Slade

By

Justin Swartz
FADE IN

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

SLADE, 30’s, is asleep in a bathtub full of ice. He wakes up suddenly. Looks around. Sees the ice. And thumps his head against the wall.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Did you ever have a really bad day?

Slade scratches the back of his head. Finds an envelope taped to the wall behind him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
A day that just sucked to all hell?

Slade grabs the envelope. Opens it. Pulls out a piece of yellow legal paper.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That’s the kind of day Slade’s having.

Slade reads the note. It’s typed in a crooked Courier font.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Only now his day has gone from bad, to worse, to fucked.

Slade turns the note over. Reads more on the back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
A long time ago, he made a bet on a sure thing, not knowing that there is no sure thing.

Slade crumples up the note. His fist shakes around it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The assholes he owes the money to just took his kidneys as collateral until he can pay them back.

Slade’s fist shakes uncontrollably. He looks pissed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In that case, there’s only one thing he can do...
EXT. ROAD - DAY

Slade is now dressed in a hoodie, jeans, and sneakers. He strides forward with purposeful steps.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...and that’s do what he does best.

Slade hangs a left at the end of the road. Takes a side street.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Slade stumbles. His feet drag. He falls to his knees.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The note said that without kidneys, his body wouldn’t be able to process fluids and waste the right way.

Slade pushes himself up. Fails. Pushes himself up again.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It would also make him feel hot--

Slade wipes sweat from his forehead.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
--thirsty--

Slade licks his lips. Swallows. His mouth is dry.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
--and sick as hell.

Slade manages to stand. He leans to the right. Puts his hands on his knees.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But he wants his kidneys back.

Slade breathes hard. Pinches his eyes shut. Opens them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He wants his goddamn kidneys back!!

Slade stands. Drags his feet forward. Regains his stride. Walks with a purpose.
NARRATOR (V.O.)
Just take it one step at a time, Slade. Put one foot in front of the other and go.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

Slade crosses at the tracks. Falls to his knees after he crosses.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
No, no, no, Slade. Get back up.

Slade goes down on his hands and knees.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Don’t you dare crawl, Slade. Get back up!

Slade pushes himself up on one knee.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That’s the way. Put the other foot down.

Slade does so.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Now push, Slade. Push!!

Slade stands to his full height.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Atta boy, Slade! Atta boy!

Slade swallows. Rubs sweat from his forehead. Stumbles forward.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Is that the best you can do?

Slade walks a little. Walks harder. Walks faster.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You keep doing that, Slade...and don’t let anything get in your way!
EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY

The street empties out here. Slade hides behind some bushes. Pulls a snub-nosed .38 out from the back of his jeans.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Make sure it’s loaded, Slade. Make sure you’ve got it ready.

Slade opens the .38. It’s loaded with six bullets. He gives the chamber a spin. Snaps it closed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Now all that’s left is getting that money.

Slade puts the .38 down the front of his pants. Covers it up with his hoodie. Walks down the main path for the park.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Just act natural, Slade. Nothing weird about a guy walking through a park with no kidneys.

Slade wipes sweat from his forehead again. Swallows. Licks his lips.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
What you wouldn’t do for a drink right about now...

He exits the park. Walks up a country road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY


NARRATOR (V.O.)
That’s it, Slade. Don’t stop now. Don’t stop when you’re so close!

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Slade reaches his destination. He hides along the side of the station. Falls to one knee. Grabs his stomach.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Come on, Slade! Don’t give up now! Don’t give up when the prize is only a few steps away!
Slade breathes hard. Almost throws up. Puts a hand on the ground.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Get up now. Get up! You’ve got to get up!

Slade pushes himself up. Stumbles. Puts a hand against the station for support. Walks inside.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

The station is empty at this time of day, say for MEXICAN CLERK, 50’s, who sits on a stool behind the counter and sleeps.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
There’s the prize, Slade. The money in the register, right there, for the taking!

Slade looks toward the wall of drinks. Spots a bottle of Coca-Cola.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
No, Slade. Don’t give in. Get the job done and go home. Don’t let anything--

Slade walks toward the drinks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Aw, come on, man! Don’t fuck this up now!

Slade opens one of the doors. Grabs the bottle of Coke. Lets the door slap shut.

The noise of the door awakens Mexican Clerk. His eyes fall on Slade.

Slade opens the Coke. Chugs it straight down. Mexican Clerk gets pissed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The clerk says something about paying for that soda. You could care less.

Slade doesn’t answer. He’s still chugging away.

