

ROAD TRIP

Written By

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EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Rain trickles down on a funeral service from the overcast grey sky. A preacher is speaking to a large crowd, it's hard pressed to find a dry eye within the gathering. There is a large picture at the front of the service showing BOBBY, an 18 year old that has been taken too soon.

Two teenagers are sitting at the front of the service. One does not seem quite as moved.

TYLER, 17, sits in silence staring at the picture of Bobby. He has short, clean hair and is dressed very well. Sitting next to him is Jess, 17. She has long dark hair and is holding a box of tissues. Jess is silently sobbing with her face in her hands.

TYLER

What a dumbass

JESS

Don't say that.

TYLER

I know, I'm sorry. It's just hard to believe right now.

Tyler's hand lightly nudges Jess's. Jess holds onto Tyler's hand.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Um...

JESS

Uh, sorry. You're okay right?

Tyler and Jess let go and give each other some distance.

TYLER

Uh, yeah I'm fine.

Jess wipes her face and tries to fix the awkward silence.

JESS

Soo...

(Beat)

Where's C.J.?

TYLER

Probably selling bunk weed to a few fourteen-year olds.

Jess lets out a laugh.

JESS
More like oregano.

TYLER
Oh shit...

Tyler sees a figure emerging out from behind the trees. Walking towards the service is C.J., with long messy hair and dirty clothes on. He tosses the joint in his mouth into some bushes and sits next to Tyler and Jess.

C.J.
Sup guys.

TYLER
You're a little late dickhead.

The entire audience noticed his late arrival, a few disapproving head shakes follow.

JESS
You're making a scene C.J., what the hell?

C.J.

Woah, relax okay? It's not my fault Bob ran across the street without looking.

TYLER
Just shut up and pay attention.

EXT. RECEPTION - DAY

The three of them stand around a dedication to Bobby at the reception held after the funeral. Tyler looks distant and trying to avoid conversation.

C.J.
Damn shame really. I loved that kid like a brother.

JESS
Me too. He was always the guy we went to for a smile.

Jess wipes a single tear from her face.

JESS (CONT'D)

I can only imagine what you feel like Tyler. Your brother went too soon.

Tyler looks at the ground, trying to look disinterested.

C.J.

Remember that time we each took a brownie and Bob ran off and went crazy?

Tyler looks up with a smile.

TYLER

We found him an hour later drooling under the slide at the park in the fetal position.

JESS

That was amazing, I miss those days.

Jess looks like she is getting choked up. Tyler walks away from them without saying a word.

Jess throws her arms up.

JESS

What the hell? Why is he acting like this?

CJ

Give the man some time Jess, he'll come around.

CUT TO:

INT. CLEVELAND CITY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

CJ and JESS are talking in the hallway. People are walking all around them, to and from class presumably. Tyler walks up to them carrying a large bag of lacrosse gear.

JESS

Oh, here he comes.

C.J.

Tyler, let's go eat! I'm starving.

TYLER

I've got AP Stats in 5 minutes.

C.J.
So what. Let's go get food.

JESS
I could go for a frosty. And my
employee discount. Tyler?

TYLER
Yeah, screw it. Coach says I need
to loosen up anyway.

C.J.
Hell yeah.

The three of them walk out of the building while hundreds of
kids pour in and dutifully walk to class.

CUT TO:

INT. CJ'S CAR IN WENDYS PARKING LOT

Jess and C.J. are chowing down on some burgers and fries.
Tyler isn't eating his food and silently looks out the
window.

CJ lets out a groan and wipes his face

C.J.
Oh my god, that was spiritual.

JESS
Gross C.J. Get away from me.

His face is covered in greasy food.

C.J.
You know you love me. I'll go grab
some napkins.

CJ gets out of the car and walks towards the restaurant.

JESS
How are you holding up?

TYLER
I'm actually fine.

JESS
You can be honest with me you know.
You don't have to block everyone
out.

TYLER

No I know.. It's fine. It's just that-

CJ comes out of the restaurant with a handful of napkins and sees his friends sharing a moment. Naturally he shouts across the parking lot.

C.J.

HA! You two are so cute!

Tyler and Jess look annoyed with C.J. for breaking up their moment.

CJ begins to walk toward his car. We hear a screeching noise coming from the drive through, the sound of rubber burning into the pavement.

CJ looks to his right and before he knows what's happening a Fiat blasting European techno music is coming right at him.

He falls back and the car whips past CJ narrowly missing him. His napkins go flying everywhere.

JESS

C.J.!

Jess and Tyler run over to CJ and help him up.

TYLER

Holy shit! Are you okay?

CJ looks down and takes a moment to react to what just happened.

C.J.

No Ty. I'm pretty far from okay.
Let's go home.

