

INNERSTATE 70

Written by

Tom Stohlgren

Writer:
Email: tjstohlgren@gmail.com
(970) 217-4498
Representation:
Eleni Larchanidou, LL.M.
Literary & Talent Manager
+1 (310) 696-3656
email: managerelenilllm@gmail.com
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FADE IN:

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

We SEE MAXINE (MAX) RAMIREZ (17), a pathologically shy, slovenly dressed Latina in short-cropped hair and glasses, driving an old pickup truck toward a small town on the eastern Colorado plains. She swerves and drives poorly.

We see the town's welcoming sign that reads: "Welcome to Chapman, Colorado." Someone has hand-painted a town motto -- "The other parts of Colorado are prettier." [It's really named Lamar, Colorado]

EXT. BURGER PLACE - NIGHT

Max collects a milkshake from the drive-up window, hiding her face from the Cashier (18). She drives around to the empty parking lot, proud of her accomplishment. She tries unsuccessfully to sip the milkshake, but it's frozen thick.

MAX

Too thick, again!

(angry)

Wish I could leave this place!

Max takes off the plastic lid and can't even stir the near-frozen milkshake. She shakes her head in disgust.

The backdoor of the restaurant opens, and pulling a large plastic garbage can is BRANDON LANGLEY (18), whose filthy apron matches his shabby clothes and long, ratty hair, poorly concealed by his hairnet.

Max turns to watch Brandon drag the heavy can across the parking lot to a dumpster.

Brandon gets to the dumpster, lifts out the plastic trash bag, and the bottom of the bag breaks apart, spilling wet, stinky garbage all over him.

Brandon looks around.

Max quickly turns to look away, and she squeezes her milkshake cup too hard, and half of it spills in her lap.

MAX (CONT'D)

Damnit!

She looks in the rearview mirror while trying to clean up the milkshake with one wimpy paper napkin.

Brandon stomps back to the back door and finds it locked. He pounds on the door. He's furious.

BRANDON

Really, guys? Third time this month?

(anger turns to sadness)

Graduation day?

(deeply depressed)

Tell Harlan, I quit!

INT./EXT. BRANDON'S HOUSE - DAY

The inside of the dump of a house looks nearly empty. Brandon smiles big as he walks from his bedroom to the kitchen with a GoPro camera on a selfie-stick, interviewing himself. Brandon has a small backpack on, and he carries a sleeping bag under his arm.

BRANDON

This is Brandon Langley, about to embark on the epic adventure of a lifetime.

Brandon stops at a photo of his parents. His dad (40), unshaven, holds a shovel. His hefty mom (40) holds a mop.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Pop promised me when I turned eighteen, he was going to give me a ham sandwich and a roadmap.

(beat)

Went out for a carton of cigarettes a few years ago and never came back. Ma still cleans at the county hospital, and I'll call when I can.

Brandon has a note already written for his mom, which reads: "Ma, I'll call when I can. Love ya, Brandon." He drops the note on the table where we SEE a ROAD MAP of Colorado, with a thick purple marker showing the route from Chapman to Burlington to Grand Junction, Colorado; across the state on Interstate 70. There is also a HAM SANDWICH on the table. He picks it up, smiles, and heads out the door.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Ah! White privilege! Let's go pick up my new car and meet my Craigslist traveling companion. Can't be too careful, ya know.

EXT. USED-CAR LOT - DAY

Max sits on the curb outside a dingy used-car lot with a backpack and sleeping bag. She interviews herself with a GoPro on a selfie stick. She SEES Brandon down the street.

MAX

Dumbest idea ever, right? I know it's Brandon Langley, informally voted least likely to succeed in our graduating class of 86 kids, but he doesn't know it's me answering his Craigslist ad. He signed the ad "Brandon L., recent high school grad." It's not that big of a town, Brandon! I signed mine, Max R., not Maxine. He said all I needed was \$100 cash, a sleeping bag, and a GoPro camera to document the epic journey of a lifetime along Innerstate 70!

(snickers)

Innerstate 70? It's Interstate 70, and from one side of Colorado to the other only takes nine hours!

(beat)

He's an idiot! We were in high school together for four years, and even he didn't talk to me.

(beat)

Never been out of the county. I gotta get out -- even if we're back by tomorrow night!

Brandon strolls toward Max until he sees her sleeping bag, backpack, and GoPro camera. He's furious.

BRANDON

You're not Max! You're Maxine!
Maxine Ramirez! Informally voted
"Least Popular Girl" in school!
You're not setting foot in my new
'61 Corvette!

Used-car Salesman, HARRY (55), overweight and smiling, races up in a *1984 Chrysler LeBaron convertible*, washed, but dented. He slams on the squeaky brakes. The car rattles and coughs.

HARRY

She's a real beauty.

Harry whips out a clipboard and pen. Max mumbles.

MAX
'61 Corvette?

BRANDON
That's what I'm calling her! My '61
Corvette.

HARRY
Initial here, here, and here, and
sign here.

BRANDON
What am I initialing? I paid you
yesterday!

Brandon initials and signs, glaring at Max.

HARRY
She's as is. Dashboard lights are
in, just like you wanted. Two very
minor issues. Broken fuel gauge,
always reads full; and iffy water
pump, but you knew that. I knocked
off fifty bucks. You two lovebirds
should have a hell of an epic road
trip.
(laughs)
Innerstate 70, here you come!

Harry sees that Max is disappointed by the car.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Always remember, kids, it's not how
others see you. It's how they see
you in a brand-new used car!

Brandon smiles proudly at his new car.

MAX
(mumbles)
I see myself making a big mistake.

Harry chuckles and shakes his head as he walks away. Max
throws her stuff in the back of the car and hops in.

Brandon glares at Max, but gets in and drives slowly out of
the lot to the main street to the tune of "Route 66."

The engine stalls. He starts it again. He smiles proudly as
Max looks away.

BRANDON
Innerstare 70, here we come!

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

Brandon and Max drive without speaking. We HEAR the theme music to Route 66 in the b.g.

BRANDON
Might be dangerous.

Max looks away.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I might take side trips like on
that old TV show, Route 66.

Max ignores him.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
We'll stop at exciting,
adventurous, and often dangerous
places along the way. Did I mention
dangerous?

Max glances at Brandon long enough to roll her eyes in disgust.

Brandon turns on his GoPro camera, extends the selfie-stick, and interviews himself with Max beside him.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
My Gramps told me about this TV
show when I was a kid. Tod Stiles
and Buz Murdock traveled Route 66,
worked odd jobs along the way, and
had adventures and shit!

Max yawns. Brandon is serious.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I have never been more than twenty-
five miles out of Chapman my whole
life. I just want to see the rest
of the world.

Max looks at Brandon. She sees he's sincere.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
You were the girl who never smiled
and never talked.

Max turns angry and looks away again.

MAX
Take me home.

Brandon slams on the squeaky brakes in the middle of the two-lane road and turns to Max.

BRANDON

Why didn't you smile or talk? Ever!

Max refuses to answer. A big truck is heading down the road towards them. Max is furious.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Why didn't you smile or talk?

The truck gets closer.

The car engine dies. They both panic. Brandon tries to start the car, but it won't start. The truck nears and honks its horn.

Max grabs her stuff and leaps out of the car, racing to the side of the road.

The car still won't start. Max mumbles.

MAX

Get out of there, you idiot!

BRANDON

I can't! It's everything I own. I'm serious.

MAX

(yells)

You're gonna be dead!

The car starts in the nick of time. The truck swerves to miss Brandon. Max flips the truck driver off.

BRANDON

(laughs)

At least you're talking to me.

They continue down the road.

MAX

Are you crazy?

BRANDON

Never call me that!

(beat)

Why didn't you smile or talk?

MAX

Born with a giant, giant space
between my two front teeth.

BRANDON

Geez!

MAX

I didn't smile 'til we got a female dentist in town my freshman year. She knew my folks picked melons and couldn't pay her, so she paid for me to get dental implants.

Max smiles briefly at Brandon, then she looks away.

MAX (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

You don't know what it's like to go through puberty with a big gap between your teeth.

BRANDON

I know exactly what that's like.

Max turns angrily at Brandon.

MAX

You had a big gap between your teeth?

BRANDON

No. I went through puberty!
(realizing he was wrong)
Oh! But by then, your pattern was set? You didn't smile or talk, even after your teeth got fixed?

MAX

Like you getting dumpster duty at the Burger Giant as a Freshman, and having Dumpster Duty as a Senior?

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON

So, you became the least popular girl in school?

MAX

I hated sports and didn't much care to be a popular tramp or a hated four-point-oh award-winning student, so I made sure I had one "B" every semester.

BRANDON

Me, too.

MAX
(sarcastic)
You got all As and one B?

BRANDON
No, I hated sports.

MAX
Shocking! Going to college in the fall?

BRANDON
CCC. Chapman Community College. My grades weren't the best.

MAX
Equally shocking. But you got the '61 Corvette working for you.

BRANDON
Damn straight, I do!
(beat)
Hey, we gotta record this epic adventure.

Max pulls out her GoPro, turns it on, and extends her selfie-stick.

MAX
History, huh? Right between here and I-70 is the Sand Creek Massacre Site. We should stop in for a quick look. Ten minutes max.

BRANDON
What happened there?

MAX
A couple of hundred Indians were killed by the Cavalry in 1864. I read a little about it, but I'd like to see it.

BRANDON
How far off our main route is it?

MAX
Ten minutes. Like I said!

BRANDON
Can't afford it. Schedule to keep.

MAX

You said we'd stop at exciting,
adventurous, and often dangerous
places along the way?

Max looks into the camera and smiles.

BRANDON

First stop on our non-stop epic
adventure: The Sand Creek Massacre
Site!

LATER

They see a sign to the "Sand Creek Massacre National Historic
Site," but they turn prematurely onto a dirt road.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Ten minutes off the main road. No
problem.

Brandon's car swerves along the dirty, bumpy road.

MAX

Sure, this is the right road?

BRANDON

Just following the signs.

On Max's smartphone, we SEE an enlarged MAP of the area which
shows Brandon turned too soon.

Max gathers video evidence as she pulls a water bottle out of
her backpack. She takes a sip as Brandon hits a rut in the
road, and she spills water all over her lap.

MAX

Again?

BRANDON

Can I have a sip? I feel like Larry
of Arabia!

MAX

Lawrence.

BRANDON

If you want to be formal about it.

Max hands Brandon the water bottle as he hits another rut in
the road, and water spills onto his lap. He looks down as a
big tractor enters the road right ahead of them.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
(looking down)
Geez!

MAX
Lookout!

BRANDON
(looks up)
Shit!

Brandon slams on the brakes as the tractor fills the dirt road. It looks like a dust storm.

Brandon honks, but the driver of the loud tractor can't hear him. The Tractor Driver (60) in overalls has earphones on.

Brandon tries to pass, swerving back and forth, to no avail.

MAX
(sarcastic)
This is going to make for an
exciting video.

BRANDON
Epic adventures are never easy!
Didn't you see The Hobbit?

MAX
Read the book. Are you expecting
elves to help you find the gold
ring?

The Tractor Driver drops a grader blade by accident, and he creates a bigger dust storm behind the tractor.

Brandon is furious. Max takes a bandana out of her backpack, wraps it around her face below her eyes, laughs, and keeps filming.

