

"ROAD KILL"

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

We hear the HOLLOW, AIRY SOUND of AIR being blown at the rim of an EMPTY BEER BOTTLE. Whoever's behind all this, pauses and takes a deep long breath.

VIC V.O.

That's me. The sound you hear, it's me. I'm blowing air into an empty bottle. A bottle once filled with ice cold Rolling Rock. One of my favorite beers. In part because it's cheap. No, no, inexpensive is the better word. Cheap has a negative connotation attached to it. Between you and I, I once put back two six packs in less than 4 hours. That's like a beer ever twenty minutes. What's even more crazy, I did all that on a school night. May not seem like much to ya'll, but for me... for me that was one wild night.

(a long deep breath)

Anyway, you're probably wondering why I'm blowing air into an empty bottle or why I'm even telling you all this. In short, it's because I want you to know what it sounded like when I ascended.

(beat)

Here, listen to it again.

Again we hear the same dry, airy sound. This sequence is repeated several times. But it is only on the last blow that **VIC** draws out his breath. At the same time we start to glimpse faint, unfocused images of structures, passing cars and swaying trees. **SUPERIMPOSE: 10 MINUTES EARLIER**

FADE IN:

EXT. ROADSIDE OF A BUSY INTERSECTION - SOUTH CAROLINA - DAY

Several yards ahead, across a wide, nasty intersection rests a ROUTE 76 GAS STATION. It's cold. The midday sun's warmth is subdued by an overcast of dreary clouds. Vehicles and large semi's speed by in both directions chasing a grey world that is recklessly running away from itself. The sound of high-powered engines and honking horns reach a deafening crescendo... And then silence.

A lull in the blurred movement of vehicles allows us to see busy commuters, men and women scrambling to fill their tanks with high-priced gas, imported from some distant foreign land.

VIC V.O.

Yeah, it's fair enough. You can say I was a decent kid. No better or worse than the next. Probably smiled a bit too much, though. My father hated that. Where he grew up a smile on your face was a sign of weakness. Nevermind if you were truly happy.

A heavy breeze picks up. Trees sway even harder. A FEMALE pumping gas holds down her dress. A MAN loses his hat to the wind.

VIC V.O. (CONT'D)

But I was a happy kid. I can honestly say that. Outside of the usual growing pains that we all go through, I had no complaints.

(snickering)

But you know what's funny? I speak about growing pains as if I had a chance to fully experience them.

(takes a hard breath)

Sports made me happy. I loved em. Just about anything active, I did it. Basketball, Track, Football. Those were my favorite. Track came more natural. Football, too. I was pretty muscular in school, but I wasn't tall. Definitely not tall enough to excel at basketball. What's ironic is, my mom never let me play football. She hated the sport. Saw it as more risk than reward. A sport defined by injuries, she'd always say. My twin sister on the other hand, now she was a different story completely. She was involved in sports at a time when women's athletics was gaining notoriety. She was the all-star athlete in the family and literally dominated the competition. Last time we spoke she said she was going to accept an offer to run cross country and play basketball for some college upstate. I'm sure she'll do well.

(MORE)

VIC V.O. (CONT'D)

(solemn beat)

But yeah I had dreams too, y'know? I mean who doesn't? Everyone has dreams. They may not all be realistic, but your dead without em. Dreams pull us through life. Basketball was my unrealistic pipe dream. I swear, I thought I was Michael Jordan in the flesh some days. I remember way back when NBC used to broadcast NBA games on Sundays. Remember that? Remember the theme music?

(hums old NBA on NBC theme song)

(chuckles to himself)

Yup, whoever composed that theme music was a freaking genius, seriously...

(beat)

I'll tell ya, those were the days. I remember coming home from church, running downstairs to my room in the basement, quickly changing out of my church clothes. I would always wear this dirty, dog-eared Nike T-shirt and these black and grey Puma sweat pants. I literally wore that outfit everyday.

(chuckles lightly)

I'd then run back upstairs with a smile on my face and my basketball in my hands and pick a spot on the floor right in front of the TV and watch MJ put on a show. My mom would stand at the edge of the living room, look at me, my clothes and then shake her head. She knew how much I loved basketball. And Michael Jordan. Shoot, everyone loved Mike in those days. Still do. We had this Huffy basketball goal in the backyard, made out of graphite. During commercial breaks I'd run out, dribble the ball between my legs and toss up shots as if I were Jordan. Granted, most of my shots were bricks, but hey, Jordan missed, too, didn't he?

(deep sigh)

That was my dream alright. My pipe dream that is. My mother knew it, too.

(MORE)

VIC V.O. (CONT'D)

She knew it was a dream that would probably never come to fruition. But that never swayed her belief in me. Always, always, always respect your dreams and goals, she'd say. Put in front of you what you want to remember every single day...

Though our **VIC** still remains faceless, we begin hear him sniff in through his runny nose and make a shivering sound suggesting he is getting cold.

VIC V.O. (CONT'D)

It's getting windy out. Cold, too. Good thing the light is about to change. It's a long light, I should know... See, I was on my way to do something that I've loved all my life, which is playing basketball. Me and some friends were planning to meet up for some pick up ball. The courts were across that nasty intersection you're looking at now, in the next neighborhood over. We said we would meet at 1:30. All five of us. Me, Jay, Hakeem, Brendon and Rob. It's about 1:42 now and they're probably standing around wondering where I'm at.

A cell phone begins to RING.

VIC V.O. (CONT'D)

Yup, see. That's probably them now.
(getting choked up)
But y'know something, I'm actually smiling right now. You should see my face. Actually it's probably best you didn't, but what I'm trying to say is, I'm not angry. Not at all. I was happy knowing I would be playing basketball soon with my friends. Laughing. Talking trash. I mean, after all it was an accident. I blame myself really. I didn't abide by the most basic rule every parent repeatedly tells their children. I didn't look both ways. I didn't. Maybe it's partially my fault, I don't know. Cars were goin' pretty fast, but, I can't put it all on them. One thing I do know for certain is, I'm sad.

(MORE)

VIC V.O. (CONT'D)

I'm sad that the world is in such a damn hurry. I was anxious, not gonna lie. I couldn't even wait for the light to change. Something I always wondered was, why people feel they have to speed up, to expedite life instead of just drifting with life's natural current? I don't get it.

(short beat)

Whoever was behind the wheel of those two cars and the large semi, must've been late for something. Or had somewhere real important to be. I heard truck drivers got a lot of pressure with near impossible deadlines n' all, but Jesus H, no one could spare a minute to at least pull over and see what's on the side of the road?

Cars come to a gradual stop as the light changes from green to yellow and then to red. The brakes of a BLUE PICKUP squeal and grind to a screeching halt.

VIC V.O. (CONT'D)

See that old blue dodge truck? The one with the old man with the grey beard getting out? You see him? Yeah? I'm gonna tell God about him.

A **MAN** in his later years exits his blue pickup truck on the drivers side and chucks his cigarette. Steam billows out from the tailpipe of the car ahead as the man circles his truck. He slows down a bit, nearing whatever it is that has caught his eyes with apprehension. He grimaces. Aghast. He leans forward for a closer look when a GHOST-LIKE SPIRIT rises from the ground, hangs about over the pickup before shooting up into the sky.

THE END.