

MATCHBOOK

Written by

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A BLACK SCREEN.

We hear the trickling of RAIN and the faint grumbling of THUNDER.

FADE IN:

EXT. DARK STREET - NIGHT

A lonely STREETLIGHT shines a spotlight onto the street. The rain leaves the asphalt sparkling.

In the distance we see HEADLIGHTS traveling towards the streetlight. As the headlights get closer, so does the rumbling of the engine.

The headlights cruise into the streetlight's aura, revealing the jet-black 1950's BUICK. The vehicle parks directly under the streetlight.

The Buick's headlights and engine shut off.

INT. BUICK - MOMENTS LATER

ALLEN, early 40's, lanky with a sad comb-over, sits in the driver's seat. His hands grip the STEERING WHEEL, positioned at eleven o'clock and one o'clock.

Allen winces preemptively before slamming his forehead forward onto the steering wheel, occupying noon.

ALLEN

Dammit!

Allen lets his forehead nestle between his hands still perched on the steering wheel, and liberates an emphatic sigh from his lips.

Allen alleviates his grip and leans back. The leather seat groans as his blue, denim jeans squirm into their new position.

Allen's eyes observe the rain trickling down the windshield.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUICK - MOMENTS LATER

The jet-black Buick glistens under the streetlight.

The sky grumbles and it starts to rain just a little bit harder.

INT. BUICK - MOMENTS LATER

Allen's observation of the raindrops on the windshield have transformed into a lifeless gaze into the world outside the car.

Without interrupting his dead stare:

ALLEN

You know, it didn't have to end this way.

(beat)

You really didn't leave me a choice, man.

EXT. BUICK - CONTINUOUS

War erupts in the heavens and the rain intensifies. Like liquid gravel, the torrent of rain batters the hood of the Buick.

INT. BUICK - CONTINUOUS

Allen adjusts the rear-view mirror and takes a long look at his face.

Allen's beard is patchy and undefined, like tiny bits of fishing wire thrown randomly onto his chin and cheeks.

Allen tilts his head down, keeping his eyes fixated on the mirror as he inspected the hair on top of his head-or lack there of.

Allen uses his fingers to smooth out his comb-over, but abruptly stops after noticing the BLOOD on his hand.

ALLEN

(under his breath)

Shit.

A single CIGARETTE peeks out from a soft pack of LUCKY STRIKES sitting on the dashboard. Next to it, two identical MATCHBOOKS.

Allen snags the cigarette and a single matchbook. He holds one end of the cigarette between his teeth and then lights the other. He closes the matchbook, the cover reads:

"SUNRISE INN: FROM GOODNIGHT TO SUNLIGHT."

The glow from the cigarette briefly illuminates Allen's face.

Still staring at the matchbook:

ALLEN (CONT'D)
It's funny.
(exhales smoke)

Allen grabs the second matchbook from the dashboard and holds them side by side. Then places them on his lap.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
These little matchbooks ratted you out.

Allen readjusts the rear-view mirror. Peering into it, he surveys the back of the cab.

A DEAD BODY lay across the back seat, rolled-up in a white sheet. Sticky with crimson stains.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
You couldn't just let me have one thing, could you Brian?
(beat)
You got the better job, the better looks, the hair, body, the fucking money-

Allen clenches his jaw. The veins on his forehead become noticeable. His face replete with antipathy.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Even got the better god damn car!

Allen's fury consumes him and he hammer-fists the headrest of the passenger seat.

THWACK-THWACK-THWACK

His eyes never stray from the mirror.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
That's fine, I'm fine with that, but did you have to take Susan from me too? You could have had any girl in the world, but you had to take mine.

(MORE)

ALLEN (CONT'D)

You had to take the only thing I
love, for your fucking self.

(beat)

You selfish bastard, you were like
a brother to me.

Allen cracked the window just enough to flick his cigarette
into the drenched abyss.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Do you know how it feels to have
the only two people you trust stab
you in the back?

Allen's voice fatigues as the frog in his throat makes its
presence. He stares back down at the matchbooks sitting on
his lap.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Do you think I would write it off
as mere coincidence that you both
had the same matchbook?

(beat)

From the same fucking hotel?

Allen shifts his body to look directly at the bloody bundle
that lay behind him.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

I'm done taking the back seat to
you, Brian.

(defiant)

This is the last time I get the
shit-end of the stick.

Allen snatches the LEATHER JACKET resting on the passenger
seat. A SMITH & WESSON MODEL 36 falls to the floorboard.

KA-THUNK.

Allen reaches over and picks it up. Taking a second to
inspect the pistol, he slowly rotates the cylinder: only TWO
ROUNDS left.

The rainfall ceases and an uneasy silence engulfs the world.

Allen slips his lanky arms into the jacket, storing the
pistol within its INNER POCKET.

With keys in hand, he shoves the driver-side door open,
withdrawing his gangly frame from the vehicle.

EXT. BUICK - CONTINUOUS

Allen skulks to the REAR-END of the Buick. Fumbling with the keys before successfully opening the TRUNK.

Inside, a TERRIFIED WOMAN, mid 30's, dirty-blonde and bloody, lay bound and gagged. Her eyes focus on Allen in horror. The deluge of tears has left her make-up bedraggled.

Allen leans in toward her, caressing her long, damp and messy hair.

She forces a moan of terror through the rag that gags her, jerking her head away from him.

ALLEN
(whispering)
You know, Susan?

Allen reaches into the inner pocket of his jacket, retrieving the pistol.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
It didn't have to end this way.

CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN.

THE END.