Jess and Tyler pick up C.J. and help him get back into his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. TYLER'S BACKYARD

The three friends are speaking together in Tyler's backyard. Jess is sitting with C.J. Tyler is shooting and playing lacrosse.

JESS

I can't believe that just happened.
I'm still freaked out.

Tyler looks annoyed that Jess and C.J. are upset.

TYLER

C.J. you are fine. Can you please relax?

C.J.

C.J. responds with a hurt look on his face.

C.J. (CONT'D)

To think the last thing I would have seen in my beautiful life was some euro-trash asshole running me over is a little bit too much to handle.

CJ puts his head between his knees to calm down. His legs are still shaking.

TYLER

I think you're overreacting a bit.

JULIE, 45 years old, with a cute dress and adorable smile pokes her head out the sliding door.

JULIE

Hey guys!

JESS

Julie!!

JULIE

I made banana bread and Rice Krispies if anyone's hungry! Ty I know how you get when you've been exercising and running around.

Tyler's face turns red and he slowly shakes his head.

TYLER

Mom, we're fine. We just ate.

JULIE

Okay honie, let me know if you guys need anything.

JESS

Aw, thanks Julie! What a sweetheart.

Julie returns inside the house.

JESS (CONT'D)

Julie is honestly the nicest person alive. She didn't deserve what happened to her.

C.J.

And what almost happened to me. That would have been devastating for her too.

Tyler stops practicing for a moment and looks at CJ a little irked.

TYLER

Sometimes I forget you guys have your own moms. I don't think she'd miss you C.J.

C.J. exhales deeply and picks up his head.

C.J.

Fuck you man. Why are you being such an asshole all the time?

Tyler drops his lacrosse gear and storms off into his house. Jess gives C.J. the bird. They both stand up and walk after Tyler.

CUT TO:

TYLER'S ROOM - EVENING

Jess and CJ walk into Tyler's room. Tyler is sitting on the lower bunk of his room's bunk bed. His face is flushed red and his eyes look watery. There is a PICTURE of Bobby sitting next to him.

Jess and CJ sit silently walk in and take a seat next to him.

C.J.

Come on man. You can't let this ruin you. You have to come back from this.

Jess pats Tyler on the head and holds his arm. Tyler has his face buried in his pillow. The picture of Bobby is attached to a postcard. Tyler picks his head up.

TYLER

This is the last thing he ever said to me.

Tyler hands the postcard to Jess. She and C.J. read it.

JESS

A postcard?

TYLER

It's from a few weeks ago. He wanted me to come down to his school and visit him. I never got to see him.

C.J.

Damn. That's rough bro.

JESS

We should go. It's important you get this closure.

Tyler looks up at Jess and scoffs.

TYLER

Are you crazy? It is so far away. There's no way. Absolutely no way.

C.J.

Yeah Jess, that sounds like a whole big emotional ordeal. We should probably skip this one.

JESS

Are you guys kidding me? This would be fun! A road-trip to CU Boulder? That would be exactly what Tyler needs.

C.J.

Boulder you say? As in the Boulder city filled with hippies and weed? I'm intrigued.

TYLER

C.J. no. This is not happening. I have a lacrosse tournament Tuesday.

JESS

That's fine. If we leave tomorrow we'll be back in plenty of time.

C.J.

I'm game. When do we ever get to do anything fun? Come on Tyler.

Tyler groans and rolls over.

TYLER

Why won't you people just leave me alone.

JESS

Tyler we just want to help you. Will you please do this? I can't stand to see you this depressed anymore.

Tyler stands up and lets out a sigh.

TYLER

Fine. If it'll get you two to chill..
(beat)
We'll go.

C.J. jumps up and celebrates.

C.J.

Whoohoo! Boulder here we come! See you guys in the morning.

C.J. walks out and leaves Tyler and Jess alone.

Jess kisses Tyler on the forehead.

JESS

This isn't just for Bob. This is for you too.

Jess exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY OUTSIDE CJ'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

C.J.'s place is a rundown shack compared to the nice suburban cookie cutters in his neighborhood. The three of them stand outside a parked car as the sun rises.

C.J.

Okay, we've got our bags, food, directions, a first aid kit, batteries, blankets, swim trunks, gameboys, rolling papers, and 5 bags of goldfish.

Tyler and Jess peek in the car. They nod approvingly.

TYLER

Damn C.J. I'm impressed.

JESS

I guess when you put your mind to something you can actually come through.

C.J.

This is going to be the most amazing trip of all time. Get ready.

TYLER

Yeah we'll see.

The three of them get into C.J.'s car.

CUT TO:MONTAGE

INT. CJ'S CAR - DAY

The three of them are beginning their drive across the country. Cue shots of them laughing, listening to music, and general road trip fun during the drive.

They pass a sign: NOW ENTERING MISSOURI.

