

UNRELIABLE WITNESS

FADE IN:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

JESSE, male, 28, sits upright, unconscious, in the back seat of an old rust bucket of a car. Beat up by life, he's in particularly bad shape right now.

Blood oozes from a tear in his nostril. A larger, steady flow of blood bubbles from his mouth, covers his chin, soaks his ratty t-shirt.

He stirs awake. Looks around.

It's dark, but on the seat next to him sits a little plastic solar-powered camp lantern. He picks it up, swings it toward the front seat to see...

Two MEN, unconscious. Handcuffed together, driver's right arm to passenger's left. Their joined wrists rest against the roof of the car, held in place by an invisible force.

Also pinned to the roof: a gun, a badge, a set of car keys and three cell phones.

The unconscious man behind the wheel, DETECTIVE WARNER, 50s, round and ragged, wears a cross around his neck.

The necklace defies gravity as it strains for the roof, held only in place by the Detective's chin.

In the passenger seat, tethered to the Detective, BRANDON, male, 35, leans face-first against the dash. Perfectly coifed, he's got that soft, rich look.

There's a word written in lipstick on each of the windows, except for the windshield. Jesse spins to read them: DON'T. EVEN. THINK. ABOUT. ESCAPE.

JESSE

Thit.

The word doesn't come out right. Jesse checks his tongue. His hand comes back bloody.

JESSE

Thit.

He looks up. Pinned to the roof: the stud that used to be in his once-pierced, now-torn tongue. It's next to another that used to be in his nose.

JESSE

Fuck!

Jesse grabs for the door. There's no handle. No lock. No way to roll the window down. He pushes. The door won't budge.

He looks outside. Darkness.

The car sways gently with Jesse's panicked movements as he checks the other backseat door. No luck there, either.

Detective Warner shakes awake. He makes a quick assessment of the situation, tries unsuccessfully to pull his handcuffed arm from the roof.

JESSE

I'm guessing there's a big-ass magnet up there.

Warner spins, best he can.

DETECTIVE WARNER

Who the fuck are you?

JESSE

I'm Jesse. The man that's gonna beat your ass, you don't treat me with respect.

DETECTIVE WARNER

(mocking)

That right?

Jesse grabs Warner around the neck, pulls back.

DETECTIVE WARNER

I'm a licensed detective, San Antonio police department.

He nods to the badge on the ceiling.

DETECTIVE WARNER

You best take your hands off me.

Jesse releases him. Warner notices the windows.

DETECTIVE WARNER

Don't. Even. Think --

JESSE

It's like we're fucking floating.

Jesse rocks the car to make it sway. Warner looks outside.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
Looks that way.

Warner reaches over, pushes Brandon back in his seat.

JESSE  
You know him?

Warner shakes his head.

JESSE  
Looks like a dick.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
On that, we can agree.

Brandon stirs awake. He sees the detective. Startled, he tries to yank his arm down. It won't budge, but the motion is enough to dislocate his shoulder.

The pain hits hard.

BRANDON  
Oh, crap! Crap! Crap! Crap!

Warner spins, wedges his foot against Brandon's chest for counter-pressure and using his free arm, yanks on Brandon's arm. The shoulder snaps into place.

The pain gone, Brandon fights to control his breathing.

BRANDON  
Thanks.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
Well, I wasn't gonna listen to you  
scream like a baby all night.

JESSE  
That was awesome.

Brandon spins.

BRANDON  
Who the fuck are you?

Jesse lunges, grabs Brandon by the neck.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
Jesse!

Jesse releases Brandon.

Brandon fakes a backhand punch to Jesse, then turns back. He looks around. Reads the windows.

BRANDON

Holy shit.

Brandon notices a keychain on Warner's hip. Like the necklace, the keys strain to be free.

BRANDON

For the handcuffs?

Warner nods, reaches down, releases the keys. Before he can grab them, they shoot for the roof, landing with a CRASH.

BRANDON

Didn't think that through.

THUMP. THUMP.

Jesse, on his back, kicks at the back window. Brandon and Warner reach to try and stop him.

DETECTIVE WARNER

Christ, Jesse.

BRANDON

Can't you read?

DETECTIVE WARNER

Best to figure out why we're here,  
before we make any big moves.

Jesse sits up as Warner settles back in.

Warner's necklace hovers in front of his face. He slides the chain from under his chin. THUNK. Almost instantly, the cross is pinned to the roof, next to the gun.

BRANDON

You a religious man?

DETECTIVE WARNER

My daughter gave it to me.

THUMP. THUMP. Again, Warner spins for Jesse.

DETECTIVE WARNER

Enough with the kicking --

Jesse shakes his head, motions to the seat. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. Someone's in the trunk.

He looks out the back window. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. The trunk bends up with every blow, but it doesn't open.

JESSE  
 (to the seat)  
 You're wasting your time. It's welded shut.

The thumping stops.

ARNIE (O.S.)  
 Welded shut?

Jesse motions to Warner: You talk.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
 (hollers, to Arnie)  
 Calm down. We're working on it.

ARNIE (O.S.)  
 Who are you?

DETECTIVE WARNER  
 Stuck here, same as you.

He turns for Brandon.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
 Check the glove box.  
 (to Jesse)  
 Look under the seats. Receipts, mail, anything.

They do. Brandon pulls a stack of papers from the glove box. He flips through them, pauses on one.

Jesse calls out from the back seat.

JESSE  
 Nothing back here.

Brandon quickly stuffs the papers back in the glove box. Warner sees him, motions for them. Brandon hesitates.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
 Unless you're a detective, too...

Brandon relents. Warner flips through the stack, pulls one out, tosses the rest.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
 Registration. Can't quite make it out. Carly -- something.

JESSE  
Carly? Summers?

DETECTIVE WARNER  
Yeah. Looks like it.

JESSE  
Aw, fuck. We're fucked.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
What'd you do?

JESSE  
Not your business.

Warner gives him a look: Seriously?

JESSE  
I may have slipped a little  
something in her drink. Just having  
some fun.

Warner shakes his head, turns to Brandon.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
And, you? Maybe you were just  
having fun once, too?

BRANDON  
Never heard of her.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
(to the trunk)  
Hey! You know a Carly Summers?

ARNIE (O.S.)  
What? Carly -- ?

DETECTIVE WARNER  
This is her car.

Silence. Then... THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. The trunk bulges from  
fresh blows.

The lantern, spent, flickers and goes dark.

INT. CAR - DAY

The morning sun highlights the men's predicament.

They can't see it, but they were right. A big-ass magnet  
holds the car a good twenty feet off the ground.

The only item in their view, besides the scrapyards they hang over, is the boom of the crane that holds them up.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
Unreliable witness.

BRANDON  
What?

DETECTIVE WARNER  
I remember. Been rackin' my brain all night. That's what I wrote in the report. Unreliable witness.

He pounds the steering wheel.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
Said her boss forced himself on her. I never even interviewed him.

BRANDON  
Yeah? Well, maybe he would've told you she was practically begging him. Short skirts. That look in her eye...

DETECTIVE WARNER  
(realization)  
You gotta be shitting me.

BRANDON  
I was innocent.

DETECTIVE WARNER  
Yeah, that's why we're all dangling by the balls twenty feet in the air. 'Cause nobody's ever mistreated this girl.

Brandon leans over, HONKS the horn, but the sound is bleak. He hits it again. Nothing.

BRANDON  
What's she waiting for?

JESSE  
Fuck this.

Jesse spins, kicks at the back window. Again. And, again. Finally, it gives way. He pokes his head out.

The crane activates and the car slowly swings around.



