

**BOOMERANG**

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

Pissing rain. The road in deluge. A dated SEDAN splashes past.

SUPER: "Indiana. 1987."

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - CONT.

At the wheel, sporting two days worth of stubble and lack of sleep, is JERRY HOLLAND. A disenchanted 40, Jerry has the bearing of a man whose best days are behind him, and hates it.

Jerry nods off, lulled by the rhythmic sweep of windshield wipers. He shakes his head, jogging himself awake.

For all the good it does. Within moments he's nodded off again. Then...

A loud, ugly THUD jars Jerry awake. He catches a split-second glimpse of SOMETHING as it SMASHES the windshield and rolls up and over the sedan. He slams the brakes.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - CONT.

The sedan skids a good hundred feet on the slick road before finally coming to a stop.

INT. SEDAN - CONT.

Jerry stares ahead, knuckles white around the wheel. Too afraid to look into his rearview. He shifts into park.

JERRY

Please. Please, please, please...

He retrieves a flashlight from the glove compartment. Takes a breath, readying himself.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT (CONT)

Jerry climbs out into the rain and aims his flashlight back down the road. Something there, a hundred feet back. Hard to make out through the rain.

Baby steps. Almost there, his stomach drops. What is clearly a twisted HUMAN ARM extends from the heap. Jerry sinks to his haunches, horrified by what he's done.

DEPUTY (V.O.)

Have you been drinking, sir?

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

Jerry, pale and shaky from shock, sits across from a young DEPUTY.

JERRY  
I don't drink.

DEPUTY  
You on something?

JERRY  
On something?

DEPUTY  
Weed, opiates?

JERRY  
No.

Deputy gives Jerry a look over, notices how exhausted he looks.

DEPUTY  
When's the last time you slept?

Deputy SLAPS his desk, jolting Jerry to.

DEPUTY  
Hey! I asked you a question.

SHERIFF (O.S.)  
Tommy.

Deputy looks over to see the SHERIFF moseying over. Big guy, bit of a gut, Mark Twain mustache.

SHERIFF  
Take a break.

DEPUTY  
Right now?

SHERIFF  
Yes, right now. G'on, shake a leg.

DEPUTY  
(not liking it)  
Yes, sir.

Deputy steps away.

SHERIFF  
(to Jerry)  
Step into my office.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sheriff skims Jerry's record on a monitor.

SHERIFF

Clean driving record, no priors,  
insurance and registration up to  
date. Seem a decent sort to me.  
Wanna tell me what happened out  
there?

JERRY

It was my fault. I haven't slept  
in two days. I shouldn't have been  
behind the wheel.

SHERIFF

Then why were you?

JERRY

I was...attending to some personal  
business, out of town.

SHERIFF

What kind of personal business?

JERRY

(struggling with the  
words)

It was a funeral. My dad, he... I  
wanted to stay one more night, get  
a motel room, get some sleep. But  
my wife, she... She was insistent.

SHERIFF

They get that way sometimes, don't  
they?

JERRY

Who was he?

SHERIFF

Piece of shit local name of  
Terrence Mackery. Alcoholic, petty  
criminal. Rap sheet long as my  
third leg.

JERRY

Did he have any family?

SHERIFF

A brother, name of Ben. Even  
bigger piece of shit than he is,  
doin' three to five up at state for  
aggravated assault. What about  
you? You got a family?

JERRY

My wife. Tina.

SHERIFF

Kids?

JERRY

No, we... I can't--you know...

SHERIFF

Impotent?

JERRY

Sterile. I'm sorry, is this line of questioning routine for this kind of--

SHERIFF

Y'know we found an empty fifth of Jack in his coat? That's in addition to the three hundred in cash and the unregistered .38 tucked into his pockets. Turns out, 'bout an hour before you ran into him -- no pun intended -- Mackery knocked off a liquor store here in town. Gave the poor clerk a heart attack, keeled her right over. Sweet old lady. Marcia. Give you the shirt off her back if she thought it'd fitcha. Broke my heart to tell her husband.

JERRY

I'm sorry to hear that.

SHERIFF

I'd just put out on APB when we got your call. If we'da caught him, we'da charged him with murder. State of Indiana, that's a life sentence. Mackery'd done time before, year here, six months there, but a punk like him ain't cut out for a life bit. Which is probably why he jumped in front of your car.

JERRY

What?

SHERIFF

Just deserves, I say. Good news is, that makes you not liable.

JERRY

I'm sorry, that's -- I fell asleep. This was my fault--

SHERIFF

What this was, Mr. Holland, was a suicide. Terrence Mackery was pond scum, looking to avoid a life sentence, so he got lit and threw himself in front of some poor sap's car.

(beat)

In case it ain't clear to you, Mr. Holland, I'm doing you a favor. Go home.

Sheriff goes about his paperwork. Jerry hesitates, as numbed by this sudden turn of events as the incident itself. Finally he stands to leave.

SHERIFF

Mr. Holland?

Jerry pauses.

SHERIFF

You're welcome.

Jerry lingers a beat, then continues out the door.

FADE TO:

BLACK SCREEN.

We hear the motorized stutter of a lawnmower refusing to start.

SUPER: "14 months later."

EXT. HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS - DAY

A modest split-level on a street of similar. Jerry struggles to pull-start his lawnmower. We hear a voice, faint, drowned out by the sputter of the mower. Finally, loudly:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Jerry!

Jerry looks back at the house to see his wife TINA hovering in the front doorway.

TINA

Phone.

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Tina makes lemonade. Jerry grabs the receiver resting atop the wall-mounted phone.

JERRY

This is Jerry. Uh-huh. Now? I'm  
in the middle of--all right. All  
right. Yeah. I'll be right--

CLICK on the other end of the phone. Jerry hangs it up,  
sighs.

