

Take Your Shot

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April 11, 2023  
First Draft

Made in Highland

**EXT. A RURAL GAS STATION - DAY**

In a sunbaked Californian afternoon, a gas station appears completely abandoned. Suddenly, a BEATEN DOWN COROLLA rolls into sight; its breaks scream as it comes to a halt. ROLLO, 20'S, MALE dressed in A BLACK TURTLENECK, JACKET, AND PANTS and wearing a BLACK SKI MASK emerges from the driver's seat. He locks the car - it lets out a brief HONK - and enters the gas station.

**INT. A RURAL GAS STATION - DAY**

A bell strung above the door chimes as Rollo enters. He pauses to acknowledge the CLERK with a nod, then walks further into the store. The clerk does not take his eyes off Rollo.

Rollo approaches the BOTTLED DRINKS at the back of the store. He opens the refrigerator door and begins contemplating. He pulls out a PELLEGRINO glass bottle. With his ski mask still on, He cracks open the top and takes a sip. He breathes an "ahhh" of relief.

Rollo approaches the clerk at his desk.

ROLLO  
Hey, uh, can I get one of those  
Tickets?

CLERK  
Uh-heh. Which one you after?

ROLLO  
Umm....

Rollo browses the gaudy mosaic of LOTTERY TICKETS under the desk's GLASS PANEL.

ROLLO  
That one there.

He points to a BRIGHT RED TICKET reading 1,000,000 JACKPOT in a golden, bold text.

CLERK  
Gotcha.

The clerk retrieves the ticket and places it on top of the desk. Then, he scans the pellegrino and places both items in a PLASTIC BAG which reads "THANK YOU :)".

CLERK

Ya know, the mask does no good  
against covid if it doesn't cover  
neither your nose or mouth.

ROLLO

Ya, thanks.

DING.

Another patron, CRISPIN, 30'S, MALE, enters the store, dressed in a causal PLAID SHIRT and JEANS. He is clearly of a smaller physique than Rollo, who has meanwhile become frozen into place.

Crispin notices the clerk first and smiles, somewhat relieved. Then, upon noticing Rollo, his expression turns to solid terror. In a single beat, Crispin turns his back and, DING, sprints back out the door.

ROLLO

Shit!

Rollo grabs the plastic bag and pursues Crispin out of the store. The sound of screeching tires can be heard as both cars race to take off. The clerk, realizing that Rollo has forgotten to pay for his drink and ticket, then attempts to pursue him on foot - but he is left in the dust.

**EXT. A CALIFORNIAN DESERT - DAY**

A SINGLE, PAVED road slices through arid hills and sandy dunes. In the blink of an eye, TWO CARS rip by.

**INT. ROLLO'S CAR - DAY**

Rollo clenches the steering wheel in a death grip. He is fixated, with an unbreakable concentration, on Crispin's bumper as it slowly grows closer.

**INT. CRISPIN'S CAR - DAY**

Crispin, conversely, is frantic. With each glance into the rear view mirror he notices that Rollo is catching up.

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CRISPIN  
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Crispin checks the rear view mirror again. This time, his eyes linger a bit longer. When they return to the road, they notice A lethargic TORTOISE in the middle of crossing. In a knee-jerk reaction, Crispin yanks his steering wheel to the right, causing his car to dart off the road and into the sand. He loses control and crashes into a YUCCA TREE. Meanwhile, the tortoise reaches the other side.

**EXT. A CALIFORNIAN DESERT - DAY**

SCREECH. Rollo's car comes to a halt next to the collision. The resulting CLOUD OF DUST mingles with the SMOKE emitting from Crispin's bumper, which is contorted against the partially unearthed Yuca Tree.

ROLLO  
(shouting)  
Hello?

Then, the driver's side door clicks open. Crispin emerges, blood pouring from his nose. He sees Rollo, yelps, and attempts to flee on-foot. He can still run, but is held back by a limp. Rollo grabs the Pellegrino bottle from his car and pursues.

ROLLO  
Stop! Stop!

When Rollo is only a few yards away, he throws the bottle with full force against the back of Crispin's head. It lands with a THUNK and Crispin falls face-first to the sand.

