

ONE MISSISSIPPI

Written by

Ed

FADE IN:

EXT. REST STOP - DAY

Ominous sky. The parking lot is empty and calm, until...

A TORNADO SIREN ramps to a full scream.

Seconds later, a beat-up compact car races into the lot, skids to a stop -- straddling the lines, half on the sidewalk, directly in front of the restroom door.

The car backs up, moves several spaces down the row, parks neatly into a slot.

INT. REST STOP BATHROOM - DAY

Three MEN burst into the decrepit restroom: STEVE, 30s, military tight, OWEN, 30s, skinny and unkempt, and ED, 60s, frazzled and grumpy.

ED

You couldn't have just parked in India? It would have been closer.

OWEN

Who worries about door dings in an empty parking lot?

ED

Seriously, if you listed that car, you'd have to describe it: 1995 Toyota Rust, tires included.

Steve looks around as the guys settle in.

STEVE

I don't think this is a government-approved storm shelter.

OWEN

We might be safer IN the tornado.

ED

Where's your mother?

Owen and Steve look at each other.

STEVE

I thought you got her.

OWEN

I thought you got her.

ED
We can't leave her out there.

OWEN
You sure about that?

Steve rolls his eyes, opens the restroom door, looks outside. The force of the wind knocks him backwards, but he leans forward, presses out.

Ed, meanwhile, feverishly works the paper towel dispenser, unrolling one HUGE line of paper towels.

ED
(off Owen's look)
My tax dollars pay for this.

Ed balls the paper towels into a giant wad, starts another.

ED
I'll surround myself with dozens of these, in case the tornado brings this place down.

OWEN
Excellent plan, Dad. One thing a tornado can't bust through, a pile of paper towels.

ED
You'll wish you'd have thought of it when this twister drops you in Kentucky.

The rest stop door flings open. Steve staggers in, looking like he's just been through a carwash with no car: his hair is trashed, his clothes torn. He's soaked from head to toe.

ED
Storm picking up?

Steve thrusts an urn toward Owen.

OWEN
Hey, Mom.

Ed snatches the urn.

ED
(to the urn)
At least one person cares about you. I'll get you to Myrtle Beach. Just like we promised.

OWEN

We've made it 10 minutes, so far.

The lights snap off. The restroom is dark, lit only by the light of a small slit window at the top of the room.

Steve opens a lighter, snaps it on to break the darkness.

STEVE

What's with all the paper towels?

Owen picks up a ball of towels.

OWEN

Dad's Viva-based emergency plan.

He gets a little too close. The ball of towels goes up in flames. Owen's tosses it to the floor as panic breaks out.

ED

Put it out! Put it out!

STEVE

We need water!

Suddenly, the flame is extinguished with a WOOSH.

The lights flicker back on.

Owen stands frozen, urn upside down. At his feet, a pile of ashes where the flames once were.

Ed bends down, looks at the ashes...

ED

Good job, Honey.

Steve horrified, drops to his knees, scoops at the ashes. Owen joins him.

Behind them, the FAUCET turns on. They look up to see Ed rinsing out the urn.

ED

(off Steve's look)

It was dirty.

STEVE

With Mom!

ED

Oh. Good point.

Ed shrugs, heads for the hand dryer. He holds the urn underneath, hits the button. The dryer doesn't work.

He reaches for the window, props it open.

ED
The wind'll dry it out.

He holds the urn out the window. The wind immediately rips it from his hand.

ED
Oops.

LATER

The three men stand around a toilet, their hands and faces dirty with ash.

Ed holds a small handful of ashes.

ED
You sure about this?

STEVE
The sewer empties into the Kaw River. The Kaw meets the Missouri, which connects to the Mississippi. She takes the Mississippi to the Gulf.

ED
It's not Myrtle Beach.

OWEN
But, it is the ocean.

Ed drops the ashes into the toilet.

ED
Storm cleared, Honey. We're all safe now.

Steve flushes. Ed waves.

ED
Have a good trip, Dear.

Owen nudges Steve.

OWEN
We're going to hell, aren't we?

STEVE
Oh, most definitely.

FADE OUT.