

**DITCH**

Written by

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TITLE - "MINNESOTA"

EXT. HIGHWAY 23 - NIGHT

A late, cold night. It's a vacant field road until--

A Chevy Tahoe cruises into view.

INT./EXT. CHEVY TAHOE [MOVING]

JOHN CROWE (50) drives, wearing a white tee and knit pajama shorts. His wife LUCILLE (few years below 50) rides passenger, wearing a sleep chemise.

They scan the sides of the road. While they scan, a phone in a car mount attempts to make a call on speaker.

JOHN  
Can you see him?

LUCILLE  
No, John.

JOHN  
Dammit.

He grits his teeth.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
He better pick up.

EXT. FIELD ROAD - NIGHT - EARLIER

A dead and vacant road. In the far distance, a--

DITCH BANK

It consists of wheat and dead grass. In it, lies a Chevy Malibu with beaming headlights.

O.S: Murmurs of a male voice.

PAN TO the shoulder of the road.

A handsome eighteen year-old has the phone to his ear. His name is DONALD CROWE and he's eager for the caller to pick up.

The phone BURRS a couple of times, until--

VOICEMAIL

Hey, it's Michael. Leave your message after the beep.

The beep of a voicemail.

Donald's blood boils and he hangs up.

DONALD

(whispery)

Fuck.

He dials another number, then puts the phone back to his ear.

Once again, he hears the phone burr.

INT. BEDROOM [CONTINUOUS]

John and Lucille watch TV in bed. They wear the same clothes as they wore in the car.

On a dresser nearby, the house phone rings.

John and Lucille hear it ring, but John hustles to the phone.

JOHN

(getting out of bed)

I'll get it.

He hurries out of bed and reaches the dresser. John accepts the call, then presses the phone against his ear.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hello?

John waits for a response.

DONALD (V.O.)

Hello?

John recognizes the voice, so he smiles.

JOHN

Hey, Don. What's up?

Lucille overhears their conversation. She can't help it to smile.

EXT. FIELD ROAD - SHOULDER

Donald looks at his Chevy in the ditch.

DONALD  
Dad. I need help.

INT. BEDROOM

John's smile dissolves into panic.

JOHN  
What do you mean you need help?

Lucille heeds to John's sentence and worries too.

LUCILLE  
(to John, low voice)  
Put him on speaker.

John puts him on speaker.

With the phone louder, they hear Donald sigh.

DONALD (V.O.)  
My car's in a ditch.

John and Lucille's hearts skip a beat.

DONALD (V.O.)  
After I left the party, I drove on  
the sixty-eighth and made a wrong  
turn. I called a couple friends,  
but none of 'em picked up. So, I--

LUCILLE  
Donald, are you alright?

DONALD (V.O.)  
Calm down, Ma. I'm alright.

JOHN  
How much damage is on the car?

DONALD (V.O.)  
None. Not even a scratch. I just  
need to push it back on the road.

John and Lucille take an easy breath.

JOHN  
Were you drinking?

DONALD (V.O.)  
No-no, Dad. I made a wrong turn,  
that's all.

JOHN  
Did you call 911?

DONALD (V.O.)  
No. This is not an emergency. Look.  
I'm not even that far away from  
home. I just need--

JOHN  
Why didn't you call Triple A?

DONALD (V.O.)  
I don't have Triple A. You know  
that.

Beat.

DONALD (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Look. All I need is a little bit of  
assistance. So, can you guys please  
help me out?

John runs his fingers through his hair, then sighs.

JOHN  
Where are you again, son?

DONALD (V.O.)  
Between Marshall and Lynd, just off  
the twenty-third.

JOHN  
Wait. Twenty-third? Now that I  
remember it, I thought you said  
crashed on the sixty-eighth.

DONALD (V.O.)  
(annoyed)  
No-no, I crashed on the twenty-  
third.

JOHN  
Donald, are you sure haven't been  
drinking?

Donald eases his burden with a sigh.

