

RAISING THE STEAKS

Written by

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INT. HONDA CR-V - EARLY EVENING

AUSTIN, 18, hops in the car as his dad, MIKE, 56, sings along to Juice Newton's "Angel of the Morning," tapping the steering wheel as he waits.

MIKE

"...of the morr-ni-ing, Angel! Just touch my cheek before I lea-aave, baby."

AUSTIN

Dad!

MIKE

Huh? Oh! Hey, bud. Did you put the key in the slip and fill out the service form?

AUSTIN

Yeah, car should be ready in a couple of days, I think.

MIKE

They usually call when they're done but I don't imagine it taking very long for some routine service.

Mike puts the car in drive and drives the short distance from the garage to their house. Mike pulls into the driveway.

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

They exit the car and enter the house together.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

School pictures of Austin from nearly every age are scattered around the room. It is a cozy space with two big couches, ottoman and chair. There is a what looks to be a bookcase but is actually a CD holder.

MIKE

Jackie! Ooo what's that delicious smell? Are those salmon cakes?

JACKIE

(laughing)

Salmon cakes and Mac n cheese, Austin! Come set the table; we're just about ready to eat.

Austin and Mike walk into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

JACKIE
How's it going?

Mike sits down at the kitchen table. Austin gathers plates from the nearby cupboard and begins setting the table.

MIKE
Doing all right.

JACKIE
You know, you boys should really check this out. It's a list of the best cheese steaks in Philly. I found it on Thrillist. Might be something you guys could check out?

She hands her phone to Mike who glances at it.

MIKE
That looks pretty cool. Cheese steaks? Tasting?

Mike turns to Austin, then back to Jackie.

MIKE
But, Jac. Doesn't this seem too tourist-y to you? We live in Philadelphia.

Mike chuckles.

JACKIE
Of course, it does, but it also looks like fun!

MIKE
Austin, what do you think about this?

He slides Jackie's phone toward Austin. Austin picks the phone up and scrolls through the list.

AUSTIN
Hmm. Looks pretty cool.

MIKE
I think this could be really fun! Look, look, number 1 is Big Charley's Cheese Steak. We can do one a week and then have Charley's last. You know, right before you leave for school.

AUSTIN

Okay? I mean, sure. I want to hang out with my friends this summer, though. I'm supposed to help out with some filming. We're shooting, like, long board stuff. And Michelle, I want to spend time with my girlfriend before we part ways, you know?

MIKE

There we go! Let's start tomorrow! We've only got 10 weeks to make this happen. Oh, Austin. Austin, you'll have plenty of time for your friends and Michelle.

AUSTIN

Oh, okay. What time, tomorrow?

MIKE

Bright and early. Don't worry. I'll burn us a CD for some "dope" tunes.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Austin walks in bleary-eyed and tired rubbing his face as Mike pours coffee into a travel mug.

MIKE

Morning, Sunshine!

AUSTIN

Ugh. Why are we doing this so early, again?

MIKE

Early? This isn't early. It's nearly 11.

AUSTIN

Ugh, Dad. Gimme a second to wake up.

Mike reaches for the keys and picks up the travel coffee mug. He walks to the door and opens it, gesturing for Austin to leave.

MIKE

Come on, bud.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

The two men get into the same Honda CR-V.

INT. HONDA CR-V - MORNING

Mike starts the car and begins driving.

MIKE

All right! Geno's first!

AUSTIN

Dad, I really only like cheese steaks from Dalessandro's.

MIKE

Okay, fancy pants. Might you grace me with your presence at Geno's? It's part of the trip. Heck, you might even like Geno's better.

AUSTIN

Yeah, sure. What time are we going to be back, though? I'm supposed to meet people around 2 o'clock.

MIKE

Give it a chance, Austin. But, I don't know. We'll see how busy they are.

AUSTIN

Okay, okay. I know. I just promised the guys that I would film.

Austin turns his head to the window and stares out it for the rest of the ride. Mike switches on the CD player. "Hotel California" plays in the car as Mike begins tapping his fingers on the steering wheel.

