

BIG AL'S AND BUB'S

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CALIFORNIA BY-WAY - NIGHT

A convertible roadster cruises along on a narrow road through the Mojave desert. The Joshua Trees that crowd the shoulder whiz past in the headlights.

SUPER: OWENS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 1995

With no other traffic on the road, the roadster's speed is over the limit and excessive.

INT./EXT. ROADSTER - CONTINUOUS

The lone occupant and driver is MARISA THOMPSON (25). She wears a sundress and a scarf over her head and under her chin to control her long blonde hair.

Marisa, left hand on the steering wheel, yells above the wind and engine noise into a Motorola flip-phone held in her right hand.

MARISA

I'm tellin' ya, Stan. That statement was taken out of context. I would never say that about the studio. Read page...oh, hold on.

Marisa pinches the phone between her shoulder and ear so she can reach to the passenger seat to grab an issue of VOGUE.

MARISA

By the way, I was supposed to be on the cover. Not that second rate Friends bitch!

She can't turn the pages with one hand so she drives with her knee and starts to thumb through the magazine by the light of the dashboard. The car begins to swerve.

MARISA

Okay, page...42. Uh-huh. Right. Hey, what am I paying you for?! You gotta go to the studio and explain-

A HITCH HIKER, holding a cardboard sign for MALIBU, appears in the headlights. Marisa grabs for the steering wheel but cannot turn in time to miss.

There is a sickening THUD of flesh into crumpling steel as the car hits the hitcher square. Blood splatters the windshield and Marisa's face.

The roadster grinds to a stop on the shoulder. One headlight is out and steam rises from the grill.

In a panic, Marisa restarts the roadster and hits the accelerator. The car lurches forward and high-centers. A SCREAM of agony pierces the night.

EXT. CALIFORNIA BY-WAY - CONTINUOUS

She gets out of the car, stands on the center line and stares at her car.

A low GROAN and raspy GASP comes from the undercarriage.

MARISA

Hello? Are you okay?

Marisa takes a hesitant step towards her car. She stops mid-step as bright lights flood the scene from a hundred yards down the road.

The lights reveal an intersection with a gas station and diner. A neon sign reads: BIG AL'S & BUB'S CROSSROADS.

Marisa turns and runs towards the station.

INT. STATION - CONTINUOUS

A cowbell clangs as she opens the door. She enters to see two men standing behind opposing counters.

Behind the diner counter to her left is the bald, fat and red-faced BIG AL (40). He is dressed in a sweat-stained t-shirt and cooks apron.

Behind a cashier counter to her right is the thin, dark haired and red-faced BUB (40). He has a pointy Van Dyke beard and is dressed in greasy mechanic coveralls.

MARISA

Hi, ah, I need some help? I've had an accident.

BIG AL

Hey, hey, Miss Thompson!

BUB

It seems you got troubles, girl.

Marisa is startled.

MARISA

You know me?

BIG AL
Course we do!

BUB
Been expecting you.

BIG AL
You got some decisions to make.

MARISA
We need to call an ambulance.

BUB
Do we?

BIG AL
You sure 'bout that, girl?

The banter back and forth between Big Al and Bub is like a tennis match for Marisa. Her nerves are strained and voice has become rattled.

MARISA
Of course we do!

BIG AL
Have you thought about the press?

BUB
Add that to your statements about
the studio.

BIG AL
Your career will be ruined.

MARISA
But how do you-

BIG AL
Oh, we know.

BUB
And you know.

Marisa stamps her feet and shouts in exasperation.

MARISA
What is this place?!

Both men lean forward on their counters and grin.

BIG AL
It's the crossroads.

BUB
And you have a choice to make.

MARISA
Someone needs help.

BIG AL
Who needs help?

BUB
That hitch hiker?

BIG AL
Probably just a transient.

BUB
A bum.

BIG AL
No one will miss him.

Marisa gawks in disbelief.

MARISA
What choice do we have?

BIG AL
(eyes wide)
We?

BUB
(points to her)
You.

BIG AL
Your choice is whether to let us
take care of it...

BUB
...or not.

BIG AL
Or take care of you...

BUB
...or not.

MARISA
But-

BIG AL
You can call for help and ruin your
career, or-

BUB
 You can have all your studio
 troubles go away and have...let's
 say...twenty-five years of fame and
 fortune?

Bub slides a copy of VOGUE in front of Marisa. It's the same
 issue from earlier except Marisa adorns the cover.

Marisa is dumbstruck and shakes her head.

MARISA
 I...I don't know-

BIG AL
 You'll get what you deserve.

BUB
 An Oscar.

BIG AL
 And we'll get what we deserve.

BUB
 You.

BIG AL
 No one will ever know.

BUB
 But we'll get ours.

Marisa's struggle is real. She presses the heels of her
 hands to her forehead and clenches her eyes shut.

BIG AL
 Time's a'wasting, girlfriend.

BUB
 No pressure. Three, two-

MARISA
 Oh, 0-

INT./EXT. ROADSTER - CONTINUOUS

Marisa is back in the driver seat. The roadster is parked on
 the shoulder with no evidence of any damage. The gas station
 and diner have disappeared.

MARISA
 -kay.

Marisa looks about. On the passenger seat is the VOGUE magazine with her picture on the cover. In her lap is her open flip-phone still on a call. She picks up the phone.

MARISA

Stan? Yes, sorry. The call was lost for a moment. You will?! You're the best. I owe you one. Bye, now.

Marisa flips the phone closed and lets out a long exhale.

MARISA

Here goes nothing.

She turns the ignition. It starts. She puts on her left turn signal and slowly pulls onto the highway. A blood splattered cardboard sign for MALIBU blows out from under the car and into the desert night.

FADE TO BLACK