DONALD (V.O.)  
Okay. I took one shot of whiskey,  
but that's all. I'm not drunk. I  
slipped up and said the sixty-  
eighth. My bad, I meant the twenty-  
third. Just can you guys please  
pick me up?

John heaves, then sinks his feet into his bed slippers.

JOHN  
Okay, Don. We'll be right there.  
Stay where you are.

DONALD (V.O.)  
Okay. Bye.

JOHN  
Bye.

John quickly hangs up, then taps Lucille.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Come on, Lucille. You heard what I  
said. We gotta go look for him.

As Lucille plants her feet into her slippers, John leaves the room.

LUCILLE  
Hey! Wait up!

She scurries out the room, attempting to catch up to John.

*INT./EXT. CHEVY TAHOE [MOVING]*

JOHN  
*He better pick up.*

The call crackles to life.

DONALD (V.O.)  
Hello?

JOHN  
Don, we're on the twenty-third  
between Marshall and Lynd with a  
tow rope in the trunk. We've been  
looking and so far, we haven't been  
able to find you. Where are you?

*EXT. FIELD ROAD*

Donald stands on the road's side with his phone glued to his ear.

He looks up and down the road, but it remains void.

DONALD  
I'm on the side of the road. You  
can't miss me.

Behind him: an ominous, bright LIGHT suddenly shines beyond  
the fence lines.

Unfortunately, Donald's blind to the beam behind him.

INTERCUT FIELD ROAD/CHEVY TAHOE

JOHN  
Well, we must've missed you. Do you  
see anything that can help us find  
out where you are?

DONALD  
Well--

Donald scans the street up and down again.

DONALD (CONT'D)  
I'm near a street. Nothing's really  
here. I haven't seen a car or a  
headlight ever since I got here.

JOHN  
Okay, Donald. Do you see anything  
behind you?

DONALD  
(turning around)  
Well, there's my car and my  
headlights are still on, but--

The light masks Donald's face as he turns around. Donald  
finally sees the beam of light.

DONALD (CONT'D)  
(away from the phone)  
What the hell.

LUCILLE  
(in response to Donald's  
initial sentence)  
But what?

JOHN  
But what, Don? What do you see,  
son?

DONALD  
A light. I see a light.

Lucille hears what Donald says. She peers deeper into the sides' horizons.

John looks on both sides of the road. He sees nothing.

JOHN

What light, Donald?

Unbeknownst to John and Lucille, Donald gazes into the light.

He lets himself stray away from the road.

He treads onto a gravel path toward the fence lines, as he stares into the light.

Over the phone, John and Lucille hear the CRUNCH of gravel.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What's that sound, Donald?

DONALD

A gravel path. I'm walking on a gravel path to get a better look at this light.

John brakes.

JOHN

Well, we haven't seen a light and we're heading into Lynd. We haven't seen you or any cars out here. We're making a U-turn. If we still can't find you, we're calling the police.

John makes a U-turn.

Meanwhile, Donald leans an arm on the fence lines.

DONALD

Wait. You guys don't see this light?

Lucille looks again and John takes a quick glance at both sides.

JOHN

Donald, we've been looking ever since we got here and we haven't seen a bright light or you on either side of the road.

Donald hops over the fence lines.



DONALD  
How do you guys not see it? It's  
big, bright, and-

END INTERCUT

CHEVY TAHOE

DONALD (V.O.)  
OH SHIT!

JOHN  
Donald?

The call cuts off.

Then, John immediately pulls over. He and Lucille tear up.

John dials Donald again.

CUT TO BLACK.

The phone BURRS over their whimpers.

JOHN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Pick up, Donald!

Another burr.

JOHN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Pick up!

Lucille and Jon CRY as the phone continues to burr.

"Donald Crowe was never seen or heard again, even with  
assiduous calls."

"The authorities used Donald's cell phone records to locate  
his vehicle. They discovered it was farther than he  
suggested."

"It was twenty miles from Lynd."

"Various searches have been conducted, but all were  
unsuccessful. To this day, no one knows what exactly happened  
to Donald."

FADE OUT.