BRANDON
I see how it's going to be!

EXT. SAND CREEK MASSACRE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE - CONTINUOUS

Brandon pulls into the empty parking lot. The car's radiator is steaming hot, so Brandon lifts the hood. Brandon is as hot as the car.

Max pulls off her bandana and steps out of the car.

A Native American Interpreter, IRVING WILD HORSE (35), dressed in a National Park Service-like volunteer uniform (dark green pants, tan shirt), comes to greet them with a smile. He sees them covered in dust, and their pants are wet in the crotch. He points. Irving talks in a mild, almost squeaky, voice.

IRVING
Restrooms are right over there. My name is Irving Wild Horse. I'll be your guide today.

Max and Brandon look at themselves and laugh, a bit embarrassed. They trudge toward the bathrooms.

MAX
(sarcastic)
Exciting and often dangerous adventures along the way.

Irving races to the headquarters door. He leans in the door with a much stronger voice.

IRVING
Leo, hand me the megaphone. It's wrong, but I'm going to have some fun with these two.

Max and Brandon are much cleaner when they exit the restrooms, and their pants are dry. They grab their backpacks from the car.

They see Irving exiting the Headquarters building with a megaphone in his hands and a small backpack on. He races up to Brandon and Max, and readies the megaphone to his lips.

IRVING (CONT'D)
Please form a single-file line.

Brandon and Max stare at each other, bewildered. There are no other people around. They both start their GoPro cameras.

Two FACES (30s-40s; one male, one female) appear in the Headquarters building. They are laughing hysterically. Irving uses the megaphone relentlessly for humor.

BRANDON
Single-file?

Irving turns to wink at the Faces in the Headquarters building.

IRVING

Follow me, and keep an eye out for rattlesnakes.

Irving heads up the trail. Brandon and Max follow in single file, looking for snakes. Brandon whispers to Max.

BRANDON

We really do have to get to Innerstate 70. We're on a tight schedule.

Irving turns angrily with his megaphone.

IRVING

Our people lived and died on this land for fourteen thousand years. Your people have been in this locale for less than two hundred years. Is it too much to ask for a little of your precious time to remind you of our forgotten ancestors?

Irving turns and takes a step.

MAX

(mumbles)

Won't this be fun?

IRVING

What was that?

MAX

And educational!

Irving runs a short way up the trail and turns with an evil smile.

IRVING

Imagine if a 14,000-year epic journey led you to a place as beautiful as this! Take photos and video, please. Remember this until you rudely delete them forever!

Brandon and Max shrug their shoulders at each other, smirk, and take a video of the barren landscape.

BRANDON

We're on a tight schedule.

Irving ignores the teen and walks further up the trail. The teens follow reluctantly.

IRVING

The plains were a sea of buffalo, deer, antelope, elk, grizzly bears, and wolves -- until the great white hunters killed them with powerful rifles.

(angry)

The native wildlife competed with their precious non-native horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens.

BRANDON

We served up a good bison burger at the Burger Giant for a year or so, but it was two bucks more.

Irving glares at Brandon.

MAX

We get what you're saying. It was paradise.

IRVING

For the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa, it was their special paradise. It was home.

Max pulls Brandon by the sleeve.

MAX

Your home. We get it. But we should get going.

Irving ignores Max and stands angry and proud.

IRVING

What if your home, or entire hometown, was the site of one of the greatest mass murders in American history?!

Brandon and Max are stunned. Irving laughs maniacally and walks on. Brandon and Max follow.

IRVING (CONT'D)

Don't look so shocked. It is called a massacre site!

They walk on the trail in silence until they get to an overlook. Irving uses the megaphone as he reads from the brochure.

IRVING (CONT'D)

The brochure says, "At dawn on November 29, 1864, 675 U.S. volunteer soldiers commanded by Colonel John M. Chivington attacked a village of about 750 Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians along Sand Creek. Using rifle and cannon fire, the troops drove the people out of their camp. Women, children, and the elderly fled to the bottom of the dry stream bed. The soldiers followed, shooting at them as they struggled through the sandy earth."

Brandon and Max can't take their eyes off the barren landscape.

Irving puts away the brochure and sets down the megaphone.

IRVING (CONT'D)

What are your names?

MAX

I'm Maxine Ramirez. Max.

BRANDON

Brandon Langley. We're from Chapman. Irving doesn't sound Indian?

Irving picks up the megaphone and uses it.

IRVING

Indian, as in, from India?

MAX

I think even he knows better than that.

IRVING

My given name in Cheyenne is Wahanassatta, he who walks with his toes turned outward.

Brandon and Max look at Irving's feet.

IRVING (CONT'D)

It's why I don't wear sandals.

MAX

Ever been to Chapman, an hour south, except if you follow a tractor.

Irving lights up.

IRVING
Chapman High? Home of the Chapman
Savage Warriors?

BRANDON
We don't mean nothin' by it. Just a
mascot.

MAX
Don't apologize, Brandon! The
founders of our town and high
school were bigoted assholes. Not
much has changed.

Irving slowly sets down the megaphone. He points to a spot on the landscape, and he hops around as he begins to rant like a madman, while flailing his arms.

IRVING
Over the course of eight hours, the
troops killed over 230 Cheyenne and
Arapaho people, most of them women,
children, and the elderly.

Brandon's and Max's jaws drop.

MAX
Black Kettle was a Peace Chief,
wasn't he?

Irving screams and nods 'yes' a dozen times as he carries on.

IRVING
He flew an American flag and a
white flag of surrender over his
lodge.

Irving acts like a lunatic. Brandon and Max try to capture Irving on their GoPro cameras, but he doesn't stop moving around and yelling.

IRVING (CONT'D)
They didn't just kill a peaceful
band on their guaranteed-safe
reservation. They mutilated the
bodies of women and children and
wore their body parts in a parade
in downtown Denver.

Irving looks away in tears.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I can't do this anymore. I can't.
Two hundred thirty defenseless old
men, women, and children in eight
hours, and the soldiers were proud
of themselves!

Max and Brandon try to console Irving, but he's running
around like a madman.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I just can't do this anymore! Where
was the outrage? Where is the
outrage?

Max stares at Brandon, who secretly points to Irving like,
"he's crazy."

Irving looks deranged. He marches back and forth pretending
to shoot at an invisible approaching army. Max and Brandon
try to calm him down.

MAX

Well, Brandon, your '61 Corvette
should be cooled off now.

Irving pauses to glare at Brandon.

IRVING

'61 Corvette? More white man lies!

BRANDON

Except it's a slightly less-
expensive make and model.

Irving raises an invisible bow and sends invisible arrows
into Brandon and Max.

IRVING

Like Route 66? The endless trail of
fur traders, pioneers, farmers, and
soldiers!

BRANDON

I get it! Okay. We just want to see
the land you lost!

MAX

We're going to drive all the way
across Colorado.

Irving pauses for a moment. Max and Brandon smile, believing
he is settling down, but Irving goes wild again!

IRVING

You have no sense of place.
Chapman, Colorado, home of the
Savage Warriors, isn't good enough
for you?

BRANDON

Huh?

IRVING

No sense of place. Our ancestors
had a real sense of place. Devoted
to the earth and sky in one tiny
piece of the Earth.

MAX

One tiny piece?

Irving uses air quotes while ranting.

IRVING

There were over 400 Native American
languages when your so-called
"pilgrims" so-called "discovered"
America.

MAX

How many languages remain?

IRVING

Less than half. Others are going
fast. The genocide and ethnic
cleansing continue!

Irving is more anguished than ever. He stomps further up the
trail.

Max whispers into her GoPro.

MAX

We can't leave him like this!

Max runs after Irving, as Brandon whispers into his GoPro.

BRANDON

I could leave him. Nuttier than a
fruitcake.

Brandon reaches Max, who starts to shake and panic.

MAX

If he's that unstable, he shouldn't
be left alone. I... I...

Max races to catch up with Irving.

Brandon shrugs, then catches up to them. Irving speaks without the megaphone, but he still acts unstable.

IRVING

Wasn't the bullets so much as the diseases: smallpox, measles, the flu, and a bunch of others. Their bodies had no natural defenses! Between ten and thirty million of our people died in the "Americas."

MAX

Why weren't we taught this?

IRVING

Our little massacre is just a forgotten footnote in history. Did they tell you anything about our people in your "American History" classes at Chapman High, home of the Savage Warriors?

MAX

Not much. We had a lot of real wars to cover: Revolutionary War, Civil War, Mexican-American War...

IRVING

(interrupting)

You never lost as many people in all your little wars put together!

Brandon is oblivious to Irving.

BRANDON

Of course, you got your World Wars.

Irving nods as the conversation bores him.

IRVING

We lost our world to you!

BRANDON

Okay. This has been fun, but we're leaving. Come on, Max.

Brandon points back to his car.

MAX

Yeah, we'd better go. Sorry, Irving.

Irving looks away, sad. He turns, looks them in the eyes, and speaks slowly.

IRVING
I'll, I'll lose my...

Max and Brandon have a surprised took.

MAX
Job?

IRVING
Internship. It's an unpaid internship, but it's a start. The guys in the office are paid. White guys, of course. If we get bad comments on mandatory comment cards two days straight, we get fired.

Brandon gently guides Max down the trail.

MAX
We'll tell 'em you did a great job.

Irving races to hug them both.

IRVING
They're going to fire me anyway.

MAX
Why?

IRVING
Yesterday. An elderly couple visited.

BRANDON
Oh, my God. You didn't.

IRVING
Megaphone, right in the hearing aids.

Brandon and Max drop their heads.

IRVING (CONT'D)
The poor old lady was in such pain that her husband had to help her walk!

MAX
Geez.

IRVING

His cane kept getting in the way.
Not my fault they fell.

BRANDON

No. Not your fault.

IRVING

None of us saw the prairie rattler.

Brandon and Max jump back and look around.

IRVING (CONT'D)

Didn't bite anyone, but the old man
'bout had a heart attack and
stroke.

MAX

What about the old woman?

IRVING

Unconscious after the fall, but she
came to in a few minutes. The water
helped, but the ambulance took
forever to get here!

BRANDON

Can imagine what their comment card
said.

Irving looks away.

IRVING

I can always return to begging in
the middle of the highway. I tried
begging along the farm roads 'round
here, but the tractors just don't
see you.

MAX

(mumbles)

Sorry, Irving, but we have to get
to Burlington and on our way across
Colorado.

BRANDON

We thought this was going to be a
ten-minute stop.

Irving starts back down the trail, waving his arms.

IRVING

See a quick massacre, and go. I
surrender.

(MORE)

IRVING (CONT'D)
I don't understand you, people!
Let's go! I'll guide you back.

Irving starts back down the trail.

Max and Brandon whisper into Max's GoPro.

MAX
Irving is really unstable right
now. Maybe suicidal!

BRANDON
But helping him would ruin our
schedule.

MAX
His life's a mess! We gotta help
him!

Brandon and Max run to catch up to Irving.

BRANDON
Irving, wait up!

MAX
How 'bout a picnic lunch?

Irving stops, turns, and smiles.

IRVING
I know just the place. Follow me.

Irving hikes to a large open patch of prairie. He walks in
concentric circles, looking at the ground.

IRVING (CONT'D)
No snakes.

