

In The Evening
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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY 80, ONE HOUR WEST OF MANHATTAN -- NIGHT

VIN CAPUTO'S eyes are getting heavier by the minute as he drives his car down US 80. He blinks as he looks at the digital clock which reads 1:05. He looks up the dark highway as the AM talk show host talks about the recession in Western Pennsylvania. CAPUTO looks down at the dashboard as the gas pump indicator warning starts to blink.

CAPUTO

Shit! Come on, four exits to go!

He looks over at the gas gauge and the sees the arrow way below the empty sign.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

SHIT!

He looks back up the highway and sees a sign for a Service/Rest Area. He raises his fist.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Yes!

The car begins to sputter as he passes the sign which reads; Service/Rest Area; 1/4 mile. He rubs the steering wheel.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Come on baby, don't fail me now.
You can make it!

Caputo steps down on the gas one last time. The car speeds up and begins to sputter one final time as he glides onto the Rest Area off ramp. He looks up and sees a dark, empty gas station. He bangs his fist on the dashboard.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Son Of A Bitch!

The car sails into the pitch black parking area. Caputo sees an eighteen wheeler parked near the barren bathroom area and two cars on the other side of the rest area. The car stops. He shuts off the ignition, gets out and locks the door. He checks his holster and unbuttons the safety on it and on his nine millimeter pistol. He taps the gun handle.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Looks like you and me kid!

Caputo begins to walk to the two cars.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Hope I'm not intruding on a couple
of boys having fun.

He sees that the cars are empty.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)
So much for a cheap thrill.

Caputo turns and walks to the eighteen wheeler. He climbs up the step and knocks on the door.

CAPUTO (yells) (CONT'D)
This will will uncomfortable if I'm
interrupting a threesome. HELLO!

He bangs a little harder.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)
HELLO, ANYONE HOME?

Still no response. He bangs harder, this time with his fist.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)
COME ON SLEEPING BEAUTY! HELLO!

Caputo shakes his head as he climbs off the truck. He buttons up his suit coat. As he walks to the exit he does his best Terminator imitation.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)
Nice night for a walk!

He looks up and sees a car pull into the rest area. The car stops then starts to drive towards him.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)
SWEET!

From the far end of the rest area a set of car lights go on. Caputo turns as he hears a car start up and begin to pull away from a dark, wooded area. He shrugs his shoulders.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)
When it rains it pours!

The car, an old model black Cadillac, speeds up to Caputo. Caputo waves to it as he sees a large black Suburban style S.U.V. driving from the edge of the woods. It stops as the Cadillac pulls up next to Caputo. The window electronically rolls down. A very fair skinned MAN in a black fedora and scarf looks at Caputo.

MAN
Do you need a hand?

CAPUTO
More like a ride to a gas station.
I ran out just as I pulled in here.

The MAN looks at the side view mirror. Caputo sees this, turns and watches the S.U.V. creep towards him. The MAN turns back to Caputo.

MAN

I have a spare can in the trunk.

CAPUTO

Aren't you the good Samaritan.

Caputo turns and walks to the other side of the car. The man looks back in his rear view mirror.

MAN

More than you'll ever know!

Caputo opens the passenger door and gets in. He looks over at the S.U.V., which does a 180 and moves back to the dark, wooded area. It shuts off its lights. As he sits in the passenger seat Caputo looks at the immaculately clean car with a hint of stale air and sees an old pine tree freshener on the shift. Caputo extends his hand to the man. The man nods but keeps his hands on the steering wheel as the Cadillac pulls away.

CAPUTO

Thanks. I'm Vinny Caputo.

MAN

Tim, Tim Wells.

Wells looks back in the rear view mirror and sees no one coming up the exit ramp.

CAPUTO

I hope there's a gas station near that's open...

WELLS

There's one two exits up.

CAPUTO

Good. Do you usually keep a gas can in your car?

WELLS

It comes in handy. It happened to me two rest areas up. I wish I had one that night.

CAPUTO

No Samaritan roaming the highway that night?

WELLS

No, that's what I wouldn't call it. Back to your question. Yes, I keep a spare can as well as a tool box in my trunk.

CAPUTO

Always trying to save a stranded victim.

WELLS

Something like that.

Wells pulls off his scarf as he looks forward at the dark highway. Caputo looks over at Wells and notices the brown polyester leisure suit and the two top buttons of his olive shirt unbuttoned. Caputo looks at Wells' hair style.