Exhausted and disoriented, Crispin provides little resistance to Rollo, who is in the process of ZIP TYING his arms behind his back. The tie is secured so tightly that Crispin's hands begin to lose their colour

Then, Rollo sits Crispin up and uses the COLLAR OF HIS SHIRT to drag him several feet back to the site of the accident. He is propped up against the mangled Yucca tree, with smoke still lingering in the adjacent car engine.

Rollo leaves for his car and returns with a REVOLVER.

ROLLO  
Don't worry, I'll make it quick.

He begins with checking the magazine.

ROLLO

You put up a good fight, man.  
Bringing me all the way out here  
in the desert.

CRISPIN

(out of breath)

I can't do that to my  
girlfriend... I picture her  
finding me with my brains... all  
over... god.

ROLLO

It shouldn't be that messy. It's a  
revolver, not a bayonet.

Rollo searches for the revolver's safety lock.

ROLLO

And you wouldn't be here if it  
weren't for that girlfriend in the  
first place. That's something.

Rollo's remarks hit a nerve in Crispin, who lets out an  
exasperated laugh.

CRISPIN

Of course it was her who ordered a  
hit.

ROLLO

You're not surprised?

CRISPIN

You don't care.

Rollo finally discovers the safety lock. He switches it off.  
Suddenly, he has become hesitant. He pauses, then aims the  
revolver.

ROLLO

Guess not. I'm sorry.

Crispin squeezes his eyes shut.

ROLLO

What the fuck!

Confused, Crispin opens his eyes. Rollo has become paralyzed  
and slack jawed. The hand holding the revolver has become limp,  
its barrel now pointing towards the dirt.

Only a few meters away, a MOUNTAIN LION is revealed to have been stalking the two men. As if to make a vital decision, the predator has given up its hiding place among the sand and shrubs and is boldly holding its ground. Slowly, it makes its approach, its amber eyes are an emotionless abyss.

ROLLO  
What do we do?

CRISPIN  
Shoot it!

Rollo glances at the revolver.

ROLLO  
What if it just pisses it off?

CRISPIN  
You can't run from a Mountain Lion  
and I definitely can't! I'm  
completely fucked up! Shoot it!

Shakily, Rollo holds up the revolver. The cat responds by flattening its ears and rolling back its lips to reveal two massive canine teeth. It lets out a warning yowl before it prepares to leap. Then..

BANG.

The cat stumbles backward, grunting and murmuring in shock. Then, it slumps to the ground, dead.

ROLLO  
Fuck.

CRISPIN  
You're shaking.

ROLLO  
Yea. That was fucking terrifying.

CRISPIN  
And before you were going to shoot  
me, you fumbled with the safety on  
the gun. Have you even shot  
anything before?

Rollo shrugs.

ROLLO  
Okay. No, this is my first time.  
But it doesn't really matter to  
you.

Crispin sits up from a slouched position and his eyes widen. This information partially revives his confidence.

CRISPIN

Well, it does, because if you missed we'd both be dead.

ROLLO

You are dead.

CRISPIN

Why?

Rollo re-loads the magazine.

ROLLO

No hard feelings, man. It could've been anyone. I've been trying it the right way for years - school, work, whatever - and it fucked me.

The magazine clicks shut.

ROLLO

They tell you to work hard and you'll never worry about money. Bullshit. Money happens to the people born rich or born lucky. I'm done playing their way. Shit like this... drugs... violence... it gets you somewhere if you're not lucky.

Rollo checks the safety one last time.

ROLLO

And I guess your ex wife decided she wanted you to die at the exact moment I realized that. So, like I said, nothing personal.

CRISPIN

You aren't the only one roughing it, ya know? Shit happens to all of us. Just look at me.

ROLLO

(ignoring Crispin)

God damn this mask is hot.

Rollo pulls the ski mask off his head. He is clearly young, but constant exposure to the Californian summer has washed over his skin and caused it to turn red and dry. Dehydration has made his lips chapped. His hair is matted and crusted in dirt.

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Observing Rollo's immature and battered appearance, Crispin's hope grows. He sits still, observing his capturer with a watchful eye, careful not to let his optimism become apparent. The revolver is aimed at Crispin a second time.

CRISPIN

Please wait. Just talk to me for a second. You're clearly down on your luck. Just talk to me.