He sits Indian style and pats the ground.

MAX
What is this place?

IRVING
Sacred ground.

Brandon sits and digs through his backpack.

BRANDON
I've got a ham sandwich.
(laughs)
Inside joke.

Max sits.

MAX

The joke in our town is that when you turn eighteen, your folks give you a ham sandwich and a road map.

IRVING

(confused)

They want you to leave home?

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON

'Cept it's no joke at my house.

IRVING

Indigenous people want and need family, especially youngsters.

MAX

Mine just wants you to work and bring home money. I didn't want to pick and sort melons.

IRVING

Don't blame you there. Did either of you go on a vision quest?

BRANDON

Vision quest?

IRVING

Like a walk-about, but while fasting? For guidance? Direction?

BRANDON

I guess this trip across Colorado is my vision quest.

Max turns away, then back.

MAX

Guess it is for me, too.

IRVING

You're not too late for the Sun Dance, Brandon.

BRANDON

Sun Dance?

IRVING

Our brothers, the Crow, hold the ceremony on the summer solstice.

(MORE)

IRVING (CONT'D)

No lesson in life comes without the pain of understanding.

Brandon and Max pause to think.

MAX

Tell us about the Sun Dance.

Irving looks from side to side, then he whispers.

IRVING

Describing a boat or an airplane does not inform anyone about the journey.

BRANDON

Please tell us.

Irving looks around again. Brandon focuses his GoPro on Irving.

IRVING

Imagine a meadow, three times this size, surrounded by willows, with a sweat lodge in it. Imagine fasting for four days in a sweat lodge, praying for guidance, strength, forgiveness, and compassion for others. A fire outside heats the boulders that will be rolled into the sweat lodge to pour water on for steam. The steam clings to you like your past.

Irving motions the imaginary steam toward his face. He closes his eyes.

Brandon breaks his ham sandwich up into three pieces and passes them to Irving and Max.

BRANDON

Ham sandwich?

MAX

I've got apples.

IRVING

Sure.

Irving grabs the sandwich and eats it like a starving man.

Max sees this and hands him an apple. He talks while chewing. Max and Brandon can't eat due to the story.

IRVING (CONT'D)

The Sun Dance involves great sacrifice. Your chest is pierced in four places. Two strong sticks are inserted in the skin and tethered to leather straps to a forked cottonwood tree. Dancers have a hollowed eagle bone in their mouths as a whistle to fight the pain.

BRANDON

Geez.

IRVING

After days of dancing, the dancer leans way back and breaks free, ripping holes in his chest.

MAX

Right of passage for teens?

IRVING

Common misperception. It's for all ages, from young men to old. I danced for my father, who had cancer for several years 'til the disease took him.

BRANDON

Geez!

IRVING

I danced for guidance many times.

MAX

Wait? You danced in the Sun Dance?

Irving slowly unbuttons his shirt. He opens it to reveal sixteen scars on his chest (in sets of four).

Brandon and Max gasp.

IRVING

That's not all.

Irving turns and lifts his shirt to reveal sixteen scars on his back.

MAX

Oh my God!

Irving is quick to correct Max.

IRVING
Oh, Great Spirit. Always remember,
no lesson in life comes without the
pain of understanding.

Irving buttons his shirt and sits down.

BRANDON
So, Irving, can I ask you a
personal question?

IRVING
Sure?

BRANDON
All your time in sweat lodges
asking for guidance, strength,
forgiveness, and compassion for
others; and all the pain of
understanding you got from your
dancing at the Sun Dance -- did it
do you any good?

Irving looks down and begins to weep uncontrollably.

Max glares at Brandon.

MAX
Brandon! What kind of a question is
that to ask?!

Max pulls Brandon aside. Max's GoPro captures it.

BRANDON
I was curious; that's all. I mean,
we're embarking on an epic journey
ourselves. I want to know what
works and what doesn't work. I
mean, look at Irving. All the
prayer and sacrifice in the world
don't seem to have helped him. You
said it yourself; he's a wreck!

Irving wails behind them.

MAX
(sarcastic)
Thanks a bunch, Brandon!
(whispers)
We'll never get to Burlington now.
Irving is more of a wreck than when
we met him. We can't leave him now!

They go to comfort Irving, who is crying his eyes out.

BRANDON
Sorry for upsetting you, dude.

MAX
We'll work this out together,
Irving.

BRANDON
We're here for you, dude.

MAX
Everything's going to be all right!

IRVING
I doubt it!

Irving is recovering from a good cry. He has his megaphone
and his backpack by his side.

IRVING (CONT'D)
The bad guys are closing in!

Brandon and Max look around.

MAX
What bad guys, Irving? Do you see
bad guys?

Irving looks around suspiciously.

IRVING
They're all around me.
(beat)
And you!

Irving jumps up and grabs the megaphone. He races to an open
low spot in the prairie and yells into the megaphone.

IRVING (CONT'D)
Imagine being surrounded by
hundreds of cavalry with superior
weapons, and you have nowhere to
hide.

BRANDON
Awful!

IRVING
Their Henry rifles shoot 13 times
before reloading. Yours shoot once.

MAX
That's unfair.

IRVING

War isn't about being fair! It's about being better murderers! Their cannons hit you from more than a hundred yards away. You can't see 'em firing, but the sound hurts your ears before a single cannonball wipes out four or five lodges like bowling pins.

MAX

Irving, let's bring you down to headquarters.

IRVING

I grew up surrounded.

(beat)

Surrounded by people who didn't believe in me. Said I would amount to nothing!

Brandon finds this cheerful news.

BRANDON

Me, too! Voted "Least Likely to Succeed!" Though it was informally done on the web. Went viral!

Irving paces like a lawyer in a courtroom.

IRVING

Only, on a reservation, it's a death sentence. On the Pine Ridge Reservation, the life expectancy for men and women is almost 30 years less than outside the reservation! Explain that!

MAX

Poverty? Stress? Depression? Alcoholism. Poor health care?

IRVING

All of the above!

Max waves her arms.

MAX

Irving, this isn't doing anybody any good. You have to calm down!

Irving tosses down the megaphone and smiles like a madman.

IRVING

I'm sorry. That was a selfish, self-serving rant. My bad!

BRANDON

You gonna be okay?

Brandon's smartphone rings with the "Ding-Dong the Witch is Dead" ringtone.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

I gotta take this.

IRVING

Surprised you got reception out here.

Brandon turns away, but the others hear them both, because MOM LANGLEY (40) is yelling from the get-go.

MOM (O.S.)

Where da hell are you? It's trash day! I'm not wheeling your crap to the curb!

BRANDON

Miss you too, Ma!

MOM (O.S.)

You didn't really go on that stupid trip, did you?!

BRANDON

Left you a note.

Brandon turns to Max and Irving, a bit embarrassed.

MOM (O.S.)

You picked up dat car. They called to check on insurance, and I said "Hell no!" They want dat car back!

BRANDON

Don't matter, Ma? Possession is like three-eighths of the law.

Brandon is pleased with himself.

Max chuckles.

MOM (O.S.)

Brandon Langley, who you with?!

Maxine shakes her head and waves her arms, 'No.'

BRANDON
Maxine Ramirez.

MOM (O.S.)
An abduction! That's what it is!
And she ain't eighteen or white!
You're in a heap of trouble! I'm
calling dat Ramirez home now! Den,
I'm callin' da police!

Click!

Brandon smiles nervously.

BRANDON
That went good, I think.

Max stomps over to Brandon.

MAX
She ain't eighteen or white?

Brandon looks away.

IRVING
Ah. Been together a couple of
hours, and the two lovebirds are
having their first race riot!

Brandon turns toward Irving in anger.

BRANDON
Irving, I'm not a bigot. My Ma,
she's from the dinosaur age!

MAX
My Papá's gonna be furious.

Brandon turns to Max.

BRANDON
Didn't you tell your parents?

MAX
Well...

BRANDON
Not even a note?
(beat)
That's very irresponsible.

Max paces, as Irving enjoys the show.

MAX

I go two or three days sometimes
without seeing my Papá, and my mom
thinks I'm just in the way.

BRANDON

Not even a note!

MAX

Okay. That was wrong. I needed to
get away. That's all!

BRANDON

They might think I abducted you!

IRVING

That's eight to ten years in the
State Pen.

Max turns on Irving while she paces in circles.

Irving, upset, paces back and forth, and Brandon starts
pacing, careful not to run into anybody.

MAX

That's not helping, Irving!

IRVING

Should have left a note, Max!

MAX

And what about the car, Brandon?!

BRANDON

I can't go to prison! I'm afraid to
shower when I'm alone!

Max speaks quietly, scared.

MAX

My father has rifles and pistols.

Irving flails his arms like a madman again.

IRVING

Rifles and pistols didn't do us any
good. They signed our death
warrants; that's what they did.

Irving, Max, and Brandon collide in the middle of the open
prairie.

Each has a gloomy expression.

MAX & BRANDON
We're screwed.

Max pushes Brandon lightly.

MAX
What are we going to do now, Mister
"Least Likely to Succeed?"

BRANDON
I don't know! What are we going to
do now, Ms. "Least Popular Girl in
the School?"

Max points her finger at Brandon, shakes it, then begins to
stomp down the trail in the direction of the car.

She speaks without turning around.

MAX
I was the least popular girl in the
class, not the least popular girl
in the entire school! Take me home!

Silence.

Brandon makes a private recording with his GoPro.

BRANDON
She's as crazy as Irving is. I'm
taking her home to Chapman and
dumping her off!

Brandon trudges after her. Irving yells.

IRVING
I hope you both enjoyed your visit!
Remember to fill out a comment
card!

INT. CAR - DAY

On the road from Sand Creek, Max is depressed as she looks
away. Brandon drives slowly on an asphalt road.

BRANDON
So, this is the road we missed
getting here.

MAX
I'm an introvert. I hid in my room
from the time I was born until this
morning.

Brandon, equally sad, looks over at Max, and he tries to help.

BRANDON

But you answered my Craigslist ad,
and we got pretty far.

(beat)

Irving's a raving lunatic, huh?!

MAX

He's not alone. Not all of us rave.

BRANDON

Lunatics? You're not a lunatic.

Max looks up and into Brandon's eyes. He sees her tears.

MAX

We're all lunatics. Some show it
more than others. Take me home!

Brandon drives on. He stops at the main road.

BRANDON

Innerstate 70 is to the left. Home
is to the right.

MAX

Did I ever go to a single football
game, field trip to the Denver Zoo,
or Natural History Museum? I was
always sick those days. No
homecoming basketball games or
dances. No after-school activities.
I always had a pretend cold or flu.

Brandon chuckles nervously.

BRANDON

Some people prefer the company of
their strange selves over the
company of strangers.

MAX

At least you dared to show up. You
knew you would be picked on.

Brandon shrugs and snickers, blowing it off.

BRANDON

A little.

MAX

And bullied. I remember Johnny Cramer beat the shit out of you in the lunchroom because you didn't sit more than two tables away.

Brandon shrugs and snickers and laughs a little.

BRANDON

He was pretty strict about the two-table rule. Wonder how his family ate dinner at night?

Max looks him in the eyes.

MAX

I thought you were either the bravest or the dumbest guy alive.