CAPUTO

Nice suit. Going for the retro look?

WELLS

What?

CAPUTO

I said, nice suit. I was only a kid in the 70's but I remember my dad and uncles owning suits like that. Are you trying to bring the style back?

WELLS

It never left!

Caputo turns away and rolls his eyes.

CAPUTO

I guess everything comes full circle.

Caputo looks back at Wells, who is driving exactly 55 miles per hour with his both hands on the wheel. Caputo also notices a gold chain with an Italian horn and fingers on it.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

I haven't seen one of those chains in a long time.

JONES

What?

CAPUTO

Your chain, my dad had one of those. You're more like my dad than I am.

JONES

In more ways than you know.

CAPUTO

Are you Italian?

WELLS

No, my wife is. She gave it to me.

CAPUTO

Is it a keepsake from her?

WELLS

You could say that. I look at it and always remember her.

CAPUTO

What? Aren't the fingers supposed to ward off evil spirits?

WELLS

Don't always believe myths. You don't like it?

CAPUTO

No, it's very nice. Back in the day, everyone had one.

WELLS

Gold never ages.

CAPUTO

You're right. Only the styles change.

Caputo looks down at the console in between the seats. He sees three four track tapes, Boston, Frampton Comes Alive, Alice Cooper and Aerosmith sit in the tape holder. The stereo plays a Styx song. He slightly sarcastically smiles.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Good tapes, haven't seen them in a long time. I didn't know they still made eight tracks.

Wells looks down at the tapes then back to the road.

WELLS

Came with the car.

CAPUTO

I feel like I'm in a time capsule.

WELLS

Timeless to me. Brings back memories.

Caputo rolls his eyes as he leans back, stretches and unbuttons his jacket. Wells looks over and sees Caputo's pistol. He looks over at Caputo.

WELLS (CONT'D)

I hope I didn't help the wrong guy.

Wells points to Caputo's chest. Caputo looks down, sees his uncovered gun and shakes his head.

CAPUTO

Don't get the wrong idea, I'm a cop

WELLS

A cop?

CAPUTO

A detective. I'm not a psycho roaming the dark roads of Pennsylvania looking for his next victim.

WELLS

I hope not. We have enough of them around here.

CAPUTO

What do you mean?

Wells at the gun then back at the road.

WELLS

Maybe I should have let you get a ride with the guy that pulled up. But again, maybe not.

CAPUTO

I don't get it?

WELLS

Not important.

The car pulls off Highway 80 and down an off ramp. As the car turns left Caputo sees an lighted gas station. *

CAPUTO

Nice! I was worried there wouldn't be anything open at this time.

WELLS

It's open 24 hours.

Wells pulls the car into the station and stops at a pump.

CAPUTO

I had a feeling you knew we'd find a place open. I'll be a minute.

Wells nods as he hits the trunk release. Caputo gets out of the car, walks to the trunk, pulls out a rusty gas can and moves to the front of the gas station. He walks back to the pump and fills the can. He looks around the car, walks to the back and lifts up the license plate to reveal the fuel opening. He puts the hose in it.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

I can't remember the last time I've seen the gas tank under the plate.

Caputo looks at the plate and memorizes it. He finishes pumping gas and puts the gas can back in the trunk. He gets back in the car. The car pulls away from the pump.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

I put a couple bucks in your tank.

WELLS

That was not necessary.

CAPUTO

And it wasn't necessary for you to pull over and help me.

WELLS

Thank you. That will last a long time.

CAPUTO

You don't drive much?

WELLS

Only when it's a necessity.

The car pulls back onto Highway 80.

CAPUTO

What do you do for a living?

WELLS

I'm disabled now. I used to be a baseball player.

CAPUTO

Really? What position?

WELLS

Second base.

CAPUTO

Who'd you play for?

WELLS

I was drafted out of high school by Houston. Played four years there and then was traded to the Pirates. Played five years in both the majors and minors but then I had an accident.

CAPUTO

No offense, I don't remember your name.

WELLS

It was a few years back.

CAPUTO

The Pirates? Talk about being baseball Purgatory!

WELLS

I've been in Purgatory more than you could imagine.

CAPUTO

Couldn't have been that long ago. You can't be a day over 25.

WELLS

28.

CAPUTO

Damn! You look good. Must have good genes.

WELLS

No, I just aged well.

CAPUTO

What happened? The accident?

WELLS

I was driving on 80, not far from here, after a ballgame. It was the autumn Equinox.

CAPUTO

Autumn Equinox?

WELLS

The first day of Fall. It was late at night and my brakes weren't working very good. I stopped off at a rest area about 20 minutes from here. Do you know there are five rest areas in a twenty mile stretch.

CAPUTO

That seems like a little much.

WELLS

I agree. I turned into the rest area and stopped to check my brake fluid. A car pulled up and asked if I needed a hand. I told him I was fine. Shouldn't have told him I was fine.

CAPUTO

Why?

The Cadillac pulls onto the rest area on ramp.

WELLS

As I had my head under the hood, he, ah, turned and walked away.

(MORE)

WELLS (CONT'D)

It's all blurry but I think I got in my car and drove off. But it wasn't the brake fluid. I snapped my brake line and when I pulled out near the ravine the brakes seized and I went over the edge of a ravine.

CAPUTO

Ravine? I don't know where,

WELLS

It's more or less a scenic overlook area. Now there's benches, tables and a swing area over there.

CAPUTO

What did you break?

WELLS

The car flipped over and I landed near a white birch on the way down. I broke my neck, shattered my rib cage, and had severe internal bleeding.

CAPUTO

Ouch! At least you were found.

WELLS

Not really. I was there a long time before help came.

Wells pulls over next to Caputo's car. They look over to the dark, wooded area.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Good.

CAPUTO

What's, good?

WELLS

The S.U.V. left. He's probably trying another rest area. I have to go.

Caputo gets out of the car and walks to the back of the car. He opens the trunk and takes out the gas can.

CAPUTO

Where? To the next rest area to help another person in distress?

WELLS

Something like that.

CAPUTO

Thanks again. Hope to see you soon.

WELLS

Probably not. I don't get out that often. Stuck inside most of the time but I do get out four times a year.

CAPUTO

Four times?

WELLS

The nights of the Equinox and Solstice. And, I've seen that truck before roaming the highway.

CAPUTO

When?

WELLS

Every new season. I think it's kind of a ritual to him.

CAPUTO

Hmm, strange...

WELLS

I don't want what happened to me happen to anyone else even though I think hundreds of people been hurt real bad on this highway. Perhaps you should look at the rest area where my accident occurred. Especially the birch tree down in the ravine.

CAPUTO

Why...

The Cadillac pulls away. Caputo raises his arm.

CAPUTO (yells) (CONT'D)

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! YOUR CAN!

Caputo looks at the plate.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Mental note, 900 ISI Hmm, that was strange. Interesting, but really strange.

He begins to put the gas in his car. He looks back over a the dark, wooded area. Fade.

EXT. REST AREA-MORNING -- AFTERNOON

A Knock is heard. Caputo jumps as he sees a large body at the window. He rubs his eyes as he sees a NEW JERSEY STATE TROOPER.

STATE TROOPER
Wake up Goldilocks!

CAPUTO
Goldilocks? Wrong fairy tale.

Caputo rolls down his window.

STATE TROOPER
License and registration.

Caputo takes out his wallet and hands it to the Trooper who sees the gold detective shield as Caputo reaches over to his glove compartment. The Trooper stares down at Caputo.

STATE TROOPER (CONT'D)
You're a cop? I mean, New York
detective?

CAPUTO
Robbery and Homicide.

Caputo hands the Trooper his registration. He backs away.

STATE TROOPER
No need Detective. Too much to drink
last night?

CAPUTO
No, not at all. Coming from my
parents, they live a couple hours
away and I ran out of gas. I guess
I just fell asleep.

STATE TROOPER
Did you happen to see anything strange
last night?

CAPUTO
Not really. Why?

STATE TROOPER
This woman's been calling every hour
for the past seven hours saying her
husband is missing. We found his
car two rest areas up the highway.
He's probably shacked up in a hotel.
Poor bastard when he gets home.

CAPUTO
What time is it?

STATE TROOPER
8:15

CAPUTO
Thanks for the wake up call.

Caputo starts up the car. The Trooper looks back at Caputo.

STATE TROOPER

Detective, I thought you said you
ran out of gas.

CAPUTO

Me too! I guess I dreamt it.

The state Trooper shrugs, taps on the door, and walks away. As Caputo stretches he finds a piece of paper with a name and license plate written on it. He turns and sees an empty gas can in the back seat.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Maybe it wasn't a dream.

Caputo's car pulls out of the rest area. Fade.

EXT. HIGHWAY 80, 35 MINUTES OUTSIDE OF PITTSBURGH--MORNING

Caputo puts down his coffee as his phone rings. He sees the I.D. It reads, Sue Shannon, I.T., work.

CAPUTO

What did you find?

SHANNON (O.S.)

And good morning to you ass wipe!

CAPUTO

Sorry. What's up Suzy Q?

SHANNON (O.S.)

That wasn't too hard. And yes, I
got your voicemail. Very weird,

CAPUTO

The whole incident was weird.

SHANNON (O.S.)

Are you sure that was the right
registration number?

CAPUTO

Yeah, I checked the number twice.

SHANNON (O.S.)

I ran it through D.M.V. They had no
listing for a mid 70's black Cadillac
with the license plate 900 ISI.

CAPUTO

How could that be? Even if it expired
wouldn't it still be in the system?

SHANNON (O.S.)

My exact sentiments. So I checked a little deeper, actually a hell of a lot deeper. You owe me one Caputo.

CAPUTO

And?

SHANNON (O.S.)

The car did belong to a Timothy Wells but the car has been off the road since 1978.

CAPUTO

78, that can't be! I was in it last night. Did you find an address?

SHANNON (O.S.)

1960 Willow Street, Mansfield.

CAPUTO

Mansfield, that's about forty minutes away. I'll be at the office in two hours.

SHANNON (O.S.)

With lunch?

CAPUTO

That's was the deal. Thanks.

Caputo shuts off the phone. He looks at the piece of paper as he begins to set up the car G.P.S. Fade.

EXT. 1960 WILLOW STREET, MANSFIELD, PA -- 35 MINUTES LATER

Caputo pulls up to a mail box in front of a large Colonial. He checks the number on the mailbox and pulls into the long driveway. As he gets out of the car he gazes over at a garage to the side of the house. Caputo walks to the farmers porch and moves up the steps to the door. He knocks. A window shade is pulled back in the living room.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who is it?

CAPUTO

Hello. I'm Detective Vincent Caputo from Pittsburgh.

The door slightly opens. An eye peers through the crack. Caputo lifts his I.D. to the door.

CAPUTO (CONT'D)

Mrs. Wells...

VOICE (O.S.)

Been a long time since anyone has called me that.

The door opens. CHRISTINE BALERNA, an attractive 59 year old, smartly dressed woman appears. She curiously looks at Caputo.

BALERNA

It's Balerna. Christine Balerna.

CAPUTO

Sorry, may I speak to your son?

BALERNA

My son?

CAPUTO

Yes, he helped me out last night.

BALERNA

I have two daughters but no sons. Have a nice day.

Mrs. Balerna turns to shut the door.

CAPUTO

I'm sorry I must have been mistaken. I was looking for a Timothy Wells.

Mrs. Balerna quickly turns with a look of shock on her face.

BALERNA

Timothy Wells?

CAPUTO

Yes. I thought he was your son.

BALERNA

He wasn't my son!

CAPUTO

I ran out of gas and he gave me a lift.

BALERNA

That's impossible.

CAPUTO

A black Cadillac pulled up to me as I was walking to a gas station in the middle of the night.

BALERNA

Detective, that car has not moved in over thirty years!

CAPUTO

Thirty years? Can I take a look?

BALERNA

Be my guest. It's in the garage.

Caputo leaves the porch and walks to the garage. As he opens the door stale, musty air and dust envelope Caputo. He sneezes and coughs as he walks to a vehicle covered with a cloth tarp. He pulls off the tarp and stands back in shock as he sees a black Cadillac covered in a solid layer of dust and mildew. He looks down at the plate. It reads 900 ISI.

CAPUTO

This can't be.

Caputo walks to the passenger door and opens it. Again he coughs as the car is consumed with dust and musty air. Mrs. Balerna enters the garage.

BALERNA

Now do you believe me? This car hasn't left this garage since the late 70's. I couldn't bring myself to drive his car.

CAPUTO

Who's car?

BALERNA

Timmy's! He's not my son. He was my first husband. Tim's been missing for thirty three years!

Caputo, in complete shock and confusion, steps back and falls onto the hood of the car. Fade.

THE END

