PREPARED

(C) Copyright 2015

FADE IN:

EXT. JAIL INMATE TRANSPORTATION DOCK - DAY

Dirty, cracked, oily fingers rest on top of a open bus hood that radiates heat distorted air.

SMYTH (V.O.) I fucking hate playing grease monkey.

A police radio squawks:

STEPHENSON (RADIO) We're bringin' 'em out.

A steel security door on the jail opens, Deputy STEPHENSON, young, lean, and tall, shotgun in hand, leads a chain gang of inmates across the concrete parking lot.

INMATE ONE, coke-bottle glassed tub-O-lard, squints hard from the burning sunlight.

SMYTH (V.O.) Legend has it I fucking hate cars because my dear father, working as a gas station attendant, was murdered trying to protect a lady customer from a maniac hiding in the backseat of her car.

QUICK FLASHES - 1950S GAS STATION - NIGHT

-- At office phone, a middle-aged pump monkey gestures to blond Stepford WASP lady to get out of her Bel Air.

-- Young BC glassed fatty punk scrambles from back seat.

-- Pump monkey pulls resistant woman from car, spins her away from its door.

-- Pump monkey seizes, falls to ground, hatchet buried in his back, fatty punk laughs M.O.S.

-- Black & white, bubble afire, rolls up, cops pull their service .38s on fatty punk.

BACK TO SCENE

INMATE TWO, hairy gray-haired old fart, fares no better in the harsh sun than his predecessor.

SMYTH (V.O.) Yet another legend has it I fucking hate cars because my sweet mother, helping an old lady find her own car in a parking lot, was almost murdered, or worse, by a hairy armed nutcase in an old lady's dress.

QUICK FLASHES - 1960S SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

-- Brunette Stepford WASP gestures for old lady in dress to get into her Chevy Nova.

-- Inside, she notes the "old lady's" hairy forearms.

-- She stops the car, dashes out and away.

-- "Old Lady" grabs after her, spills noosed rope and butcher knife from large purse.

BACK TO SCENE

INMATE THREE, scruffy wild man, yanks the chain to inmate two. Deputy Stephenson raises the butt of his shotgun to him. Inmate three yields.

> SMYTH (V.O.) Truth is... I fucking hate cars because once upon a time a stupid girlfriend of mine almost killed me with one.

QUICK FLASHES - FOREST - NIGHT

-- Chevy Camaro stops rocking, young Smyth stumbles out, pisses in weeds.

-- Teen girl wipes away condensation from inside car, looks about.

-- Inside car, she grows impatient, car shakes, she freaks out, gets behind wheel, drives away.

-- Outside, young Smyth dangles from a noose hung from tree branch above where the Camaro just was.

BACK TO SCENE

SERGEANT SMYTH, weathered and leathered beyond his post-middle-age, slams shut the bus hood.

He tugs at his Sheriff's uniform collar and necktie, ratty old rope burn scars around his throat.

> SMYTH (V.O.) I hate her more than I hate being a grease monkey.

Smyth glares from behind mirrored shades at the third inmate who hawks phlegm then spits on ground before he steps onto the bus.

SMYTH (V.O.) More than the sunuvabitch that almost killed me.

QUICK FLASHES - FOREST - NIGHT

-- A naked wild man runs from the bushes, under young Smyth, and after the Camaro.

-- The tree limb breaks, young Smyth crashes to ground, pulls the noose from his bloody neck.

BACK TO SCENE

A few other inmates bring up the rest of the chain-gang onto the bus

The sunny sky has gone gray.

Smyth pulls the bus keys from his pocket and hops on board as rain begins to fall.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

All are seated except for Deputy Stephenson riding shotgun with his shotgun while the bus rolls down the road.

In the rain the bus moves fast.

Too fast.

INMATE THREE Where's the fire, Smokey?!

Inmates chuckle.

STEPHENSON Shut the fuck up!

INMATE THREE I just wanted to know if I shoulda brought marshmallows.

INMATE TWO I brought a weiner.

Inmates chuckle.

INMATE ONE I seriously doubt that, Nancy.

Inmates laugh, inmate two seethes.