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON

Bought a car that overheats, no insurance, abducted a beautiful non-white seventeen-year-old girl, all to go on a wild, epic adventure across Colorado. Dumbest guy alive sounds right. And now I gotta drive us back home in shame.

MAX

(mumbles)

Beautiful? No!

(defiant)

But, home? Not yet!

Max rants.

MAX (CONT'D)

Irving's not the only one who can rant! He is right about the way we treated his people. But even this horrible massacre couldn't destroy his pride, his history, or his love for his people.

Brandon looks at Max, bewildered.

BRANDON

Where are you going with this?

MAX
We're not going back! We're going
to finish this epic adventure if it
kills you!

BRANDON
What?

MAX
Or if you end up serving eight to
ten years in a cell with a guy
named Bubba!

BRANDON
Huh?

MAX
Or if our parents never speak to us
again! This is our defining moment!

The car stalls.

INT. CAR - SUNSET

Brandon and Max drive in silence. The GoPro is off.

BRANDON
You sure you want to go through
with this?

Max looks away, then back at Brandon.

MAX
I said I was all in!

Brandon smiles.

BRANDON
Imagine the adventure that awaits!

MAX
So far, we have made it exactly
fifty-two miles from home.

BRANDON
Day isn't done. How far to
Burlington?

MAX
Eighty-six miles. An hour and forty
minutes, if we don't have to stop
and cool down.

BRANDON
Burlington -- the far eastern edge
of Colorado. The end of the world!

Max smiles as Brandon turns serious.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Why did you want to come on the
trip?

Max is serious.

MAX
I was worried about getting
agoraphobia.

BRANDON
Fear of agriculture?

MAX
Getting out in public, social
situations. I stayed in a lot.

BRANDON
Is that what causes agoraphobia?

MAX
Panic attacks, they think.

BRANDON
You get 'em.

MAX
Almost had one when Irving had his
meltdown. Got one the day my
acceptance letters came in.
Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and
Berkeley.

BRANDON
You serious? I didn't get any!

MAX
I'm thinking Harvard, but I'd never
left town, so I needed to prove to
myself that I could get out in the
world. I was looking at cheap bus
trips to Denver when I saw your
Craigslist ad.

BRANDON
What do I do if you get a panic
attack?

MAX

Calm me down. Talk softly. Explain how everything is going to be all right.

BRANDON

Guess I'm honored, but it's not what I imagined. In Route 66, it was Tod and Buz, two confident and capable guys.

MAX

I know, in the '61 Corvette, you told me.

BRANDON

I needed to find a best bud, someone I could talk to at the community college. You're going away. You're not Tod or Buz!

MAX

Sorry.

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON

We could pretend.

MAX

Huh?

BRANDON

On our epic adventure along Innerstate 70, I could be Tod, and you could be Buz!

MAX

Buz?

BRANDON

If you wouldn't mind?

MAX

If it makes you feel better, Tod!

Brandon smiles.

BRANDON

Now we're talking, Buz!

Max smiles.

They see a road sign "Burlington -- Junction I-70, 5 Miles."

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Less than five miles, and we'll be
on good ol' Interstate-70!

MAX
Better stop for gas in Burlington!
Remember, your fuel gauge is stuck
on full.

Brandon pauses. He smiles.

BRANDON
Glad you remembered. I thought we
were getting great mileage!

Max smiles.

MAX
One more thing, Tod.

BRANDON
What? You name it!

MAX
I'd like to be the leader of this
expedition.

Brandon is defiant.

BRANDON
No. It's my '61 Corvette!

MAX
Women never get the chance to lead!
I want to lead!

BRANDON
No.

MAX
Look! It's brawn versus brains. You
obviously have the brawn!

Brandon looks down at his bony arms and scrawny body.

BRANDON
That's true. Been working out.

MAX
It shows! And I have the brains!

BRANDON
Okay, that's true, too.

MAX
It's settled then! Burlington, dead
ahead!

As they approach the junction of I-70, it's getting dark.

BRANDON
Just about there!

MAX
Epic adventure.

They laugh!

BRANDON
Makes our hometown of Chapman look
like New York City! Who knew?

MAX
Not me.

Brandon puts his blinker on to exit the freeway.

MAX (CONT'D)
What was it that the used-car
salesman said about putting in the
dashboard lights you ordered?

BRANDON
You ready for this?

MAX
Ready for what?

BRANDON
You know, on TV and in movies, you
can always see the faces of people
in cars?

MAX
Yeah.

BRANDON
So, in real life, cars don't have
lights like that!

MAX
Duh! It's dark on the inside of
cars, so you can see out.

BRANDON

Duh! But I was thinking, how cool would it be to be able to see our faces while driving at night, just like on TV or in the movies?

MAX

So, you had them install more interior lights? Seems excessive.

Max squirms, a bit uneasy.

BRANDON

Better for filming with our GoPro cameras, too. Get the GoPro to prove we made it to Burlington.

Max complies as Brandon exits the freeway slowly.

MAX

To document our epic adventure?

BRANDON

Exactly! You ready?

Brandon feels for the switch on the lower-left side of the dashboard.

MAX

I guess so, but I don't think...

Brandon flicks on the lights. They are too bright, and they blind Brandon and Max.

MAX (CONT'D)

Turn 'em off!

Brandon swerves to the left and veers off the freeway exit. Brandon over-corrects and swerves to the right, on the other edge of the freeway exit.

The edge of the road is bumpy. He yells.

BRANDON

Can't find the switch!

MAX

Stop! For Heaven's sake, stop!

Brandon slams on the brakes, and the car swerves and skids off the road, toward a barbed-wire fence, and into a ditch on the side of the road, before hitting a fence post.

They SCREAM! CRASH! The car hits a fencepost. A headlight SHATTERS. STEAM rises from the hood again.

BRANDON

You okay?

MAX

Can't go to Stanford if I die! You?

BRANDON

Think the new interior lights are a little too bright.

MAX

(upset)

Ya think?

They SEE a flashlight carried by a large, shadowy figure walking toward them.

As the farmer, T. EDWARD DOWD (65), in overalls, gets closer to them, they SEE he's carrying a shotgun.

T. Edward shines his flashlight on Brandon, then Max.

T. EDWARD

Name's T. Edward Dowd the third.
Folks call me T. Edward. You done broke my fence! You're in a heap a trouble!

BRANDON

Terribly sorry...

T. EDWARD

Save it! Come along peaceful-like,
or I'm gonna have to shoot ya!

MAX

T. Edward, if we could just...

T. Edward cocks the shotgun and aims it at Max's head.

T. EDWARD

You Mexican?

MAX

American.

T. EDWARD

Don't think so.

T. Edward points the shotgun at Brandon.

BRANDON
All a misunderstanding...

T. EDWARD
Transporting a minor illegal
immigrant is a felony. That's human
trafficking! I'll be calling the
U.S. Immigration and Customs
Enforcement as soon as we're back
at the ranch.

Brandon glares at Max.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
Come on, now. Git your gear. Let's
go! Don't make me shoot ya!

BRANDON
(mumbles)
I'm just following my leader. I'm
just an abductor and human
trafficker!

Brandon and Max get their things and lead the way down the
road, with T. Edward holding a shotgun on them.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Max paces while Brandon checks his phone.

BRANDON
You'd better call home.

MAX
And tell my folks, what?

BRANDON
Tell 'em the truth. Don't worry.
Everything's fine. Just stepped
out, voluntarily, for the epic
journey of a lifetime, driving
across Colorado with a well-
respected, handsome-but-
gentlemanly, graduating senior!

MAX
What about the shotgun and sleeping
in a barn?

BRANDON
No need to go into details.
Besides, T.
(MORE)

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Edward said he'd pull the '61
Corvette out of the ditch in the
morning if we fixed his fence.

MAX

Think he'll call the cops or ICE?

BRANDON

Hell, no! The great Colorado farm
economy is built on cheap Mexican
labor. Bet he has other work for
us. Maybe we can make enough to buy
a gas gauge and a water pump!

Max shakes her head in disbelief as Brandon strips to get
into his sleeping bag.

MAX

I guess he knows we won't try to
escape without the car.

Brandon watches as Max strips from inside her sleeping bag.

BRANDON

Up at dawn, fence fixed and on the
road by ten with our pockets full
of dough!

Max rolls her eyes in disgust.

INT. BARN - DAWN

T. Edward storms into the barn as the rooster crows. Max and
Brandon are asleep on opposite sides of the barn.

T. EDWARD

Up and at 'em. Fence ain't gonna
fix itself.

EXT. PASTURE - DAY

Brandon and Max are digging fence-post holes and stringing
barbed wire in the hot sun. Max wears jeans and a halter top.
They both wear protective gloves. Brandon takes his shirt
off. Max eyes his body.

MAX

Where'd you learn to do this?

BRANDON

My uncle's ranch is south of town.

MAX

How long do we gotta do this?

BRANDON

I forgot! This is your first real job! Who knows? T. Edward said he'll be back for us after he pulls the '61 Corvette out. Said we didn't even dent that fence post!

MAX

Then what are we doing here?

BRANDON

He needed us to mend the fence. We're helping him out. Maybe he'll pay us a little something. We need the money!

MAX

We both still have a hundred bucks, don't we?

BRANDON

Well. I used mine for the new interior lights.

Max's eyes open widely as T. Edward drives up in an old pickup. Max whispers.

MAX

I don't have a hundred bucks. More like twenty.

T. EDWARD

Makin' fine progress. Supper's ready at sunset.

Brandon and Max looked shocked.

BRANDON

We'd better be going. Got a long drive ahead of us. Grand Junction.

T. EDWARD

Grand Junction! That's clear across the state!

MAX

We'll finish up this post before we go.

T. EDWARD

You ain't goin' nowhere!

BRANDON
I'm calling the cops!

Brandon takes out his phone, but doesn't call.

T. EDWARD
Go ahead.

MAX
I'll call.

Max takes out her phone, but she doesn't call.

T. EDWARD
Though so. Keep working the east
boundary. I'll fetch y'all for
supper.

T. Edward drives off.

BRANDON
Are you a legal citizen?

MAX
Maybe.

BRANDON
Social Security Card?

MAX
Told ya. Never had a job!

BRANDON
How did you apply for college?

MAX
Just left that part blank. I aced
the ACTs. What are they gonna say?

BRANDON
Keep digging! That's what they're
gonna say!

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The farmhouse looks like a museum. Cobwebs are everywhere. There are dusty family photos scattered about, and no sign of a woman's touch. Brandon and Max sit at a table set for four, as T. Edward brings in a huge bowl of chili.

T. EDWARD
You can leave in the morning.
Thanks for all-y'all's help.

Brandon and Max dig in on the chili. T. Edward slams a fist down on the table.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
We'll pray first!

Brandon and Max bow, their mouths full of hot chili.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
Lord, we thank thee for the
bountiful food we are about to eat.

Brandon and Max glance at each other briefly.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
We're so sorry the dearly departed
can't join us, but they's dead.

BRANDON
Amen.

T. Edward keeps praying.

T. EDWARD
Buried out back.

MAX
Amen.

T. EDWARD
With the others.

Brandon and Max open their eyes widely.

T. EDWARD (CONT'D)
Amen.

MAX & BRANDON
Amen.

They all eat the terrible chili.

T. EDWARD
It's all a lie, ya know.

BRANDON
What is, T. Edward?

