

THE LONG HAUL

by

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EXT. U.S. ROUTE 36 / BOULDER, COLORADO - PRE DAWN

Snow falls on a gray winter morning. A SEMI, equipped with heavy-duty tire chains, lumbers up a two-lane highway then disappears through a mountain pass.

Just off the highway sits a modest eight-room motel, THE PINE TRAIL MOTOR LODGE. Beside the motel is a small DINER.

Several sedans with out-of-state plates and a late model RV sit parked in the lot. A SEMI CAB sits parked off alone in the snow covered gravel.

INT. ROOM #6 / PINE TRAIL MOTOR LODGE - DAY

The shower blasts. Its steam slowly wafts into the dark room.

A waitress uniform hangs on a wooden chair by a small desk. A pair of women's panties lay on the floor.

A whiskey bottle and several empty beer cans clutter the stand beside the bed, where our hero—

—DEAN SUTTON, a few years past his prime, lies face down, shirtless, wrapped in the sheets. After a moment he begins to stir. Shower off.

Dean rolls onto his back, opens his eyes, a little worse for the wear. He turns to the night stand, checks the clock, then silently takes in the empty beer cans and whisky bottle.

Just then, MELANIE (30's) sexy, but weathered, exits the bathroom in nothing but a towel. She grabs a brush from her bag and begins to comb her hair in the mirror on the wall.

MELANIE

How about some breakfast?

DEAN

I should get going.

MELANIE

(smiles, heard this before)

Come on, one cup of coffee.

DEAN

I'm due in Detroit.

Melanie puts down the brush then turns to Dean in the bed. She playfully crawls up onto the bed, "stalking" Dean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MELANIE

I'll make it myself.

DEAN

(smiles, enjoying the play)  
It's 1500 miles.

Melanie finally stops, sits up on her knees, straddles Dean, then drops her towel to reveal herself to him.

MELANIE

Please?

DEAN

(beat, smiles)  
I guess I could eat a little something.

Dean playfully grabs Melanie and they momentarily wrestle on the bed until Dean quickly concedes and they begin to kiss.

After a few moments, Melanie falls back into Dean's arms.

MELANIE

Dean, why don't you ever stick around, for a cup of coffee? Do you have another girl somewhere you're not telling me about?

DEAN

What do you think?

MELANIE

I think it's strange that a handsome man like you spends all his time alone in a truck.

DEAN

I'm not alone; I've got Bud.

MELANIE

(on Dean, studying him)  
Don't you miss having people around?

Dean lies there for several moments, looking at Melanie, things not being said, until he finally smiles...

DEAN

Breakfast is getting cold.

Dean quickly pulls up the covers and "attacks" Melanie again. She playfully screams...

EXT. PINE TRAIL MOTOR LODGE / BOULDER, CO - DAY

Dean, duffel bag in hand, approaches the semi cab parked on the gravel, unlocks the door and climbs in.

DEAN  
Rise and shine.

But as Dean enters the cab, he's instantly repulsed.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Jesus...

Just then, Dean's copilot, Bud, a 12 year-old AMERICAN BULLDOG, emerges from the sleeping bag on the seat.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
(fanning the air)  
What are you, an animal?

Bud BARKS!

Dean fires up the engine. He puts in the CLUTCH, checks the OIL PRESSURE, THE AIR GAUGES. He adjusts his MIRRORS.

As he does, Melanie hurries out of the diner, in her waitress uniform, carrying a Styrofoam cup of coffee.

When she reaches the cab, Dean rolls down the window. Melanie hands him the coffee.

MELANIE  
So, I guess I'll just see you and Bud  
next time through?

DEAN  
(beat, smiles)  
Absolutely.

Melanie steps up on the runner; she and Dean kiss.

As Melanie steps back down, Dean lets out the AIR BRAKES, then puts it in gear. He turns back to Melanie and smiles, then pulls off onto the two-lane highway.

Melanie stands there in the parking lot, looking a little sad, watching Dean go, as he heads off into the falling snow.

MELANIE  
(finally smiles, smitten)  
Damn...

EXT. EASTBOUND I-40 - DAY (OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE)

MUSIC CUE: The Rolling Stones' "You Gotta Move."

Dean's semi rolls through CHANGING LANDSCAPES, MILE MARKERS passing by, Bud sitting shotgun, watching out the window.

END OPENING CREDITS. MUSIC OUT.

EXT. FACULTY PARKING LOT / GROVES H.S. / DETROIT, MI - DAY

As snow continues to fall, TYLER WOJECK (14), a wiry, awkward, pubescent teen—bundled in a puffy down jacket and wool, stocking hat—stealthily creeps through the lot.

He finally stops at a SATURN, looks around, then pulls a crow bar from his coat and BASHES IN THE SATURN'S DRIVER-SIDE WINDOW.

INT. VICE PRINCIPLE GUMBAL'S OFFICE / GROVES H.S. - DAY

Tyler sits in a chair, head down, defiant, as VICE PRINCIPLE GUMBAL, 240 lbs. and all business, eyeballs him from behind his desk, at a loss. Gumbal thinks a moment, then...

GUMBAL

Alright, look. I know there have been some issues at home, but this is the third time this month you've been in that chair.

Nothing from Tyler.

GUMBAL (CONT'D)

You're lucky Ms. Briggs isn't going to press charges. Vandalism is a criminal offence. You do realize that?

Still nothing. Gumbal sits there, waiting, until:

GUMBAL (CONT'D)

You have nothing to say for yourself?

Tyler finally looks up and defiantly raises his hand.

GUMBAL (CONT'D)

(trying to be calm)

Yes. Tyler?

TYLER

Can I go to the bathroom?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUMBAL

No.

TYLER

I've got to piss.

GUMBAL

(on Tyler, firm)

Then I guess you're going to have to hold it.

Tyler eyeballs Gumbal for several moments before he finally gets up, walks over to the trash, unzips his pants...

And urinates down into the can. As Gumbal sits, speechless, Tyler purposefully misses the can and sprays the floor.

TYLER

(turns to Gumbal)

Oops.

INT. MERCEDES / BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI - DAY

KATHY WOJECK (40's), Tyler's mom, drives along, at a total loss, as Tyler silently sits in back, headphones around his neck, angrily staring out his window.

KATHY

(sotto, shaking her head)

What am I going to do with you?

EXT. FLYING J REST STOP / TYLER, INDIANA - NIGHT

Snow continues to fall. A DOZEN SEMIS sit parked side by side, lights off— DRIVERS sleeping.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / REST STOP - NIGHT

Dean sits behind the wheel, beneath an overhead light, entering information into his LOG BOOK.

He finishes then sets the log book up on the dash. After a moment, he pulls a small, worn photo from his shirt pocket.

THE PHOTO: Dean's son, NICHOLAS (age 6).

Dean looks at the photo for several moments, then finally slips it back into his pocket and pulls down a thin, leather binder from above the passenger visor.

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CONTINUED:

He carefully opens the binder. On one side, there is a folded blueprint. On the other, there is a thin paper bag.

Dean takes out the paper bag and sets the binder on the dash. He pulls a CARD from the bag: "SON, ON YOUR 8TH BIRTHDAY."

He takes a pen from the binder, opens the card, then sits thinking for several moments— unsure what to write.

He finally gives up, closes the card, carefully slips it back into the bag, then sets everything back up on the visor.

Dean sits there a moment, then reaches over across the seat and pulls a pint of whiskey from the glove box.

He unscrews the cap and lifts the bottle to his lips, when he turns to see Bud, lying on the seat, staring up at him.

DEAN

Don't look at me like that.

Bud continues to stare.

Dean finally takes a drink, then caps the bottle, clicks off the light and climbs back into the sleeping area of the cab.

Bud stays on the seat, watching Dean settle in, until...

DEAN (CONT'D)

You coming or what?

Bud hops in back and crawls under the covers with Dean.

EXT. LOADING DOCK / FORD PLANT / LIVONIA, MI - THE NEXT DAY

A cold, grey day. Several trailers back into the loading area. DOCK LOADERS in heavy winter gear guide them in.

INT. SHIPPING AND RECEIVING / FORD PLANT - DAY

Dean stands at the window signing papers on a clipboard for the DISPATCHER. The Dispatcher looks at the forms before him.

DISPATCHER

Right back to LA, huh?

Dean politely nods then slides the clipboard back to the Dispatcher.

DEAN

Any idea how long?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DISPATCHER

Well, weather's got us runnin' a little behind. Probably take a few hours to get you loaded up, but we got a lounge in back— TV, showers, fresh pot of joe.

DEAN

Phone?

INT. LOUNGE / FORD PLANT - DAY

Dean stands at a pay phone on the wall, dialing the long series of numbers from the pre-paid calling card in his hand.

Meanwhile, Bud lies sleeping at the end of an old, ratty couch. Local news plays on a TV mounted in the corner.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE / BRENTWOOD, CA - CONTINUOUS

As the PHONE BEGINS TO RING, CHARLOTTE LEWIS (30's), Dean's ex-wife, opens the front door and enters the foyer of her upscale home carrying a box overflowing with PARTY SUPPLIES: birthday hats, plastic cups and plates, streamers, etc.

Charlotte, quickly sets down the box, picks up the receiver, and perfunctorily checks the INCOMING NUMBER on its digital display. She suddenly hesitates— AS IF SHE KNOWS WHO IT IS.

After several moments...she sets the phone back down— without answering it.

BACK TO SCENE:

Dean waits on the phone as Charlotte's MACHINE PICKS UP.

CHARLOTTE

"Hi. You've reached the Lewis's. If you'd like to leave a message for Tim, Charlotte or Nicholas, please do so at the beep."

Dean lowers his head— hangs up.

ONE HOUR LATER:

Dean sits on the old, ratty couch, silently thinking, his hand resting on Bud— who continues to sleep beside him.

He drains the last of the coffee from his Styrofoam cup, rubs his face, then looks around, bored— a little restless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just then, the Dispatcher enters, pulling change from his pocket. Dean smiles; the Dispatcher nods and smiles back.

DEAN

Any news?

The Dispatcher steps up to one of the room's vending machines and begins to insert his change.

DISPATCHER

It's still looking pretty backed up.  
(checks his watch)  
But we'll have you back on the road  
before dark.

The Dispatcher pulls a pack of doughnuts from the machine, then pours what's left of the free coffee into a mug.

DISPATCHER (CONT'D)

I'll get you an update soon as I can.

As the Dispatcher begins to exit...

DISPATCHER (CONT'D)

Feel free to make another pot.

Dean politely nods and smiles. After a moment, he picks up an old copy of POPULAR MECHANICS from the table before him.

He pages through it for a few moments then tosses it back onto the table. He takes in the dank room around him.

Except for Bud sleeping beside him...HE IS COMPLETELY ALONE.

After several moments, Dean pulls out his wallet and takes out an old, folded piece of paper with a few phone numbers hand printed on it. He stares down at the paper— thinking.

A FEW MINUTES LATER: (BACK UP AT THE PAY PHONE)

Dean punches in his calling card's long string of numbers, the folded paper in hand. The line finally picks up.

DEAN

Hey...  
(hesitant, then:)  
It's your brother.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET / BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI - DAY

Dean's cab, without the trailer, sits parked in the street of an affluent neighborhood. Big houses, expensive cars.

INT. LIVING ROOM / WOJECK RESIDENCE - DAY

A beautifully decorated, 10,000 square-foot home, overrun with the sounds of SCREAMING BABIES and the high-octane, sludge-metal band, *Mastadon*, BLASTING upstairs.

The DOORBELL RINGS. JOANNE (25) the nanny, quickly descends a large spiral staircase with LYDIA (1) crying in her arms...

...as Kathy exits the kitchen with ROSE, Lydia's twin sister, who is also crying, and is completely covered in baby food.

KATHY

I'll get it. If you get them in the bath, I'll send Emma up as soon as she's done.

Joanne takes Rose from Kathy, then heads back upstairs, a screaming baby in each arm. As Kathy heads for the door...

KATHY (CONT'D)

(her patience quickly waning)  
Tyler!? Could you please turn that down!

Suddenly, the MUSIC STOPS.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

But when Kathy reaches the door, the SONG RESUMES— as loud as before. Kathy looks back toward the stairs, exasperated.

The DOORBELL RINGS again. Kathy takes a deep breath, composes herself, then finally turns and opens the door to find...

KATHY (CONT'D)

(pleased)  
Dean.

INT. KITCHEN / WOJECK RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Dean sits at the table, looking uncomfortable, as EMMA (4) stares at him from behind her hands across the table— the remnants of a fish stick and pea dinner scattered before her.

Kathy pours a cup of coffee at the counter.

KATHY

Are you sure Bud's okay. It's freezing out there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Yeah. He likes it. He's cooped up in the truck most of the time.

Bud BARKS! We turn to find him standing at the back sliding-glass door, bored, waiting to be let back in.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Go on. Run! Go play!

Bud turns to look back at the yard a moment, as if considering the command, then turns back and BARKS again.

Kathy grabs a spoon from a drawer, the cream from the fridge then sets everything down on the table before Dean and sits.

KATHY

So? How are you? How've you been?

DEAN

Good.

KATHY

You look a little tired.

DEAN

I've been on the road a lot.

KATHY

Yeah. I heard from Mom you were driving the truck...that sounds exciting.

DEAN

(beat, finding the positive)  
I like the quiet.

Kathy politely smiles, unsure what else to say, when she finally notices Emma, still hiding from Dean.

KATHY

Emma, do you remember your Uncle Dean?

Emma smiles shyly, then shakes her head no.

DEAN

I don't think she was even walking, last time I was here.

KATHY

Has it been that long?  
(beat, almost ashamed)  
How's Nicholas?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEAN

Growing like a weed. You should see him.

KATHY

So, things are better with you and Charlotte. I mean, they've improved?

DEAN

(polite smile, holding back)  
Yeah... a little.

KATHY

Doesn't Nicholas have a birthday coming up?

DEAN

He'll be nine next week.

KATHY

Do you have a picture?

DEAN

Yeah.

Dean pulls out the small, worn photo from his breast pocket— Nicholas at 6 years old— and hands it to Kathy.

DEAN (CONT'D)

It's a little old.

KATHY

He's so handsome. You should bring him home some time. His cousins would love to see him.

DEAN

(politely smiles)  
I bet he'd like that.  
(changing the subject)  
How about you? How are the twins?  
How's Tyler?

KATHY

(the cracks begin to show)  
Well, the twins are constant. And, Tyler, he has his own particular challenges, but...we're okay.

DEAN

How's Mark?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Kathy takes a minute, then turns to look at Emma— who's still playing shy, hiding from Dean behind her hands.

KATHY

Actually, Mark isn't living here anymore.

DEAN

Oh...

KATHY

(getting up, frazzled)  
You know, why don't I take Emma up stairs, let Joanne get her in the tub.

DEAN

Kathy, I'm sorry. I didn't—

KATHY

No. It's fine. I'm just going to take Emma upstairs. You're staying for dinner?

