

THE RIDE HOME

written by

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Based on a true story

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BLACK SCREEN

PAUL (V.O.)

We just got married a year and a half ago. There's still a lot that we need to pay off from that big party.

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

PAUL and MARY SINNOTT (both late-20s) are in their open-concept apartment.

Paul scrapes the remnants of dinner into the garbage can, and loads plates into the dishwasher

Mary sits at a laptop, scrolling with her mouse.

INSERT - LAPTOP SCREEN

Mary is looking at a Caribbean vacation website

MARY

But it's one of those budget resorts. C'mon \$2,300 a night, all-inclusive--

PAUL

Mary, listen to yourself. If we arrive on a Friday, and depart that Monday - basically 72 hours, that's still almost a \$7,000 bill--

BACK TO SCENE

Paul finishes cleaning the last plate, and walks over to Mary.

MARY

Well what did you expect? It's the Caribbean.

PAUL

I'm not saying we can never go there. I'm just saying, why don't we go to Bryce Lake this summer, save our money, and try for it next year.

Paul hugs Mary from behind, and starts kissing her neck. She looks longingly at the laptop screen.

MARY

You're no fun--

PAUL

Oh I'm plenty of fun.

(a beat)

You said so yourself, last night.

Mary smiles.

MARY

You were really good last night.

Paul grabs his car keys from the desk.

PAUL

Alright, gotta go make that extra bacon if we're going to have an extra mouth to feed.

MARY

(with hope in her eyes)

You think it'll happen this time?

PAUL

I do.

(a beat)

And if it doesn't, we'll just keep trying until it does--

MARY

You like the idea of that, don't you?

PAUL

So do you.

(a beat)

I'll see you later tonight.

MARY

Do you know when you'll be home?

PAUL

Bars close at two. Usually do a couple of runs around that time, so figure 3 o'clock?

MARY

Don't be offended if I'm asleep
when you get home.

PAUL

I won't. But promise me you'll go
to sleep in the bedroom. You
never sleep well on the couch.

MARY

If I don't fall asleep watching
TV, then I promise I'll go to bed
in the bedroom.

Paul smiles as he opens the apartment's front door and goes
to leave.

PAUL

Love you.

As the door shuts, Mary says...

MARY

Love you, too!

EXT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Paul walks to his car, which bears a ride-sharing sticker on
the windshield. He gets in the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul takes his phone out of his pocket, opens up his ride
sharing app, and changes his status to "available."

INT. CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT.

The faint thump of pulsing base can be heard as Paul sits in
his car outside of a night club. He periodically checks his
rear-view mirror. He then notices something.

Paul gets out of the car.

A woman, CONNIE O'HERN (early 30s), makes eye contact with
Paul. He raises his hand to flag her over.

While Connie is not completely drunk, every so often her
steps are uneasy, and it is clear that she should not be
driving home.

CONNIE
(to Paul)
Are you Paul?

PAUL
Yeah, are you Connie?

She nods in response.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You like front seat, or back?

CONNIE
Which seat do you wanna clean
puke off of?

Paul looks at her with concern.

PAUL
Preferably none. You feeling
okay?
(a beat)
There's a garbage can behind you
if you wanna puke before the
ride--

CONNIE
Relax, sir Galahad, I'm kidding.
(a beat)
I can hold my liquor. Front
seat's fine.

Paul opens the front passenger door, and helps Connie inside.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Such chivalry.
(a beat)
Romance isn't dead.

Paul shuts Connie's door, walks around to his side, and gets
in the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul starts the car.

PAUL
Still heading to the Spring Tree
Lane address?

CONNIE

Yeah.

Paul pulls out of his parking space, as Connie shuts her eyes for a moment, resting her head against the headrest.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

(eyes still shut)

Actually, could you just drive around for a bit?

Paul glances over at Connie.

PAUL

Uh, sure.

CONNIE

Mind if we crack a window, too?

(a beat)

I could use some fresh air.

Paul obliges, cracking Connie's window a bit.

Connie opens her eyes and looks out the window. The pair sit in companionable silence for a moment.

PAUL

Any particular route you want me to take?