EXT. GENO'S STEAKS - LATE MORNING

Mike and Austin open the door and walk into Geno's. They're greeted with a line with at least 20 people waiting.

MIKE

This is why I wanted to get here early.

INT. GENO'S STEAKS - 1 HOUR LATER

Mike and Austin are seated. They order immediately.

MIKE

Hi, how you doing?

WAITER

Good, good, what can I get you folks to drink?

MIKE

I'll take an unsweetened iced tea, please.

AUSTIN

Coke, please.

WAITER

Okay, be right back with those.

MIKE

I think we're ready to order, actually. Austin?

AUSTIN

Uh, yeah. Can I get one provolone without?

MIKE

I'll take the same.

WAITER

I'll get that all in for you, folks.

MIKE

Thank you.

Austin texts under the table.

MIKE

So, what're you and your friends shooting?

AUSTIN

Ah, this really cool long board trick down in the park. It's gonna be sick. Chase is gonna come down the pipe and flip the board. Ugh, it's gonna be so cool.

MIKE

So, you have to be back at 2
o'clock?

AUSTIN

Yep. That's what time worked the
best.

INT. JIMMY'S STEAKS - MORNING

Mike and Austin sit across from each other eating cheese
steaks.

MIKE

What's on the agenda for today?

AUSTIN

I think some editing for a recent
shoot, but Michelle wants to hang
out later, too.

MIKE

Ah, Michelle. How is the lucky
lady?

AUSTIN

(blushing)
She's fine. We're good.

MIKE

Ooo. I see.

AUSTIN

Yeah, we might hang out later
tonight.

Austin takes another bite of his sandwich.

EXT. SOPHIA'S - LATE MORNING

Austin and Mike wait in line at the famous food truck.

INT. DALESSANDRO'S - NIGHT

Austin and Mike sit in a crowded area, tables jammed into one
another.

AUSTIN

This! This is what I'm talking
about.

Austin takes another bite and groans.

MIKE

(smiling)

Okay, okay. Wait until you get to Big Charley's, eh?

AUSTIN

(mouth full of food)

Okay, okay.

INT. CAMPO'S DELI- EARLY EVENING

Mike sits in a booth munching on fries he ordered.

EXT. PARK - EARLY EVENING

Austin and CHASE, 18 and lanky, film their friend DEREK, 18 with more muscle than Austin and Chase combined, skate off a park bench into nearby bushes.

AUSTIN

Yikes!

CHASE

That had to hurt. You good, man?!

Derek is half in the bushes but manages to give the other two a thumbs up. The three laugh.

AUSTIN

Yo! I got that all on tape! I gotta snap chat you in those bushes, though.

Austin is still laughing when he pulls out his phone and sees the time.

AUSTIN

Shit! I was supposed to meet my dad for cheese steaks!

CHASE

Cheese steaks? Really?

Austin starts packing up his camera and tripod.

AUSTIN

Yeah, it's our summer plan. We go to a different cheese steak place each week.

It's pretty fun, not gonna lie.
Yeah, it's corny but I don't know.

Austin starts running to his car. He looks back.

AUSTIN
I'll text you guys!

INT. CAMPO'S DELI - 40 MINUTES LATER

Austin runs into the restaurant, camera bag slung across his chest, out of breath.

AUSTIN
Sorry, Dad. Shooting ran late. I completely spaced on this.

Mike looks down at the empty plate of fries in front of him and then back up to Austin.

MIKE
We had plans, Austin. If you're not going to follow through then at least let me know.

AUSTIN
I know, I know. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to lose track of time and then Derek wiped out in the bushes. It was a lot. It won't happen again.

INT. MCNALLY'S TAVERN - EARLY EVENING

Austin checks his phone as Mike sits down at the table they're seated at.

AUSTIN
Dad, I'm so sorry. Michelle wants to see a movie later. Is there any chance we could get these to-go?

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Austin enters the living room and throws his camera bag on the floor. Mike is sitting with the newspaper open and a cheese steak wrapper next to him.

