

AUTOMATIC DRIVE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FUTURISTIC SUPER-HIGHWAY - DAY

SUPER: 2035

Advanced vehicles with blacked-out windows travel incredibly fast. They traverse from lane-to-lane gracefully.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Three PASSENGERS are sat on high-tech swivel seats surrounded by screens which depict a myriad of TV channels and games.

At the front sit EMILY and RYAN(50's). They watch TV while in the back sits their son ETHAN(18). He is playing a first-person shooter game.

EMILY

(singing)

Never gonna give you up!

RYAN

(singing)

Never gonna let you down.

Ethan pauses his game, he presses a device in his ear.

EMILY

(singing)

Never gonna run around and desert  
you.

ETHAN

What the blue shmeck are you two  
doing?

Both parents activate a similar device in their ears. A panel in front of them changes to a view of Ethan.

RYAN

(to the image of  
Ethan)

Ethan my boy, glad you could join  
us!

ETHAN

What was that...noise you two were  
making?

EMILY  
You've been Rick Rolled!

Both parents laugh. Ethan frowns.

ETHAN  
What's a Rick roll?

RYAN  
Google it!

They laugh harder. Ethan slaps his legs in frustration.

ETHAN  
Argh you guys are the zeesh!  
What's that number got to do with  
anything and why do I never  
understand a word you two say? I  
wish I was with Karl, at least he  
speaks normal Splingish.

EMILY  
(sarcastically)  
Is Splingish the new leet? Can you  
make a meme of it?

ETHAN  
I give up!  
Are...we..nearly..there..yet? Do  
you understand that?

RYAN  
(sarcastically)  
Well if you could just manage to  
extend your finger like so.

Ryan presses the device in his ear. A new panel opens up on  
the view-screen which shows a countdown timer.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
Then you'd see it's eighteen  
minutes thirty-two seconds until  
we reach our destination.

ETHAN  
Zurchnack! Why does it take so  
long?

Dad swivels his chair around to face Ethan.

RYAN  
Long? You are too young to  
remember this but it used to take  
two days to travel from New York  
(MORE)

RYAN (cont'd)  
to Los Angeles, now it's just over  
eight hours and you think that's  
long?

ETHAN  
That's like forever! Why couldn't  
we...

SUDDENLY: All the panels in the car lose power. It is pitch  
black.

EMILY  
(nervously)  
What just happened?

CUT TO:

EXT. FUTURISTIC SUPER-HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

One car amongst the myriad of fast moving vehicles suddenly  
swerves. The other vehicles correct their course to avoid a  
collison.

The car flips onto its side. It rolls over repeatedly.

The other vehicles grind to a halt behind it.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CAR - MOMENTS LATER

ABIGAIL(22) and LUCAS(41) are dressed in beach gear. Their  
seats are set in a reclined position. The panels surrounding  
them depict a beautiful beach next to cascading waves.

The background flickers. It is replaced by the image of a  
damaged vehicle on the highway.

A family is stood by the scene of the accident. They do not  
appear to be seriously hurt.

The chairs flip to an upright position, the couple remove  
their sunglasses.

ABIGAIL  
What's going on?

The words GRIDLOCK WARNING flash on the screen. A countdown  
timer is displayed. It shows less than four minutes  
remaining.

COMPUTER VOICE (O.S.)  
 Gridlock warning. Gridlock will  
 occur in T-Minus four minutes.  
 Please vote for your preferred  
 course of action.

On the main view-screen two options are presented. One to wait for the emergency services to arrive, the second to move the vehicle immediately to an off-road breakdown area.

LUCAS  
 Oh come on, there's nothing wrong  
 with them! We'll be here hours if  
 we wait!

ABIGAIL  
 I don't know, I think that lady  
 might have a concussion.

LUCAS  
 (laughs)  
 You serious?

Ignoring her concerns he presses option 'Two'. Within seconds a final figure appears. 96 percent have chosen Option Two.

LUCAS  
 Yeah for democracy!

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

A scene of carnage. The car is nothing more than a lump of twisted metal.

The highway is clear in front of the accident. Behind there are hundreds of vehicles with more queuing up in the distance.

Emily lies dead on the highway, her lifeless eyes stare up into nothingness. Ryan SOBS over her body. He is covered in cuts and bleeding.

ETHAN (OS)  
 (painfully)  
 Mom? Dad?

Ryan limps over to the wreckage. Peering inside he can see Ethan. He is badly injured and trapped inside a mass of twisted metal and wires.

RYAN  
Hold on son, help will be here  
soon.

At the side of the road a huge panel opens up. From underneath two large robot arms emerge and extend towards the crash site.

RYAN  
No! No!

He stands directly in the path of the arms. They swerve around him and clamp onto the remains of the car.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
There's someone still in there! My  
son is in there! You are not  
supposed to move injured people!  
Stop it!

He limps over to the nearest car and bangs on the hood.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
Help me, for the love of god help  
me! Tell them to stop! Vote no,  
vote Option One! Can't you see  
this is serious?

The robot arms drag the car towards the open panel. Ethan SCREAMS. Ryan limps over as fast as he can, wincing in pain with every step.

He grabs the vehicle, trying with all his remaining strength to stop it moving. He BASHES at the arms with his uninjured arm to no avail.

INT. ANOTHER CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucas and Abigail view the clean-up operation.

Their view screen depicts the car being moved slowly by the robot arms while the family are led to a seating area by some androids.

LUCAS  
Come on, come on. We've not got  
all day!

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE - CONTINUOUS

Ryan limps to the other side of the car. He pushes against it with all his remaining strength.

RYAN  
(screaming)  
Stop! Please stop!

Ryan is dragged along with the car. He glances over at the other vehicles. They hover motionless. The sun glistens off their black windows.

RYAN  
One of you, just one of you  
please! For the love of god take a  
look for yourself. Please, help  
me!

His pleas are not answered. He never stops trying, never stops shouting. Slowly he is pushed into the dark depths and falls under the panel.

The car falls on top of him.

Ethan's SCREAMS slowly fade as the panels close.

INT. ANOTHER FUTURISTIC CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The view screen shows the family seated on benches at the side of the road. They wave at the cars as they go by.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Your journey will resume in three,  
two, one, now!

LUCAS  
See, everyone's happy!

The accident scene is replaced by the beautiful beach setting. Ethan and Abigail relax again as their seats return to their reclined position.

COMPUTER VOICE  
The TechStorm Corporation would  
like to apologies for the  
temporary delay and any  
inconvenience this may have caused  
you. TechStorm, keeping the  
Highways gridlock free since two  
thousand and thirty three.

LUCAS

Whatever.

SUDDENLY: All the panels in the lose power. It is pitch black.

LUCAS

(nervously)

What just happened?

FADE OUT.