JESS

Damn this place is actually uglier than Ohio.

C.J.

I haven't seen anything but billboards for sex stores in miles.

TYLER

Maybe we'll stop and get you a nice new vibrator.

Jess and C.J.'s jaws drop and let out a relieved laugh to Tyler's unexpected joke.

JESS

Wow. Good to have you back Ty.

C.J.

Even if you can be an asshole.

C.J. (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. Should we stop up here at this next exit for food?

TYLER

Chuck, there's gonna be a problem
if there's not a greasy burger
waiting for us at this exit.

C.J.

Don't call me Chuck prick.

C.J. punches Tyler playfully. The car swerves and they fly
through the exit ramp.

TYLER

There!

Tyler points out a Whopper King and they head for the drive
through.

KELLY DRIVE THROUGH ATTENDANT (V.O.)

Welcome to Whopper King! My name is
Kelly how can I help you?

CUT TO:

INT. CJ'S CAR IN PARKING LOT OF WHOPPER KING - DAY

Fast food bags are scattered all over the car. There's used
napkins and empty shakes all over the car floor.

TYLER

That was so damn good.

Tyler looks at C.J. and smiles.

TYLER (CONT'D)

We need more food.

C.J.

Obviously.

TYLER

I'm out of cash though. Can you
spot me?

C.J. looks into his wallet and frowns in disappointment.

C.J.

Damn, I'm cleaned out too. Jess?

JESS

I don't have enough for both of
you. Go to an ATM or something.

A 55+ year old woman walks past them wearing a brightly colored "Mississippi State" t-shirt. She is wearing an NRA visor cap and has hair that probably hasn't seen a brush in a month or so.

C.J.

Nah I got a better idea.

C.J. grabs his backpack and gets out of the car.

JESS

What is he doing?

TYLER

Just let the man work Jess. Trust me.

EXT. WHOPPER KING PARKING LOT

C.J. runs up to the older woman and starts a conversation.

C.J.

Excuse me ma'am.

The woman stops in her tracks and spits a wad of her chewing tobacco into a water bottle.

C.J. (CONT'D)

I don't mean to bother a fine lady like yourself, but I'm not from around here and I could use some help.

JANICE

(THICK SOUTHERN ACCENT)

Name's Janice. What do you need son?

JANICE (CONT'D)

Not to be rude kid, but you smell like something awful.

C.J. takes a step back and checks his breath.

C.J.

Oh wow. I'm sorry about that, I really shouldn't take another moment of a your time, but I have a proposition.

JANICE

I'm married kid.

CJ awkwardly scratches his head and looks away.

C.J.

Uh, that's not exactly what I had in mind. I have something you and your husband might enjoy.

CJ pulls out a small baggy of weed and shows it to Janice.

JANICE

Oh no. Is that the devil's lettuce? I tried that back at State one time and I swear it turned me into a lesbian.

CJ gives a disgusted look on his face and takes a step back.

C.J.

Ah I'm sorry to hear that. Sure you're not interested?

JANICE

I'm very sure kiddo.

C.J.

I see.. Well I'll be on my way then.

CJ turns around completely.

JANICE

I don't think so! You're coming with me.

Janice takes a step forward grabs CJ on the shoulder

JANICE (CONT'D)

(Shrieking)

Citizen's arrest!

CJ spins off her and jumps away, startled.

C.J.

Get off me crazy!

CJ makes a B-line for his car and hops in the driver seat. Tyler and Jess are looking at C.J. wide-eyed and astonished.

CUT TO:

INT. CJ'S CAR - DAY

JESS

What the hell just happened?

C.J.

Would you relax? It was nothing. We just gotta go.

CJ turns the ignition and they begin to leave the parking lot.

JESS

Hey that lady's got her phone out! It looks like she's taking a picture!

C.J.

No she's not, it's fine.

TYLER

If she gets a picture of our out of state plates were actually screwed. Just hurry up dude. Get back on the highway now.

CJ struggles with gears under the great deal of pressure, he shifts into first and the car jolts out of the parking lot.

INT. CJ'S CAR ON ROUTE 66 - NIGHT

The three of them are continuing on their road trip. The car is silent.

C.J. is visibly upset, his legs are shaking and he is sulking in his seat staring out the windshield. He breaks the silence.

C.J.

Damn, I'm still bugging about that old lady. That was so weird.

TYLER

You might have just ruined everything you know. For Bobby's sake I wish you would just be smart for once.

C.J.

For Bobby's sake?! He's not here anymore. That's the whole point of this trip! You need to move on.

Tyler turns around from the window and punches C.J.

TYLER

Fuck you C.J., you don't know what it's like to lose a brother.

(beat)

You guys have been acting like you know what you're talking about since his funeral. But you never will.