Rollo lowers the revolver half way. He is still uncertain. Crispin notices.

Then...

The sound of a SOUPED UP VOLKSWAGEN VAN slowly approaching grows on the paved road. Rollo quickly turns attention to it, panicking. Then, he turns back to Crispin.

ROLLO

I...I'm going to untie you

ROLLO pulls an EXACTO KNIFE from his pockets and slices the zip tie in half. Crispin rubs his wrists.

ROLLO

If you say anything, I'll have to kill them too.

Crispin shoots Rollo a scrupulous, almost scheming SIDE EYE.

The Volkswagen comes to a rolling stop next to Crispin's mangled car and the yucca tree. Out jumps DENNIS, 20's, a heavy-set man wearing a TIE-DYE HOODIE and SWEATPANTS and MELISSA, 20's, wearing a BEATLES T SHIRT and JEANS.

DENNIS

Holy shit, what'd ya'll do?

ROLLO

He's okay, just a little beaten up. I saw the whole thing. Damn tortoise in the middle of the road.

Dennis approaches the wreckage to examine it. Then he notices the Pellegrino bottle in the distance.



DENNIS  
 (pointing)  
 How'd that get all the way over  
 there?

CRISPIN  
 Um... I think it just launched  
 out. Um, the whole thing's a blur.

Rollo shoots Crispin a look as if to say "watch it".

ROLLO  
 I've got it from here. I'm gonna  
 give him a ride back.

Melissa approaches closer.

MELISSA  
 Shit, well, if you say so.  
 (turning to Dennis, then  
 back)  
 You've got anyone else around  
 here?

ROLLO  
 No, just us. But it's fine really.  
 We were just about to leave for  
 town.

Dennis and Melissa pause for a beat. Everyone notices the sting  
 of sudden tension.

DENNIS  
 (shouting)  
 Okay hands up!

In sync, Dennis and Melissa pull out two HANDGUNS.

MELISSA  
 We don't wanna hurt you. We just  
 want your money.

ROLLO  
 (in a panic)  
 I don't have anything, seriously!

DENNIS  
 No bullshit. We don't want to hurt  
 you but we will.

CRISPIN  
 (acquiescing)  
 Look in my glovebox! My wallet is  
 in there, take anything you want.

Melissa turns her back to run for Crispin's car while Dennis remains, holding his handgun up at the two men. He hardly blinks.

MELISSA (O.S.)

I found it!  
God damn, he has hundreds in here!  
We can get so much ketamine!

DENNIS

(gesturing the handgun  
towards Rollo)  
You too. You've got something on  
you.

Rollo reaches into his pocket and retrieves a WORN IN LEATHER WALLET. He tosses it to Dennis who carefully picks it up before starting to speed-walk backwards, gun still pointing.

DENNIS

Let's go babe!

Dennis does not look away until he can feel the handle of the van. He jumps in with Melissa already in the driver's seat.

MELISSA

We're rich!

The vehicle screeches and takes off, dust blowing behind them.

Rollo and Crispin stand shoulder-to-shoulder, speechless for a few beats. Then...

ROLLO

Alright, I get it man.

CRISPIN

What?

ROLLO

That sucked. To be on the other  
end like that. Dude, I'm sorry,  
I'm just going to go... it can't  
get any worse for me anyways.

Crispin watches in silence as Rollo mopes away towards the direction of his car. He considers helping.

**INT. ROLLO'S CAR - DAY**

The gas station bag sits on top of the glove box. The BRIGHT RED lottery ticket emits a soft glow from underneath its opaque plastic. Past it, Rollo's figure grows into focus, framed by the driver's side door - left open wide. He stops just before he can enter the car.

**EXT. A CALIFORNIAN DESERT - DAY**

Rollo reaches through the door and pulls out the lottery ticket. He pauses, then holds it close to his face and uses his thumbnail to scratch the tabs.

He has won the \$1,000,000 jackpot.

Rollo drops the ticket and looks back to Crispin, who now is a few yards away. They meet eyes.

CRISPIN

What's that?

Rollo is speechless.

Then, the empty plastic bag is blown from Rollo's car. Like a tumbleweed, it rolls to a halt a perfect distance between the two men. Its text, "THANK YOU :)", is the last thing we see.

END