CONNIE

Take me up to the overlook, if you don't mind.

PAUL

Okay.

INT. CAR - A LITTLE LATER

Paul and Connie arrive at the Overlook, with a fantastic, sprawling view of the city.

CONNIE

That's the building where I work.

PAUL

The big silver one?

CONNIE

No the one next to it.

PAUL

What do you do for a living?

CONNIE

Paralegal. You?

PAUL

By day, a banker.

CONNIE

You just do this for some extra cash?

PAUL

Yeah. Gotta make the money to afford the dream before you can live it.

Connie gives a light, single chuckle and nods. Another silence falls on them as Connie looks out her window at some other buildings.

CONNIE

Do you ever think about death, Paul?

PAUL

Not all that often. Although I guess I should probably get a will in order. Been married for about a year and a half.

Connie looks at Paul with a subtle smile.

CONNIE

You're wife's a lucky woman. Not many people your age would have the foresight to think like that. You really have your shit together.

PAUL

I try to, at least.

A beat. Connie looks out at the city, lost in thought.

CONNIE

No, I mean...do you ever think about what it feels like...

(a beat)

...to die.

PAUL

This conversation turned morbid
really quickly.

Connie laughs, then genuinely says...

CONNIE

Sorry.

PAUL

In answer to your question...

(a beat)

No. Not at all.

(a beat)

I can only hope that I die in my
sleep, and feel no pain.

CONNIE

I didn't think about death.

Paul looks at Connie with concern, as if to ask "where is
this going?"

PAUL

Well good, you shouldn't.

(a beat)

What are you, 28?

CONNIE

You're very kind.

(a beat)

32.

PAUL

My dad always taught me that if
you're guessing someones age,
always guess younger.

(a beat)

Especially if it's a woman.

CONNIE

You're dad's a smart man.

(a beat)

What I mean is, I didn't think
about death, until recently.

Connie turns towards the passenger window, and swipes a tear
away, which Paul does not see.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

I was out celebrating with my co-workers tonight.

(a beat)

They threw me a party because I told them I took a job across the country.

(a beat)

I didn't have the heart to tell them that nine months ago, a neurologist found an inoperable tumor on the right side of my brain.

PAUL

Are you serious?

CONNIE

Yeah.

(a beat)

And before you go expressing pity, or saying you're sorry. Let me just say, that I'm sorry.

PAUL

For what?

CONNIE

I don't expect you to understand, but sometimes, confessing a deep, dark secret like this, even though it's a relatively new one, is easier to do with a stranger.

PAUL

I can understand that.

(a beat)

I'm still sorry to hear all of this.

CONNIE

Thank you.

(a beat)

There's no one sadder to hear it than me, I can tell you that.

(a beat)

I had a lot of big plans.

PAUL

Are the doctor's sure that they can't operate?

CONNIE

They knew from the get-go that they couldn't get to it.

(a beat)

They'd have to slice through some essential functions.

(a beat)

We tried radiation for about seven months, and in that time, the tumor went from stage three to stage four.

PAUL

Wow.

CONNIE

Yeah. Big ol' "fuck you," Connie.

(a beat)

When we stopped treatment, I had to take a week's vacation.

(a beat)

I just sat in my house and wept.

PAUL

And how are you feeling now?

CONNIE

Well, I suppose I'm lucky that the tumor didn't affect my ability to do my job, but knowing that something is slowly killing you is still terrifying. I've had a lot of time to digest the news though, so I guess you could say I've made my peace with it.

PAUL

Are you sure that's not the alcohol doing that for you?

Connie smiles.

CONNIE

You're very perceptive.

(a beat)

I still get spurts of emotion, all of which I've had to hide from my co-workers.

(a beat)

I guess now that work's over for me, that part of my life will get easier now.

PAUL

Are you seeing anyone?

CONNIE

Like a boyfriend?

PAUL

No, like a therapist.

CONNIE

Oh, yeah. The hospital has therapists on call for the terminal patients.

(a beat)

Of course, what can they say? I don't envy them at all. The one thing they went to school to learn how to offer, they literally can't offer to any of their patients.

PAUL

Isn't their job just to listen?

