

HAPPY DAYS

Written by

SOMEONE

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - EARLY MORNING

A small clearing in the midst of a pine tree grove. It's still dark. Shadows upon shadows. A car sits at the edge of the clearing, lights off.

A YOUNG MAN, 25, steps into frame and looks into the woods. For what, we don't know.

A briefest hint of light reveals his face is beaten to a bloody pulp, his eyes almost sealed shut. He tries to move away, but collapses to his knees.

ANOTHER MAN is obviously there, but all we see are his footsteps approaching the Young Man from behind. A wire slips quickly around the Young Man's neck.

TIGHT ON THE YOUNG MAN, who now struggles against the weight of the wire, so tightly it splits the skin.

Gloved hands pull the wire even tighter now. A guttural, gurgling noise emanates from the Young Man, and in a matter of moments, he collapses to the ground.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

ON THE CAR--the young man is thrown naked into the trunk of the car. His swollen face is illuminated by a flash light held by his tormentor, and it's brutal enough to haunt the senses.

INT. CUNNINGHAM HOME - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Moonlight fills the small room. RICHIE (17) sleeps in his twin bed.

RICHIE's father, HOWARD, 50, short and stocky, enters the room and rustles Richie from his sleep.

HOWARD

Wake up, Richie. It's time.

Richie is slowly drawn into the waking world.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Richie's mother, MARION, 48, makes breakfast. The typical early morning mom look - hair piled up in a beehive and dressed in a robe. She looks out the window, touches the pane to test the weather.

MARION
Richie? Breakfast's on!

INT. RICHIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

RICHIE
Coming!

Richie flips on a light, and now he is seen for who he is -- a fresh-faced, redhead beanpole.

The room is lined with pennants of high school and colleges. Clothes tossed about the room. It's a mess.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MARION
Richie, let's go!

Howard sits at the breakfast table and picks up the newspaper. A few seconds later Richie ambles in and seats himself.

Marion places a plate of bacon and eggs in front of him and he digs in. She again looks out the window, pours herself some coffee and joins them.

MARION (CONT'D)
It's a cold one out there, Richie.
You stay in the car if you can.

Richie ignores the advice as he stuffs his face.

HOWARD
He'll be fine, Marion...
(slaps the paper)
Would you look at this?, Hank Aaron
signed a new contract. Thirty-five
thousand dollars. To play baseball!
Has the world gone mad?

Richie smiles at this as he finishes the last of his eggs.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

I work nine hours a day running that hardware store, and he plays a kid's game for two hours a day six months out of the year and makes twice as much as me.

MARION

I'm surprised to hear you say that. You're always going on and on about Hank did this, and Hank did that, and he's the greatest player since Babe Ruth and--

HOWARD

I'm just saying that no one in Milwaukee deserves to be paid that much money, especially a black man.

MARION

Oh, Howard. Really.

Richie's smile goes away at this pronouncement. He takes a last gulp of orange juice and heads for the front door.

RICHIE

Gotta go. See you after work.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Richie climbs into a well-worn 1953 DeSoto and pulls away from the house.

A collection of small white wood frame houses dot the landscape. Richie's car is the only vehicle traveling the streets this time of morning.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Richie pulls into the driveway of another wood-frame home. He waits for a moment, then WARREN "POTSIE" WEBBER, 17, hustles out the front door. Attractive, clean cut.

Potsie hurries over to the passenger side and jumps in. Blows vigorously into his hands.

POTSIE

Man, it's cold.

RICHIE

Who does a paper route in weather like this? And on a Saturday?

(MORE)

RICHIE (CONT'D)

It's the only day each week where I can actually sleep in, and we're driving around at six a.m.

POTSIE

It's easy money, Richie. And you know girls love a guy who can spend big money on them.

Richie pulls away from the house.

RICHIE

We're making fifty cents an hour, Potsie. I don't think the girls are going to be throwing themselves at us for that kind of dough.

POTSIE

You wait and see. When we get that first paycheck, we're going to have to beat the girls off with a stick.

RICHIE

I should be beating you with a stick for talking me into this.

EXT. MILWAUKEE JOURNAL - EARLY MORNING

A large building on the outskirts of town. A sign over a gate outside the building reads "MILWAUKEE JOURNAL." A smaller sign next to the road points to the loading dock.

Richie's car pulls through the gate and heads for the dock. Richie and Potsie get out and head inside.

INT. MILWAUKEE JOURNAL - LOADING DOCK - EARLY MORNING

Potsie meets up with MR. JENSEN, the dock foreman, a jolly round man in his fifties. Richie follows close behind, fascinated by the paper printing machinery.