The bus makes a couple of tactical moves, all aboard brace against the physics of mass in motion.

After another hard move Stephenson looks out window at the fairly empty roadway.

The bus' windshield wipers beat away.

The rain has turned into a downpour.

STEPHENSON You okay, Smyth? I don't see no fire. Maybe you have a wedding to get to? I'd hate to think you were driving like this to your funeral. You might bring us all with you.

Smyth is focused on the road ahead.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

The bus makes a horrendous slide into a turn down a county road.

It books time, road spray rooster-tailing behind.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

The inmates vacillate between power and fear.

Terrified, they yell for Smyth to slow down.

STEPHENSON Buddy, you need to ease up on the gas. You're going to kill us all.

Smyth grins.

Ahead, trees and power lines have fallen across the roadway.

He reaches across the big steering wheel.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Again the bus makes a horrendous slide into a turn down a small road: Baden-Powell Lane.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

The literally chained inmates are figuratively off the chain with alarm.

INMATES Stop the bus! Slow down! You're going to kill us!

STEPHENSON Hey, Buddy. This road... we're not authorized to--

A deer darts into the road.

EXT. BADEN-POWELL LANE - DAY

The bus slams into it, it cartwheels over the windshield, crashes on the roof, then slides off the side in a waterfall of blood and bits.

The brakes slam tight, the bus slides the length of a football field on the slick road.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

Stephenson is thrown forward, drops his shotgun, bounces backward off a support column, the inmates grab him through the chain fence.

> INMATES Grab his keys! Get us outta here!

Like trained magician Capuchin thieves they snatch Stephenson's keys, unlock their cuffs, and open the cage door.

Smyth shoves the shotgun into the chest of the first man out, inmate one, and pulls him out the bus' entry door.

> INMATE ONE Let me go! What are you doing, pig! What are you--

EXT. BADEN-POWELL LANE - DAY

SMACK! Smyth boat-paddles him in the face with the shotgun butt.

As inmate two scrambles to the driver's seat Smyth handcuffs the dazed inmate one to the side mirror.

The engine roars.

The bus lurches forward, BAM! Smyth fires a round through the open door into the ribs of inmate two behind the wheel.

Inmates scream as the bus rolls forward but lists to the side towards a steep embankment towards a rain swollen creek.

An inmate jumps from the open doorway, BAM!

Smyth drops him the moment he hits the ground.

The bus rolls off the shoulder, and flips onto its side on top of the inmate and inmate one handcuffed to the side mirror.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

The grinding action of the bus' weight spews blood from the crushed inmates onto all aboard.

Their screams amp up even more when they slide into the creek.

The bus doesn't fill up so much as it sinks straightway into the creek.

EXT. BADEN-POWELL LANE BRIDGE - DAY

Smyth aims towards the first prison rat that escapes the sunken bus.

BAM!

Still no escapees.

He scans and targets.

Waits.

Walks to the downstream other side of the bridge.

BAM!

Another prison rat for the fish.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

The shotgun blast echos across the bus rooftop.

Inmate three takes his last few gasps of air, chokes, strains against his shackles, and drowns in fits.

EXT. BADEN-POWELL LANE BRIDGE - DAY

Rain pours.

Water rushes.

Smyth waits.

Nothing.

LATER

The rain has stopped.

Smyth tosses the shotgun into the creek, ambles to a roadside puddle, washes his hands in the silt and sand, then moseys back up the lane.

SMYTH (V.O.) Legend also has it that there's a country lane somewhere where a bus load of boy scouts were slaughtered by their scout master and now their ghosts haunt the roadway and forest.

QUICK FLASHES - BADEN-POWELL LANE - DAY

-- Scout Master bludgeons scouts with a craft neolithic ax.

-- Ghost scouts roam the roadway.

BACK TO SCENE

Smyth looks up at the clearing clouds and notes the birds beginning to sing.

SMYTH (V.O.) Well, I wouldn't call this batch boy scouts, but... I don't think they'll be haunting anywhere else either.

Smyth whistles, picks up a rain-blown leaf from the roadway, then tosses it away.

FADE OUT: