

# Location: Highway. Time: Near Dusk

by

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## DESCRIPTION

Adam is picked up for causing a disturbance on the highway when she sees the seventh deer hit and left to die.

## CHARACTERS

- ADAM, played by a woman
- DREW, state police interrogator - female. SEAN's boss.
- SEAN, state police interrogator - male.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Three chairs
- Sound effects

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*DREW stands in a half-light or down-light. She is neatly dressed, compact in her jacket and skirt and heels (or pants—she would wear them as well).*

*On the left lapel of DREW's suit jacket, worn below a small flag pin, is a US Army unit insignia pin: 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.*

*DREW rubs in lotion with obsessive care—each knuckle, each cuticle—as if she were Lady Macbeth washing off blood.*

*Once she is done with this meticulous ritual, she holds both hands out flat.*

*They tremble.*

*She continues to hold them out.*

*They continue to tremble.*

*She balls both hands into tight fists, then opens them and shakes them out.*

*They tremble.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Lights shift to the lights of an office. SEAN bears two cups of coffee, one of which he hands to DREW, and two folders tucked under his arm. It takes both of DREW's hands to hold the cup steady, something which SEAN does not miss.*

DREW

Thanks.

SEAN

How can we begin a day without the nectar of the gods? You okay?

DREW

Right as rain.

*DREW is not convinced of her answer.*

SEAN

Because your hands—again—

*DREW raises the coffee cup as if raising a chalice.*

DREW

Here's to an easy day.

*SEAN raises his cup as well, then hands her a folder.*

SEAN

To an easy day, then.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Lights up on ADAM in a chair at a table, under interrogation lights. DREW and SEAN enter the space.*

*ADAM wears leather driving gloves, and her white shirt and her jacket are stained with what looks like blood.*

*DREW and SEAN put their folders on the table, open them. DREW moves three items out of the folder onto the table itself.*

Easy— DREW

Or hard. SEAN

*SEAN and DREW exchange an experienced look.*

We can do this— DREW

Easy or hard. SEAN

Choice is yours. Because what you did made it hard for everyone. DREW

What is it that you think I did? ADAM

No no no—too quick. DREW

What am I charged with? ADAM

Too quick. Take us back— DREW

*DREW finds what she wants in the paperwork.*

Adam. Adam. DREW

*DREW pauses long enough to have both SEAN and ADAM look at her. She is mulling over the significance of the name.*

Adam. The not-male Adam. How did that one slip by? DREW

SEAN

The not-male Adam engaged in—well, why don't you tell us in what you were engaged. Out on that highway.

DREW

Near dusk—dusk is a dangerous time.

SEAN

Made more dangerous by your misparked vehicle—and the spectacle of—in the break-down lane—of—

*DREW indicates for SEAN to stop.*

DREW

Of exactly what—Adam? Make us see.

*ADAM says nothing. DREW slides over the three items she had taken out of the folder, one at a time.*

DREW

Then at least tell us about these. They were dangling from your rearview mirror.

SEAN

Obstructing your view.

*DREW holds up her hand. SEAN backs down.*

*ADAM slides one back.*

ADAM

A rosary—made out of apple seeds—applewood cross—for the saving of a soul.

*ADAM slides another one back.*

ADAM

St. Francis of Assisi—patron saint of—

DREW

Of animals—I know—

ADAM

Why would I expect a person like you to know that?

DREW

And this one?

*ADAM pats her left breast, just about where a lapel pin would be if she had a suit jacket on.*

ADAM

You would already know about that one—I saw that when you walked in.

DREW

Stop doing that.

ADAM

It's a memorial card, for one of the "fallen heroes"—

DREW

Stop. Doing. That.

*ADAM stops patting her "lapel."*

ADAM

One of our fallen heroes—

*ADAM claps her hands.*

ADAM

"I've fallen, and I can't get up!" My fallen friend, who got his carcass left by the side of some fuck-all desert road. You probably know about that because I think you've got a fuck-all desert road stuck right there, over your heart—the fuck-all desert road of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines—

*ADAM clamps up. DREW just watches her. SEAN shuffles through his papers.*

SEAN

No resistance to the arrest. The officers said she just played dumb—"dumbstruck" was how they put it. Maybe it's dumb fuck—can't read the writing—perhaps she just wanted the venison.

*ADAM jams her hand, palm up, forward, as if honking a horn.*

SOUND: A heavy truck, 18-wheeler, jams on its brakes, screeches its tires.

SOUND: The high blast of an air horn.

ADAM  
Not dumbstruck—

DREW  
Not dumb fuck—

ADAM  
—just nothing to say to your officers—I'd said it all already—

SEAN  
Said what, Adam? We need your words. The system thrives on the confession.

*Again, ADAM says nothing, but she pounds the table with her fists.*

SOUND: The panting of the stopped truck's engine.

SOUND: The smash of a tire iron against the metal fender of the truck.

SEAN  
Maybe she thought she was doing public service. Maybe she secretly desires to be a transportation maintenance worker—

SOUND: An air horn.

SOUND: The pinging of a truck backing up.

SEAN  
Maybe she has deep spiritual cravings expressed through clean roadsides—

*ADAM finishes pounding, stares at the table.*

SOUND: A truck pulls away and recedes as it moves up through its gears.

*DREW sits, rests her chin on her balled hands, stares at ADAM.*

DREW

A saint. A saint of nature—earth mother—

*ADAM finally looks up to show her face.*

ADAM

It was respect. It was justice—something I would think you would—

DREW

I hate saints. Saints make you think they're doing something for free. No selfishness. No greed. Like they've got clean hands. I know for a fact that clean hands do not exist.

*ADAM's breathing is heavy. She looks away.*

*DREW still rests her chin on her hands.*

DREW

Why, Adam? Why?

*An active silence.*

ADAM

Because we live in such savage times.

*For some reason, these words strike SEAN, a reaction he doesn't hide.*

CHAR

It was the seventh one in as many miles—I counted. Seven deer in seven miles.

*ADAM shoves herself away from the table.*

*SEAN makes a move toward ADAM, but DREW motions him to a stop.*

*ADAM starts moving her left and right feet as if she were double-clutching and driving a semi in a hurry, held back by traffic, by the idiots of the world.*

ADAM

C'mon. C'mon. C'mon. C'mon. Move. Move it. C'mon. C'mon.  
C'mon. Move over. C'mon. C'mon. Fuck. Tourists. Move over.  
C'mon. Late. No mercy. C'mon.  
C'monc'monc'monc'monc'monc'mon—

SOUND: The high hiss of air brakes and, audible underneath, the thump of something being hit.

*ADAM can barely contain her rage, which she covers with an ironic tone.*

ADAM

Aw fuck, hit one again.

*Silence settle backs into the room.*

ADAM

It was the seventh one in as many miles.

SEAN

Did he hit all the previous six?

ADAM

Probably not.

SEAN

So why tailgate him? Why force him off the road—

ADAM

Because I witnessed. Young. Sleek. Even from as far away as I was, I could see that.

SEAN

So the deer came up from—

ADAM

Melted up out of the woods—

SEAN

Right.



ADAM

Onto the edge of the road.

SEAN

Right.

ADAM

Young. Sleek. Ten hands at the shoulder. Skin quivering—

DREW

You couldn't have seen that.

ADAM

I saw it! Fur—reddish umber. White-flecked.

DREW

Embellishing.

ADAM

Testifying. High neck held up. Wanting to cross. It stepped. What had such weight, sailed! What had such line, snapped! Gone. Truck—gone. Sleek—gone. We live in savage times. It was the seventh one in as many miles.

SEAN

How did you manage the body? How—a hundred, at least—hundred and a half, maybe—

DREW

The power of saints.

SEAN

I ask because it's not in the notes.

*DREW gets up, strides to ADAM. DREW puts her face just inches away from ADAM's. SEAN moves to the table.*

DREW

Cradling the damn thing, the deer as dead as dead could be made dead—so what do you think were you testifying to?

ADAM

Every comfort we have—every comfort that comforts us—requires a sacrifice of blood.

*ADAM pats her left “lapel.”*

ADAM

Of. Some. One. Of. Some. Thing. Deer. 1st Battalion. I was bringing it back.

*DREW snaps back from ADAM.*

ADAM

You would know about being sacrificed.

SOUND: Cacophony, gunshots, blurred screams, an explosion.

SEAN

Detective?

SOUND: Battle recedes.

*DREW stares at them both. ADAM stares at DREW. DREW moves back to the table.*

DREW

What are you looking at?

ADAM

I don't know.

SEAN

Detective—

DREW

I'm fine—she should be checked for ticks, diseases—

SEAN

I can set that up.

DREW

So go set it up—go! Fine. Thank you. I'm fine.

*SEAN leaves.*

*An active silence. ADAM breaks it.*

ADAM

What had such weight, sailed. What had such line, snapped.  
Gone. Truck—gone. Sloop—gone. We live in savage times.

DREW

Stand up!

*ADAM stands.*

SOUND: Battle mayhem and confusion that DREW had heard before.

*DREW stands only inches away from ADAM, scans her face.*

ADAM

How many did you lose?

DREW

It was necessary.

ADAM

Slaughter is never necessary.

DREW

Whatever you think you did out there with that deer doesn't  
change that what happened—happens—out there—

ADAM

In the fuck-all desert—

DREW

—is necessary, we need it—

ADAM

It's grotesque.

DREW

—because it keeps that truck putting food on the table and we  
stay warm at night and that's what makes us more than animals.

ADAM  
Makes us monsters.

DREW  
Makes us civilized.

*DREW pulls back, puts space between them.*

ADAM  
How many of your butchered friends did you have a chance to  
rescue from the side of that fuck-all desert road?

*Without preamble, DREW smashes ADAM to the floor. ADAM falls as if struck by a truck,  
doesn't move.*

SOUND: Battle noise interspersed with the RPMs of a truck, an air horn, a thump of a deer  
being hit.

*DREW makes a short, abrupt gesture, and the sounds go away.*

*ADAM gets on her hands and knees, then sits back on her heels. She stares at DREW.*

DREW  
I don't suppose in your daze of glory you got the plate number, the  
company—

*ADAM reaches into her jeans, pulls out a paper, hands it to DREW.*

*DREW walks to the table, puts the paper in the folder. She returns the three items to the folder.  
She closes the folder.*

*They wait.*

*ADAM gets up, unkinks herself, sits.*

ADAM  
There's going to be hell to pay, isn't there?

DREW  
I was able to rescue one.

ADAM  
Out of how many?

DREW  
Out of too many.

ADAM  
At least one. Best you could do. I only got one too—seventh one  
in as many miles. On the fuck-all desert road.

*SEAN returns.*

SEAN  
We're lucky—can get her in now.

*DREW steps back so that SEAN can escort her out, which he does.*

*DREW opens the folder, takes out the rosary. She lets it dangle from her fingers. Then she starts moving the beads through her fingers, her hands shaking. She may also be praying, but there's no way of knowing that.*