Mr. Jensen points to a stack of freshly printed newspapers and hands Potsie a clipboard and a pen.

MR. JENSEN

Here's your list of addresses. Make sure every one of these gets delivered, understand?

POTSIE

Yes, sir. You can count on us.

Potsie signs the checklist and begins to load stacks of newspapers into the car's back seat.

Richie still has his attention on the printing presses.

MR. JENSEN (O.S.)
Morning, Richie.

RICHIE
(startled)
Oh...hi, Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN
Better help your friend there.

RICHIE
Right. Thanks.

MR. JENSEN
Pretty interesting, isn't it? You interested in newspapers?

RICHIE
I've thought about being a journalist. Maybe a sports writer.

MR. JENSEN
Well, the world is always going to need journalists, that's for sure. A good profession to make a living. People are always going to read newspapers, and that's no lie.

POTSIE
Hey, Richie, you gonna help here, or what?

Richie nods to Mr. Jensen and grabs a stack of papers.

MR. JENSEN
You come apply when you turn 18, you hear? We'll get you covering local high school sports!

He slaps Richie on the back and he almost drops a bundle of papers. Potsie looks annoyed as Mr. Jensen walks away.

INT. RICHIE'S CAR - MORNING

For a few moments there is silence. Richie takes in the view that the silhouette of a quarter-moon provides. Potsie finally breaks the silence.

POTSIE

Did you mean that? About being a
journalist?

Richie thinks about this for a second.

RICHIE

Yeah, sure. I mean, I'd have to go
to journalism school, but I was
going to college anyway, so...

Potsie forms a frown at this notion.

POTSIE

I thought you, me and Ralph were
going to join the Army after high
school. Or form a band. Or start a
burger stand together. Something
fun, you know?

RICHIE

Those were things we talked about
when we were kids. We've grown up.
You didn't think we were still
going to do those things, did you?

Potsie shrugs his shoulders in a way to indicate that, yeah,
he did.

POTSIE

I really figured you were just
gonna stick around town and work at
your dad's hardware store.

RICHIE

Do you want to be an orthopedist
because of your dad?

POTSIE

I'd never do anything my dad did,
even if it was the greatest job in
the world.

RICHIE

So what is you really want to be?

Potsie seems struck by the question. He digs deep down for
the answer, as if no one has ever asked him this before.

POTSIE

Hmm... A singer. Or some type of
musician. Or a wide receiver for
the Green Bay Packers.

RICHIE
That'd be cool, wouldn't it?

The mood suddenly turns as dark as the morning sky.

POTSIE
(sighs)
Maybe I can fix your kids' teeth
someday. That'd be something, huh.

RICHIE
I'm not letting you anywhere near
my kids' teeth.

POTSIE
Smart guy.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - MORNING

Richie turns the car onto a country road.

INT./EXT. DESOTO - RURAL ROAD - MORNING

RICHIE
Why'd they give us the route way
out in the sticks?

POTSIE
(shrugs)
I didn't know people in this part
of town could even read.
(looks at the list)
There's our first house.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Potsie grabs a rolled up paper from the back seat, and tosses
it out the window into the front yard of the home. A dog
BARKS continuously as Richie drives away.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Richie continues down the country road. A large lake comes
into view off to his left. It looks dark, ominous.

They pass another house. Another paper thrown. Again, a few
moments of silence, then--

POTSIE
You thought about which college?

RICHIE
University of Wisconsin, maybe. Or
Northwestern, if I can get in.

POTSIE
Northwestern? Man. Gotta have good
grades to get into there.

RICHIE
I have good grades.

POTSIE
Whatever you say.

RICHIE
I do!

Richie looks into the woods. He's distracted by something.

RICHIE'S POV -- In the darkness, there appears to be a man
standing along the tree line, but it's hard to be certain.

BACK TO SCENE

Potsie suddenly gets bug eyed.

POTSIE
RICHIE!!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Richie slams on the brakes as he notices a car barreling down
a dirt road that cuts out of the forest. But it's too late.
Richie SLAMS into the car's rear end, hard, spinning it
sideways.

Richie and Potsie are visibly shaken. Potsie has a small cut
on his forehead where he's bumped his head against the dash.

RICHIE
You okay?

POTSIE
Yeah, you?

RICHIE
Yeah. C'mon.

They get out of the DeSoto. There's significant damage to the
front of Richie's car.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
Aw, man. Dad is gonna kill me.

They approach the other car. Richie looks in the driver's side, and is taken aback to see that there's no one behind the wheel.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

What the...

Richie looks in the back seat. Nothing. He's puzzled.

POTSIE (O.S.)

Uh, Richie... you better come here.