MIKE
Where the hell have you been?

Austin looks up from his phone in bewilderment.

AUSTIN
What? Oh, shit-

MIKE
Hey!

AUSTIN
I completely forgot.

MIKE
Oh, really? What was so important that you didn't answer your phone? Huh? I pay enough money for that device that it wouldn't hurt for you to pick up when I call.

AUSTIN
Aw, man. I forgot, I guess. The guys and I were in the middle of some intense editing. Derek was showing me how to compress this file and...I lost all track of time.

MIKE
That sounds like a bunch of bull.
(beat)
I really thought you might mature before going to school, hang out with your old man one last time. Your friends are...are they always going to be there? Michelle?

AUSTIN
I know, I know.
(beat)
I'm sorry. It's just really rough right now. I'll try more.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Austin comes down the stairs and Mike is on his iPad. As he sees Austin he looks up.

MIKE
Hey, where are you off to?

AUSTIN
Ah, you know an "end-of-the-summer" party.

Austin makes quotes with his fingers and continues his advance toward the door.

MIKE

Aren't we going to Big C's? Tonight is the last night they're open for the summer.

AUSTIN

Yeah, yeah it is-

MIKE

When are you going to be home?

AUSTIN

Uhh, I'm not sure? Later?

Austin makes moves to inch out the door.

AUSTIN

I'm not going to see them, Dad. Come on.

Mike goes back to his iPad.

MIKE

Well, Big Charley's closes at 11.

Austin is out the door and half running/jogging to Chase's car parked in the cul de sac right in front of his house. He opens his friend's dilapidated car door and sits down in the 2003 Saturn ION. Wrappers from various fast food restaurants litter the floor as Drake's "One Dance" blares from the speakers.

INT. 2003 SATURN ION - EVENING

AUSTIN

(screaming over the music)

Yo!

CHASE

Yo!

Austin's butt touches the seat and Chase peels out of the cul de sac and races down the road. Austin rushes to get the rest of his body in the car and shuts the door.

CHASE

You ready, man?

Chase comes to an abrupt stop at a red light about to cross traffic jerking them both forward. He looks over at Austin.

AUSTIN

Hell yeah, dude. What do you think it is that we have to do? Seniors from last year wouldn't tell me.

CHASE

(laughing)

I don't know, I just hope girls will be there.

AUSTIN

I mean, it is a party. Why wouldn't girls be there?

CHASE

Shit, man, I don't know. I'm just here for the ladies.

AUSTIN

"The ladies?" Ha! Who are you trying to fool?

Austin looks out the window and sees all trees. They are deep into the forest. They continue driving until they reach a house tucked away, further into the woods than not.

AUSTIN

Is this is the right house, Chase?

CHASE

Yeah, yeah this was the address I was given. I think it's probably gonna be seniors here first and then everyone else is coming in an hour or so. Ya know? So we can do whatever it is?

AUSTIN

Yeah, yeah, I guess.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

The two get out of the car and start walking towards the house. They reach the door and knock, waiting. The door flies open revealing DREW, 18, and another one of Austin's friends. Drew is shorter than Chase with a squat, football-dense body.

DREW

Yo, yo, yo! How we doin!!

He grabs first Chase then Austin exuberantly and ushers them inside.

INT. ENTRYWAY - EVENING

They get shoved into the dirty house and are faced with more Drake music and sounds coming from a nearby bedroom.

AUSTIN

Aye, what's going on upstairs?

DREW

Ah, that's where most people are.
We're doing it right now. Wanna
join? Do you? You should. Let's go.

Drew is talking rapidly and Austin has to lean in to catch every other word.

AUSTIN

Uh, okay? Chase and I should go
upstairs?

DREW

Yas! You should! Ha ha I've had
like 3 bumps so far.

AUSTIN

Huh?

DREW

Oh, you'll see, you'll see.