DEAN

I don't want to interrupt your evening. I mean, this was all kind of last minute. My schedule's pretty—

Kathy tries to keep it together by forcing a smile as she grabs a napkin and perfunctorily wipes Emma's hands and face.

KATHY

Dean, I haven't seen you in three years. You have to at least stay for dinner.

DEAN

(reads her distress)  
That'd be great.

KATHY

Good.

Kathy picks Emma up, quickly wipes a tear from her eye.

KATHY (CONT'D)

(finds a smile for Emma)  
I'll be right down.

As Kathy and Emma exit, Dean sits there in silence, unsure of what just happened or what he should do, until he notices...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

...Bud, still standing there patiently at the sliding glass door, staring straight at him, waiting to be let in.

Just then, Tyler ENTERS, headphones on, his iPhone blasting the same aggressive SLUDGE-METAL BAND. Tyler heads to the fridge, as if Dean wasn't even there.

Dean watches Tyler as he pulls a GALLON OF ICE CREAM from the freezer, sets it on the counter, and digs in with a spoon.

Tyler finally looks up at Dean. Dean awkwardly smiles.

DEAN

Hey. How's it going?

Tyler shakes his head, as if to say, "*What a tool*," then goes back to eating his ice cream without answering.

Dean sits there, uncomfortable. He checks his watch, briefly scans the room, then finally turns back to Tyler.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(re: blasting music)

Sounds pretty intense.

Tyler slowly looks back up at Dean, shakes his head again, then begrudgingly peels off his headphones, totally annoyed.

TYLER

What?

DEAN

What are you listening to?

TYLER

(on Dean, condescending)

You wouldn't know it.

Tyler pulls his headphones back on, picks up his spoon and digs back into the ice cream.

Just then, Kathy re-enters, a little embarrassed from becoming emotional before.

KATHY

(as if making light)

I don't know what I'd do without Joanne. Those kids are so much—

(immediately back on edge)

Oh...hi Tyler.

Without looking up, Tyler continues to dig into his ice cream.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

DEAN  
(tries to lighten the mood)  
He's all grown up. A teenager, huh.

Kathy puts on a smile, then crosses the room toward Tyler.

KATHY  
He sure is. Tyler?

Tyler still doesn't respond. He scoops up some more ice cream.

KATHY (CONT'D)  
Tyler? Your Uncle Dean is here.

Tyler briefly looks up at Kathy, then turns up his music. Her patience gone, Kathy pulls the headphones from Tyler's ears.

TYLER  
What?!

KATHY  
(trying to stay calm)  
Your Uncle Dean is here.

TYLER  
(on Dean, with disdain)  
So what?

Kathy stares at Tyler; he's embarrassing her. After a moment, she picks up the ice cream and puts it back in the freezer.

KATHY  
We're going to have dinner in a minute.

DEAN  
Kathy, I don't want you to have to go to any trouble.

TYLER  
Don't worry. She's not. We're probably having fucking Chinese...again.

KATHY  
(getting mad)  
Would you set the table, please?

TYLER  
Have Joanne do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

KATHY

She's giving the girls a bath. I'd like you to do it, please.

Tyler goes into the freezer and pulls the ice cream back out.

TYLER

(gesturing to Dean)  
Why don't you have him do it?

KATHY

Put that away.

DEAN

I'll do it.

KATHY

Tyler, put the ice cream away and set the table, now.

TYLER

No.

KATHY

Go to your room.

TYLER

Fuck off.

DEAN

Hey.

KATHY

Tyler, go to your room.

TYLER

I'm 14 years-old. I'm not going to my room!

DEAN

Hey, Tyler. Why don't you—

TYLER

(turns to Dean)  
Who's talking to you?

KATHY

Okay. Look—

TYLER

Don't come into my house telling me what to do, you fucking loser!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

KATHY  
Tyler! I'm warning you.

TYLER  
He's a loser! You said so yourself.

Dean quietly takes the hit.

KATHY  
(beat, off Dean)  
I did not.

TYLER  
I heard you talking to grandma. The  
guy's a drunk.

DEAN  
(embarrassed, gets up)  
Maybe I should just go.

KATHY  
Dean. Please, sit down. Tyler...go  
to your room, now.

TYLER  
Why are you taking his side.

KATHY  
I'm not taking anyone's side!

TYLER  
Fuck you.

DEAN  
Hey! That's enough.

TYLER  
Fuck you too!

Kathy SMACKS Tyler hard across the face!

After a moment, Tyler, who's humiliated, CHUCKS THE CARTON OF  
ICE CREAM AGAINST THE FAR WALL, then storms out of the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM / WOJECK RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Bud sleeps in the corner by the heating vent.

A FRAMED PHOTO on the mantle shows Tyler (age 10) smiling ear  
to ear, holding his baby sister, Emma, in a rocking chair.

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CONTINUED:

Dean sits in a stiff-backed chair with his cup of coffee.  
Kathy sits on the couch, drying her eyes with a tissue.

KATHY

He's lucky he wasn't expelled. I've called his father...I guess he can't be bothered, too busy with his new family. He sends money, but... He hasn't called Tyler in six months... He's so angry...I don't know what to do. All I do know is he blames me.

DEAN

Are you sure you don't want me to go look for him?

KATHY

He's done this before. He'll come back. He just needs some time.  
(beat, tries to smile)  
I wish you could stay a few days.

DEAN

Yeah. Me too. It's just, this schedule...

Dean sits for a moment, a little anxious, then puts down his coffee and gets up. Bud gets up in the corner.

DEAN (CONT'D)

In fact, I should probably get going.

KATHY

Oh. Sure..

Kathy gets up from the couch.

KATHY (CONT'D)

I understand... So how long does it take to get all the way out to LA?

DEAN

About four days with a full load.

KATHY

Don't you get lonely?

DEAN

I've got Bud.

They finally reach the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KATHY

Well...call okay. Keep in touch.

DEAN

I will.

They hug. Kathy wipes away a tear.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Everything will be okay.

Kathy silently smiles and nods.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET / BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI - DAY

Dean silently heads for his semi at the curb, obviously affected, as Bud trots along beside him— tongue wagging.

DEAN

(sotto)

That was a mistake.

EXT. LOADING DOCK / FORD PLANT / LIVONIA, MI - DUSK

Snow flurries fill the air as the sky quickly grows dark.

DOC WORKERS driving forklifts load a scattering of open trailers parked across the dock area. Meanwhile:

Dean walks the perimeter of his trailer, flashlight and rubber mallet in hand, performing his "PRE-TRIP INSPECTION."

He checks: THE CROSS MEMBERS...THE LANDING GEAR...THE FRAME RAIL...THE BRAKE DRUMS...THE AIR LINES...

...He "THUMPS" THE TIRES with the rubber mallet, checking for air pressure. As he does...

A DOC WORKER climbs down from the back of Dean's trailer, clipboard in hand. He closes and secures the doors.

INT. DEAN'S CAB / HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dean drives along, settled in, a Styrofoam cup of coffee in the holder, the radio softly playing.

Dean looks over to Bud, sleeping on the seat beside him. Dean rests his hand on Bud's head and smiles, until...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Are you serious?  
 (rolls down his window)  
 What's the matter with you?

Bud sheepishly looks up then goes back to sleep. Suddenly, we hear MUFFLED COUGHING from back in the sleeping compartment.

Dean turns down the radio and looks up into his rearview mirror to see Tyler HIDING BENEATH THE COVERS OF DEAN'S CLUTTERED BED.

Dean rolls up his window— not pleased. Then...

DEAN (CONT'D)

Tyler.

No response.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(in rearview mirror)  
 I see you.

No response.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(waiting, then with edge)  
 Tyler!

Tyler slowly sits up, busted, square in the rear view mirror.

TYLER

(defiant as always)  
 What?

EXT. UNION 76 SERVICE STATION / JUST OFF HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dean steps up to a pay phone, calling card in hand, only to discover the phone is broken.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / UNION 76 SERVICE STATION - NIGHT

Tyler sits in the cab, annoyed, as Bud stands on the seat beside him, panting, wanting to play.

TYLER

(turns to Bud)  
 Get!

Dean opens his door, looking annoyed, and climbs in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER (CONT'D)

Did you talk to her?

DEAN

The phone was broken.

TYLER

(with contempt)

How can you not have a cell?

DEAN

(starts up the engine)

I lost it.

Dean puts it in gear, pulls out of the lot, then heads down the darkened service drive towards the freeway on-ramp.

TYLER

Where are we going?

DEAN

We're going to find a phone and call your mom. Get her to come pick you up.

TYLER

Why can't you just drop me across the state line? I can take care of myself.

DEAN

Sorry, Homes. No can do.

TYLER

(mockingly)

Homes?

DEAN

Put on your seat belt.

TYLER

No.

DEAN

Look, I'm not taking you back to your mother dead. Alright? Put on your seat belt.

TYLER

(brewing, then)

Man, fuck you.

Dean suddenly down shifts, hits the brakes and pulls to a complete stop on the narrow shoulder of the on-ramp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEAN  
 (turns to Tyler)  
 Say it again. Say 'fuck you' to me  
 again. Say it one more time.

TYLER  
 (beat, building courage)  
 Fuck you.

Dean suddenly reaches over to grab Tyler's coat, but Tyler slides back against his door.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
 Don't touch me, man! I'll fucking  
 sue!

Dean lets Tyler go, momentarily frazzled. It's a standoff. Unsure what else to do, Dean finally kills the engine, leaving the keys in the ignition, and sits back.

DEAN  
 Look, we can sit here all night.  
 Alright? So you either put on your  
 seat belt, or settle your ass in,  
 because I am through dickin' around  
 with you.

Tyler stares at Dean— with a look that could kill, then turns and opens his door.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 What are you doing? Close the door.

Tyler begins to hop out.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 Tyler? What are you—

Tyler slams the door shut. Dean sits there a moment, then...

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 Tyler!

EXT. HIGHWAY ON-RAMP - NIGHT

Tyler takes off on the snow covered shoulder. Dean exits the semi and quickly gives chase. A moment later Bud hops out of the cab and tears off down the darkened shoulder behind them.

DEAN  
 Tyler!

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tyler runs down the snow covered shoulder, cars and semis whizzing by. He looks back over his shoulder to find...

...Bud running along the shoulder, quickly closing in, and Dean, lugging along, bringing up the rear.

Dean grows more and more agitated as semis whizz buy— high beams flashing, horns blaring.

DEAN

(sotto)

Son-of-a-bitch!

Bud, finally catches up to Tyler; Tyler tries to swat him away.

TYLER

Leave me alone!

In his excitement, Bud trips Tyler up, and Tyler goes tumbling down the snowy embankment into the ditch beside the highway.

Dean finally catches up, completely out of breath. He climbs down the embankment, wincing, holding a cramp in his side.

DEAN

What the hell is the matter with you!

TYLER

Leave me alone!

DEAN

Get back in the truck.

TYLER

Lick my balls.

DEAN

I said get back in the truck!

Dean reaches down and forcefully picks Tyler up by the arm.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Now.

Dean shoves Tyler back toward the truck, but Tyler stops and stands firm. He stares at Dean, with hatred, a moment longer, then slowly begins to head back for the truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But after a moment, he looks back at Dean, then suddenly takes off running— racing to get back to the truck.

DEAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Bud BARKS, and takes off running after Tyler, tongue wagging again. Dean sucks it up, grabs his side and gives chase.

Tyler looks back over his shoulder, digging deep, as if running for his life. Bud catches up and slows down— as if playing, waiting for Tyler. Dean struggles in the distance.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You better run! You shit.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Bud and then Tyler reach the cab. Tyler, breathing heavy, opens his door and follows Bud up and in.

Tyler locks his door, then locks Dean's door as well.

TYLER

Fucker!

Dean finally reaches the cab, holding his side, totally out of breath. He reaches for his door, but it's locked.

Tyler begins to laugh. He pulls the keys from the ignition and dangles them in the window in front of Dean. Bud barks.

DEAN

Open the door.

TYLER

Suck my dick.

As Tyler catches his breath Dean grows more intense, moves in.

DEAN

Open the door, now.

Tyler finally catches his breath, then turns to Dean, slowly lifts his hand up to the window and flips Dean the bird.

Dean stares at Tyler a moment, completely incensed, then slowly disappears from the window.

Tyler sits back in the seat, relishing his victory, when suddenly...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...Dean's door unlocks. Tyler INSTANTLY FREAKS and leaps across the cab to lock the door, but Dean pulls it open.

Tyler nervously swallows, as Dean stands there, prepared to kill, a spare key in his hand. Then...

TYLER  
(defiant as ever)  
What?

INT. KATHY'S HOUSE / BLOOMFIELD HILLS - NIGHT

Kathy, her eyes red from crying, sits in a rocking chair by the window, breast feeding Lydia, staring out into the night.

The PHONE in her lap begins to RING.

INT. LOBBY / FULL-SERVICE TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Dean stands at a pay phone, watching his semi out the window, parked in plain view, Tyler'S WET BOOTS SITTING ON TOP OF THE PAY PHONE before him. The phone line picks up.

KATHY (O.S.)  
Dean?

DEAN  
I've got him.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / FULL SERVICE TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Tyler sits in the parked cab, shoe-less, angrily looking out the frosted window, as Bud sits on the seat a few feet away, staring at him, panting, eager to play. Tyler turns to Bud.

TYLER  
You're an ugly bitch. You know that?

Bud sits there, panting, staring at Tyler.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
And you smell like shit.

Bud just sits there, unaffected, panting and staring.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
What are you, fucking retarded?

Bud stares at Tyler a moment longer, then quickly leans in and LICKS Tyler right in the face. Tyler freaks! Ugg!

INT. FULL-SERVICE TRUCK STOP / KATHY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

Dean continues on the phone.

DEAN

Kathy, it's okay. It's okay. Look...  
 (checks his watch)  
 ...it'd help me out if you could maybe  
 meet us half way...if Joanne's still  
 around. If I head back now I can  
 probably be in Ann Arbor by two.

Kathy sits in the rocking chair, phone to her ear, still  
 feeding her baby. She thinks, then...

KATHY

Dean? Maybe you could keep Tyler with  
 you? I mean, just for a few days—  
 until you get to LA. Maybe a little  
 time away would do him some good.

Dean, phone in hand, looks out on his truck, parked out  
 front, Tyler pushing Bud away on the front seat.

DEAN

Kathy, I'd like to help, but...it's a  
 pretty long haul— four days straight  
 in that little cab. It's not much  
 fun. Plus, I don't think he really  
 likes me very much.

KATHY

(thinks, then)  
 I could pay you.

DEAN

(taken aback)  
 Kathy, it's not about—

KATHY

The money Mark sends, it's more than  
 we need. It mostly just sits in an  
 account. Twenty thousand  
 dollars...the first of every month.  
 Dean? I could pay you.

Dean thinks a moment, silent— considering the amount.

Kathy, still holding the baby, wipes a tear from her eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATHY (CONT'D)

Dean, I think maybe Tyler and I need a break. I mean, I think I need a break.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / FULL SERVICE TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Tyler sits against his door, trying to ignore Bud, as Bud continues to try to coax him into rough housing.