Potsie is standing behind the mystery car. He backs away slowly as he points at the trunk.

RICHIE

What is it?

And now Richie looks to where Potsie points. The trunk is slightly ajar, and a HAND protrudes from it.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

Holy cow!

POTSIE

Do you think he's... you know?

RICHIE

Dead? Yeah, I'm pretty sure he is.

POTSIE

Let's get out of here, Richie. I'm not good around dead people.

RICHIE

Hang on. We have to check it out, just to be certain. Then we'll call the police.

POTSIE

You don't think we did that, do you? It's not our fault, right?

Richie thinks about it for a second.

RICHIE

No, of course not!

POTSIE

What happened to the driver?

RICHIE

I never saw one. There wasn't anyone in the car.

POTSIE
You're lying.

RICHIE
Look for yourself.

Potsie declines the invitation as Richie steps gingerly towards the trunk.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
Go get the flashlight out of the
glove compartment.

Potsie does as he's told.

After pondering it a few moments, Richie reaches down and quickly flips open the trunk.

INSIDE THE TRUNK--

Richie is taken aback to find that the man in the trunk is naked. Richie picks up the man's hand hanging out of the car, and checks for a pulse.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
No pulse.

POTSIE (O.S.)
Here.

Potsie throws Richie the flashlight. He's not getting close to this body.

Richie flicks on the light, and when the light tracks to the man's face, it freezes Richie cold.

The man's eyes are sealed shut with heavy black bruises, and the rest of his face reveals a severe beating.

RICHIE
Oh, Jesus...

POTSIE
What? What is it?

Richie's moves the light around, and his attention is seized by a tattoo on the man's shoulder. It's a skull with a serpent crawling through the eye sockets.

Richie is mesmerized for a moment by the tattoo, then is brought back to reality as Potsie grabs him by the shoulder.

POTSIE (CONT'D)
C'mon, let's go call the police and
let them deal with this!

Richie and Potsie climb back in the DeSoto and speed away.

EXT. HILLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

A LONE FIGURE on the hillside amongst the woods steps out of the shadows and watches them drive away.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Richie veers his car down the main road from where they came. He comes upon a small white house with a screened-in porch. They get out and rush to the porch.

Richie rings the door buzzer. He has to ring it three times before a stout woman in her late thirties, MISS GRACE, answers.

She wears a hideous blue robe and looks like she's had all of two minutes of sleep. Her hair is in curlers. A cigarette hangs loosely from her lips.

RICHIE
Ma'am. I need to use your telephone
real quick. It's an emergency.

She takes a drag on a cigarette, as if she expects an explanation before she'll let Richie use the phone.

MISS GRACE
What are you doing out here this
time of morning?

RICHIE
Something bad's happened. An
accident. Please.

MISS GRACE
All right, come on in, then. Watch
the carpet.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Miss Grace points Richie to a phone. As he dials, Miss Grace stands over him.

MISS GRACE
How old are you? Thirteen?

RICHIE
 (pained look)
 No, ma'am, I'm seventeen.
 (into phone)
 Hello, I need to report an
 accident. Old Mills Road where
 Saxon Lake begins. One person is
 dead...

MISS GRACE
 (to Potsie)
 Dead? Did you kill him?

POTSIE
 I'm pretty sure he was dead when he
 got put in the trunk.

Miss Grace's eyes grow wide.

RICHIE
 (into phone)
 Thanks, we'll meet them there.

Richie hangs up. Turns to Potsie.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
 C'mon, let's go. They're sending
 someone to meet us there.
 (to Miss Grace)
 We need to get back. Thanks for
 letting us use the phone.

Miss Grace looks dazed and confused as the boys rush out.

MISS GRACE
 Yeah, sure.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

Richie pulls the DeSoto up to the spot where the car appeared
 out of the woods.

A black and white squad car appears just a moment later. A
 short, balding Japanese-American, DEPUTY SHERIFF ARNOLD
 TAKAHASHI (54), gets out of the car.

But the car that Richie hit is nowhere to be seen. Richie and
 Potsie are as perplexed as Miss Grace was.

POTSIE
 Where did it go?

ARNOLD
Where did what go?

RICHIE
The car -- we hit a car right here.
It came out of nowhere, and... and
there was a dead body in the trunk.

ARNOLD
A dead body? What about the driver?

RICHIE
There was no driver.

ARNOLD
No driver and a dead body in the
trunk. Got it. And now this car is
gone.

(writes in pad)
You boys haven't been drinking, by
any chance?

RICHIE
No, swear to God! Look at the front
of my car! See the damage?

Arnold does a cursory review of the DeSoto.

ARNOLD
What's your name?

