talks with a hard Brooklyn accent.

DRIVER

Where to?

EXECUTIVE

The Village, 131 West 3rd.

DRIVER

131 West...oh, da Blue Note. Got it. Ya celebrating?

The driver reaches over and starts the meter. The cab pulls away from the curb into traffic.

EXECUTIVE

Fuckin' A celebrating. I just brokered a \$12 million dollar deal and those suckers never saw it coming!

(MORE)

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Hey, that's pretty good. How'd you know that was the Blue Note?

DRIVER

I know the neighborhood. Been dere a time or two.

Both driver and executive look to the rear view mirror and their eyes lock. The executive's eyes widen slightly while the driver seems emotionless behind his sunglasses.

After a moment, the executive breaks the stare and he looks down to the drivers certificate display.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

Jack Turner...Jack Turner? Do I know a Jack Turner? Geez he looks familiar.

The executive looks up and back to the rear view mirror to see the driver's sunglasses once again. He quickly turns and looks out the side window.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

Was he looking at me or just using the mirror?

The executive looks back to the driver's certificate. He wipes a smudge off the photo.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

What the shit. That picture is crap! It doesn't even look like this guy.

The executive reaches over, picks up his satchel and slides slowly to the seat directly behind the driver. He holds his satchel to his chest.

EXECUTIVE

So...Jack, been driving long?

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Jack? Oh, sorry man, I forgot to switch certificates with the previous guy. You can call me buddy.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

Buddy? Seriously? What the fuck. I think I'd remember if I knew a Buddy. Dammit he looks familiar though.

The executive leans a bit left to try and get a better look at the driver's face right as the cab makes a hard right on to Church Street and he bangs his head on the window.

EXECUTIVE

Fuck!

DRIVER

What's dat?

EXECUTIVE

Nothing, Buddy.

(beat)

So Buddy. Been driving long?

DRIVER

Nah. Use ta be in commercial real estate till 2008. You know how '08 went down, huh? I got screwed big time.

The driver sees that his fare had slid over to the window. The driver reaches up and adjusts his rearview.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

What'd he mean by 'I know how it went down?' That market crash and mortgage scandal hit everybody hard. And how should I know how he got screwed? It's his problem he got screwed!

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

The executive looks up and sees the driver looking at him again in the mirror. He looks away quickly.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

What the hell? Why does he keep looking at me? Buddy...is that short for something? Wait a minute...what was the name of that guy back in '08...Billy? Bobby?

DRIVER

It's all about the money, huh?

EXECUTIVE

What is?

DRIVER

What you do. You work at 40 Wall, right?

The executive doesn't really know what to think. For the moment, he does not respond.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

I gotta know...

(aloud)

So Buddy...what have you heard about 40 Wall?

DRIVER

Dealin's...I toll ya, I use ta work in commercial.

(beat)

I read an article in Bloomberg about them shady tings that have been going on there.

(beat)

Not that you'd be any part of dat, right?

EXECUTIVE

No, no way man, I'm strictly legit.

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Yeah, yeah, course not. Most of them penny-stock bums and traffickers have been busted and are doing time.

(beat)

I'm sure dey didn't get 'em all doh.

The executive is showing signs of the heat and sweat begins to bead on his forehead.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

Holy crap is it getting hot in here.

The executive looks to the dashboard and we see that the air conditioning has been turned off and the driver has rolled his window down. We now see that there are no window cranks in the back seat.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

I could have sworn the AC was on when I got in here. He's doing this on purpose, I know it.

(beat)

Hey, ah, Buddy...do you think you could do me a favor and turn on the AC?

DRIVER

Yeah, no sweat!

(laughing at his own pun)

I'm all about doing you favors. Dat's what I'm here for.

The driver smiles and looks to the rearview mirror.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

A favor? Doing me favors? And what's up with that look? What have I ever done to him?

(MORE)

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE (V.O. CONT'D)

2008...was it...? No, couldn't
be...they were out of towners.

The executive again tries to get a better look at the driver's profile.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

Goddammit he looks familiar.

The cab continues up Church Street to Avenue of the Americas. The executive is beginning to look a little more relaxed with each passing moment.

The driver breaks the welcome silence.

DRIVER

So, ah, you don't remember be, do
you.

The executive stiffens and cringes.

EXECUTIVE

I'm sorry Buddy but I can't. You
look awful familiar but I just
can't remember.

DRIVER

I want you to think...think **real**
hard.

The executive is starting to panic. The sweat forms again and starts to trickle down his temples. The driver sees this in the mirror.

DRIVER

You alright? You ain't looking
too good. Dat AC not making it
back dere?

EXECUTIVE

No, I'm fine. It's just the suit.

(MORE)

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Where was it? That market space
in mid-town? That office complex
at the Battery? So many times....

DRIVER

Now it wasn't dat long ago. It
was a little dark when we met but
I sure got a good look at you.

We see the driver pointing at the executive in the
mirror as he made that last statement.

The executive can't seem to get any air and he pulls at
his collar. He is panic-stricken.

The cab stops at a red light at 3rd Street. The executive
can see the sign for the Blue Note down the street to
the right but it's one way and they need to circle the
block.

The executive is holding the door handle and considers
jumping out and making a run for it while stopped.

The light turns green and the cab begins to move
forward.

The executive looks hopeless as the cab circles the
block in silence once again.

EXT. YELLOW CAB IN FRONT OF THE BLUE NOTE - EVENING

The driver gets out and opens the executive's door.

The executive appears to hold up his satchel as a shield
and his eyes are shut tight.

DRIVER

It's me, Buddy!

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

The driver removes his sunglasses and is standing with feet apart with arms wide, and grinning like an old friend.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Two weeks ago, here at the Blue Note! I was next to you at the bar when your credit card was denied! I paid your tab!

A wave of fleeting memories rushes through the executive as he remembers the act. He jumps out of the cab and embraces the driver laughing yet sobbing.

The driver is very uncomfortable with the contact.

DRIVER

Whoa, whoa now. Easy does it. I only spotted ya a fifty. That don't mean we're dating or nothing.

The executive backs off, pulls out a wad of money and peels off a couple of hundred dollar bills.

EXECUTIVE

Here, take it. Keep the change. Thanks Buddy. You don't know what this means.

DRIVER

Uh, sure, thanks! Hey, ah, I'll buy ya drink next time I see ya. How bout dat?

EXECUTIVE

Yeah, sure, sure. Thanks again for the trip.

The executive regains his composure and walks to the front of the club. He turns as he opens the entrance and gives the driver a wave before entering.

The driver waves back and gets back in the cab.

(Continued)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Yes, sir. How 'bout dat.

The driver licks his finger and counts his cash.

FADE OUT