TYLER

Look, man. Piss off!

Suddenly, Dean opens his door and climbs in behind the wheel. Tyler turns to Dean.

TYLER (CONT'D)

So? What did she say?

Dean sits there silent, thinking, then finally turns to Tyler.

DEAN

Looks like you're going to LA.

TYLER

(beat, not pleased)  
With you?!

DEAN

(offers Tyler his boots)  
Put on your seat belt.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dean's semi exits right off the highway towards the NEON LIGHTS of SEVERAL FAST FOOD CHAINS and a MOTEL SIX.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / MOTEL SIX - NIGHT

Dean parks in a far corner of the lot— air breaks on, engine off. Tyler sits silent, staring out the window.

TYLER

I can't believe this is happening.

DEAN

Yeah, well I'm not thrilled about it either. Alright? But it's the way it is. Your mom needs a break.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER

How the hell would you know what my mom needs?

DEAN

How old are you? Fourteen?

TYLER

Yeah. That's right.

DEAN

You want to see fifteen?

TYLER

You wish.

DEAN

Look, we've got a long trip to LA. I don't like it, and I know you don't like it, but it would be a hell of a lot easier for the both of us if we could just drop all this bullshit and cut each other some slack. Alright? What do you say?

Tyler considers this a moment, then finally turns to Dean.

TYLER

Like I said before... Fuck you.

DEAN

You know what, Kid? Fuck you too.

Dean angrily opens his door and hops out—

DEAN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Tyler silently sits there, pouting, a little taken aback, as Dean secures Bud's leash in his open door.

TYLER

No thanks. I'll wait here.

DEAN

(grabs keys from ignition)  
Fine. Sleep in the truck.

Dean slams his door and heads off with Bud for the office. Tyler sits there several moments, stewing in the cold, until he finally throws open his door and heads off after Dean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TYLER  
I want my own room!

INT. INTERIOR HALLWAY / MOTEL SIX - NIGHT

Dean, Tyler and Bud head down the dark hall— an unlikely crew. They finally reach SUITE #102. As Dean puts down his duffel to open the door, Tyler covers his nose— disgusted.

TYLER  
What's wrong with your dog?

DEAN  
He's old.

TYLER  
He stinks.

DEAN  
You stink.

INT. SUITE #102 / MOTEL SIX - CONTINUOUS

Dean enters and clicks on the light to reveal the room has only one bed. Tyler enters.

TYLER  
Oh, hell no.

Dean sets his duffel on the bed and takes out a LEATHER TOILETRY BAG and BUD'S BOWL.

DEAN  
They're going to bring you a cot.

Dean heads into the bathroom and clicks on the light. He closes and LOCKS the door behind him.

IN THE BATHROOM:

TYLER (O.S.)  
Why can't we get two beds?

Dean turns on the faucet and fills Bud's water bowl.

DEAN  
This is all they had.

TYLER (O.S.)  
That's bullshit. The lot was empty.  
You're just a cheap bastard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN  
 (calling out at Tyler)  
 Hey! Watch your mouth, alright?

TYLER (O.S.)  
 I got the bed.

DEAN  
 You got the cot.

TYLER (O.S.)  
 I got the bed.

DEAN  
 (restrains himself)  
 Fine. Take the bed.

TYLER (O.S.)  
 I will.

Dean pulls a PINT OF WHISKEY from his toiletry bag. He looks at the bottle for a moment, then uncaps the top and pours the whiskey down the sink.

He buries the bottle in the trash can, then grabs Bud's bowl of water and exits BACK INTO THE MAIN ROOM.

OUT IN THE MAIN ROOM: Tyler lies back on the bed, his arms behind his head, wet boots on the bedspread.

DEAN  
 Look, I've got to go out for a while.

TYLER  
 (sits up)  
 What?

DEAN  
 I'll be back in an hour.

TYLER  
 You can't leave me alone, stuck in this room.

DEAN  
 Bud'll be here.

TYLER  
 He smells like ass!

DEAN  
 (beat, on Tyler)  
 I gave you the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TYLER

Big deal! Look, man, the minute you leave here, I'm gone. I'm serious.

DEAN

Where are you going to go? You're 300 miles from home. It's 11 o'clock at night.

TYLER

Don't worry about it.

DEAN

Give me your boots.

TYLER

Yeah, right.

Dean suddenly steps toward the bed, grabs Tyler's feet and begins to pry off his boots. Tyler puts up a fight.

TYLER (CONT'D)

What are you doing!?

After a brief struggle, Dean secures Tyler's legs, and pulls the boots from his feet and backs away from the bed, winded.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Real fucking mature! You know that? I'll go barefoot if I have to.

DEAN

You take one step out that door, I'm calling your mom!

TYLER

Go ahead. I'm fourteen years old! You think she's going to want to hear you left me alone in this dumpy motel at 11 o'clock at night.

Dean's stopped cold. Tyler's got him. After a moment, Dean decides to change tactics.

DEAN

Look, I've got to go out for an hour, and I need you to stay here. What if I give you twenty bucks?

TYLER

Are you serious?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DEAN

Alright, look...  
 (in spite of himself)  
 Please?

TYLER

(totally amused)  
 Oh my God.  
 (then, tauntingly)  
 Deal with it, bro. You're not going  
 anywhere. 'Cause the moment you walk  
 out that door, I'm gone. Shoes or no  
 shoes, I did it before, and I'll do it  
 again, and there's nothing you can do  
 about it...  
 (mocking Dean from before)  
 ...homes.

Dean sighs, shakes his head, unsure what to do, until he spots the remote, picks it up, and clicks on the TV to find the motel menu offering a variety of HARD CORE PORN TITLES.

DEAN

What if I let you order some porn?

Tyler turns to the TV, then awkwardly swallows.

TYLER

What time will you be back?

INT. PAY PHONE / MOTEL SIX LOBBY - NIGHT

Dean reads a number from the old, folded paper in his hand as he dials. After a few rings, someone picks up.

DEAN

Hi. I'm trying to find a meeting.  
 Gary, Indiana...tonight.

INT. SUITE #102 / MOTEL SIX - NIGHT

Tyler sits back in bed, covers to his waist, a motel hand towel beside him, transfixed on the porno playing on the TV.

He slowly begins to slip his hand under the covers into his lap when he spots Bud, watching him, panting.

TYLER

Get!  
 (throws pillow at Bud)  
 Little perv.

EXT. ST. JUDE METHODIST CHURCH - NIGHT

Dean's semi sits parked in the lot. Snow falls.

INT. RECTORY / ST. JUDE METHODIST CHURCH - NIGHT

TWO DOZEN ALCOHOLICS sit in folding chairs drinking coffee from Styrofoam cups.

An OLDER WOMAN steps up to the podium and turns to the group.

OLDER WOMAN

Hi. My name's Mary Ann, and I'm an alcoholic.

Meanwhile, Dean sits in the back of the room— coffee in hand, head down, thinking.

INT. SUITE #102 / MOTEL SIX - NIGHT

Dean quietly enters the darkened room to find Tyler asleep in the bed, porn still playing on the TV.

Dean shakes his head then clicks off the TV and scans the room, but Bud is no where in sight.

Dean notices the light under the bathroom's door jam. He heads to the door and carefully pushes it open to find...

Bud, asleep on the tile, every last towel from the rack tossed onto the floor under the sink.

DEAN

(on pile of "soiled" towels)  
Little perv.

INT. SUITE #102 / MOTEL SIX - THE NEXT MORNING

Tyler sleeps soundly, NOW ON THE COT, while off screen we hear RHYTHMIC BREATHING: *One...two...three...*

Bud steps up to Tyler and begins to lick his face. Tyler wakes.

TYLER

Get!

Meanwhile, Dean does PUSH-UPS at the foot of his bed, pushing himself...*eighteen...nineteen...twenty*. Dean finishes strong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

Dean gets up from the floor, winded, but energized— a spring in his step. He grabs a towel from the chair, wipes his face.

TYLER (CONT'D)

How did I get in the cot?

Dean heads into the bathroom, turns on the FAUCET, then reappears with Bud's water bowl. He sets it down for Bud.

DEAN

(putting on a fresh shirt)  
I'll be back in five minutes. I want you ready to roll.

TYLER

What?

DEAN

We're on a schedule.

Dean pulls the thin leather binder from his duffel bag on the dresser, then zips up the bag and turns for the door.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You've got five minutes.

TYLER

Wait!

Dean stops, takes a breath, then turns back to Tyler.

DEAN

What?

TYLER

What makes you think I'll even be here when you get back?

Dean shakes his head and smiles, "*nice try*," then grabs the remote, clicks on the TV and heads out the door. Tyler turns to the tube and settles in for more porn.

INT. LOBBY / MOTEL SIX - DAY

Dean steps up to the pay phone. He pulls out his old folded piece of paper, picks up the phone and dials.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Mr. McGovern? It's Dean Sutton.  
Well, I was calling to see if that  
land we talked about is still  
available? That's great. Yes, Sir.  
In fact, I'd like to go ahead and make  
the offer.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / HIGHWAY - DAY

A clear, cold, Winter day. Dean drives along, a little  
lighter than before, tapping the wheel to the beat of The  
Rolling Stones' "*Street Fighting Man*" playing on the stereo.

Meanwhile, Tyler sits up against the passenger door, staring  
out the window, listening to his headphones.

Bud comes out of the sleeping area, stretches his neck then  
begins to nudge Tyler with his nose. Tyler looks over.

TYLER

Get.

Bud continues to nudge Tyler, now almost in his lap.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Get.

Bud sits there, staring at Tyler. Tyler stares back, until he  
finally pets Bud's head a few times, as if finally letting  
down his guard— just a bit. Then, after a few moments...

TYLER (CONT'D)

Now get.

As Bud heads off into the back, Tyler turns to look out his  
window when his iPhone runs out of power. He takes off his  
headphones and checks the battery indicator.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Son-of-a-bitch.

Dean turns to Tyler.

DEAN

(realizing)  
You had a phone?

TYLER

(beat, with contempt)  
You never asked... And anyway, this  
isn't just a phone, it's the 5s.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER (CONT'D)

It does everything. Camera, music,  
internet, games—

DEAN

Yeah? Does it jack you off too?

TYLER

(immediately humiliated)  
I don't jack off.

DEAN

Uh huh.

They drive along in silence. Then...

TYLER

Where'd you go last night anyway?  
Meet up with some skank?

DEAN

It's personal.

TYLER

Where did you go?

DEAN

(turns to Tyler, firm)  
I said it's none of your business.

TYLER

Fine. I was just asking.

Dean turns back to the road, annoyed, but then feeling  
guilty, in spite of himself...

DEAN

I was at a meeting.

TYLER

At 11 o'clock at night?

DEAN

(shakes his head)  
It was an AA meeting. Alright?

TYLER

(thinks, then)  
That's why your wife left you, right?  
Cause you were like a wicked drunk?

DEAN

Pretty much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TYLER  
Do you still drink?

DEAN  
Sometimes.

TYLER  
And that's why you drive this truck?

DEAN  
(turns to Tyler)  
How many more of these you got?

TYLER  
Weren't you like some big time  
architect?

DEAN  
I was an architect. Not big.

TYLER  
What did you build?

DEAN  
Nothing. Strip malls, parking garages.  
Look, I need to concentrate on the  
road, so why don't we hold off on the  
questions for a while, alright?

TYLER  
Fine... I didn't have any more  
questions anyway.

DEAN  
Good.

Tyler sits back, annoyed, as Dean tries to concentrate on the road. Tyler looks at his headphones, totally dead, Then...

TYLER  
What's in the trailer?

DEAN  
That's a question!

Dean turns up the stereo.

TYLER  
Well do we have to listen to this  
shit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DEAN

This shit is *The Stones*. If you don't like it, listen to your phone.

TYLER

(beat, taking offense)  
It's the fucking 5s.

DEAN

And watch the language, alright? Just put on the headphones.

TYLER

The battery's dead.

DEAN

What?

TYLER

The battery's dead. I left the charger at home.

DEAN

You can't use it?

TYLER

No... Not without the charger.

DEAN

(thinks, turns back to road)  
Fuck.

The two sit in silence for several moments, until finally...

TYLER

What's in the trailer?

EXT. PARKING AREA / TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION - DAY

Dean pushes up the back hatch to reveal 8 FACTORY NEW SALEEN MUSTANGS. Tyler, holding Bud's leash, steps to the open hatch.

TYLER

Sweet!  
(turns to Dean)  
Can I check 'em out?

Dean thinks a moment, checks his watch, then finally agrees.

DEAN

You got two minutes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler hands Dean Bud's leash and excitedly begins to climb up into the trailer.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Careful.

Tyler walks through the trailer, checking out the cars, when he discovers...

TYLER

Hey! The keys are in the ignition!

DEAN

Don't even think about it.

Tyler walks along the side of the cars, in awe, for a few more moments, looking in windows, feeling the finish.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Alright. Come on. Out.

As Tyler climbs down, Dean hands him Bud's leash.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Take Bud over to the picnic area, let him go to the bathroom. Alright?

TYLER?

Why can't you do it?

Dean pulls out a plastic bag and hands it to Tyler.

DEAN

And pick it up. I'm going to get us some lunch.

As Dean heads off toward the "snack shop" Tyler stands there, Bud's leash in his hand, totally bent.

INT. SNACK SHOP / TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION - DAY

Dean stands at a pay phone, receiver to his ear, listening to the same old answering machine recording.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

Hi. You've reached the Lewis's—

Dean hangs up the phone, frustrated.

EXT. PICNIC TABLES / TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION - DAY

Tyler holds Bud's leash as Bud defecates onto the snow.  
Tyler winces, totally grossed out.

TYLER

Fucking sick.

Tyler begrudgingly leans down with the bag to pick the pile up, when suddenly, as if amused...

TYLER (CONT'D)

Oh my God. It's steaming!

INT. SNACK SHOP / TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION - DAY

Dean grabs a tin of Vienna Sausages from the dry goods aisle, then heads to the cooler and grabs two pre-made sandwiches.

He passes the BEER SECTION of the cooler, then grabs three bottles of water, turns and heads up toward the cashier.

He briefly stops in the sporting goods aisle and picks up a cheap fishing rod. Unimpressed, he puts it back in the rack.

He turns again for the register, but a few steps later, in the "electronics" section of the aisle, he suddenly stops.

And there before him, lo and behold, are several PORTABLE iPHONE CHARGERS (the ones that plug into cigarette lighters) hanging there on metal pegs. Dean picks one up, examines it.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION - DAY

Tyler sits shotgun, looking out his window, waiting, bored, as Bud rummages through the sleeping compartment in back.

After a few moments, Tyler begins to look through the cab—the center counsel, the glove box, the pocket of his door, until he sees Dean's leather binder above his sun visor.

He pulls down the binder and opens it up. He unfolds the blueprint and briefly examines it, then pulls the unmarked birthday card from its thin paper bag when...