CONNIE

Their job is to offer solace to their clients. Comfort in times of distress.

(a beat)

How can anyone be comforted when they know their clock is running out?

PAUL

Well everyone's clock is running out.

CONNIE

True, but if I told you your specific clock was going to stop at some point six months from now, wouldn't you be scared?

(a beat)

Wouldn't you live your life differently?

(a beat)

Everyone walks around with the luxury of not knowing the hour that they'll leave this life.

(a beat)

No one knows what a luxury it is until it's taken away.

An uncomfortable silence.

PAUL

What can I do to help?

CONNIE

You're a sweet guy, Paul.

(a beat)

Look, I'll be well taken care of, you can rest easy in knowing that. The company I worked for is paying me for all of my unused vacation and sick days, and I'm putting my house on the market. I've got a couple of showings tomorrow, and hopefully they translate into offers, maybe even a bidding war.

(a beat)

I've saved money diligently, so I'll be comfortable when the end comes.

(a beat)

But there is one thing you could do, that would mean the world to me.

PAUL

What's that?

CONNIE

Drive me around, and tell me your plans.

PAUL

My plans?

CONNIE

The plans you have for your life.

PAUL

(smiling)

Okay.

EXT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Paul's car pulls out of the parking spot at the Overlook and drives off.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Silence.

Paul drives, but periodically gestures with his hands as he talks to Connie about his plans.

Connie laughs at various points in Paul's stories, and is seen responding to his dreams. They continue to chat as we see the following from inside the car.

MONTAGE

The car passes city streets.

They pass through suburban neighborhoods.

Past vacant baseball fields.

END MONTAGE

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Paul pulls on to a suburban street.

PAUL

(in the middle of his
thought)

Mary wants to go to the
Caribbean, but that might be a
few years down the road. A long
weekend there is like \$7,000 on
the budget websites.

CONNIE

Oh man, I'd have loved to go to
the Caribbean. I hear the waters
are so clear, you can see your
feet when you step in the ocean--

PAUL

That's what I hear too.

CONNIE

Where will you go if you can't go
on your Caribbean adventure?

PAUL

Oh there's a lake that we've gone
to in the past. Very nice and
peaceful.

Paul stops the car in front of Connie's house.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I think this is you.

CONNIE

That is correct.

An uncomfortable silence.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(a beat)

I mean it. This meant so much to me.

PAUL

I'm glad I could help.

(a beat)

Can you let me know if you need anything? I can give you my number.

CONNIE

I have it, from the app. And I will.

(a beat)

I won't need anything. But I'll keep you in mind.

PAUL

You good to get inside?

CONNIE

Yeah. Thanks.

PAUL

Goodnight.

CONNIE

Goodnight.

Connie gets out of the car, and walks up to her front door. She gives a small wave right before ducking inside.

EXT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul pulls into a parking space, shuts off his car, and gets out.

He pulls his phone out of his pocket as he walks up to his apartment complex's front door. He notices something on his phone.

PAUL
(to himself)
Holy shit.

INSERT - PHONE

The screen reads "you got a tip! - \$20,000 from CONNIE O."

Paul scrolls down to a comment box, which reads, "the lake is nice, but I'm sure it doesn't compare to the islands. Enjoy a few days on me. And thanks for listening tonight."

BACK TO SCENE

Paul's eyes are as wide as saucers.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Mary is asleep on the couch as Paul walks in. A muted TV is the only light illuminating the living room space.

Paul also sees that the laptop screen is still on, with the budget travel site still open to the vacation package that Mary was looking at before he left.

INSERT - LAPTOP SCREEN

Paul hovers the mouse over to the "BOOK NOW" button, and clicks.

BACK TO SCENE

Paul types some information into the computer.

A few moments later, he goes over to the couch and gently wakes Mary.

PAUL
(whispering)
You didn't have to wait up.

MARY
You know me, I fall asleep at any show longer than a half hour. And I missed you.
(a beat)
How was your night?

PAUL

It was good. I'll tell you more
in the morning.

(a beat)

Let's go to bed.

Paul picks Mary up off the couch, and carries her to bed.

FADE OUT.

THE END