T. EDWARD
The world ain't round. It's flat
like it says in the Good Book.

MAX

So, the moon landing, solar and lunar eclipses, and the sailing and flying around the world are all fake?

T. Edward stands and screams.

T. EDWARD

If the Good Book says it's flat, it's flat! Help up by four angels, one in each corner!

Max snickers.

MAX

If you say so, T. Edward.

T. EDWARD

You can take a carpenter's level everywhere in the world, and it reads level! What's that tell ya?

Brandon snickers.

BRANDON

Pretty strong angels.

Max stands to distract T. Edward.

MAX

Would you mind getting us a bit more water, T. Edward? This chili tastes extra good with cold water.

T. Edward grunts, but exits to fetch more water.

Max grabs Brandon's arm and whispers.

MAX (CONT'D)

We're outta here!

BRANDON

He owes us each a day's pay.

MAX

It's canned chili. He doesn't have any money, he's armed, and he's nuts!

Brandon pauses. She grabs his shirt. They race out.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

They hop in the convertible. Brandon starts it up, as T. Edward races out with a shotgun.

T. EDWARD
Won't get far at night. Your
headlight's busted.

BRANDON
Thanks for dinner. We'll take our
chances.

MAX
By, T. Edward! Thanks for the work
experience!

T. Edward fires the shotgun into the air. The car stalls. Brandon and Max panic as T. Edward approaches the car, holding out two twenty-dollar bills.

T. EDWARD
Twenty bucks a day is what we pay
wet-backs and drifters.

Brandon gets the car to start, as Max grabs the money.

MAX
Thanks, T. Edward. See ya next time
through!

They drive off, waving. T. Edward doesn't wave.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Max holds the money in triumph as they drive.

MAX
Forty bucks? Two bucks an hour
each? Barely gas money.

BRANDON
Not enough for a water pump. And,
with a broken headlight, we gotta
drive during the day, like Louis
and Clark.

Brandon smiles.

MAX
Always optimistic?

BRANDON

I'm a gas tank's half-full kinda guy.

MAX

That's why only optimists run out of gas! There's a 24-hour gas station up ahead. We'll need thirty bucks of gas to get to Denver. We'll sleep in the car and drive at dawn.

Brandon laughs happily.

BRANDON

Just like Tod and Buz. Work a little, drive a little. I love it!

Max looks over and smiles as she studies his face. It's sincere.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Brandon drives, and Max enjoys the summer scenery along the highway. We HEAR the theme song to Route 66 in the b.g. Brandon points to the right.

BRANDON

That's where the deer and antelope play. Amber waves of grain.

MAX

Purple mountains' majesty dead ahead?

BRANDON

Are you not panicking?

Max looks around and smiles.

MAX

America, the beautiful. What's not to like?

Brandon puts on the right turn signal.

BRANDON

Rest stops! I gotta pee.

EXT. REST STOP - DAY

Brandon pulls into the rest stop. Max sees a middle-aged African American, NORM SANDERS (40), in a gray business suit, sitting and smiling, with a small cardboard sign that reads: "Denver."

BRANDON
You go first. I'll watch our stuff.

MAX
Think it's necessary?

Brandon eyes the black man. They exchange smiles.

BRANDON
Guess not.

LATER

When Brandon and Max return from the bathrooms to see Norm standing by their car.

NORM
'84 Chrysler LaBaron. Nice. Plenty
of room in the back seat to Denver?

BRANDON
I don't know...

MAX
Why not? Hop in.

Norm smiles and hops in.

NORM
Thanks. Name's Norm Sanders.
Anywhere closer to Denver is fine.
It's ethnically lonely out here.

BRANDON
I'm Brandon. This is Max. We're on
our way to Commerce City to get a
water pump.

NORM
And a headlight?

MAX
And a gas gauge, if they got one.

They laugh as they drive off.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Once on the freeway, Max starts the GoPro.

NORM
What's that?

MAX
A mini-video camera called a GoPro.

BRANDON
We're documenting our epic
adventure across Colorado.

NORM
(nicely)
Turn it off.

BRANDON
It's kinda important...

Norm pulls out a snub-nosed 38 pistol and aims it at Brandon.

NORM
How important is it to you?

Brandon swerves the car nervously, and Max shakes angrily.

MAX
The video proves we're happy with
who we are! It's important to us!

Norm pulls back the pistol.

BRANDON
Put that away! She gets panic
attacks. Such a stereotype, anyway!
Black guy with a gun!

NORM
You call it a stereotype. I call it
profiling!

MAX
Profiling? You're holding a gun!

NORM
Just to fulfill the stereotype!
(beat)
Look, blacks get pulled over by
cops much more than white guys get
pulled over! It's a fact!

BRANDON

Nothing to worry about if you did nothing wrong.

NORM

Then, blacks get put away longer for lesser crimes than whites.

MAX

So, you carry a gun?

NORM

And if you pick up an ex-con, half of them are black! Why's that? We don't make up half the population on the outside! But it isn't a stereotype! It's profiling!

BRANDON

(to Max)

He makes a good point there.

Norm puts the pistol away.

NORM

Sorry. Don't know what to do with myself.

MAX

Huh?

NORM

I got a lot of decisions to make. Should I kill ya, take your money, steal your car...

BRANDON

Too many things are wrong with the car.

MAX

And us! I was informally voted the least popular girl, and Brandon was voted the least likely to succeed in our graduating class.

NORM

I was voted most likely to take a life and marry outside my species.

(beat)

I'm not going to shoot ya. You gave me a ride, and I don't have any bullets.

BRANDON
Very comforting.

MAX
We have to stop every hour and let
the '61 Corvette cool down.

NORM
Huh.

BRANDON
It's what I call it. After Route
66.

NORM
This is Interstate 70.

BRANDON
Innerstate 70.

NORM
Trust me. The penitentiary is in
Kansas on Interstate 70. Goes from
Maryland to Utah.

Brandon is frightened and confused.

BRANDON
Thought it was Innerstate 70. Just
in Colorado.

MAX
Should have told you, Brandon.

Brandon is furious at Max.

BRANDON
You knew? You knew, and you didn't
tell me?

MAX
Thought you were kidding.

NORM
Big fucking deal! The road is
longer than you thought!

BRANDON
Changes everything! Not an epic
adventure. It's nothing!

Brandon pouts. Max glances back at Norm, and they shrug their
shoulders. Max leans over to yell at Brandon.

MAX

Norm's got a gun, and you're mad at me for not telling you it was Interstate 70 all along!

Brandon pouts and looks away, then back at Max.

BRANDON

Should've told me, that's all.

Max ignores Brandon.

MAX

Norm, what kind of work did you do before you were arrested?

NORM

Taught third grade. Needed the pot to relax on the weekends. Those kids will drive ya nuts!

Brandon is still upset with Max.

BRANDON

Should have told me, Max!

Norm leans up to Brandon.

NORM

Want me to shoot her?

Brandon smiles. Max snickers. Norm laughs hysterically.

EXT. REST STOP - DAY

The hood is up. The car is steaming. Norm, Brandon, and Max stare at the water pump.

NORM

Rebuilt water pump, couple clamps, maybe a hose. Easy.

BRANDON

Not for us.

MAX

What were you in for, Norm?

NORM

Told ya! Smoking pot. Served half of the fifteen years. They said I was selling it. That was a lie. The judge gave me the max. No offense.

MAX

None taken.

BRANDON

It's legal here in Colorado.

NORM

Ain't timing a bitch! It's why I moved from Kansas.

MAX

Won't need the pistol.

NORM

Guess you're right.

Norm goes to the back seat, wipes the pistol clean, rolls the pistol in a newspaper, and dumps it in a garbage can. Max and Brandon smile.

MAX

Thanks. Norm.

NORM

The firing pin was filed down.
Wouldn't have fired.

BRANDON

Why'd you carry it?

NORM

Bad neighborhood. White-collar criminals all around. Needed it!

MAX

Prison? For smoking pot! That's dumb!

Norm looks away.

NORM

I knew that the day I was arrested.
I had seven and a half years of calling myself a dumb-shit. First day out, my friend who picked me up hands me a pistol that doesn't fire and has no bullets.

BRANDON

Some friend.

NORM

I know, right? Don't need friends like that! I left town.

MAX
What's next for you?

NORM
Don't know. Wasn't supposed to
leave the state without a job
offer.

Brandon closes the hood.

BRANDON
Should make it to Commerce City.

MAX
Junk yard, there is our water pump.

NORM
Probably have a headlight, too.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Brandon drives. Everyone chats.

NORM
Is Commerce City close to Denver?

MAX
Nine miles to Downtown.

BRANDON
We'll take you.

Norm puts his head down.

NORM
My daughter's there. She's a cop.

Max shakes her head, disgusted.

MAX
So, you were bringing her a gun?

NORM
She don't know I'm coming.

Norm smiles and slaps Brandon and Max on the back.

NORM (CONT'D)
But who doesn't like their dad
visiting, right?

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Brandon drives to the junkyard office, and Norm hops out immediately to lift the hood.

They are met by a woman, ESTER (40), in blue overalls, with bandages covering her right hand.

ESTER

Sorry, can't help ya. Broke a hand
when my ex-husband's jaw hit it.
We're closed!

MAX

But I called, and you said you had
our water pump!

ESTER

I do, but I can't take it off or
put it on. See the sign?

Ester points to a "Help Wanted" sign.

NORM

I could use a job.

ESTER

Certified mechanic?

NORM

No.

ESTER

Two years' experience.

NORM

No.

ESTER

Willingness to learn?

NORM

Yes.

ESTER

You're hired.

NORM

My name's Norm Sanders.

ESTER

Overall's in the office, Norm.
Hurry up. I got three days of back
orders.

Norm takes two steps and turns around.

NORM
I'd like to do the kids' water pump
and headlight for free.

Ester winks at Norm.

ESTER
I'll take it out of your first
paycheck.

Ester waits for Norm to get into the office.

ESTER (CONT'D)
Ex-con?

MAX
And third-grade teacher. Busted for
smoking pot in Kansas.

ESTER
That's unfair!

MAX
It was profiling, pure and simple.
Norm's a nice guy inside and out.

BRANDON
Plus, he didn't shoot us, rob us,
or steal our car.

ESTER
Good to know. I need the help.

MAX
We could help Norm and you out
today for a few extra bucks.

BRANDON
We could use the gas money, and Max
here needs work experience. I used
to take apart and rebuild my
uncle's ATVs.

Ester pulls out a long list of car parts.

ESTER
Five bucks a part, removed with
mounting hardware, and polished up
cleaner than the Queen's ass on a
holiday.

Max grabs the list.

MAX

Yes, Ma'am!

Max and Brandon race around looking for parts, as Ester yells.

ESTER

Don't call me Ma'am. Ma'am means
bitch if you're not in the South.

Norm races out of the office with a tool kit and blue overalls and begins work on Brandon's car.

LATER

At DUSK, Norm and Ester bend over the open hood of the car as Brandon and Max approach carrying two boxes of CAR PARTS. The teens are covered with grease.

MAX

Removed, shined, and labeled as you said.

BRANDON

The bumper and passenger-side door from the '96 Nissan Sentra you needed are against the side of the office.

ESTER

Your '61 Corvette's ready to roll. Norm here knows his way around an engine.

NORM

Headlight works too, but it's a little dim.