...Bud excitedly jumps up front with a chewed up football in his mouth. He offers it to Tyler, but Tyler's not interested.

TYLER

Get.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bud continues to push the ball on Tyler.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
No. It's freezing outside.

Bud drops the ball in Tyler's lap, then sits there panting.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
I said get! Alright? I'm serious.

EXT. PICNIC AREA / TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION - DAY

Bud sits at attention, panting in the snow, as Tyler picks up the wet, slimy football before him.

TYLER  
Last time. You got it? I'm serious.

Tyler winds up and fake throws the ball, cupping it then hiding it behind his back. Bud turns, Tyler's tickled.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
Dumb ass...Alright, here we go.  
One...two...

Tyler chucks the ball with all his might, but it hits a tree and bounces out into the parking lot.

Bud quickly turns and rushes out into the lot, just as a SEMI COMES rolling in off the freeway. The SEMI'S HORN BLASTS!

Just then, Dean exits the SNACK SHOP. He hears the horn and quickly looks up to see Bud disappear behind another SEMI.

DEAN  
Bud!

Dean drops his bags and rushes out into the lot. Tyler stands frozen in the snow, panicked— unsure what to do.

Dean reaches the center of the lot when the BLARING SEMI passes by— Bud no where in sight, until...he runs out from behind a parked PICKUP— tail wagging, football in his teeth.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Get over here!

Bud runs over to Dean who SMACKS HIM HARD across the rump.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Get in the truck!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bud scurries off toward the semi.

Dean quickly returns to the sidewalk, grabs his bags, then heads for the semi as Tyler tentatively approaches.

TYLER

Sorry—

DEAN

Get in the truck.

TYLER

It was an accident.

Dean passes Tyler on his way to the semi, leaving Tyler standing there in the parking lot. Tyler thinks a minute, unsure what to do, then hurries to catch up with Dean.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION - DAY

The door opens and Bud hops in, head low, tail between his legs. He quickly slinks back into the sleeping compartment.

Dean gets in behind the wheel, fuming, when Tyler opens his door and climbs in.

TYLER

Look, man. What is your problem?

DEAN

You're in a parking lot! Do you understand. You could have gotten him killed!

TYLER

I said I was sorry! It was an accident! It wasn't my fault!

Just then, Dean spots his leather binder lying open on the floor, the blueprint stuffed haphazardly back into the leather pocket, the thin paper bag in the crease of the seat.

DEAN

What is this?

TYLER

(beat, a little nervous)  
What?

Dean quickly reaches down and picks up his leather binder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Jesus! What the fuck is wrong with you?! This is my business. Alright? These are my things, not yours! Keep you god damn hands to yourself!

TYLER

(sincere, almost timid)  
I'm sorry.

DEAN

I don't care if you're sorry! I want you to stay out of my shit!  
(organizing his folder)  
Jesus Christ...no wonder your old man left.

As Dean continues to fume and organize his folder, Tyler suddenly throws open his door and rushes out of the cab.

Dean doesn't even look up.

When he finishes with the folder, he sets it up on the dash, finally sits back, then suddenly realizes what he's done.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(beat, opens his door)  
Tyler!

EXT. TRUCK STOP SERVICE STATION / PICNIC AREA - DAY

Dean heads after Tyler, who crossed the lot and is making his way toward the snow covered picnic area.

Dean finally catches up to Tyler, who's taken a seat on top of a picnic table, facing away.

DEAN

I'm sorry. Alright? I lost my cool.  
Let's just get back in the truck.

No response.

DEAN (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have said that. I was out of line. It's just, the things in that folder are important to me.

No response.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN (CONT'D)

Tyler? Can we please just get back  
in the truck?

No response. Then, as if Dean suddenly remembers...

DEAN (CONT'D)

Look, I found you a charger. Alright?  
They had them inside... Tyler? Come  
on.

Tyler sits there, silent, for several more moments until...

TYLER

Are you fucking lying to me, just to  
get me to go back in the truck?

DEAN

No. I swear. It's in the truck.

Tyler thinks a moment longer, then turns and heads past Dean  
toward the truck.

TYLER

You're an asshole.

DEAN

(watches Tyler go, then)  
Yeah...I know.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / HIGHWAY - DAY

Dean drives along through the falling snow, wipers going, the  
stereo in the cab off, while...

Tyler sits listening to his headphones— staring out the  
window. Bud sleeps in back. No one is talking.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dean's semi exits the highway and heads towards a DAY'S INN.

INT. ROOM 18 / DAY'S INN - NIGHT

Dean silently enters the darkened room, followed by Bud and  
then Tyler. Dean clicks on the light to reveal TWO QUEEN  
SIZE BEDS.

Dean goes through the same routine as before— takes out  
Bud's bowl, heads into the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler, still wearing his headphones, walks over to the far bed, quietly slips off his shoes and lays down on his back.

INT. BATHROOM / ROOM 18 / DAY'S INN - 30 MINUTES LATER

Dean sits against the wall on the floor by the toilet, pen in hand, Nicholas's BIRTHDAY CARD open in his lap, still blank.

He sits there for several moments, no idea what to write, how to start. He finally closes the card and slips it back into its bag.

INT. ROOM 18 / DAY'S INN - NIGHT

Dean exits the bathroom, as Tyler continues to lie in bed, TV off, eyes closed, listening to his headphones.

Dean slips his leather binder into his duffel bag and heads over to Tyler's bed. He taps Tyler on the foot.

DEAN

Hey?

Tyler opens his eyes and pulls the phones from his ears.

TYLER

What?

DEAN

Why don't we get out of here for a while, go get something to eat?

TYLER

(on Dean, then:)

No thanks.

DEAN

Look, we can't just sit here all night.

TYLER

You go... I'll watch TV.

DEAN

Come on. You're gonna' go blind.

TYLER

(back on Dean, defensive)

I don't jack off.

INT. LOBBY / DAY'S INN - NIGHT

Dean and Tyler browse the outdated "tourist attractions" pamphlets on an old wooden rack. There's not much.

Dean heads up to the CLERK at the check-in counter.

DEAN

Hi. My nephew and I are looking for something to do around town. Any suggestions?

CLERK

Tonight?

DEAN

Yeah.

CLERK

Well, there's a bowling alley about three miles down the road.

Dean turns to Tyler to see what he thinks. Tyler shakes his head, "*fuck no.*" Dean turns back to the Clerk.

DEAN

Anything else?

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

A STRIKE EXPLODES in the b.g. as Tyler enters frame, releases his ball and watches it fly straight into the gutter.

TYLER

Son-of-a-bitch!

Dean marks the frame then heads for the ball return.

DEAN

You've got to keep your wrist straight.

TYLER

I did.

As Tyler sits, he notices THREE DRUNK LOCAL PUNKS (20's) looking over at him, laughing.

Dean spots the Drunk locals as he collects his ball.

DEAN

Ignore them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler sips his coke, shoots the locals a look, then turns to watch Dean, as he releases his ball and rolls a STRIKE!

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 (returning to scorer's table)  
 See? Just keep that wrist straight.

TYLER  
 (getting up)  
 Lucky shot.

Tyler grabs his ball and steps onto the lane. He turns to see the Three Drunk Locals watching him, waiting, laughing.

DEAN  
 Hey, let's just bowl.

Tyler slowly turns back to the lane, focuses on the pins. He begins his approach, releases the ball...

...and it shoots STRAIGHT INTO THE GUTTER! Once again, the Three Drunk Locals immediately erupt with laughter.

TYLER  
 (turns to locals)  
 You guys got a problem?!

DEAN  
 Hey? Tyler? Come on. They're drunk.  
 (beat)  
 Roll again.

Tyler eyeballs the locals, who continue to laugh, then grabs his ball from the return. He turns back to the pins, takes a deep breath, then makes his approach, releases the ball...

...and it flies STRAIGHT INTO THE GUTTER! The Drunk Locals ERUPT WITH LAUGHTER. Tyler turns toward them; he loses it.

TYLER  
 Hey, fuck you!

DEAN  
 (gets up)  
 Tyler!

But one of the Three Drunk Locals has taken offense. He confers with his friends, then...

DRUNK LOCAL  
 (across several lanes)  
 What did you say, Kid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEAN  
(approaching Tyler)  
Don't say anything else.

TYLER  
(beat, then to Locals)  
I said go fuck your mother!

And with that, The Drunk Local puts down his ball and begins to head for Tyler and Dean..

DEAN  
Didn't I tell you to keep your mouth shut?

Dean puts Tyler behind him as The Drunk local steps up, backed by his two drunk friends.

DRUNK LOCAL  
Yo, your kid's got a big mouth.

DEAN  
(trying to defuse)  
Look, why don't you guys just go back down and play your game, and let us play ours, alright?

DRUNK LOCAL  
(sizes up Dean, then:)  
Yeah, that's fine, but first I want the kid to apologize.

TYLER  
(grabs his genitals)  
Apologize to this.

DRUNK LOCAL  
What?!

Dean steps up and holds off the Drunk Local with his hand. It's evident the guy is severely inebriated.

DEAN  
Hey look, relax.

DRUNK LOCAL  
Yo, you relax. The kid apologizes, or I'm going to kick his little ass.

Dean takes in the Drunk Local and his two equally inebriated friends— both of them just waiting to jump into the mix.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DEAN

Alright, look... We're leaving.

TYLER

What?

DEAN

(turns to Tyler)

Put on your shoes.

TYLER

Why? We just got here!

DEAN

I said put on your shoes.

TYLER

Are you going to let these guys scare you off?

The Drunk Local steps up; Dean holds him back again.

DEAN

Hey. Look, the kid's got an attitude problem, alright? He's not going to apologize.

TYLER

You're god damn right.

DEAN

Quiet!

(back to Locals)

Look, why don't you guys just go back and finish your game, and I'll send down a round. Alright? To make up for the kid.

TYLER

Are you serious!?

DEAN

What are you guys drinking...Bud?

The Drunk Local, holding a bottle of Bud, thinks a moment, considering the proposal. He checks with his friends, then...

DRUNK LOCAL

Heineken.

DEAN

Heineken it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TYLER  
Are you kidding me?

DEAN  
Put on your shoes.

Tyler just stands there.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
(slightly menacing)  
Now.

Tyler finally sits down and kicks off his bowling shoes.

DRUNK LOCAL  
Fine. Three Heineken. Send them  
down. Right over there.

Dean nods, "*Will do.*"

DRUNK LOCAL (CONT'D)  
And teach that kid some manners.

As the Drunk Local and his friends head back to their lane, Dean sits down by Tyler and begins to change his shoes.

TYLER  
Are you seriously going to buy those  
dick-heads beer?

Dean silently pulls on his boots, picks up his bowling shoes.

DEAN  
Let's go.

TYLER  
Dean?

DEAN  
(beat, turns toward Locals)  
Fuck them.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Dean and Tyler exit into the falling snow and make their way toward Dean's truck parked at the back of the lot.

Suddenly, in the b.g., the Three Drunk Locals exit the bowling alley and quickly begin to approach.

DRUNK LOCAL  
Hey!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dean and Tyler look back. Dean puts his hand on Tyler's shoulder and quickens their pace.

DEAN  
Keep walking.

DRUNK LOCAL  
Hey! Tough guy! I'm talking to you!

DEAN  
Just keep walking.

DRUNK LOCAL'S FRIEND #1  
Check it out. The pussies are running away!

Just as Dean and Tyler reach the semi, the Drunk Local and his friends surround them.

DRUNK LOCAL  
Hey, tough guy. Where's our beer?

DEAN  
(on local, then to Tyler)  
Get in the truck.

But as Tyler heads for his door, one of the Drunk Local's friends steps in his way.

The Drunk Local gathers his courage, then steps up— gets right in Dean's face.

DRUNK LOCAL  
You owe us three Heineken, bitch.

Tyler looks at Dean, a little scared...*"What do we do?"*

DEAN  
Alright.

Dean takes out his wallet and hands the Drunk Local a ten.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Okay? Tyler, get in the truck.

DRUNK LOCAL  
Wait!  
(pockets ten, then...)  
And the kid's going to apologize.

TYLER  
(beat, nervous swallow)  
Eat shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Suddenly, the Drunk Local steps away from Dean and heads for Tyler.

DRUNK LOCAL

Hey, Kid. You know what? You got a big fucking mouth!

DEAN

Hey!

Dean quickly grabs the Drunk Local by the coat, pulls him away from Tyler and backs him off into an old Chevy in the next spot over.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You don't touch the kid. Do you understand?

The Drunk Local's friends slowly move in on Dean.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(to Drunk Local's friends)

Back the fuck off.

(turns back to Tyler)

Get in the truck.

Scared, Tyler quickly turns and heads for the passenger door, when the Drunk Local calls out to his friends.

DRUNK LOCAL

Fuck that. Get the kid.

The Drunk Local's friends turn and quickly go after Tyler. They pull him down as he begins to climb into the semi.

DEAN

Hey! Get your hands off him!

Dean heads for Tyler, but the Drunk Local spins him around and throws a right cross to his cheek. Dean recovers and sends two hard jabs into the Drunk Local's face. The Drunk Local falls back into the Chevy and collapses onto the ground.

Dean turns and heads for Tyler at the front of the rig.

DEAN (CONT'D)

I said get your fucking hands off!

Dean pulls the Drunk Local's Friend #1 off Tyler and fires a right cross into his face. The Man goes down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRUNK LOCAL'S FRIEND #1  
Ah! My fucking nose, man!

Friend #2 releases Tyler and squares off against Dean.

DRUNK LOCAL'S FRIEND #2  
(trying to be tough)  
I'll mess you up.

Dean clocks Friend #2 on the chin with a right hook, then grabs him by the coat and whips him up against the side of the trailer, lifting him off his feet. The man falls down onto all fours and vomits onto the pavement.

The Drunk Local finally gets up by the Chevy, wiping blood from his mouth...

DRUNK LOCAL  
You fucking asshole, man! We were just playing with you.

Dean, blood still pumping, heads back for the Drunk Local.

DRUNK LOCAL (CONT'D)  
What's the matter with you?  
(backing up)  
Hey. Back off. I'll fucking kill you man. Don't fucking touch me again—

Without hesitation, Dean clocks the Drunk Local in the eye with a hard right cross. The man falls to the ground.

Dean leans down above him, gets right in his face...

DEAN  
You want to play!? Huh!?

As the man tries to get up, Dean throws another blow to his face, and another, and another...

DEAN (CONT'D)  
You want to play with me!?

DRUNK LOCAL  
(trying to cover up)  
No! Alright!? I'm sorry!

Dean continues to throw blows, until finally Tyler runs up and grabs his arm.

TYLER  
Dean?! Come on! That's enough.  
Leave him alone! Dean? Stop!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Dean finally lets up, breathing hard. He slowly gets up, leaving the Drunk Local holding his nose, moaning, bleeding in the snow. He looks at Tyler, then heads for the semi.

DEAN  
(still breathing heavy)  
Get in the truck.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAN / LOCAL ROAD - NIGHT

Dean silently drives along. He feels a cut on his lip with the back of his hand then turns to Tyler, who's still shaken.