Mexican Clerk comes around the counter. Walks toward Slade.
NARRATOR (V.O.)
The clerk says you need to pay
before you can drink.

Slade lifts his .38 at Mexican Clerk. Cocks the hammer.
Finishes his Coke.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The thirty-eight is your answer.

Slade tosses the empty Coke bottle aside. Steps forward.
Mexican Clerk steps back toward the counter.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You explain the situation to the 
clerk. The sure thing, the bad
debt, the missing kidneys, and how
you need that money in his till.

The Mexican Clerk is back behind the counter. Slade steps 
back there with him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The thirty-eight is very 
persuasive.

The Mexican Clerk opens the till. Slade takes the money 
inside. Shoves it inside the pockets of his hoodie.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The deed is done. Now get out of 
there, Slade!

Slade knocks the Mexican Clerk on the back of the head with 
his .38. The Mexican Clerk goes down to the floor.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I said, get out of there!

Slade stumbles past the counter. Almost falls to his knees 
again. Pushes his way out the door.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Slade looks around. There’s a green ’66 Chevelle screaming 
into the lot. It stops in front of Slade.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You remember that car, don’t you,
Slade? You know who it belongs to.

The passenger door opens. Slade looks at it.
NARRATOR (V.O.)
Don’t get in, Slade. There’s nothing but bad news inside that car.

Slade gets inside the car.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
What the fuck, Slade? Don’t you ever listen to me?!

Slade closes the door. The muscle car screams away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Oh, Slade...you’re in for it now.

EXT. EMPTY CITY LOT - DAY

The muscle car screams in. Parks. Slade falls out of the car.

COOPER, 30’s, the man who took Slade’s kidneys, gets out. Storms over to Slade. Picks him up. Slams him against the side of the car.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You remember him now, don’t you, Slade?

Cooper yells at Slade. Slaps him across the face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He’s the guy who took your kidneys.

Cooper reaches inside Slade’s pockets. Removes the money he stole from the gas station. Waves it in Slade’s face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And he is none too happy with your job performance.

Cooper tosses Slade’s money on the ground. Stomps on it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Uh-oh. That can’t be good.

Cooper grabs Slade by his collar. Tosses him to the ground.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And that looks even worse.

Slade grabs his stomach. His eyes widen.
Cooper kicks Slade in the face. In the stomach. Kicks him again. And again.

Slade rolls onto his back. Comes up with his .38. Cocks the hammer.

Cooper taunts Slade. Slaps his chest. Challenges him to shoot.

    NARRATOR (V.O.)
    Don’t do it, Slade...!

Slade pulls the trigger. Cooper gets a bullet in the stomach. Slade fires again. And again. Cooper’s chest is covered in blood.

Cooper falls to the ground. Blood pools under him.

    NARRATOR (V.O.)
    Ooh, boy. You’ve gone and done it now, Slade.

Slade manages to stand. He stumbles over to the muscle car. Looks inside.

INT. MUSCLE CAR - DAY

Slade finds an Igloo lunchbox. He grabs it. Opens it.

EXT. EMPTY CITY LOT - DAY

Slade has a grave look on his face. He throws the lunchbox on the ground in a rage.

Slade’s kidneys slap onto the ground. They’re black and rotten.

    NARRATOR (V.O.)
    Things just aren’t working out for you today, huh, Slade?

Slade falls to his knees. Puts his hands to his face. Fights tears.

    NARRATOR (V.O.)
    I wish I could help, but you didn’t listen to me. I told you not to get in that car. You don’t even know where you are, do you?

Slade looks around. Has no clue where he is.
NARRATOR (V.O.)
See? Told you so. You’re fucked, Slade. Big time.

Slade puts his hand on the muscle car’s side mirror. His hand slips off. He goes down on his hands and knees.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
What’s the matter, Slade? Feeling a little sick?

Slade tries to stand up. Can’t.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I think your number’s up, Slade. It’s not your brain that’s failed you, but your body.

Slade falls onto his back. Looks up at the sun.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You look at the sun like you just noticed it was there.

Slade lays there. His body jerks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Your body jerks. It can’t function without its kidneys anymore.

Slade stops jerking. His head falls to the side.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
As you lie there dying, you think to yourself...

Slade’s eyes close. He’s gone.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
...oh, wait. You don’t think anything. Mostly because you’re dead.

Slade’s body lies in the lot. So does Cooper’s. The money flutters across the ground. It’s a sad scene.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Have you ever had a really bad day? A day that just sucked to all hell? Slade’s had a day like that...and it was his last day on Earth.

FADE OUT
THE END