MAX

Dim is not knowing a socket wrench from a crescent wrench. Learned that today, thanks to Brandon!

Max and Brandon laugh as they set down their boxes of car parts and hug Ester and Norm.

ESTER

Folks come here and see junk. I see these vehicles as organ donors, keeping the dreams of others alive.

NORM

I'm staying on a while. I'll call
my daughter tonight and tell her
I'm okay, not to worry.

Ester pulls out a wad of cash and pays the teens.

ESTER

You kids can sleep here tonight.
Safe as anyplace in Denver.

Max hops in the passenger seat.

MAX

We're getting fond of showering at
truck stops, sleeping in the car,
and sneaking into hotels for the
free breakfasts.

Brandon gets in to drive.

NORM

I adjusted your new interior
lights.

Brandon turns them on. They're perfectly adjusted to add just
a little light on faces.

MAX

Woo-hoo! I'm firing up the GoPro.

Max takes a video of the junkyard.

BRANDON

I'm showing her all the best sites
in Colorado.

Brandon drives off slowly.

MAX

Plus, we can save the money for
gas. Long way to go!

NORM

Oh! Your gas gauge is still busted,
so keep filling her up.

Norm and Ester wave goodbye.

ESTER

Careful of the morning traffic!

BRANDON

It's Max's turn to drive tomorrow!

Max turns to Brandon, and her eyes open widely.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Max drives in rush-hour traffic. She is shaking, driving poorly, and panicking, as Brandon takes video in the passenger seat.

BRANDON

You do have a driver's license,
don't you?

MAX

Wish I did.

Max struggles to stay in the center of the lane.

BRANDON

Hold her steady.

MAX

Can't. Lousy peripheral vision.

BRANDON

What?

MAX

Can't see the sides well. How am I
doing on your side?

BRANDON

Ha! Somebody kept coming to the
Burger Giant before closing and
getting...

MAX

Chocolate milkshakes.

BRANDON

That was you who kept hitting our
back-view mirrors on the side of
the drive-thru?

MAX

Staying in lanes is tough!

BRANDON

Jesus! Better pull over and let me
drive.

MAX

Can't change lanes.

The car swerves left and right.

BRANDON
Put on your blinker.

MAX
Blinkers are a sign of weakness. I
can do this.

Traffic is horrible. Max stresses out.

MAX (CONT'D)
No traffic like this back home!

BRANDON
This is bad.

MAX
My hands and feet are shaking.

Brandon panics.

BRANDON
Oh, shit! A panic attack. What do
we do? We can't just stop in the
middle of the highway!

MAX
I don't know. I hate this?

BRANDON
Right blinker! Right blinker!

Max turns on the new interior lights.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
No! Right blinker! Right blinker,
damn it!

The car stalls. Cars and trucks honk at them.

Max tries to start the car, but fails.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Let me do it!

Max yells at Brandon very loudly.

MAX
I can do this!

Max finally starts the car and takes off confidently, waving
to drivers triumphantly.

Brandon captures it all on the GoPro.

BRANDON
Knew you could do it!

MAX
(sarcastic)
Sure, you did!

She drives on.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - DAY

Max stops at the Lookout Mountain exit so Brandon can switch to driver. They SEE the bison that always hang around the fence. They document it all on the GoPros.

MAX
Oh my, God! Bison.

BRANDON
Believe they're called buffalo.
Irving said we killed 'em all.
Guess he was wrong.

MAX
The scientific name is Bison bison.

BRANDON
That's redundant redundant.

MAX
Only about 30,000 pure bison are left.

BRANDON
That's a lot.

MAX
Used to be forty to sixty million!
A hundred years ago, there were fewer than a hundred still alive.

BRANDON
Geez. Irving was mostly right then.

MAX
The last wolf in Colorado was shot in 1940. Last grizzly bear in 1979.

BRANDON

You mean, when our parents were
alive, there were still grizzly
bears in Colorado?

Max is sad.

MAX

Like Irving, I feel cheated that we
don't get to see wolves and grizzly
bears roam free.

Brandon puts an arm around Max.

BRANDON

Maybe they'll come back.
(beat)
The bison did.

MAX

Took people who cared to bring 'em
back.

BRANDON

I care.

They share a moment before Max hands Brandon the keys.

They drive off.

With Brando's GoPro capturing it all, Brandon drives past
Loveland Ski Area, through the Eisenhower Tunnel, marveling
at the beautiful scenery. They laugh and giggle.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Who knew there were mountains like
this in Colorado?

MAX

Everybody?

BRANDON

I had a pen pal in Japan when I was
in middle school...

MAX

Hey, so did I. Same class, I bet.

BRANDON

Anyway, my pen pal, Tom Tse,
spelled T-S-E; his real first name
wasn't Tom; they just said that to
sound 'Merican.

Max is annoyed.

MAX

Did you just say, 'Merican, without the A?

BRANDON

Anyway, Tom Tse wrote and asked me how the skiing was, and if I saw elk and moose every day? I wrote back that I never skied or saw wild animals, and he asked to be assigned another pen pal.

MAX

Kinda sad.

BRANDON

Less writing for me. I was okay with it.

Brandon looks around at the scenery.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Ever have a boyfriend?

Max looks away.

MAX

Nothing serious. Billy Trujillo used to share his Twinkies with me in seventh grade. I smiled. He saw the big gap in my front teeth and never shared Twinkies again. I think he thought the sugar caused my tooth to fall out, 'cause he quit eating them, too.

BRANDON

Geez.

MAX

Have you ever had a serious girlfriend?

BRANDON

Lots. They just never knew it!

They chuckle, then look away.

MAX

I love the mountains!

BRANDON

Best epic adventure in my life!

MAX

Only epic adventure in our lives.

Brandon drives up Vail Pass and stops at the Vail Pass rest stop.

EXT. VAIL PASS REST STOP - CONTINUOUS

They separate by ten yards and go wild with their GoPros. Brandon speaks privately.

BRANDON

We're over 10,600 feet in the air. Well, on the ground, but you know what I mean. It's only two and a half hours to Grand Junction on the far side of Colorado, and it's all downhill from here! Can't believe we made it this far! Totally epic. The '61 Corvette is amazing!

(whispers)

I think I'm in love. No way Max goes off to college now! She'll stay with me at Chapman Community College!

Meanwhile, Max has her own private conversation.

MAX

Should have told my parents, but we'll be home tomorrow night. Except, everything has changed. I could go out of the house. I could go beyond the high school. I don't need to sneak out late to the Burger Giant for a milkshake. I'm braver than I ever imagined! I drove in Denver traffic! I drove into the Rocky Mountains. I'm not afraid. Yale, here I come!

Max and Brandon saunter back to the car with smiles on their faces.

MAX (CONT'D)

Brandon, watch my stuff while I use the restroom, will ya?

BRANDON

That's the least I can do.

Max looks bewildered as she steps lively to the restroom.

Brandon gazes at her until she disappears. Max's phone rings on the seat of the car.

Brandon looks around before he answers it because he sees the photo of Max's dad, PAPÁ (45), a Mexican field laborer, who speaks with a very heavy accent.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Hello?

PAPÁ (O.S.)

Are you the worthless boy who
abducted my daughter?

BRANDON

I... I... Hold on, I think you may
have the wrong number.

PAPÁ (O.S.)

I know the number!

Brandon turns to see Max walking toward him. Max sees her phone in Brandon's hands. She runs over to him.

Brandon quickly hands the phone to Max, but Brandon's GoPro remains on.

MAX

Papá? Is that you?

PAPÁ (O.S.)

Come home this instant!

Max is happy and excited. She puts the phone on speaker.

MAX

Papá, we have only two and a half
hours to drive before we make it to
Grand Junction! All the way across
Colorado! Imagine that! From your
little girl who never left her room
to a world traveler. And, guess
what? I'm driving in the Rocky
Mountains!

PAPÁ (O.S.)

Immigration and Customs Enforcement
officials called our house. Your
idiot sidekick's mom called them.

Brandon's head drops in sadness. Max is speechless.

BRANDON
I'm not a sidekick.

PAPÁ (O.S.)
Max? Did you hear me?

MAX
What's gonna happen?

PAPÁ (O.S.)
My five-year work visa expired long ago. You were a niña. You need to explain to them. Ellos no me entienden.

Papá weeps. He can't speak. Max's voice tails off.

MAX
They don't understand you.

Max's phone loses reception.

Max curses in Spanish, as Brandon looks away.

MAX (CONT'D)
Damn it! Shit! Does your phone get reception?

Brandon struggles to find and check his phone. He shakes his head, 'no.'

MAX (CONT'D)
This is all your fault!

BRANDON
My fault. You answered my Craigslist ad!

MAX
Your mother turned my folks in!
They'll be deported, asshole!

Brandon looks away.

BRANDON
I didn't know!

Max shuts off the engine, throws the keys at Brandon, and grabs her backpack and sleeping bag.

MAX
You and your epic journey! Route 66! Innerstate 70!

BRANDON

It got you out of your room and out
of Chapman!

Max trudges down toward the freeway entrance.

MAX

And my parents are out of the
country! You happy?

Brandon is defiant.

BRANDON

We came all this way in the '61
Corvette! I'm two-and-a-half hours
from fulfilling my dream!

Max yells without turning around.

MAX

And ending my parents' dream.

Brandon looks away but yells to Max.

BRANDON

It's four and a half hours to
Chapman from here. We can race to
Grand Junction, complete the epic
adventure, and be back in Chapman
in nine hours. What do ya say?

Max flips him off.

Brandon hops in the car. It doesn't start.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Piece of shit car! It's nothing
like a new '61 Corvette.

(beat)

It never was!

The car finally starts. He turns on his GoPro and drives
right past Max on the way west toward Grand Junction.

She lowers her head, shivering cold, and sticks out her thumb
to hitchhike east toward Denver.

Super: "Twenty minutes later."

Brandon races onto the Rest Area exit, traveling east. He
sees Max hitchhiking and slams on the brakes to pick her up.

MAX

What are you doing here?

BRANDON
Sorry for being a dick.

MAX
I gotta get home.

BRANDON
I know. Would have been here
sooner, but there's nowhere to turn
around, 'til ya get to the Vail.
I'll have you home by eight P.M.

MAX
Thanks!

Neither can hide the disappointment on their faces.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- From Vail Pass to Chapman, CO (Lamar, CO)

They don't film their return trip. They hardly speak.

-- We SEE highway signs that read, "Denver"

-- They pass through the Eisenhower Tunnel.

-- They SEE the city lights of Denver.

-- They turn off I-70 at Limon and head south.

-- Late at night, they pass the sign "Welcome to Chapman,
Colorado." "The other parts of Colorado are prettier." They
are both exhausted.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max's house is in an unkempt neighborhood of poor houses.
Brandon looks around nervously as he rolls to a stop.

MAX
Thanks for the lift. I'd give you
more gas money, but I'm out!

Brandon chuckles as Max grabs her backpack and sleeping bag.

BRANDON
Me too. Never would have made it
back from Grand Junction without
you. You were right again.
(beat, sad)
You've been right all along. 'Bout
everything.

Max turns towards her house and mumbles.

MAX

You would have made it if not for
me, the least popular girl in the
world!

She disappears through the front door. Brandon mumbles.