DEAN  
(beat, regretful)  
You okay?

Tyler turns to Dean; he silently nods, then:

TYLER  
You took on all three of those guys,  
like at the same time. I mean, were  
you in the army or something?

DEAN  
No.

TYLER  
How'd you do it?

DEAN  
(long beat, then:)  
Those guys were drunk.  
(beat, back on road)  
And I guess I've got a lot of anger.

Tyler considers this for several moments. He finally turns to his window and looks out at the night.

TYLER  
Yeah... Me too.

Dean looks over at Tyler, struck by what he's just said.

EXT. ICE MACHINE CUBBY / DAY'S INN - NIGHT

Dean sets an ice bucket into the machine's dispenser and hits the button— his KNUCKLES BLOODY and BRUISED.

The bucket fills with ice. Dean grabs a few cubes from the bucket and lifts them to his swollen cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

After a few moments, he rests his left hand on the top of the machine then lowers his head, ashamed.

INT. ROOM 18 / DAY'S INN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dean enters the room, ice bucket in hand, to find Bud intently watching Tyler do PUSH-UPS at the foot of his bed.

Tyler finishes, winded. He slowly gets up from the floor.

DEAN  
Push-ups, huh?

TYLER  
Yeah. Those things are a bitch.

DEAN  
Push-ups are all heart.

Dean steps into the bathroom, grabs a towel, fills it with ice. He holds the towel to his knuckles and returns.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
How many did you do?

TYLER  
(obviously lying)  
I don't know. I think maybe like eighty-five. How many can you do?

DEAN  
I guess it depends.

Just then, Tyler's iPhone rings. He picks the phone up from the night stand between the beds and checks the LCD screen.

TYLER  
It's my mom.

DEAN  
I guess you better get it.

TYLER  
(answers phone, tentative)  
Hi... Good. Yeah. Um, somewhere in Kansas I guess.  
(on Dean, then)  
We went bowling... Yeah. It was cool.  
(quietly, self conscious)  
I know. Yeah. I love you too. Okay.  
(offers phone to Dean)  
She wants to talk to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dean takes the phone then sits on the bed across from Tyler. Tyler looks on— anxious.

DEAN

Hey. Yeah. We're doing great. Yeah, we're getting along fine. Uh huh.

(acknowledges Tyler)

Yup, right on schedule... Kathy, it's no problem at all... Well, we're probably gonna' hit the hay. Yeah. Shoot for an early start. You're welcome. We will. Good night.

Dean hangs up, then looks at the iPhone.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(as if making peace)

Pretty cool.

Tyler smiles, pleased.

Dean hands Tyler the phone then turns and begins to pull back his covers. As he does, we see Tyler sitting there, the wall beginning to come down. After a moment, he follows Dean's lead and begin to settle into his own bed.

Meanwhile, Bud sits in the middle of the room, panting, staring at Dean. Dean finally sits up, looks at Bud, sighs.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You coming or what?

Bud stares at Dean a moment longer, then turns and jumps up into bed with Tyler.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Hey!

Amused, Tyler pets Bud, "Good boy," messing with Dean.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(playful, re: Bud)

Traitor.

Dean finally reaches over and clicks off the lamp on the night stand beside him. Blackness. After a few moments...

TYLER

Good night, Dean.

DEAN

Good night, Tyler.

INT. DINER / OUTSIDE MOTEL - THE NEXT MORNING

Dean and Tyler sit across from each other in a booth, Dean drinking coffee, Tyler devouring a plate of french toast.

TYLER

This is the best fucking french toast  
I've ever fucking had. I'm serious.

The WAITRESS (60's) overhears Tyler's foul language as she refills Dean's coffee. Dean patiently smiles at her.

DEAN

He likes the french toast.

As the waitress heads off, Tyler turns to check out TWO CUTE TEEN GIRLS eating with their folks. Dean smiles— amused.

TYLER

This is so much better than school.

DEAN

Then I guess it's a good thing you got  
suspended.

TYLER

(smiles, as he eats)  
I know.

DEAN

(watches Tyler eat, then...)  
What happened?

TYLER

Nothing. I mean, bullshit. I snuck  
into the faculty lot and smashed this  
teacher's car window with a crow bar.

DEAN

That's nothing?

TYLER

She totally deserved it!

DEAN

Who?

TYLER

Ms. Briggs. My Math teacher— she's a  
total bitch. She fucked me over.

DEAN

How?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER

She accused me of cheating on some stupid quiz, in front of the whole class, so I broke her fucking window.

DEAN

(sarcastic)

Sounds reasonable.

Tyler suddenly looks up at Dean, as if he's actually "heard" what Dean has said: "*Maybe he did kind of over react...*"

Tyler returns to his French Toast. Dean looks around, then checks his watch.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You play any sports?

TYLER

I suck at sports. I suck at school. I pretty much fuckin' suck at everything I do.

DEAN

Well, you swear like a champ.

TYLER

(looks up, pleased)

That's true.

DEAN

Fuckin' A.

Tyler smiles and goes back to his french toast, then...

TYLER

Can I ask you a question?

DEAN

Okay.

TYLER

What do you have to be so angry about?

DEAN

What?

TYLER

Last night you said you've got a lot of anger. What do you have to be so angry about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEAN  
It's complicated.

TYLER  
What? You don't think I'll understand?

DEAN  
No, it's just, it's a lot of things.

TYLER  
Like what?

DEAN  
I don't know. I guess...things don't  
always turn out like you plan.

TYLER  
What kind of things?

DEAN  
(thinks, then)  
Life.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER / MOTEL PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Dean finishes his routine check of the ENGINE COMPARTMENT and gently lowers the hood of the cab. As he does:

Tyler approaches, finishing up "THUMPING" the tires with the rubber mallet.

DEAN  
All set?

TYLER  
(back on trailer, unsure)  
Yeah... I think so.  
(beat, back on Dean)  
Why did I bang them again?

DEAN  
(smiles, takes mallet)  
Get in the truck.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

BEGIN MONTAGE: Dean's semi rolls along the endless highway heading WEST, passing a VARIETY OF MILE MARKERS and SIGNS.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / HIGHWAY - DAY

Dean drives along, as Bud sleeps on the seat, and Tyler, without headphones, sits shotgun examining a HIGHWAY MAP.

TYLER

That doesn't make any sense. It's like the longest possible route.

DEAN

You in a hurry to get back to school?

TYLER

No. But, I thought you were on a schedule?

DEAN

We'll be fine.

TYLER

(consults map again)  
But Boulder's totally out of the way.

Dean, looking a little uncomfortable, turns to Tyler, then as if to close the discussion...

DEAN

I like going through Boulder.

Finally dropping it, Tyler sits back, shaking his head. After a moment he looks out the window.

TYLER

How can you do this for a living? I'm bored out of my mind.

DEAN

Bored? How can you be bored? Look at that view.

TYLER

What view? There's nuthin' to see.

DEAN

What are you talking about?  
(points out Tyler's window)  
Look at that. That's the open range. You've got snow capped mountains, an endless sky. There's probably a herd of elk out there somewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER  
 (looks out window)  
 Fuck elk.

DEAN  
 Fuck elk?

TYLER  
 We haven't passed another car in a  
 hundred miles. There's nothing out  
 here. And there's nothing to do.

Dean looks at Tyler, unsure what to say. After a moment, he  
 looks out his window, then up in his rearview mirror, then...

DEAN  
 (humoring him)  
 You ever drive a rig like this?

TYLER  
 No.  
 (trying to save face)  
 I mean, not exactly like this.  
 (beat, slightly apprehensive)  
 Why?

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / GRAVEL SHOULDER OF HIGHWAY - DAY

Tyler sits behind the wheel, nervous, the engine idling, as  
 Dean sits shotgun giving him instructions. Bud looks on,  
 also nervous!

DEAN  
 Alright? That's all it is. Clutch  
 down...shift...give it some gas.

TYLER  
 Yeah. I got it.

Tyler grabs the gear shift and takes a deep breath.

DEAN  
 Good. Don't fuck up my truck.

Frazzled, Tyler quickly pulls his hand from the gear shifter  
 and shoots Dean a look. Dean can't help but smile.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 Come on. Clutch down...

Tyler puts his hand back on the gear shift, collects himself  
 and puts in the clutch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Good. Shift into first.

Tyler puts it in first.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Now give it some gas...

The semi slowly begins to move on the shoulder, but suddenly STALLS OUT, lurches forward then stops.

TYLER  
Son-of-a-bitch!

Bud suddenly heads back to hide in the sleeping compartment.

DEAN  
It's okay. Try again.

TYLER  
This is stupid.

DEAN  
Clutch down...

Tyler sits there, stewing.

TYLER  
I can't fucking do it.

DEAN  
Come on. Clutch down...

Tyler shakes his head, exhales, then settles back into the seat, grabs the gear shifter and puts down the clutch.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Good. Shift into first...bring up the clutch...give it some gas...

The semi slowly begins to roll forward on the gravel shoulder.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Good. Clutch down. Put it in second.

Tyler puts in the clutch and begins to shift into second when the transmission begins to grind.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
All the way down. Put it all the way down!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TYLER

I am!

Tyler puts the clutch all the way in, steadies it out and the semi begins to roll forward a little faster.

DEAN

Good! Alright, hit your blinker.

TYLER

What? Where?

DEAN

Left hand.

Tyler looks to his left hand, hits the blinker.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Check your mirrors. Good. Now slowly merge back onto the road. Clutch down. Shift. Give it some gas. Clutch down.

Tyler gets into a groove, rolling along— clutch down, shift, give it some gas. He begins to gain confidence, quietly repeating the order to himself— his eyes locked on the road. After a few moments, Bud tentatively returns to the front.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Hey, look at you. You're doing it, man! You're doing it. Clutch down. Shift. Give it some gas.

TYLER

(getting excited)  
How fast am I going?

DEAN

(on speedometer, encouraging)  
Holy shit! Twenty-five!

Tyler's getting totally stoked.

TYLER

Check it out!

Tyler puts in the clutch, shifts, gives it some gas.

DEAN

You feel it?

TYLER

Hell yeah!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Dean CRANKS the stereo.

DEAN  
Roll down your window.

Tyler rolls down his window— the wind blows through his hair.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Honk the fucking horn!

Tyler begins to honk the semi's massive horn, barreling down the highway at a break neck thirty-five m.p.h.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
You're doing it, Tyler! You're moving like a freight train!

TYLER  
Like a bat out of hell!

Suddenly, 100 yards ahead, a FOUR-LEGGED ANIMAL, steps up onto the highway. Tyler's the first to see it.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
Dean?

DEAN  
(looks out at road)  
Alright. Put in the clutch...foot on the brake.

Tyler puts down the clutch and accidentally steps on...

DEAN (CONT'D)  
That's the gas! Foot on the brake!

Panicked, Tyler tries to downshift; he begins to grind gears.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Tyler? What are you doing?! Put your foot on the brake!

Tyler slams on the brakes, and the cab lurches forward. Bud quickly heads back into the sleeping compartment.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Easy!

Tyler begins to lay on the horn— but the ANIMAL just stands there, frozen, the semi quickly approaching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DEAN (CONT'D)

Tyler! Put your foot on the brakes!

Tyler slams his foot on the brakes, locking them up. As all EIGHTEEN WHEELS begin to SCREECH UPON THE ASPHALT, the semi begins to slowly jackknife out along the highway.

Dean and Tyler hold on for dear life, BARRELING FORWARD, RIDING IT OUT, until the semi finally stops, jackknifed, but safe and intact upon the road.

The buck, still standing its ground, now just ten yards away, finally turns and heads off into the field.

TYLER

What the hell was that?

DEAN

(watching it go, stunned)  
Fucking elk.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Dean's semi pulls off the highway onto a busy exit, several CHAIN RESTAURANTS and an enormous BEST BUY in the distance.

INT. BEST BUY - DAY

Dean and Tyler stand just inside the store, acres of electronics before them.

DEAN

You sure about this?

TYLER

He's gonna' be eight, right?

Dean NODS.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Trust me; I know just what he wants.

INT. BEST BUY / MOBIL PHONE COUNTER - DAY

Dean examines A NEW iPhone 5s, as Tyler steals a look at the CUTE COLLEGE-AGE SALES GIRL (22) working the counter.

She turns to catch Tyler staring. She smiles; Tyler blushes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

I was thinking maybe a telescope.

TYLER

A telescope?

(on Sales Girl, smiles)

I thought he was eight, not gay.

Dean shoots Tyler a look, and the Sales Girl's smile suddenly disappears. Tyler silently drops his head.

SALES GIRL

We actually don't carry telescopes in the store anymore.

Dean turns to Tyler, standing there, his face deep red.

DEAN

(holding up iPhone)

You think he'd like this?

TYLER

(without making eye contact)

It's the best phone you can buy.

DEAN

(back to Sales Girl)

How much?

SALES GIRL

Two-ninety-nine.

DEAN

(beat, thinks)

Can you guys set it up?

SALES GIRL

Of course.

DEAN

(hesitant, off Tyler)

I'll take it.

Tyler finally looks back at the Sales Girl. Humoring him, she smiles and mouths the word "*Thanks*." Tyler is reborn.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / FREEWAY - DAY

The iPhone sits wrapped in its box on the dash. Dean drives along, Bud sleeping beside him, as Tyler programs Dean's new BASE MODEL CELL PHONE, charging in the lighter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER

You should have gotten the same one.  
All this thing does is make calls.

DEAN

(turns to Tyler)  
It's a phone.

Tyler shakes his head, continues to program the phone.

TYLER

You think that chick was hot?

DEAN

Who? Your girlfriend at the counter?

TYLER

I totally blew it. I mean, she had a  
big ass, but still...she was hot.

Bud slowly gets up and heads into the back. Dean watches in  
the rearview mirror, as Bud settles into his old blanket.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(beat, tentative, then:)  
Hey, Dean, when you were my age, did  
you ever...you know...tug the tiger?

DEAN

No.

Tyler looks down— embarrassed— until Dean finally turns to  
him and smiles. Tyler is overjoyed.

TYLER

I knew it! Everybody does it! Even  
chicks. It's a scientific fact!

DEAN

You done with that?

Tyler finishes programming Dean's new phone.

TYLER

Alright. You've got Nicholas, me and  
my mom. Anyone else?

DEAN

Take the wheel.

Tyler takes the wheel as Dean reaches into his coat and pulls  
out his wallet. He opens it and takes out the old, folded  
paper that serves as his phone book. He gives it to Tyler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TYLER

Is this everyone you know?

DEAN

Just about.

TYLER

It's like six people?

DEAN

I'm not as popular as you.

TYLER

Who's Melanie?

DEAN

(slightly hesitant, then)  
A lady friend.

TYLER

(sincerely interested)  
Is she hot?

DEAN

(turns to Tyler, then...)  
I think so.

TYLER

You ever bang her in the ass?

DEAN

What's the matter with you?

TYLER

What? I was just asking.  
(beat)  
Where does she live?