RICHIE
Richie Cunningham. This is Warren
Webber.

POTSIE
People call me Potsie.

ARNOLD
Don't even want to know why. So
what exactly happened here?

RICHIE
We were delivering papers, and I
looked over there--
(points to the woods)
And I thought I saw a man standing
in the woods over there. And the
next thing I know, this car is
barreling down this dirt road right
in front of me. Didn't have its
lights on or anything.

POTSIE

And that's when I saw the hand sticking out of the trunk.

RICHIE

When I opened the trunk I saw the body. Beaten pretty badly. Had a wire around his neck.

Arnold lets out a low whistle.

ARNOLD

You sure about that? And about the wire, too?

RICHIE

Absolutely. Won't ever forget that.

Arnold looks around the area. He walks down to a cliff that where the car disappeared into the lake.

ARNOLD

Why don't you boys get home and get some rest, think about any detail you can remember about the accident, then I'll come by your house and we can write up the report? I'll give you a call later.

Richie and Potsie write down their addresses for Arnold, then get into the DeSoto and drive away.

Arnold watches them leave, then looks down and notices his shoe's untied. As he bends over to retie the shoe, he notices something. TIRE TRACKS leading from the main road right off the cliff.

Arnold looks to the lake. It's dark, foreboding. Something is rotten in the state of Wisconsin.

INT. RICHIE'S HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

Richie sits on the couch. Marion sits next to him, patting his shoulder. Howard stalks back and forth in front of them.

Richie's sister, JOANIE, 12, a fresh-faced short-haired girl sits in a chair next to the couch and eats an apple.

HOWARD

What were you thinking, Richard?

Marion blows into a Kleenex. It's obvious she has been crying.

RICHIE

It wasn't my fault. He came out of nowhere right in front of me! What was I supposed to do?

HOWARD

Are you sure you didn't just hit a tree and you've made up this story as a way to stay out of trouble?

RICHIE

Dad, c'mon. There definitely was another car involved.

JOANIE

As bad as you drive you're lucky you didn't veer off into the lake.

RICHIE

Thanks a lot.

HOWARD

She's right, you know. A hundred bad things could have happened out there. Driving around in the dark -- I never should have let you take that job.

RICHIE

But I didn't, dad. I'm okay.

MARION

(sighs heavily)

Well, that's the most important thing...Why don't you go upstairs and take a nap.

Richie gets up and heads upstairs.

JOANIE

If Richie gets sent to jail, can I have his room?

RICHIE

Sit on it, Joanie.

HOWARD

We'll need to take the car down to--

Suddenly the front door flies open, and ARTHUR "FONZIE" FONZARELLI, 25, barges in. Perfectly coiffed hair, a black leather jacked over a T-shirt. The epitome of cool.

FONZIE

Mr. C. I came over as soon as I heard. This is not good. Not good at all.

RICHIE

How did you hear? We haven't told anyone.

FONZIE

Are you kidding? I hear everything. Cunningham, are you okay?

RICHIE

Yeah, I'm good, Fonzie.

FONZIE

Fantastic. Listen, Mr. C, you bring that car down to the shop and I'll get it fixed up right away.

HOWARD

Thanks, Fonzie. We'll do that.

FONZIE

All right, then. Later.

As Fonzie leaves, Richie chases after him.

EXT. RICHIE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Fonzie is getting on his motorcycle when Richie pops out the front door.

RICHIE

Fonzie!

FONZIE

What do you need, Cunningham?

RICHIE

I guess you heard...
 (Fonzie looks bored)
 ...right, because you hear everything, that Potsie and I called the Sheriff's office.

FONZIE

Let me guess. Arnold?

RICHIE

Yeah. But here's the weird thing.
The car was missing by the time we
got back there. I don't think
Arnold believes me.

FONZIE

You I'd believe. Potsie not so
much. Any idea who it was?

RICHIE

I couldn't tell. His face was... He
was beat up pretty bad.

FONZIE

Must've been drunk. Some lowlife
who got himself in with a bad
person. Probably deserved what he
got, you know?

RICHIE

Maybe... You ever see a guy around
here with a tattoo on his shoulder?
Looked like a skull with a serpent
going through it's eye sockets?

FONZIE

Cunningham, I've seen more tattoos
in this town than a Navy doctor...
but I can't say I recall anything
like that around here. Why? His
shirt off or something?

RICHIE

He was, uh... naked. Had that skull
tattooed right about here.

Richie touches his left shoulder blade, then shivers.

EXT. RICHIE'S HOUSE - MIDNIGHT

A dark, windy evening. Leaves blow about everywhere as trees
sway back and forth. Very little light on Richie's house,
giving it an ominous appearance.