BRANDON

Still the least likely to succeed.

Max drives slowly down the street.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY

Max and her Papá sit at the kitchen table with two ICE agents (30s-40s) wearing blue ICE jackets and reviewing paperwork. Max's Mamá (45) brings fresh quesadillas and coffee to the table, as Max explains everything with a smile.

Max shows the ICE agents her university acceptance letters, and she hugs her parents.

The ICE agents look pleased as they eat.

EXT. AUTO SHOP - DAY

Brandon, in mechanic's overalls, is beneath a car on a hoist finishing an oil change.

The Head Mechanic (40), in similar overalls, checks Brandon's work and gives him a pat on the back.

EXT. FIELD OF CROPS - DAY

We SEE Max, Papá, and Mamá walking through the field, weeding with hoes as they walk.

INT. BRANDON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Brandon in his room carefully reading a car mechanic manual and taking notes.

He stares at his phone right in front of him, but hesitates to pick it up.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max is in her room reviewing a video of the "epic journey" on her laptop computer.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- MAX'S GOPRO VIDEO OF THE TRIP

-- We SEE the car leaving the car lot and stalling at the street.

-- We SEE the tractor in front of them on the dirt road heading to Sand Creek. It's a dust storm.

-- We SEE Irving going crazy, stomping around, and pretending to shoot imaginary arrows into Brandon and Max.

-- We SEE Brandon with his shirt off digging fence post holes for T. Edward.

-- We SEE Norm holding a gun on them from the back seat.

-- We SEE Brandon and Max taking parts out of junkyard cars.

-- We SEE the bison and the Rocky Mountains.

-- We SEE and HEAR the last clip Max took at the Vail Pass Rest Stop.

END MONTAGE

She stares at her phone right in front of her, but hesitates to pick it up. Instead, she opens a new page on her web browser: Craigslist. We HEAR Max's voice as she types.

MAX (V.O.)

I need to take a weekend trip all the way across Colorado on Innerstate 70. Must have a sleeping bag, GoPro, one-hundred dollars, and a '61 Corvette.

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY

Max sits outside her house in the late afternoon with a backpack, rolled-up sleeping bag, and a GoPro on a selfie-stick. Max wears cute shorts and a tank top. She speaks into the GoPro.

MAX

Friday afternoon. Wouldn't blame him for not showing up.

(looks around)

Might be busy at the auto shop.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

(looks around)

Could easily have something better
to do for a weekend.

(looks around)

Might have to study car manuals.

(looks around)

Might have to sort his sock drawer.

Down the street, Brandon slowly drives in her direction.

Brandon slows to a stop.

BRANDON

Bet I'm the third '61 Corvette to
stop by this afternoon.

MAX

Fourth.

Brandon turns sincere.

BRANDON

Thanks for texting me the good news
about your folks. Sorry I didn't
text you back.

MAX

Forget it.

Brandon turns angry.

BRANDON

Not going to forget it. Not going
to forget anything. Look, I'm not
doing this for you. I'm doing it
for me. I never got to complete my
less-than-epic adventure. That
pissed me off!

MAX

Sorry!

BRANDON

You're going off to college to
become some big-shot lawyer, a
doctor, or a third-grade teacher,
and I'll always be the least likely
to succeed!

Max sees that he's almost in tears. She smiles and hops in.

MAX

Save it, Tod! We'll have to cover
six hours of driving per day.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

And I have a few stops planned, so
step on it!

Brandon is stunned. He pauses, then cracks a weak smile.

BRANDON

Aye-aye, Captain Buz!

Brandon guns it, and it stalls. They laugh. He starts it and
races down the street. We HEAR the Route 66 theme song.

EXT. SAND CREEK MASSACRE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE - DUSK

Brandon drives into the FULL PARKING LOT, and he and Max look
around. They don't see Irving. Their GoPros are rolling.

An Elderly Couple (60s) hobbles down the trail as fast as
they can, races to their car, hops in, and speeds away.

Moments later, Irving comes down the same trail with his
megaphone ready to go.

IRVING

I'll be damned! It's Brandon and
Max.

(yells toward the
headquarters building)
Call off the search, I found them!

BRANDON

Did you frighten another elderly
couple?

IRVING

Did you kiss and make up?

Brandon and Max take a half-step away from each other, as we
SEE an empty window at the Headquarters building.

Irving points the megaphone toward the empty window.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I have a confession to make!

(beat)

Who am I talking to? Everybody's
out giving tours. Never been so
busy as this past week!

Max and Brandon stare at Irving, who winks at them.

IRVING (CONT'D)

I'm not the raving lunatic you
think I am!

MAX

What are you doing, Irving?

IRVING

I don't work here!

BRANDON

What?

IRVING

I'm a member of the tribal council.

Irving puts down the megaphone.

MAX

Are you not a Park Interpreter?

IRVING

No, I'm a professor of Native American Studies at the university. I was just having a bit of fun with you and the others. My sister is the Park Interpreter here. She gives a great lecture on the hike, but they never want to offend anyone.

BRANDON

And you wanted to offend us?

IRVING

No, I wanted to inform you, even if the truth is uncomfortable.

Max smiles.

MAX

I learned a lot.

IRVING

Thanks.

MAX

I lived an hour from here my whole life, but never learned much about the Native Americans who walked this land before us.

BRANDON

We were cruel, heartless conquerors.

MAX

Made our lives seem easy.

IRVING

No one's life is easy, but we all have the opportunity to make them meaningful.

Brandon has an epiphany. So does Max.

BRANDON

That's what you were teaching us!

MAX

I get it!

BRANDON

Me, too!

IRVING

Let's see if I can get some more coolant for your '61 Corvette.

BRANDON

Don't need it. It's fixed.

MAX

We didn't quite finish our epic journey, so we're completing it this weekend.

Irving uses the megaphone.

IRVING

This is your defining moment. The great Sioux Chief, Crazy Horse, said, "A very great vision is needed and the man who has it must follow it as the eagle seeks the deepest blue of the sky."

MAX

Huh?

Irving puts an arm around Max and speaks to Brandon.

IRVING

Lone Man, a great Teton Sioux, said, "I have seen that in any great undertaking it is not enough for a man to depend simply upon himself."

Brandon looks bewildered.

BRANDON

Uh, okay.

Irving raises his index finger high in the air.

IRVING

"There are not enough Indians in the world to defeat the Seventh Cavalry."

(beat)

Never mind, that was George Armstrong Custer. Wait! I know a better one! "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

MAX

Old Native American saying?

IRVING

No, it was the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, in the sixth century B.C.

BRANDON

So says Wahanassatta, he who walks with his toes turned outward.

They all laugh.

IRVING

Hey, you were paying attention. I like that! You kids will have much success in life. This, I know to be true.

MAX

So, the megaphone, the marching all around like a madman, fits of anger -- all for our benefit?

IRVING

Sorry, just having some fun with you. Everybody's so serious around here!

(sarcastic)

Eight-hour massacre killing 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho people, most of them women, children, and the elderly. Just forget about it!

Max and Brandon hug Irving.

MAX

I'll never forget about it, thanks to you.

BRANDON

Me, neither, Irving. Thanks so much for taking the time to educate us.

MAX

Bit unorthodox, but effective.

Irving packs up and grabs the megaphone again.

IRVING

Unorthodox? Don't get me started on religion. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "When the missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible and we had the land. They said, 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible, and they had the land." Same thing here, Hawaii, everywhere!

MAX

Irving, we can hear you fine without the megaphone.

Irving turns off the megaphone.

IRVING

I get excited. Sorry.

(beat)

You came back to tell me how much you enjoyed my tour?

MAX

Wish everyone in the world could take your tour!

IRVING

Thanks. That means a lot to me.

Max and Brandon hug Irving.

MAX

We gotta make another stop in Burlington.

IRVING

I've got another tour in half an hour. Thirty people signed up. Most ever! Drive safely, you two. May the Great Spirit guide you, as he did Tod and Buz on Route 66!

Brandon and Max hop in the car and race off.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - NIGHT

It's dark, so Brandon turns on the new interior lights.

BRANDON

Don't see why we have to stop at T.
Edward's place.

MAX

To pay him back our twenty bucks
each!

BRANDON

We worked hard for that money.

MAX

He taught us the value of hard
work. I worked in the fields with
my folks, the first time since I
started school. I appreciate them
so much more now!

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Max knocks on T. Edward's door, with Brandon beside her.
Brandon turns on his GoPro. T. Edward answers with a shotgun
in hand.

T. EDWARD

What do you want?

MAX

We're here to pay you back.

Max and Brandon hold out twenty bucks each.

T. EDWARD

You earned that money.

BRANDON

We can't take it from you.

T. Edward reaches out, and grabs the money.

T. EDWARD

Why not?

MAX

You're an unkind person, T. Edward.
You threatened us with a rifle,
threatened to call the sheriff, and
threatened to call Immigration
because we accidentally ran into
your fencepost.

BRANDON

You called Max a wet-back. And we
didn't mind working for you to make
amends for hitting the fence...

MAX

(interrupting)
And you taught us the value of hard
work...

BRANDON

(interrupting)
Made us a real fine supper, you
did.

MAX

(interrupting)
But all that talk about the Earth
being flat -- we couldn't take
advantage of you.

T. EDWARD

Take advantage of me?

MAX

That so-called proof you had that
the bubble of a carpenter's level
is flat everywhere in the world.

Brandon hops up and down with excitement.

BRANDON

I bet Max has been waiting for this
all week!

MAX

Ever look at that bubble, T.
Edward?

T. EDWARD

I suppose.

MAX

Ever wonder why the bubble itself
isn't flat on the bottom?

T. EDWARD

No.

MAX

The only way that can happen is if gravity pulls toward the center of a very heavy sphere -- the Earth has to be round, or your bubble would be flat!

T. Edward gets flustered.

BRANDON

And that last eclipse we had? That's why the shadow on the sun was curved like a crescent.

MAX

And that's why a ship's hull seems to disappear as it sails away, but you can still see the tip of the mast.

Max turns to head back to the car, but Brandon obviously has more to say.

BRANDON

And those four angels strong enough to hold up the four corners of the Earth? Why can't you get them to dig your fence-post holes?

T. Edward grabs his shotgun, as riled up as a hornet's nest.

Max and Brandon jump into the car and speed away. Max yells.

MAX

And never call a Mexican a wet-back! It's disrespectful!

T. Edward aims, but doesn't fire his shotgun. He points it down, steps inside, and slams the door.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 / INT. CAR - NIGHT

Max fist-bumps Brandon, who drives past Burlington on Interstate 70.

BRANDON

Guess I should have known it was called Interstate 70.

MAX
Baltimore, Maryland, to Utah?

BRANDON
Longer than I imagined.

MAX
Our world is as big as we make it.
A room, a town, a state, or the
universe.

Max looks up to the stars.

MAX (CONT'D)
Thanks for offering to complete the
epic journey, and special thanks
for taking me along!

Max edges closer to Brandon and leans her head on his
shoulder.

BRANDON
Where to, Captain?

MAX
Keep driving 'til we fall off the
flat Earth, Tod.

BRANDON
Aye-aye, Buz.

They drive with the new interior lights on. Brandon keeps
filming.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Brandon pulls into the parking lot of a nice but inexpensive
hotel on the outskirts of Denver. Max is asleep with her head
on his shoulder.