DEAN

(back on road, embarrassed)  
Boulder.

A smile begins to slowly break across Tyler's face, then...

TYLER

Maybe we should call her?

DEAN

Just put in the number.

Dean turns to Tyler, watchful, as Tyler excitedly programs the number...then presses SEND.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DEAN (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

Pleased with himself, Tyler quickly hands the phone to Dean.

TYLER  
It's ringing!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM/ MELANIE'S HOUSE / BOULDER, CO - DAY

The PHONE RINGS in a modest, but well kept home. Out the window, we see snow falling on a grove of mountain pine.

Melanie enters in her waitress uniform and answers the phone.

MELANIE  
Hello?  
(then pleased)  
Dean!

BACK TO SCENE:

Dean shoots Tyler a look, then presses the phone to his ear and turns back to the road. Tyler attentively listens in.

DEAN  
Surprised?  
(back on Tyler, then into  
phone...)  
I've missed you too.

Tyler SMILES BIG, tickled, and begins to make "Goo Goo, I Love You Faces," teasing Dean. Dean turns to Tyler— waves him off.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Well, actually I'm just about 20 miles  
east of Big Springs.

Tyler continues to razz Dean. He begins to mime FELLATIO. Dean quickly waves him off, "*quit it!*"— a little annoyed.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Well, the thing is, I've kind of got a  
friend with me, my nephew. Yeah.  
Fourteen...  
(listens, then)  
No kiddin'?  
(smiles, mischievously)  
Really?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN (CONT'D)

(turns to Tyler)

Yeah. Okay. That'd be great. Yeah.  
We'll see you in a few hours.

Dean hangs up the phone, a smug look on his face, and silently turns back to the road, almost giddy.

Tyler sits there, watching Dean, quickly growing concerned, until finally he can't take it...

TYLER

What?

INT. PINE TRAIL MOTOR LODGE / BOULDER, CO - NIGHT

Dean exits the bathroom, freshly showered, a towel around his neck, to find Tyler watching TV and petting Bud, who's lying in bed next to him.

DEAN

When's the last time you showered?

TYLER

(not giving it much thought)  
I don't know.

DEAN

Well you might want to think about  
having a rinse.

Still watching TV, Tyler casually smells his arm pit.

TYLER

Motel showers freak me out. Plus, I  
don't have any clean underwear.

DEAN

Well, just keep your underwear on, and  
your arms at your sides.

TYLER

Why?

DEAN

(smiles, puts on pants)  
It's a surprise.

EXT. MELANIE'S HOUSE / BOULDER, CO - NIGHT

Dean's semi cab pulls up into the gravel driveway. Smoke billows from the chimney.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dean and Tyler begin to climb out of the cab.

TYLER

Dean, man, I'm not really into being a third wheel.

DEAN

No problem.

TYLER

(thinks, concerned)

What does that mean? Hey?

Tyler quickly follows Dean to the front door. Dean straightens himself, then RINGS the bell. A moment later...

...Melanie, looking beautiful, in jeans and a sweater, opens the door and immediately smiles.

MELANIE

Dean!

They embrace and kiss, then...

DEAN

This is my nephew, Tyler.

MELANIE

(smiles, extends hand)

It's nice to meet you, Tyler.

TYLER

(totally blushing)

Yeah. You too.

Suddenly, KAREN (16) Melanie's little sister— who's made up to look at least 21, steps into the doorway, not excited.

MELANIE

This is my little sister, Karen.

Tyler suddenly stops smiling. He swallows hard.

TYLER

(almost shaking)

Hi.

INT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dean browses a collection of FRAMED PHOTOS on the wall, as Karen sits across the room, texting on her phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One of her feet, sporting a fur-lined UGG BOOT, is pulled up into her chair, causing her panties to sit in plain view.

Meanwhile, Tyler sits on the couch, arms awkwardly glued to his sides, staring straight up Karen's skirt at her panties.

DEAN

So what do you usually do around here on a Friday night?

KAREN

(shrugs, still texting)  
Hang out with friends.

DEAN

No big party tonight?

KAREN

There's always a party. Melanie's giving me twenty bucks to hang out.

Tyler and Dean turn and look at each other...

KAREN (CONT'D)

Which is totally cool. I mean, I'm saving up.

TYLER

For what?

KAREN

(still texting)  
Tits.

Melanie suddenly enters, holding a tray with four glasses, a pitcher of iced tea and two bottles of beer.

MELANIE

I hope iced tea is okay.

As Dean gets up to help Melanie, Tyler turns back to Karen, who is NOW STARING AT HIM, HER PANTIES STILL IN FULL VIEW.

Karen mischievously smiles, then slowly opens her legs even wider. Tyler SWALLOWS, then quickly turns away, just as...

...Melanie steps up and offers him a glass of iced tea.

TYLER

Thank you.

Melanie offers Dean a beer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MELANIE

For you.

DEAN

I think I'll have iced tea too.

MELANIE

(beat, smiles)

Sure.

KAREN

I'll have a beer.

MELANIE

You'll have iced tea.

Melanie fills everyone's glass then sits down on the couch besides Dean.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

So, I made lasagna.

KAREN

(rolls her eyes)

Oh my God.

MELANIE

I figured you men probably haven't had a home cooked meal since you've been on the road.

DEAN

Thank you.

TYLER

I love lasagna.

Dean looks at Tyler, appreciative, as Melanie smiles.

MELANIE

Oh, and there's a little theatre in town that shows old movies for two bucks. I thought maybe that might be fun, kind of like a double date.

Tyler looks over at Karen and nervously swallows.

KAREN

You're kidding right?

DEAN

That sounds great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TYLER

Yeah. That sounds great.

KAREN

(to Melanie)

That's totally going to cost you another ten.

MELANIE

(shoots Karen a look)

So, Tyler what grade are you in?

TYLER

Um, ninth.

KAREN

Seriously? I would have said like 8th.

MELANIE

Karen—

TYLER

What grade are you in?

KAREN

Tenth. But I have my license. I mean, I can drive. It's like a totally different world.

TYLER

I drove Dean's semi. Got it up to like sixty-five...

(then with pride)

Almost hit an elk.

KAREN

(beat, highly skeptical)

Bullshit.

MELANIE

(suddenly getting up)

You know what? Let's eat.

INT. DINING ROOM / MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dean, Tyler, Melanie and Karen sit around a simple, but elegant table.

Karen has barely touched her food; Dean and Tyler have cleaned their plates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN  
That was delicious.

TYLER  
It was really good.

MELANIE  
My ex-husband's mother was Italian.  
She was a great cook.

DEAN  
(on Melanie, surprised)  
You were married?

Karen finally looks up, smiles at Melanie.

MELANIE  
(a little uncomfortable)  
Right after high school. It only  
lasted a few years.

KAREN  
He was a total tool.

MELANIE  
(off Karen, then)  
He was.

Melanie grabs the bottle of wine on the table and fills her glass. She holds the bottle to Dean.

MELANIE (CONT'D)  
Are you sure you don't want a little  
wine?

DEAN  
No. Thanks...  
(as if debating, then)  
I'm an alcoholic.

Melanie looks up at Dean, surprised. Dean awkwardly smiles.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Tyler sits on the couch watching TV as Karen applies makeup in the chair across the room— both feet on the ground.

Karen closes her compact to find Tyler staring at her once again. Tyler NERVOUSLY SWALLOWS, then begins to speak—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN  
Don't waste your time. You're not my  
type.

TYLER  
(defensive)  
What's your type?

KAREN  
(on Tyler, as if amused)  
Not you.

TYLER  
(a little hurt)  
I was just going to say you look nice.  
I mean, I think you look pretty.

KAREN  
(on Tyler, thawing slightly)  
Thanks.

INT. KITCHEN / MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Melanie dries the last of the dishes, as Dean enters.

DEAN  
Trash is out.

MELANIE  
(perfunctorily smiles)  
Thank you.

Melanie puts a stack of clean plates into the cabinet and  
closes the door. She thinks a minute then turns to Dean.

MELANIE (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry about the wine. I—

DEAN  
I should have told you.

MELANIE  
Yeah. I mean, you should have.

DEAN  
I'm sorry.

Melanie stands looking at Dean, a little unsure.

MELANIE  
Is there anything else I should know  
about you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dean steps up to Melanie, totally contrite.

DEAN

Well...I was married for ten years to a woman who hates me. I have an eight year old son who won't talk to me. And my nephew, who I've only seen three or four times in his life until a few days ago, is my best friend in the world, except for my dog, and you.

(long beat)

Is there anything else I should know about you?

MELANIE

Well...I was married at eighteen and spent six years miserable before I finally grew up. I never went to school, so I became a waitress. I bought this house from my grandmother, for a price, and I live here alone, and all I really know is I don't ever want to be with a man who doesn't treat me right again.

DEAN

(on Melanie)

Anything else?

MELANIE

(on Dean)

I'm glad you're here.

EXT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dean and Melanie exit the house followed by Tyler and Karen—everyone bundled tight.

They head for Melanie's Subaru parked in the driveway. Dean opens the passenger door for Melanie, who smiles and gets in.

Tyler, modeling Dean, opens the door for Karen.

EXT. SKYLARK CINEMA - NIGHT

Snow falls on the old movie house in the quaint mountain town. The neon marquee reads, "DOCTOR ZHIVAGO."

INT. SKYLARK CINEMA - NIGHT

Dean and Melanie sit watching the film, holding hands, in the crowded theater. Tyler and Karen sit beside them.

Tyler intently watches the film, a tub of popcorn in his lap, when Karen reaches over to get a handful of popcorn.

Tyler looks over at Karen, who turns to him and finally smiles. After a moment, Tyler smiles back, then turns to watch the film, when he feels...

...Karen's hand now resting on his thigh. Tyler turns back to Karen, who's still smiling at him. Tyler nervously swallows then turns back to the screen.

EXT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dean pulls into the gravel driveway, kills the engine and the lights, and he, Melanie, Karen and Tyler get out of the car.

MELANIE

How about I make some coffee?

DEAN

We should probably get going. We're going to try to get an early start.

MELANIE

(on Dean, like before)

Come on...one cup of coffee?

DEAN

(beat, on Melanie, smiles)

You got any pie?

KAREN

Dean? Can Tyler show me the truck? I mean, what it looks like inside?

DEAN

(tosses Tyler the keys)

Don't lose em'.

As Tyler catches the keys, Dean heads inside with Melanie. Tyler, who's nervous, turns to Karen, who's smiling.

EXT. / INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB (MELANIE'S HOUSE) - NIGHT

Tyler opens the door and helps Karen climb in, his eyes locked on her behind as it passes before him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler collects himself, shuts her door, then heads around to the driver's side.

TYLER

(sotto)

This chick is so hot.

Tyler climbs in behind the wheel and closes the door.

KAREN

Can we turn on the heat? It's freezing in here.

TYLER

Sure.

Tyler turns on the ignition and cranks up the heat. The Rolling Stones' "Love in Vain" plays softly on the radio.

KAREN

What's that?

TYLER

Oh, um...it's *The Stones*.

KAREN

(listens, then)

It's nice.

TYLER

Yeah. They're pretty much all I listen to.

Tyler smiles at Karen, obviously nervous, then begins...

TYLER (CONT'D)

So, um this is the gear shift—

KAREN

Tyler...I like you.

TYLER

(swallows, back on Karen)

You do?

KAREN

Uh huh.

TYLER

(beat, swallows again)

Awesome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAREN

(thinks, then...)

Can I ask you something? I mean, if I ask you something important, will you tell me the truth?

TYLER

Yeah...you can ask me anything you want.

Karen looks at Tyler for several moments, debating, then she finally unzips her coat and lifts up her shirt to reveal her small, oddly shaped breasts.

KAREN

What do you think? I mean, are they okay?

TYLER

(beat, in total awe)

I think they're perfect.

Karen smiles, lowers her shirt, kisses Tyler on the cheek then exits the cab, leaving Tyler sitting there, in shock.

EXT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dean stands with Melanie at his truck, preparing to go.

DEAN

(as she said to him earlier)

So I guess I'll see you next time through?

Melanie slowly wraps her arms around Dean's neck and smiles.

MELANIE

You better.

They kiss.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dean opens the door and climbs in to find Tyler, sitting in the cab alone, totally beaming.

Dean settles in behind the wheel, then turns to Tyler.

DEAN

Are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER

(beat, turns to Dean)

This was the best night of my life...  
I'm serious.

Dean smiles, puts it in gear and they slowly pull off.  
Melanie waves from the driveway, Karen from the front door.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / PINE TRAIL MOTOR LODGE - NIGHT

Dean and Tyler pull off the two-lane highway to the gravel  
corner of the lot. Dean kills the lights and the engine.

He turns to Tyler— who's just sitting there, thinking.

DEAN

You ready?

Tyler turns to Dean, silently nods.

Dean reaches for his door, when...

TYLER

Hey, Dean?

Dean stops.

DEAN

Yeah?

TYLER

I'm glad I came, with you and Bud. I  
mean, I'm having a good time.

DEAN

Me too.

Dean smiles, then turns and opens his door, when...

TYLER

Hey, Dean?

Dean stops again, turns back to Tyler.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(long beat, then:)

I was thinking...you know how I busted  
that teacher's windshield?

Dean looks at Tyler— who's obviously upset— then closes his  
door and settles back in behind the wheel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Yeah.

TYLER

I wish I hadn't done it. I mean, she didn't do anything to me.

(as if "coming out with it")

I was cheating, you know? What did I expect? I mean, she's actually really cool. I even kind of had this thing for her, but, I don't know, I just, I wish I hadn't done it.

Dean sits there, ill-equipped, unsure what to say, until...

DEAN

Well, maybe you could apologize. I mean, tell her you're sorry.

TYLER

(turns to Dean, earnest)

You think that would work?

DEAN

It might.

Tyler considers the advice; as if it gives him hope.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's get some sleep.

Tyler nods. Dean turns and reopens his door, when...

TYLER

Hey, Dean?

DEAN

(stops, turns back)

Yeah?

TYLER

(beat, finally smiles)

Karen showed me her tits.

DEAN

(on Tyler, amused)

No kiddin'?

INT. SUITE #8 / PINE TRAIL MOTOR LODGE - NIGHT

Darkness, except from the light in the small bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door opens and Dean and Tyler enter.

TYLER

I'm serious. They were perfect. I mean, one was a little pointy, and the other was kind of flat but, I mean, overall they were awesome.

(suddenly covers his nose)

Oh, sick. I think Bud crapped in the room.

Dean scans the room, then turns and heads for the bathroom.

DEAN

Bud?

TYLER

(amused)

He's a total animal.

But as Dean opens the bathroom door and looks in, he's stopped cold by what he sees.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(sitting on his bed)

What? Did he diarrhea all over the floor?

Without answering, Dean lowers his head, then slowly enters the bathroom.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(concerned)

Dean?

