

OFF GRID (rev.2)

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT WASTE LAND - SUNRISE

An old two-lane asphalt road, surrounded by alkali flats, extends straight to the horizon. Wind RUSTLES the dried weeds grow from the cracks of its sunbaked surface.

The HUM of an electric vehicle starts faint, reaches a crescendo and passes with a subtle doppler effect.

A lone vehicle, an old Model X Tesla, speeds down the desert road. The SUV has been modified with solar panels on the roof, wire-mesh windscreen and a desert camo paint job.

The Tesla decelerates, pulls to the shoulder and stops.

INT. TESLA - SAME

The driver is BRYSON (75). Shaved head, long grey beard and buckskin clothing. His hands, at ten and two, grip the steering wheel, though his left is wrapped in bloody gauze.

Bryson sings along to THE WHO. The open window noise causes him to sing at the top of his lungs.

BRYSON

"I can see for miles and miles and
miles and---" Man, I love sunrise
in the desert!

The engine hum, music and wind noise slowly begins to subside. The vehicle begins to slow.

BRYSON

Wha? No...No...NO! Oh, Tessie, you
bitch. Don't you even think
about....

Wind and engine noise stops. A moment of silence until...

Bryson BANGS both hands on the steering wheel and recoils in pain from the injury.

He YELLS an impressive soliloquy of choice profanity.

BRYSON

#@%!*?&!

Another moment of silence.

BRYSON

Alrighty, then. Hat? Check. Water?
(rustling of stuff)
Check.

The car door CREAKS upon opening. He steps out onto the crumbly asphalt and SLAMS it shut.

EXT. TESLA - CONTINUOUS

Bryson scans the stark surroundings.

BRYSON
Okay, Tessie...let's just see what
YOUR issue is.

He performs a quick check of the Tesla's elaborate after-market solar panel wiring. He TAPS an old-fashioned LCD gauge with his finger that reads ZERO charge.

BRYSON
(sighs)
Seriously? Zero charge? You can't
run but a couple of hours at night?

He slams a fist on the the roof and kicks a door panel.

BRYSON
(gasp of regret)
Oh, geez, sorry Tessie. I know, I
know, it's my fault for using cheap
after-market solar panels.

He pats a comforting hand on the roof.

BRYSON
Well, sun won't be high for a
couple hours.

He CLICKS his tongue a couple times in thought.

BRYSON
Shit. I guess I gotta make the
call.

He opens the vehicle door again (CREAK).

BRYSON
Where's that damn phone.
(more rustling)
Ah!

He retrieves an old model sat-phone. He extends the antennae and dials 911.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(computer automated)
Amazon 911. Please state your
emergency.

BRYSON
I need medical assistance.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
I see that you are calling from an
unregistered satellite phone off
sector. Please state your name.

BRYSON
(exasperated)
Aw, Christ.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
And your given name?

Bryson gets a devilish grin and chuckles.

BRYSON
Jesus.
(a 'heh-heh' chuckle)

OPERATOR (V.O.)
I'm sorry. We have no record of a
Jesus H. Christ as an Amazon Prime
member. Would you like to
subscribe? Say yes, or no.

Bryson takes a deep breath and slowly exhales.

BRYSON
Representative.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Representative. Sure. I can help
you with that. An Amazon
representative will be with you
shortly.

Bryson is put on hold as a muzak version of The Beastie Boys
'SABOTAGE' plays. Moments later-

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
This is Brittany. How may I help
you, Mister Christ?

BRITTANY'S voice is pleasant and cheerful but a little
unnatural. Another computer.

Bryson frowns at the handset and gives another groan of exasperation.

BRYSON

Yeah, I, ah, need some medical assistance.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)

Medical. Sure, I can help you with that. First I'll need some information.

(beat)

What is your date of birth?

BRYSON

I'm seventy-five.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)

I'm sorry. Date of birth, please.

BRYSON

August thirteenth, nineteen sixty-eight.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)

Age?

Sigh.

BRYSON

Oh, let me see...still seventy-five.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)

Can you describe the injury?

BRYSON

I cut myself with a hand saw and I need some medical help.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)

Cut. Hand saw. Help.

(beat)

Do you still have the weapon?

Bigger sigh.

BRYSON

I have the saw, but it's not a weapon. It's a tool.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
Proponents of the former second
amendment in the early twenty-first
century argued that weapons were
tools. They stand corrected.

Bryson speaks slow and very concise.