INT. RICHIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Riches tosses and turns in his sleep.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DREAM SEQUENCE

Richie is back at the country road, reaching into the trunk to try and get the dead man out, only this time, the beaten, swollen eyes are open. The man swiftly grabs one of Richie's arms and pulls him towards the trunk.

YOUNG MAN
(barely above a whisper)
Come with me...

Richie tries to pull away, but the man's grip is too strong.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
Come with me...

With that, the trunk begins to close, and the young man pulls Richie in with him.

INT. RICHIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Richie springs up in his bed, shaken by the nightmare he has just had. He buries his face in his hands.

EXT. LAKE - AFTERNOON

Arnold watches a team of divers bring their boat to shore. As they get out and collect their gear to leave, the head diver, STAN HARWELL, (32), a stout build, looks like a Marine drill sergeant, approaches Arnold with a disgusted look.

ARNOLD
Well, Stan, whatcha got?

STAN
What we got is diddly-squat.

ARNOLD
Nothin'? No car, no body?

STAN
Nope. We went along the entire bottom in the area where you said it went in. Nothin' down there except rocks, moss and beer bottles.

ARNOLD
(points to tire tracks)
But look--we got tire tracks that come right up to the cliff. How do you explain that?

STAN

All I'm telling you is there's no car down there. Can't help you with why.

With that he walks away, leaving Arnold to stare into a mysterious lake and wonder just what the hell is going on.

EXT. RICHIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Richie rakes leaves in his front yard. Patsie leans against a tree. Arnold pulls his squad car up to the front of the house, and gets out.

PATSIE

Hey, it's that deputy.

Arnold walks over to the two.

ARNOLD

Kind of cold to be out here raking leaves.

RICHIE

It's part of my punishment for wrecking the car.

Arnold and Richie stare at each other awkwardly for a few moments. Arnold obviously didn't come by to exchange pleasantries.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

You come by to tell me something?
You find the body?

ARNOLD

No. Found some fresh tire tracks that went right up to the edge of the cliff. But we had a team of divers sent over from Madison and they must have scoured that lake for three hours.

Arnold stops there and stares at Richie.

RICHIE

And?

ARNOLD

And nothing.

RICHIE
(flustered)
I know what I saw. Potsie, too.

ARNOLD
I understand, but we've got a real strange situation here. We don't have a body and we're not likely to ever recover one. Nobody's been reported missing from town, or the entire county that we know of.

POTSIE
What are you saying? You think we're making this whole thing up?

ARNOLD
Settle down. I'm not saying that at all. I'm only saying that I can't do anything more until we get a murder victim. I need a name, Richie. I need a face. Without an identification, I don't even know where to start.

Arnold walks back to his squad car.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
I'm sorry that we're at a dead end for now, but if anything comes up, let me know, okay?

Richie watches Arnold walk away. He clearly struggles with this latest piece of news; a seed of doubt has been sewn into his soul.

RICHIE
I know what we saw!

Arnold waives an acknowledgement without speaking, gets in his car and drives away. As Richie and Potsie watch the car pull away, the surrealness of it envelopes them.

POTSIE
(barely audible)
What is happening, Richie?

EXT. AUTO BODY SHOP - NIGHT

Establish a small shop on a city street. Banged up cars sit outside. The garage bay door is closed, but a light shines through a window.

INT. AUTO BODY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Fonzie tinkers with his motorcycle. Looks frustrated.

He looks up at the sound of an opening door. A scowl on his face as he throws a wrench on a work table.

FONZIE

What are you doing here? I told you
not to come around.

LEONARD "LENNY" KOSNOWSKI, 34, tall with slicked-back hair,
nervously paces the other side of the garage.

LENNY

I did what you said--

FONZIE

Did I say for you to get seen? You
screwed up, Lenny.

LENNY

Don't worry, Fonz, I took care of
it. They'll never find the body.

Fonzie waves him over. Lenny hesitantly crosses the garage.
Fonzie puts his arm around Lenny's shoulders.

FONZIE

One, never say never. And two, you
don't talk to anyone about this.
Especially that idiot Squiggy. He
can't keep his mouth shut about
anything. Got it?

LENNY

Got it, Fonz.

FONZIE

Now get out of here. I'll take care
of it.

Lenny turns to go, and Fonzie quietly picks up a large hammer
off the work bench.

The blow to the back of Lenny's head is quick and effective.
He drops to the floor, unconscious.

Fonzie bends over and the only thing now in frame is the
hammer swinging rapidly in succession.

SUPER WITH TITLE: "TO BE CONTINUED"

FADE OUT