EXT. HUMANE SOCIETY - THE NEXT MORNING

Dean's semi cab sits in the nearly empty lot, as the sun begins to rise in the b.g.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / HUMANE SOCIETY - DAY

Dean and Tyler climb in. As Tyler puts on his seat belt, Dean grabs his leather binder from his duffel bag on the floor.

He slides the Humane Society paper work into the binder, sets it up on the dash, then silently sits back behind the wheel.

TYLER

You okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN  
 (turns to Tyler)  
 Yeah.  
 (beat)  
 I mean, he was old. Right?

TYLER  
 (delicately)  
 Yeah...

They sit there together, in silence, for several moments, until finally, Tyler, unsure of what else to say or do...

TYLER (CONT'D)  
 (trying to be helpful)  
 You want me to drive?

Dean turns to Tyler, musters a smile.

DEAN  
 I got it.

Dean pulls out the keys, starts the engine, disengages the air breaks, puts it in gear and they pull off.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Dean's semi rolls along under a dark, overcast sky.

INT. LA QUINTA INN - PHOENIX, AZ - EARLY EVENING

Tyler lies back in bed, on top of the covers, fully dressed, switching through the TV channels with a remote— nothing.

Meanwhile, Dean sits on the toilet in the bathroom, his head in his hands, thinking.

He takes a deep breath, then carefully pulls the little boy's BIRTHDAY CARD from his leather binder sitting by the sink.

Dean puts on his glasses, opens the card, picks up his pen, then finally begins to write in the card.

But after a few moments, he stops, looks down at what he's written, then suddenly RIPS THE CARD IN HALF and dumps it in the trash. He sits there a moment longer, agitated, thinking.

He gets up from the toilet and pulls his new phone from his coat. He flips open the phone and dials.

INT. KITCHEN / CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte lifts a pot of pasta water from the stove and begins to pour it's contents into a colander in the sink.

CHARLOTTE  
(calling out)  
Tim? Could you get that please?

INT. LIVING ROOM / CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As the phone continues to ring, NICHOLAS SUTTON (9), Dean's estranged son, sits on the couch playing *Minecraft* on his laptop.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)  
Tim? Honey?

Nicholas, still focused on his game, picks up the cordless phone from the coffee table before him. He answers.

NICHOLAS  
Hello...

INT. LA QUINTA INN - CONTINUOUS

Dean, still on the toilet, phone to his ear, suddenly raises his head, momentarily speechless. Then...

DEAN  
Nicholas? Hey... It's your father.  
(beat, no response)  
How are you? Um, I was calling...I know your birthday's coming up. Saturday...I was hoping maybe it would be okay if I stopped by. I got you something. A present. I think you might like it. It's pretty cool....  
(long beat, no response)  
Nicholas?

INT. LIVING ROOM / CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas sits there, mute, holding the phone to his ear.

DEAN (O.S.)  
(softly, vulnerable)  
Nicky?

Nicholas suddenly hangs up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just then, Charlotte enters to find Nicholas sitting there, obviously affected.

CHARLOTTE  
Honey? Who was that?

After a moment, without responding, Nicholas turns his attention back to Minecraft and resumes his game.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
(concerned)  
Nicholas?

INT. LA QUINTA INN - CONTINUOUS

Dean hangs up, lowers his head. After a moment, he finally gets up and goes out into the room, where Tyler is still lying on the bed, flipping through channels.

TYLER  
(trying to be upbeat)  
Hey, Dean. I was thinking...maybe I could stay with you a few days. When we get to LA... I heard there's like tons of hot chicks out there in thongs just like hanging out at the beach?

Dean sits on the edge of his bed, preoccupied.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
Dean?

DEAN  
(finally looks up)  
Yeah?

TYLER  
When we get to LA. I thought maybe I could stay a few days. We could hang out.

DEAN  
(unsure how to respond)  
Um...I don't know. I'd have to think about it. You know? I mean, check my schedule.

TYLER  
Just like for a few days. I could call my mom. I'm sure it would be cool.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN  
(beat, preoccupied)  
Look, maybe alright. We'll see.

TYLER  
(beat)  
Yeah... Okay.

After a moment, Dean suddenly gets up and grabs his coat.

DEAN  
Look, I've got to go out for awhile.

TYLER  
What?

DEAN  
I'll be back in a bit.

TYLER  
(sits up)  
Can I come with you?

DEAN  
No.

TYLER  
Why?

DEAN  
You just can't. Alright?  
(grabs his keys)  
I'll be back.

Dean quickly turns and heads out the door...

TYLER  
Dean!?

...leaving Tyler in the motel room, alone.

EXT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

Dean's semi sits parked in the lot.

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

Dean sits at the end of the bar, alone, nursing a beer, an empty shot glass and his cell phone on the bar before him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A BARTENDER steps up and fills Dean's shot glass with whiskey. Dean nods then drinks it down.

INT. LA QUINTA INN / PHOENIX, AZ - NIGHT

Tyler lies on the bed, just like before, an old sitcom rerun playing on the TV. After a moment, he clicks off the TV.

He lays in bed a few moments, then rolls down onto the floor. He lies there, still, then begins doing push-ups, like Dean.

EXT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

Dean stumbles out of the bar into the parking lot and heads for his truck. The BOUNCER at the front door watches him go.

When he reaches the driver's side door of his truck, he takes a deep breath, lowers his head, then pulls out his new cell phone and dials. The MACHINE picks up.

DEAN

God damnit!

Dean hangs up the phone and dials again. The MACHINE picks up. Dean hangs up and dials again, when finally...

DEAN (CONT'D)

Charlotte? Yes, it's Dean. You know it's me; you've been screening your fucking calls... Look, can I talk to Nicholas please? Yeah. I know it's late. Could you please just—

(beat, denying it)

No. I'm not. Charlotte? I am not drunk! Okay. Fine! I screwed up. But maybe if you'd let me talk to my son! That's bullshit! No! I don't believe that! That is not true. That's because you've poisoned him against me! I've been trying! You know I've been trying... Look, he's my son, and I want to talk to him, now. Yeah, well he's my son too. He's my son too! Look, just put him on the phone! Put him on the god damn phone! Charlotte! Put him on the fucking—

CLICK. THE LINE GOES DEAD. After a few moments, Dean finally closes his phone, speechless— overwhelmed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, HE SMASHES HIS PHONE down onto the concrete lot. He SCREAMS OUT— enraged!

He paces a moment, unsure what to do, then turns and heads back toward the bar.

INT. LA QUINTA INN - A FEW HOURS LATER

Darkness. The door opens and Dean stumbles in. He sets the keys on the dresser then slowly sits down on the edge of his bed.

He looks over at Tyler— lying in his own bed, facing away, silently sleeping. Dean lowers his head— ashamed.

After several moments, Dean finally lies down in bed.

CLOSE ON: Tyler, lying in bed, COMPLETELY AWAKE— brooding. Until suddenly, off screen, in the darkness we hear...

...Dean QUIETLY BEGINS TO WEEP.

INT. LA QUINTA INN - THE NEXT MORNING

Tyler wakes up to the faint sound of Dean talking on the phone in the bathroom. He gets out of bed and walks over to the bathroom door, opens it a crack.

Tyler sees Dean, looking rough, sitting on the toilet, talking on Tyler's iPhone.

DEAN

I guess something early-afternoon would be best. Yeah. We should be in LA by noon. Well we talked about it a little last night, but it's just really not a good time. Yeah. I'll probably be back on the road in the next day or two— No. Kathy, he's great. We had fun. It's just—

(listens, then:)

Look, I just don't want him to get the wrong idea. He's a good kid...

(w/ difficulty)

I'm just not sure I have the time to be a part of his life. I mean, the way he needs.

(listens, then:)

Kath— Look, you don't have to—

(lowers head, ashamed)

A check will be fine. Thank you...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN (CONT'D)

I'll call when he gets on the plane...  
Bye.

Dean hangs up Tyler's phone, guilty. He slowly gets up from the toilet, obviously hung over, and turns on the shower.

Tyler steps back from the bathroom door— thinking, his eyes slowly welling up. After a moment, he grabs his coat and the keys from the dresser and quickly heads out of the room.

INT. BATHROOM / LA QUINTA INN - 5 MINUTES LATER

The shower cuts off, Dean pulls back the curtain, wraps a towel around his waist and exits, still hurting.

He exits into the main room to find Tyler is gone. He looks around, noticing Tyler's coat is gone from the chair, the keys gone from the dresser.

EXT. LA QUINTA INN - DAY

Dean rushes into the parking lot, still putting on his coat, to find the back hatch of his trailer is completely open, the metal ramp pulled down.

DEAN

Tyler...

Dean rushes to the open trailer door to find the back window of one of the Saleen Mustangs smashed out...

...and ANOTHER MUSTANG GONE, a crowbar and shattered glass on the trailer floor. Dean stands there, stunned.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The missing Saleen Mustang blasts through frame at 110 m.p.h.

INT. SALEEN MUSTANG - DAY

Tyler drives along, angrily mumbling to himself. He slams his fists into the steering wheel, when suddenly...

...a POLICE SIREN erupts in the background. Tyler looks up to see red and blue lights flashing in his rearview mirror.

TYLER

Fuck!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler thinks a moment, then SLAMS ON THE GAS! The powerful engine ROARS and ACCELERATES but then quickly STALLS OUT.

Panicked, Tyler looks down to find the needle of the fuel gage sits on EMPTY. With no other options, Tyler manages to steer the Mustang onto the gravel shoulder and roll to a stop.

The POLICE CAR pulls onto the shoulder behind him, then through a BULLHORN we hear...

HIGHWAY PATROLLMAN  
Out of the car!

Tyler slowly opens his door and exits the Mustang, his hands held high. The HIGHWAY PATROLMAN steps out of his cruiser, weapon drawn. After several moments...

TYLER  
(defiant)  
What?

EXT. SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY - DAY

Dean pulls onto the gravel shoulder in his semi cab, looking totally freaked, as a POLICE CRUISER STANDS by while a TOW TRUCK lifts the front of the Mustang onto its towing rig.

EXT. HIGHWAY PATROL STATION - 30 MINUTES LATER

Dean's cab sits parked out front.

INT. HIGHWAY PATROL STATION - DAY

Dean quickly enters and heads to the STAFF SERGEANT at the front desk.

STAFF SARGEANT  
Can I help you?

DEAN  
I'm here for Tyler Wojeck.

STAFF SARGEANT  
(turns back into office)  
Hey, someone's here for the kid.

A TROOPER crossing with a file in back steps up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STATE TROOPER  
Wojeck?

DEAN  
Yeah.

STATE TROOPER  
You the boy's father?

DEAN  
(beat)  
No... His uncle.

INT. WAITING AREA / HIGHWAY PATROL STATION - DAY

Dean sits in a chair in the corner, alone once again. After a moment, he pulls out his old, worn photo of Nicholas. He silently stares at it, smoothing out its edges.

After a few moments, he pulls Tyler's iPhone from his coat pocket and begins to dial Nicholas's number.

But when he finishes dialing, he just stares at the phone, unable to press SEND. After several moments, he turns off the phone and sticks it back into his coat pocket.

He looks back down at the worn photo of Nicholas in his hand, smooths one last edge, then slips it into his shirt pocket.

STATE TROOPER (O.S)  
Mr. Sutton?

Dean looks up to find a STATE TROOPER standing with Tyler across the room— Tyler looking defiant as ever.

EXT. HIGHWAY PATROL STATION - DAY

Dean silently exits the building, as Tyler follows, a few steps behind, his head hanging low, but his guard still up.

When they reach the semi, Dean opens his door and begins to climb in. Tyler stops, head down, hands in his pockets.

TYLER  
I don't want to go with you.

DEAN  
Look, Tyler...just get in the truck.

TYLER  
No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dean closes his door and heads back to Tyler.

DEAN

(trying to remain calm)  
What were you thinking? You could  
have been killed. You could have  
killed someone else.

TYLER

I don't want to go with you.

DEAN

(on Tyler, then turns away)  
Just get in the fucking truck.

TYLER

No.

DEAN

(finally loses it)  
Do you have any idea how lucky you  
are!? They didn't have to let you go.  
They could have locked you up!

TYLER

Good! You should have let them!

DEAN

Jesus, what is wrong with—

TYLER

I don't fucking need you, man.

DEAN

What?

TYLER

I don't need anyone...

DEAN

(beat)  
Tyler, get in the truck.

TYLER

Fuck you.

DEAN

(beat, turns for cab)  
You know what? I'm leaving. Stay  
here if you want.

TYLER

Did she pay you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dean suddenly stops and turns back, caught off-guard.

Tyler reads him.

TYLER (CONT'D)

She fucking paid you, didn't she? To hang out with me. Like I'm some kind of loser. Like some kind of joke!

(on Dean, then...)

I thought we were friends.

Dean stands there, busted, then:

DEAN

(as if "out of steam")

Look, Tyler. I'm doing the best I can. Alright? That's all I can do.

TYLER

You let me down.

DEAN

Well, I'm sorry. But you know what? That's life...people let you down.

Dean turns away and heads back for the semi; Tyler loses it.

TYLER

Fuck people, Dean! People didn't let me down!

Dean stops again, turns to Tyler, who angrily approaches.

TYLER (CONT'D)

You let me down! Alright!? Not Ms. Briggs! Not Gumble. Not my fucking dad! You let me down, Dean. You!

Tyler heads past Dean and climbs up into the cab. Dean just stands there—processing. After a moment, he shakes Tyler's comments off, collects himself, then opens his door.

DEAN

(as he enters cab)

Alright, look...

Dean is suddenly stopped cold, taken aback, as he finds Tyler sitting across the cab, turned away, crying.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Tyler...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TYLER

Take me home. I just want to go home.

Dean sits there a moment, affected, unsure what to say or do.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I just want to go home.

Slowly, Dean finally turns, settles in behind the wheel, starts the engine, puts it in gear and pulls off.

EXT. WESTBOUND I-10 - DAY

Dean's semi rolls along the highway.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / WESTBOUND I-10 - DAY

As Dean and Tyler silently drive along, the tension in the cab still thick, they come to an OVERHEAD SIGN: LOS ANGELES, THREE LEFT LANES; I-15, BARSTOW, RIGHT LANE ONLY.

Dean hits his blinker and begins to merge right.

TYLER

(slowly turns to Dean)  
Where are you going?

DEAN

I want to show you something.

Tyler silently thinks about this, as if unsure, then:

TYLER

(as if still bitter)  
I thought you had a schedule to keep?

DEAN

It's okay.

TYLER

(thinks, then...)  
I'll miss my flight.

DEAN

(beat, reassuringly)  
There'll be another flight.

Dean looks at Tyler, who sits there thinking—hesitant.

DEAN (CONT'D)

I think you might like it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler thinks a moment longer then finally turns back to look out his window, silently acquiescing.

Dean exits right onto Northbound I-15 toward Barstow.

EXT. NORTH BOUND CA 395 - DAY

The semi exits the highway onto a paved local route, the snow capped Sierras and Mt. Whitney towering in the distance.

EXT. FOOTHILLS OF THE SIERRA NEVADAS - DAY

The semi reaches the bottom of a long, slow climbing switchback and begins its ascent up into the mountains.