BRYSON
It is a tool...that you operate
manually...to cut wood. Like...for
carpentry.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
Understood.
(beat)
Why would you use a manually
powered surgical tool to cut wood?

BRYSON
I'm old school, I guess.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
Old school. Understood.

A long pause.

BRYSON
So...ah...can I get some
assistance?

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
You are off sector. Are you
ambulatory?

BRYSON
I am, but I drove all night and my
old Tesla's out of juice. Trust me,
I'd much rather have gone to an
Amazon Med-Shed.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
What is your personal assessment of
the injury?

BRYSON
I might have some ligament damage,
but, right now, I'm thinking just a
couple of stitches and a shot of
antibiotics would do me just fine.

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
Understood. As you are not a Prime member, you will be expected to provide credits upon treatment. A medical drone will arrive shortly to your coordinates with security assistance.

BRYSON
Security?

REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)
Place the weapon in view and maintain ten meter distance prior to their arrival. Good day.

CLICK

BRYSON
Wha-? Bitch.

Bryson tosses the phone back onto the passenger seat and takes a long drink of water.

BRYSON
(mumbles)
Place the weapon in view...

He opens the back hatch, retrieves the saw and throws it on the hood with a CLANG.

BRYSON
(mocks the rep)
Sure, I can help you with that!

Bryson looks toward the direction he was driving and the rising sun. No cars, no movement, nothing.

BRYSON
Fucking desert.
(sigh)
Breakfast.

The door CREAKS open again. More shuffling. A CLICK-CLICK-CLICK of a lighter. Bryson INHALES and his BONG BUBBLES to life.

A second or two of suppressed COUGHS and a huge EXHALE.

BRYSON
Yeah...CHIPS!

Again, with the shuffling of junk in his car until...

BRYSON
Eureka! And a nice shady spot to
sit...

Bryson sits down on the pavement with a groan and begins to
MUNCH on some chips and GULP some water.

BRYSON
Life is good once more.

The sound of a large lizard SKITTERS across the pavement
towards Bryson and HISSES.

BRYSON
Geezus! What the hell are you?! A
Gila? Here, dude, have a chip.

A chip CLATTERS to the pavement and the lizard SKITTERS
forward and grabs it.

BRYSON
There ya go, buddy. How's about
some atmosphere?

Bryson moves to the car. We hear the CLICK-CLICK of guitar
case fasteners.

He STRUMS the guitar and makes a couple TUNE adjustments.

He CLEARS his throat...

BRYSON
An oldie but a goodie...

Bryson starts to play NIRVANA's 'COME AS YOU ARE'.

BRYSON
"Come, as you are, as you were...."

The music fades...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

...the sound of Bryson SNORING amplifies.

Followed by the BUZZ of approaching DRONES.

Bryson wakes with a SNORT.

BRYSON
Wha...?!

The Drones gets louder.

BRYSON

Incoming!

He gets up, opens the car door, gets inside and SLAMS it shut.

DRONES

Two Amazon DRONES approach. A green and white medical drone and a black and white with red strobe security drone. The security drone is in the lead.

SECURITY DRONE

Jesus H. Christ. We are here to help. Identify yourself.

BRYSON

(muffled)

I'm in the car.

SECURITY DRONE

Where is the weapon?

BRYSON

The saw is on the hood.

The security drone hovers over the vehicle's hood and scans the hand saw with a red laser on an X and Y axis.

It emits a servo whir and clicks as it dispatches a weapon from under the chassis. The weapon twitches back and forth as it searches for Bryson.

SECURITY DRONE

Jesus H. Christ. We are here to help. Exit the vehicle and place your hands on the bumper. Prepare to be corrected.

BRYSON

Whatever you say.

The door creaks open and Bryson emerges from the Tesla. He shoulders a pump shotgun, RACKS a round into the chamber and...

BOOM!

He shoots the security drone out of the sky and RACKS another round in the chamber.

The medical drone wavers in the air as if startled.

MEDICAL DRONE
Jesus H. Chri-

BOOM!

The medical drone WHIRS and CRASHES.

Bryson hurries over to the security drone and stomps a heel into the camera.

He walks over to the medical drone. It whirls but is unable to take off.

BRYSON
I'll take that, thank you very much.

As he snatches the payload of medical supplies from the drone, the camera turns to face him.

MEDICAL DRONE
Jesus H. Christ. We are here to help. Why do you resist?

Bryson places the shotgun muzzle up to the camera.

BRYSON
I'm just old school.

BOOM!

FADE OUT