Drew starts spastically dancing as the song changes to some cacophonous Skrillex song. Chase and Austin look at each other and start walking into a nearby room.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

The two follow the music and reach the room where everyone is. Austin opens the door and finds all the guys, all his friends, roaring. He looks closer at the coffee table they're all hunched around. Lines of cocaine are dispersed on the glass surface and guys have rolled up dollar bills snorting them.

AUSTIN

Uh, what's going on here?

CHASE

Senior rite of passage, man! Come
on! Let's do a line. Sorry, man, I
knew they were doing this. Drew
told me a week ago. Didn't want to
ruin the surprise!

Austin watches as Drew breezes past them and takes another line wiping his nose and chasing it with a Natural Light beer. Austin takes out his cell phone and texts Michelle.

AUSTIN (TEXT)
Hey, this party isn't what I expected.

MICHELLE (TEXT)
What do you mean?

AUSTIN (TEXT)
Hella drugs and I don't know, where are you? On your way? Not really sure I'm game for this.

MICHELLE (TEXT)
Okay, I might come for a little, not sure yet.

AUSTIN
I think I'd just rather go to Charley's with my dad. It is the last night.

Austin looks up at Chase.

CHASE
Come on, dude.

AUSTIN
I think I'll drink first. Get my juices flowing and then come back, cool?

CHASE
Dude, you better.

AUSTIN
Eh, I might.

Chase shakes his head eager to snort the cocaine. Austin leaves the room and makes his way to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Austin finds noticeably less people in the kitchen and sees the time on the stove, 10:30 PM.

AUSTIN
Shit.

Austin reaches into the fridge where 5 other people are standing and grabs a beer. He waves to them and leans against the counter. One couple starts making out not 2 feet away from him and starts knocking over beer cans as they try to sit on the counter. Austin makes a disgusted snort and leaves the house.

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING

Austin throws the beer into the yard, pulls his phone out of his jeans and dials it. The phone rings once, twice, three times. He is sure it is going to go to voice mail.

MIKE

Hello?

AUSTIN

Dad? Hey, it's me.

MIKE

What's up, Austin?

AUSTIN

Dad, I don't know. Can we grab that last cheese steak? I'm really craving Charley's right now.

There is silence on the other end of the phone before Mike answers.

MIKE

Sure, bud.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

The same Honda CR-V pulls up in the driveway as Austin walks toward the car.

INT. HONDA CR-V - EVENING

Austin gets into the car and buckles in.

MIKE

Everything okay?

AUSTIN

Yeah. No. I don't know.

Mike drives off and gets on the highway.

MIKE
What happened?

AUSTIN
I'm not really sure. All I know is
that a cheese steak is probably the
best thing I can think of right
now.

Mike reaches up into his visor for a CD. He puts the CD into
the player but doesn't turn it on.

EXT. BIG CHARLEY'S CHEESE STEAK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Austin and Mike rush to the restaurant's entrance.

INT. BIG CHARLEY'S CHEESE STEAK - NIGHT

Austin and Mike enter the restaurant and order their
sandwiches.

MIKE
Without provolone?

AUSTIN
Actually, no. With.

They get their cheese steaks to go and walk back to the
parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Austin and Mike walk back to their car.

INT. HONDA CR-V - NIGHT

Austin and Mike get into the car and buckle in.

MIKE
You know what?

AUSTIN
What?

MIKE
Let's go eat these somewhere.

AUSTIN
Where?

MIKE

You'll see.

Mike starts driving as Austin shoves a fry into his mouth. Mike hits play on the CD he put in the car. Harry Chaplin's voice envelopes the car with lyrics to "Cats in the Cradle."

EXT. FESTIVAL PIER - NIGHT

AUSTIN

Here?

MIKE

Here.

Mike parks in the lot closest to the pier to see the water. He grabs the takeout bag and shuts the car door behind him.

EXT. FESTIVAL PIER - NIGHT

Mike proceeds to sit on the hood of the CR-V waiting for Austin to join. Austin crawls onto the hood with Mike as Mike hands Austin a sandwich. They proceed to unwrap the cheese steaks and take their first bites.

FADE TO BLACK.