C.J. rolls his eyes and returns to sulking in his seat.

JESS

Tyler, I'm sorry. I just wanted to help you... That's all.

CUT TO:MONTAGE

INT. CJ'S CAR ON ROUTE 66 - NIGHT

The three of them continue driving. Tyler has his headphones in and his arms crossed. C.J. is driving with a straight, emotionless face. Jess's eyes water up as she looks out the window. The car remains silent for some time.

Jess breaks the silence by pulling Tyler's headphones off his head.

TYLER

What the hell?

JESS

Listen up you two. It's time to make-up already. This is bigger than us all. We have a long trip ahead of us, let's put this behind us now.

Tyler picks up his head and CJ turns to Tyler. They make eye-contact for a solid 5 seconds before C.J. gives in.

C.J.

Yeah I'm sorry bro. I could never be mad at you. I know I can be a piece of shit. But I'm here for you. This trip is for you. I'll always be there for you.

TYLER

You're not a shit. Well maybe sometimes. But I love you buddy.

(MORE)

TYLER (CONT'D)
 Let's get ready for some fun in
 Boulder. We deserve it.

Tyler turns on the radio. R. Kelly's Ignition remix is playing.

JESS
 Aw, this was Bob's favorite song!

The group collectively smiles and begin singing along.

Up ahead, a sign above the highway has a flashing font with bright orange and yellow lights glowing.

C.J.
 What the hell is that?

JESS
 Hmm.. I can't really tell.

As they pull closer to the sign, they can make out the flashing message - OHIO PLATES 826 4HJT - WANTED FOR ASSAULT ON OLD LADY

A collective groan is made in the car.

C.J.
 Ohhhh noooo...

The three of them each look at the sign with a terrified expression.

Jess panics in the backseat

JESS
 Stop the car! Let me out! I want to go home right now!

Tyler grabs Jess's hand and looks her in the eye and tries to get her to calm down.

TYLER
 Relax Jess! We can figure this out.
 C.J., what do we do?

C.J.
 Listen. If we just stay focused,
 drive smart, and get out of the
 state soon - we should be fine.
 Right?

TYLER

Right

(beat)

Let's just keep going. No more stops. We're fine.

CUT TO:

INT. CJ'S CAR ON ROUTE 66 - NIGHT (30 MINUTES LATER)

30 minutes later three of them finally begin to catch their breath. CJ even cracks a nervous smile. Tyler gives him a pat on the back.

TYLER

We're going to be fine. We're almost in Kansas.

In the corner of Tyler's eye he sees red and blue flashing lights. His heart sinks.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Oh no...

JESS

What is it?

CJ and Jess look at Tyler's view and realize they are being pulled over.

Jess faints.

TYLER

What the hell! Why are we being pulled over? How is that possible?

C.J.

Shit.

TYLER

What is it?

C.J.

I've had my blinker on for the past half hour. I couldn't even hear it over R. Kelly.

Tyler sinks into his chair and smiles at his unbelievably bad luck.

TYLER

We're dead. All because of an R&B singer that peed on some poor girl 10 years ago.

CJ pulls the car over to the side of the road. His hands are shaking. C.J. checks his weed stash and tries taking some deep breaths.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Just how much stuff did you bring in your bag?

C.J.

Enough to put us away for a couple weekends. It also doesn't help that Jess is unconscious in the backseat.

Tyler takes his seat belt off and tries to help Jess wake up.

Stepping out of the police car is Deputy Dick Richards. He has a stocky build with a buzz cut and thick mustache.

He coughs and spits a giant loogie on the ground. He begins walking toward C.J.'s car, flashlight in one hand and handcuffs in the other.

CUT TO:

INT. MISSOURI COUNTY JAIL CELL

Our three friends share a jail cell in a desolate county jail in the middle of nowhere. The toilet seat is half broken, the walls are peeling, and there's only one bed.

Tyler and Jess are sitting next to each other on a bench in the cell. C.J. is laying on the bed looking at the ceiling.

C.J.

I'm so sorry Tyler. This is all my fault. I just wanted this trip to be special and for you.

JESS

And you managed to screw it all up. I was going to go to college one day you know. It's not only Tyler you screwed over.

C.J.

I know... I'm so sorry.

C.J. turns over on the bed and shuts his eyes trying not to cry.

Tyler stands up and walks over to C.J. and puts his hand on his back.

TYLER

Listen. This trip wasn't for me. It was for Bob. You didn't screw me over or ruin anyone's life. In fact, I'm better than ever. This will be the trip we made for my brother and I can go on with my life now.

C.J. turns over and looks at Tyler. Tyler gives him a hug.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I could never be mad at you bro.

C.J.

Somehow I doubt you'll make it to your lacrosse game Tuesday.

Tyler laughs and waves for Jess to come over and join them.

THE END