TINA

They called you in?

JERRY

Dan had to leave early. Family  
emergency.

TINA

I hope everything's okay.

JERRY

It's Dan. When he says "family  
emergency," translate it as "still  
hung over from last night."

TINA

Don't let them keep you too late.  
Remember we've got bowling with  
Chuck and Sherry tonight. Oh, and  
we have to get a gift for Cindy's  
birthday tomorrow.

JERRY

I was thinking of hitting the lake  
tomorrow.

TINA

And did you think of this before or  
after I told you about Cindy's  
birthday?

JERRY

(defeated)

After.

TINA

Well, there you go then.

Read Jerry's face: "I hate my life."

EXT. TELEPHONE POLE - DAY

Jerry works on a line. He leans back on his harness to wipe  
his brow, glances at the street below. Notices a MAN on the  
street corner. Watching Jerry? Hard to say. Jerry thinks  
nothing of it and turns his attention back to work.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Jerry and Tina hang out with their friends, CHUCK and SHERRY. Chuck bowls a strike, pumps his fist in celebration.

CHUCK  
Pow! Turkey, baby!

SHERRY  
Gobble, gobble!

Tina laughs politely. Jerry's trying hard to look like he's enjoying himself.

CHUCK  
You need six to win, Jer'. Think you can hack it?

JERRY  
Pressure's on.

CHUCK  
Don't worry if you choke. Sherry knows the Heimlich.

Jerry forces a laugh, mutters under breath. He steps to the lane, grabs his ball from the return track, lets it rip. The ball arcs wide, snipers a single corner pin. Chuck HOOTS in victory.

CHUCK  
Yeah, baby! Who's the man?

JERRY  
You're the man.

CHUCK  
Damn straight! Yeah!

Jerry looks to Tina. Notes the disappointment in her face.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Tina and Jerry, carrying their ball cases, approach the sedan.

TINA  
It's like you didn't even try.

JERRY  
Maybe I didn't.

TINA  
What do you mean?

JERRY

You remember the last time I beat him. He pouted like a baby the rest of the night.

TINA

So you're saying you let him win?

Jerry deposits the ball cases in the back seat.

JERRY

I'm saying I made sure he didn't lose.

TINA

Ah. You know, you should try that on yourself sometime.

JERRY

What's that supposed to mean?

TINA

Nevermind.

JERRY

Don't "nevermind" me. What are you saying? That I'm a loser?

TINA

I didn't say that.

JERRY

But you think it.

An awkward moment. Tina trying to think of a save.

TINA

I just think that, sometimes, you could maybe try a little harder--

Jerry motions for her to hush, his eyes locked on something in the b.g.

TINA

You did not just give me the "shut up" hand.

Jerry's locked onto a MAN watching them from a few rows over. We know, and Jerry is starting to catch on, it's the same guy he saw while on the phone pole.

JERRY

Can I help you?

The Man lingers a moment longer -- long enough to make it clear that he is indeed watching Jerry. He backsteps out of sight just as Tina turns to see what's caught Jerry's attention.

TINA

What are you staring at?

Off Jerry, bothered...

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Jerry and Tina browse the toy aisle. Jerry, paranoid, has his head on a swivel.

JERRY

She's your niece. What does she like?

TINA

What does any six year old like these days? My Pretty Pony, Cabbage Patch Kids -- what are you looking for?

JERRY

Nothing. Do they seriously expect us to cough up sixty dollars for a doll?

TINA

They'd do it for us.

JERRY

We don't have kids.

TINA

Whose fault is that again?

Jerry stops. Shattered. Tina looks back at him. Blanches as she realizes what she just said. Her foot must taste like shit.

TINA

Jerry--

JERRY

I'll meet you back at the car.

Jerry heads off.

TINA

Where are you going?

JERRY

Mower needs a spark plug.

TINA

Jerry--

She watches him go, sorry written all over her face.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - AUTOMOTIVE AISLE - NIGHT

Jerry, steamed, snatches a spark plug from a rack.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Jerry exits, bagged plug in hand.

MAN (O.S.)

Nice piece you got there.

Jerry looks aside to see the Man from before leaning against a row of shopping carts. Now we see him clearly. Classic prison rooster build, chain wallet, buzz cut -- you can practically smell the do-not-fuck-with.

JERRY

Sorry?

MAN

I said, nice piece.

Jerry, confused, glances at his bag.

MAN

She as warm and wet as she looks?

Jerry follows the Man's gaze to Tina, waiting obliviously in the sedan. Then it hits him.

JERRY

I saw you. On the corner. At the bowling alley. Why are you following me?

MAN

You tell me.

Jerry thinks a beat. His heart sinks as he realizes:

JERRY

You're the brother. Ben Mackery.

BEN MACKERY smiles. He looks up at the night sky, breathes deeply the crisp air.

BEN

Y'know, they say we this big hole in the ozone, air's all polluted. Damned if I could tell. All I could smell when I stepped outta the pen was freedom. Ain't but one thing smells better, and that's a woman when she's wet. You know, down there. Last couple days I've been wondering -- what does your woman smell like?

JERRY

It was an accident. I didn't mean to--

BEN

Didn't mean to what? Run over my brother, or cover it up?

JERRY

That wasn't my idea.

BEN

But you went along with it.

JERRY

(guilt-ridden)

I'm a good person.

BEN

Are you? Me, I like to hurt people. Eyes of society, that makes me a bad guy. But I ain't never made excuses for nothin' I ever done, and I sure as hell ain't never run and hid from nothin' I ever done. So what does that make you?

Jerry hangs his head.

JERRY

Look, if I could take it back, I would--

He looks back up to find Ben gone. Jerry stands there, alone, under the cold, harsh light of the store entrance.