BRANDON
Wake up. We're here.

Max struggles to wake.

MAX
Where?

BRANDON
Outskirts of Denver.

MAX

So, we sleep in the car and sneak in for the free breakfast in the morning like usual?

Max pulls a credit card out of his shirt pocket.

BRANDON

Not if you got one of these.

MAX

How did you get a credit card?

BRANDON

Boss vouched for me at the bank.

MAX

I'll sleep in the car.

BRANDON

I won't try nothin' -- I promise!

MAX

I said, I'll sleep in the car.

BRANDON

Still don't trust me?

MAX

I trust you, Brandon. It's Tod I don't trust.

BRANDON

Tod? I just made him...

MAX

(interrupting)

I know, Max. I've never been in a room alone with a boy. I'm uncomfortable in tight spaces with other people. I was in the school media center doing keyboarding, and I was fine until I realized Bobby Harrison was the only other person in the room, and I threw up instantly.

BRANDON

That was like sixth grade?

MAX

Like it was yesterday! I'll sleep in the car.

BRANDON

You gonna sleep in a car when
you're off to college in a few
months?

Max looks away.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

You'll be in a tiny dorm room with
only one other person. Probably a
dude!

Max shakes a little, then turns to Brandon.

MAX

What am I gonna do?

BRANDON

Practice, practice, practice.

Max takes a deep breath.

MAX

I guess so.

(beat)

Won't you try anything?

BRANDON

Nothing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Max showers, while Brandon, lying on one of the two beds,
uploads a video onto his laptop hooked to his GoPro.

Max exits, dressed in her tank top and shorts.

MAX

Bathrooms free.

BRANDON

Almost done.

MAX

WiFi! I need to look at those
universities again.

Brandon looks away, disappointed, while Max pulls her laptop
out of her backpack.

BRANDON

Think I'll shower.

Max pays him little attention.

LATER

Brandon exits the bathroom with combed hair and wearing boxer shorts. Max is in her bed, turned the other way, and pretending to be asleep.

Brandon slips into his bed, and turns off his bedside light.

Brandon doesn't see that Max is shaking.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Brandon turns into the junkyard. Max waves at Norm and Ester and yells to them. Ester's hand is unbandaged. Brandon has his GoPro on.

MAX

Just driving through to make sure everything's okay.

ESTER

Great to have you! Glad you stopped in.

BRANDON

Hey, Ester. Hey, Norm.

NORM

Guess what was towed in here two days ago! A '61 Corvette!

BRANDON

A real one?

NORM

No. Like yours.

Brandon looks disappointed. Max is excited.

MAX

Did it have a working fuel gauge?

NORM

Sure did! Was gonna mail it, but never got your address.

ESTER

Or your names. Ha! Never thought we'd see you to thank you.

Norm puts his arm around Ester.

MAX
That's sweet!

ESTER
He's the sweetest thing in the
world!

Ester squeezes Norm like a python.

NORM
Picked up a few moves in the joint.

BRANDON
That's great, Norm. This was Max's
idea to come by. Wanted to thank
you both.

ESTER
What for? You helped me out when I
was injured. And business around
here picked up incredibly this
week! Can't figure it out!

NORM
Made more this week than in the
past three months.

Norm runs to the office.

ESTER
He beat the daylights out of my ex-
husband when he came by asking for
money! I knew Norm was the guy for
me. His daughter, the cop, came by
and couldn't be happier. She's
getting his parole switched to
here.

Norm returns with a gas gauge.

NORM
Can I put it in for ya?

BRANDON
I can do it when we get home. We're
on our way to Grand Junction!

NORM
Again?

MAX
Never made it the first time. My
fault. But we won't fail this time!

Everybody hugs. Max hops in the driver's seat.

MAX (CONT'D)
Denver traffic? Bring it on!

Brandon keeps the GoPro rolling as they wave goodbye.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- From Denver to Vail Pass with GoPros rolling.

-- We SEE Max driving easily in Denver traffic.

-- Max drives past the bison at Lookout Mountain.

-- Brandon drives through the Eisenhower Tunnel.

-- They SEE Copper Mountain and the signs to Vail.

-- They turn off I-70 at the Vail Pass Rest Stop.

END MONTAGE

EXT. VAIL PASS REST STOP - DAY

Brandon hops out of the car, needing to use the bathroom.

BRANDON
Watch our stuff for a minute, will ya?

MAX
Sure.

Max takes out her smartphone. She checks her text messages, and she's alarmed.

MAX (CONT'D)
Seven text messages? I never have more than one?

A text message from SARAH R has a YouTube video link. Max taps on the link and sees herself outside the hotel they stayed in the previous night!

Max sees that there are dozens of uploaded videos by Brandon on YouTube, with thousands of followers.

MAX (CONT'D)
Bastards' a YouTuber! A Goddamn YouTube celebrity. Look at all those followers! Haven't they got anything better to do with their lives?

Brandon comes back to the car and hops in the driver's seat. Without warning, Max punches him in the jaw.

MAX (CONT'D)

So, your epic adventure trip on Innerstate 70 is a YouTube sensation?

BRANDON

Ow! How was I supposed to know the videos would go viral?

MAX

What the hell does viral mean?

BRANDON

Means we got thousands of followers, YouTube sponsors, and maybe an offer to do a web series or maybe a pilot for a TV show! I was going to tell you when we got to Grand Junction!

Max turns away.

MAX

I see. That's why visitation has skyrocketed at the Sand Creek Massacre site?

BRANDON

They loved Irving's tour. It was real. It touched people.

MAX

And T. Edward? Does he know he's a laughing stock?

BRANDON

I'm not gonna tell him. I edited out his last name!

MAX

How many T. Edward's do you think there are? Is he gonna sue you?

BRANDON

Did you see where you told him off! You're a sensation! You're like the critical thinker of the Internet!

MAX

My folks? Your mom? Do they know?

BRANDON
They don't watch YouTube videos.

MAX
What about your boss?

BRANDON
It's how I got the job at the auto shop. He saw us taking parts off cars at the junkyard. Wants to hire you, too?

Max brightens.

MAX
The irony! We didn't want our class to define us with their informal web polls, and now you're okay with a YouTube audience defining us!

Brandon shrugs.

BRANDON
I guess not! You're right again.

MAX
Of course, I could use the money for school. The Auto Shop pays three times what they do in the fields.

BRANDON
And the sponsors may provide a lot more!

MAX
Really?

Brandon pleads with Max, and she softens.

BRANDON
I didn't know. Honest!

MAX
You should have told me!

BRANDON
Sorry.

Brandon leans over and kisses her. She doesn't resist! In fact, she kisses him like crazy!

MAX

What are we waiting for?! Let's
finish this epic journey!

Brandon looks over and sees that Max has her GoPro on.

Brandon HOOTS and HOLLERS as they race off to the tune of
Route 66.

BRANDON

Tod and Buz are a hit!

MAX

We're going to have to add a better
soundtrack!

They laugh!

BEGIN MONTAGE -- From Vail Pass to the Utah state line with
GoPros rolling.

-- We SEE Brandon driving toward Grand Junction.

-- Max drives past Grand Junction toward Utah.

-- At the sign that reads, "Welcome to Utah," Max slams on
the brakes.

-- We see Brandon driving back towards Colorado. They are
laughing into the camera.

END MONTAGE

INT. CAR - NIGHT

We SEE Max driving, with Brandon fast asleep in the
passenger's seat.

We see the town's welcoming sign that reads: "Welcome to
Chapman, Colorado. The other parts of Colorado are prettier."

Max slams on the brakes. Brandon wakes up.

BRANDON

What are we stopping for?

MAX

Gotta fix something. I'm prepared.

Max pulls out a small tube of black acrylic paint and a
paintbrush from her backpack.

MAX (CONT'D)

Been wanting to do this since we
came back last time.

Max paints a few words on the sign, while Brandon captures it
on the GoPro.

The sign now reads, "Welcome to Chapman, Colorado. The other
parts of Colorado are prettier, but this is HOME."

Brandon cheers. He hops out of the car to hug and kiss Max on
the lips. The kiss lasts an uncomfortably long time for them
both.

MAX (CONT'D)

Thanks for everything, Tod.

BRANDON

Forget it, Buz.

MAX

I'll never forget it, Brandon.

BRANDON

Me neither, Maxine.

We SEE the "record" light is on Brandon's GoPro!

BEGIN MONTAGE -- Summer scenes from Chapman from their
YouTube channel.

-- We SEE Brandon and Max in mechanics' overalls working on
cars at the Auto Shop.

-- We SEE Max and Brandon drinking milkshakes outside the
Burger Giant. They are laughing and kissing.

-- We SEE Max reading textbooks, and Brandon reading car-
service manuals on a blanket in the City Park. They're having
a picnic.

-- We see Brandon in his bedroom loading up video onto their
YouTube channel.

END MONTAGE

EXT. USED-CAR LOT - DAY

Max waits on the curb for Brandon to drive up in his car.

Max stands as Brandon jumps out to hug her.

BRANDON

Are you sure you wanna do this?

MAX

More than anything. You? Not too late to back out!

BRANDON

It's what I saved my money all summer for.

MAX

Me, too!

BRANDON

You think it's a fair price?

MAX

Saw it on Craigslist! Gotta be fair.

BRANDON

I don't know. You're the only one who called.

MAX

I made my offer! You accepted! Fork over the keys and the pink slip.

BRANDON

I fixed the gas gauge for ya.

MAX

I'll have to deduct ten bucks.

BRANDON

But I added something.

MAX

More interior lights?

Brandon leads her to the back of the car. He points to a new bumper sticker that reads "University of California, Berkeley."

Max hugs Brandon with tears of joy.

BRANDON

Put out your hand.

Max holds out her hand.

Brandon drops the keys into her hand, then holds her hand closed.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Driving back for Christmas break
can be treacherous. Ice and snow. I
put a set of chains in the trunk.
But you cancel if there's too much
snow!

MAX

Got it, Tod.

Brandon tears up.

BRANDON

Aye-eye, Captain. Buz. Max. I mean,
Maxine. I'm really going to miss
you.

MAX

You can visit me.

BRANDON

I know. I know. But, Chapman...

MAX

(interrupts)

I know. It's home.

They hug and kiss. They kiss a lot!

Then Max gets in the car and drives slowly away. Her GoPro
captures Brandon waving goodbye.

The beautiful moment is interrupted by Harry, the used-car
salesman, who drives up behind Brandon with an identical '84
Chrysler LeBaron convertible.

Harry jumps out holding a clipboard.

HARRY

Took me a while to find this baby!

BRANDON

Oh, I know!

HARRY

Initial here, here, here, here, and
sign here.

Brandon grabs the clipboard.

BRANDON

I know. Needs a little work.

HARRY

Needs brakes; I took off fifty bucks. The timing belt is shot. She's burning oil. Needs a full tune-up and probably a battery. The tires are bald. It may have been that flood in Houston, Texas...

Harry's voice FADES as Brandon's thoughts turn to Max.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

We SEE Max wiping a tear from her eyes as her car, filled with luggage and books, drives slowly out of town.

She has trouble staying in her lane.

We see the Berkeley bumper sticker.

The GoPro catches the "Welcome to Chapman" sign as she drives away.

FADE OUT.

THE END