EXT. SIERRA NEVADAS - DAY

The semi continues its climb, rolling over a steel bridge, GIANT SEQUOIAS, spreading up the side of the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE / SIERRA NEVADAS - DAY

The semi rolls through the modest "heart of town," scattered patches of snow along the side of the road, the local SAFEWAY grocery store visible just off the road up ahead.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB (PRIVATE ROAD) - DAY

Dean pulls off the switchback onto a gravel trail in front of a gated off TWO-TRACK ROAD. A sign reads "PRIVATE PROPERTY"

TYLER

What's this?

DEAN

Get the gate.

Tyler looks at Dean, unsure, then cautiously gets out and heads to the metal gate closing off the road. He lifts the latch and walks the gate back, clearing a path. Tyler hurries back to the semi and climbs in.

Dean puts it in gear and they slowly head off down the private, two track road.

EXT. CLEARING - SIERRA NEVADAS - DUSK

The semi sits parked— majestic, snow-capped mountains in every direction, the valley spotted with snow beneath them.

Tyler sits on a beach chair in the frozen winter grass, a spent paper plate in his lap, looking down across the valley.

A few feet away, Dean packs their leftover HOTDOGS and CHIPS into a cooler then takes a kettle from an old COLEMAN STOVE, pours a cup of coffee into a tin cup and heads toward Tyler.

DEAN

(re: the view)

What do you think?

TYLER

(beat, reserved)

Not bad.

DEAN

(sits in chair beside Tyler)

You see down there? That grove of pine? There's a little clearing in there. That's where I'm going to build my place. It's got a creek that runs through there in the summer. Figure I'll build a porch that wraps around the whole cabin, so you can sit outside, watch the sun come up over the trees in the morning, watch it go down into the mountains at night. And when the weather thaws, you can go hiking or fishing or even swimming in the creek.

TYLER

(beat, has to admit)

Sounds awesome.

DEAN

(takes in the view, then—)

Before Nicholas was born...I got these glow-in-the-dark stars, stickers, and I put them up all over the ceiling in his room. I used to come home from work, most of the time drunk, and I'd sit there with him in his chair, just the two of us, in the dark, and we'd look up at the stars together.

(ashamed, then)

I don't know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN (CONT'D)

I thought maybe if I could bring him up here, you know, just him and me... he might like it.

TYLER

(beat, hesitant, then:)

I would.

Dean almost smiles— grateful.

DEAN

Look, Tyler... I don't know much, but I know you're a good kid. And I also know you have every right to be angry. Your Dad...this is his loss, and one day he's going to realize that. Believe me. He will. But I don't want you to waste your life being angry. Because it doesn't change anything. Trust me, I've spent a lot of time pissed off, angry as hell, and it's not worth it. It's wasted time...You've got to let it go.

TYLER

(beat, becoming emotional)

How?

DEAN

Your mother loves you. Talk to her—

TYLER

(trying to hold it together)

She's got her own problems.

DEAN

(beat)

Then you can talk to me.

TYLER

(turns to Dean, vulnerable)

Why would I talk to you?

DEAN

Because I am your friend. Alright? I am your friend... And I won't let you down again.

Tyler sits there thinking about what Dean has said. He wipes tears from his eyes. After a few moments, Tyler sits back in his chair and silently takes in the view, processing, as the sun begins to set into the mountains.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dean watches Tyler, reading him, then:

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 (back on view)  
 Look um, I think I'm gonna' hit it...  
 It's kind of been a long day.

TYLER  
 (beat, turns to Dean)  
 I think I just want to hang out here  
 for a while...if that's okay.

DEAN  
 (beat, pleased)  
 Yeah.

Dean slowly gets up and takes in the majesty around him.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 (on view, smiles)  
 It's all yours.

Dean gently pats Tyler on the shoulder, then heads for the truck. Tyler sits there, quietly thinking, until suddenly...

TYLER  
 Hey, Dean?

DEAN  
 (stops, turns to Tyler)  
 Yeah?

TYLER  
 Who were you so angry at?

DEAN  
 (thinks, then comes clean)  
 Myself.

Dean turns and heads for the semi.

LATER THAT NIGHT:

Tyler sits there alone in his beach chair, bundled tight, staring up at the endless night sky FLOODED WITH STARS.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / CLEARING - DAWN

As the sun begins to break into the cab, we see Dean sleeping soundly under his covers, back in the sleeping compartment.

INT. SEMI'S TRAILER / CLEARING - DAWN

Meanwhile, Tyler sits just inside the open trailer door, the cargo lost in shadow behind him, a heavy blanket wrapped around his shoulders, quietly sitting in his beach chair and staring out at the rising sun, in awe— happy.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / SOUTHBOUND I-15 - DAY

Dean drives along. Out the window we see a HIGHWAY SIGN:  
"LOS ANGELES: 140 MILES"

Dean looks over to Tyler, who's now covered in his blanket, sleeping on the seat beside him. Dean reaches out, gently rests his hand on Tyler's shoulder. Dean smiles, happy.

EXT. FORD DEALERSHIP / TORRANCE, CA - DAY

Dean backs his trailer into the unloading area behind the dealership, as Tyler, sitting shotgun, looks out his window.

INT. DEAN'S SEMI CAB / FORD DEALERSHIP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tyler sits in the cab alone, anxiously waiting, looking a little ashamed, when Dean opens his door and climbs in.

TYLER

What'd they say?

DEAN

They're going to write me up for not securing the latch, but, long as I pay the fine, insurance should cover it.

TYLER

I'm sorry. My mom will pay the fine, and I can get like a part-time job or something to pay her back.

DEAN

Let's not worry about the money.  
(on Tyler, starts engine)  
I had a few extra bucks.

Tyler acknowledges this, pleased.

DEAN (CONT'D)

So, what should we do?  
(on his watch)  
We got a few hours to kill.

EXT. BEACH / EL SEGUNDO - DAY

Dean and Tyler sit in their beach chairs, on the sparsely populated sand, the TWIN SMOKE STACKS of the local SEWAGE TREATMENT plant in the b.g., The sky is overcast and grey.

TYLER

Where the hell are all the chicks in thongs?

DEAN

Maybe this is the wrong beach.

TYLER

This sucks.

Dean looks around— silently agreeing. He checks his watch.

DEAN

Well, we still got two hours.  
Anything else you want to do?

INT. DEAN'S SEMI / CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE (BRENTWOOD) - DAY

Dean and Tyler pull up across the street, the front of the house decorated with a HAPPY BIRTHDAY BANNER and BALLOONS.

Several cars are parked in the driveway; several others line the street. Music blasts inside the house and we hear PEOPLE LAUGHING and KIDS PLAYING in the backyard.

Dean puts on the air brakes, silently staring at the house. After a moment, he nervously turns to Tyler.

DEAN

You sure about this?

TYLER

(thinks, then—)

If it were me, no matter how mad I was...I wouldn't want my dad to stop trying.

Dean looks at Tyler, indebted, then turns back to the house.

DEAN

What do I say?

TYLER

(thinks again, then)

You could always just tell him you're sorry.

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dean steps up onto the front porch, Nicholas's wrapped iPhone in hand. Festive music plays inside the house.

Dean looks back at Tyler, watching out his window. Growing impatient, Tyler mimes ringing the bell. Dean takes a deep breath, turns back to the door and finally rings the bell.

He waits. A moment later, TIM (45), Charlotte's new husband (Nicholas's step-dad), opens the door.

TIM

Dean?

Tim steps out onto the porch closing the door behind him. He notices Tyler watching from the cab of the semi, then...

TIM (CONT'D)

What can I do for you?

DEAN

Tim. I was hoping I could talk to Nicholas. I wanted to give him his gift.

TIM

Dean, we've kind of got a party going on right now.

DEAN

Tim...I just want to see my son. Just for a minute. I mean, could you help me out? Please? Just for a minute.

Tim thinks for a moment, taking in Dean, then...

TIM

Hold on.

Tim heads back inside, shutting the door behind him. Dean takes a deep breath, turns back to Tyler. Tyler raises his fist in support.

A moment later, the front door reopens and Dean turns back as Charlotte, his ex wife, steps into the open doorway.

CHARLOTTE

What are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Charlotte, I don't want to fight, and I don't want to...interrupt your party. I'd just, I'd like to see my son...I got him something.

CHARLOTTE

Dean? This isn't the time.

DEAN

It's his birthday.

CHARLOTTE

All his friends are here, my parents are here...

Charlotte finally notices Tyler watching from the cab window.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Who's that?

DEAN

(turns back toward Tyler)  
Tyler.

CHARLOTTE

(beat, confused)  
Wojeck?

Dean nods.

Tyler waves at Charlotte. Charlotte politely waves back.

DEAN

Look, if I could just see him for a minute.

CHARLOTTE

Dean? He doesn't want to talk to you on the phone. What makes you think he'd want to see you?

DEAN

Can you please just tell him I'm here? Please? Can you just tell him I'm here?

Charlotte stares at Dean, unsure what to do, then—

CHARLOTTE

I'll tell him.

Charlotte closes the door and heads back into the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Tyler rolls down his window.

TYLER

What the hell's going on?!

DEAN

She's going to get him.

As Tyler nods, Dean turns back to the door and waits. He straightens his shirt, checks the gift in his hand.

A few moments later, the door slowly opens, but it's only Charlotte. However, her edge is now gone.

CHARLOTTE

I'm sorry. I told him...  
(as if trying to explain)  
All his friends are here...

DEAN

(lowers his head, then)  
Um, could you just please give him  
this.  
(hands her the iPhone)  
And tell him I'm sorry, alright? And  
Happy Birthday.

As Dean heads back to the semi, Charlotte stands there in the doorway, almost contrite. After several moments, she finally turns and heads back inside.

TILT UP: To find Nicholas, standing in an upstairs window, the curtain slightly pulled back, watching his father go.

INT. LAX / NORTHWEST TERMINAL / GATE 62 - DAY

Dean and Tyler sit in the busy terminal, side by side, waiting for Tyler's plane to begin boarding.

DEAN

You need a few bucks for the plane?  
Get yourself a cocktail or something.

Tyler smiles.

TYLER

I'm good.

They continue to sit there together, silently waiting, until—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYLER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about Nicholas.

DEAN

Yeah, well...I'm glad we tried. I mean, I took a shot, right?

(rationalizing)

I guess that's all you can do.

Just then, the gate's P.A. SYSTEM clicks on.

FLIGHT ATENDANT (O.S.)

Attention passengers. Northwest Flight 2207, non-stop to Detroit is now boarding...

DEAN

Well, I guess this is it.

Dean and Tyler get up from their chairs, a little awkward, trying to figure out how to say goodbye.

DEAN (CONT'D)

So I'll see you this summer, huh?

TYLER

Yeah. For sure.

Then, as if remembering, Tyler takes out his iPhone and gives it to Dean.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I want you to have it.

DEAN

Tyler, I can't—

TYLER

I'll get another one. It's no big deal. I mean, they're probably coming out with the iPhone 6 pretty soon anyways, so... Plus, who knows? I might want to call you or something.

Dean finally accepts the phone. He's touched.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(earnest, warning him)

Don't fucking lose it.

DEAN

(smiles)

I won't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLIGHT ATENDANT (O.S.)  
We will now continue boarding...

DEAN  
Well...

Dean steps up to Tyler and awkwardly gives him a hug. Tyler hugs him back, a long time. They finally let go.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Take care of yourself.

TYLER  
Yeah, you too.

Tyler turns and begins to go. After a few steps he stops, then slowly turns back toward Dean.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
Hey, Dean?

DEAN  
Yeah?

Tyler takes in the OTHER PASSENGERS stepping up to board around him, then turns back to Dean and TAKES HIS SHOT.

TYLER  
I love you.

Dean looking at Tyler, who stands there vulnerable and scared. Then, without a trace of shame or doubt...

DEAN  
I love you, too.

Tyler smiles, then turns and heads off. Dean stands there, watching him go, until he disappears into the jetway.

After a few moments, Dean puts his hands in his pockets and looks around, as if unsure what to do next.

He spots a BAR across the terminal, people inside laughing, having fun. He thinks a moment, then turns and heads off.

EXT. SHORT TERM PARKING LOT / LAX - DAY

Dean reaches his semi at the back of the lot. He climbs in.

EXT. EAST BOUND 1-10 - NIGHT

Dean's semi rolls along through traffic, the sun finally setting in the b.g.

EXT. I-10 / I-15 INTERCHANGE - NIGHT

Dean's semi merges onto the I-15 North. It rolls along toward the distant mountains— the night sky studded with stars.

INT. DEAN'S CAB / REST STOP / THE SIERRAS - THE NEXT MORNING

As dawn begins to break, Dean sleeps under his blanket in the back of the cab, while Tyler's iPhone charges up on the dash.

EXT. REST STOP / THE SIERRAS - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dean exits the SERVICE CENTER BUILDING with a cup of vending machine coffee and heads over to a small picnic table area.

He takes a seat at a table, coffee in hand. He silently looks out at the snow-capped mountains in the distance.

After several moments, he takes out his wallet. He opens it and pulls out a carefully tucked away, neatly folded RECEIPT.

ANGLE ON RECEIPT: It's the one from BEST BUY. Dean flips it over, and hand written on the back we see:

"NICHOLAS 310-515-7423."

Dean sits there, staring down at the receipt, thinking.

INT. DEAN'S CAB / REST STOP / THE SIERRAS - MOMENTS LATER

Dean opens the driver's side door and climbs into the cab. He settles in behind the wheel, then picks up the iPhone charging on the dash.

He lifts the receipt and enters Nicholas's number into the phone. He sits back and waits as the line RINGS.

The line finally goes to the DEFAULT VOICE MAIL.

DEFAULT VOICE MAIL (O.S.)  
You have reached...

Disappointed, Dean listens as the message plays out. When the message finally BEEPS, Dean begins to hang up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But he suddenly reconsiders...

DEAN  
 (into phone)  
 Hey, Nicholas...It's your dad.

Dean sits back, unsure how to proceed, until finally...

DEAN (CONT'D)  
 I'm sorry about just showing up like that, at your party. If I were you, I would have done the same thing. I mean, I understand. And it's okay.  
 (beat, holding it together)  
 But, I want you to know... I'd really love to talk to you sometime. Just talk. You know... Just you and me. Whenever you're ready...

CUT TO:

EXT. REST STOP / THE SIERRAS - MOMENTS LATER

Back by the picnic table, Dean gets down on his knees in the grass and assumes the "push-up" position. He begins, slow and steady: one...two...three...

INT. DEAN'S CAB / REST STOP / THE SIERRAS - CONTINUOUS

Through the windshield, we see Dean up by the picnic table, continuing his PUSH-UPS. As he does, we...

TILT DOWN: To the iPhone, still charging on the dash.

We stay locked on the iPhone, the cab completely still, until finally, the LCD SCREEN LIGHTS UP:

"INCOMING CALL, NICHOLAS SUTTON."

THE END