

for the love of dog

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FAIRGROUND - DAY

EILEEN JESPERSON, age 37, dressed in jean pants and a jean jacket throws a Frisbee out to her black and white Border Collie in the Multnomah County Fair Frisbee Dog Show in Portland, Oregon. Her dog wears a bright pink bandana around his neck. Eileen has a pink Breast Cancer Awareness ribbon pinned to her jacket.

Thousands of spectators watch as her dog flies through the air and catches frisbees like he was born for it. It's the last competition of the tournament and they finish with the dog leaping to her owner's arms.

ANNOUNCER(V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen let's give the handlers and the dogs a big hand. Weren't they great? We'll have the results here in just a few minutes. Meanwhile, how about getting some refreshments, folks. It's a hot day and we could all use some cooling off. We'll be right back.

Eileen carries her dog over to her awaiting family. Husband MIKE, 39, and their two kids, BRENT, 15, and MILEY, 11, all pet the family dog and give him praise. Miley also has a pink Breast Cancer Awareness ribbon on.

EILEEN

You did great, Zazz. You were fantastic. Sorry I flubbed up a couple throws but we sure had fun, didn't we boy?

Zazz is excited as ever but contains himself.

MILEY

That's right. You looked beautiful today. I'm proud of you, Zazz.

BRENT

You da dog. You da dog. You were awesome. You too mom. You da mom. You da mom.

He pats his mother on the head. She gives him the evil eye.

(CONTINUED)

EILEEN

Do you think we have a chance? I sent Zazz in the wrong direction towards the end of my program. Sorry guys, my fault.

MIKE

Eileen, don't even worry about it. You were fine. I don't think anyone even noticed. If we didn't win I bet we came close.

ANNOUNCER(V.O.)

Okay everyone. We have the votes from the judges now. Handlers bring your dogs to the center of the arena please.

A dozen or so handlers along with their dogs all meander to center stage.

ANNOUNCER(V.O.)

Mrs. Markel would you do the honors.

Mrs. Markel, in her fifties, along with a young male assistant carrying three large colorful ribbons, shake hands with the handlers and pat the dogs on their heads.

She has a microphone.

MRS. MARKEL

All right everybody. Here we go. It's been a long day and we're all anxious to see who the winner will be so let's get right to it. In third place...

She walks around the contestants to build tension.

MRS. MARKEL

...Jerald Wilson and his dog Noodles.

The CROWD CHEERS.

MRS. MARKEL

Now this one wasn't easy. I'm sure you agree with me that they all deserve to win but we still have to pick a winner, don't we?

She builds drama again by prolonging the announcement.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MARKEL

Our grand prize winner today is...  
Annie Muntz and her dog Fred.

The CROWD CHEERS louder.

With that announcement Eileen knows she came in second and congratulates the other two contestants with grace and dignity.

Mrs. Markel hands Eileen her second place ribbon and shakes her hand. Eileen thanks her and makes her way to her family.

BRENT

Excellent mom. I think you should have gotten first place but that's okay. You both put on the best show ever.

MILEY

Great mom. Zazz, you were great too.

MIKE

I'm proud of you guys. That was quite a show. We'll get 'em next time. Second place is your best yet. It's just a matter of time til you get that first place ribbon. You certainly put in the work and practice. You'll get it someday, honey, I'm sure.

EILEEN

Hey, I'm okay. I had fun and I know Zazz did too. It really doesn't matter if we win as long as we had fun.

She puts her dog down.

Zazz looks up as if something's wrong.

EILEEN

Look Zazz. Second place. You won boy. You won.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

An old rickety 1981 Toyota RV drives in and parks in the lot of a typically ugly junkyard and out steps GARY CLOVER, mid-sixties, tall and lanky with brushy gray hair and a very hairy untrimmed beard. He's standoffish but once you get to know him he warms up to you. On the back of his RV is a map of the United States. Gary has stickers placed on 24 states he's visited. Most in the north and east side of the country including Florida.

As he walks by an old van a large GERMAN SHEPHERD scares the hell out of him and BARKS LOUDLY and FRANTICALLY and runs at Gary. The junkyard dog nearly comes to the end of his leash tied to a rusty old step-van and has just enough time to bite Gary in the butt. Gary leaps as if his feet are on fire and quickly distances himself from the junkyard dog. It's a slight wound that tears his pants and leaves a little blood in the area.

Obviously shaken, he checks his pants and his wound and looks around to see if anyone saw what happened. No one did.

GARY

You stupid dog! What the hell is your problem!? Dammit! What the in the world did I do to deserve that!?

Gary makes his way to the junkyard office and tears into the unsuspecting JUNKYARD CLERK standing behind the counter.

GARY

Hey, your dog just bit me on the ass!

He shows the clerk the torn pants.

GARY

(pointing towards the dog)  
Does that dog out there have rabies?!?!

JUNKYARD CLERK

No, he doesn't have rabies. You'll be all right.

GARY

All right? That's it? That's all you have to say after your stupid dog just took a chunk out of me?

The clerk shrugs his shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

JUNKYARD CLERK

You'll live.

GARY

Screw this place. I'll get a water pump somewhere else.

As Gary walks by the junkyard dog, making sure he takes a wide swath, he flips off the mutt. The junkyard dog laying underneath the old truck growls as he stares at the human walking away.

INT. SUV - TWO LANE COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A dark colored SUV with Mike driving and Eileen in the passenger seat are with their kids and dog. Zazz lies on his back between the brother and sister with his head on the girl's lap and is in dog heaven as her hand gently strokes his chest. The kids are watching a DVD on the seat backs in front of them. Both have headphones on.

Mike drives deep in thought as Eileen reads something from a glowing iPad. LIGHT CLASSICAL MUSIC plays from the car stereo.

A bright set of truck headlights comes at them from over a hill and is not completely on its side of the road. It's too far over the line.

Mike looks in disbelief as the massive truck looks to be aiming straight at him. He panics for a second. Instinctively he throws the SUV over to the right with one arm and braces his wife with the other. It's too late.

MIKE

No!!!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The TRUCK SMASHES into the SUV causing it to spin and then roll violently end over end as GLASS SHATTERS and METAL SCRAPING ON PAVEMENT sends up a trail of SPARKS. As it comes to a stop the VEHICLE ROARS up in FLAMES.

The TRUCK rocks from side to side a bit and comes to a SCREECHING stop quite a ways down the road. No noticeable damage is seen on the large truck except a bent up chrome front fender.

As the CAR'S HORN BLARES CONTINUOUSLY the dog crawls out of the SUV's broken front windshield tearing off his bandana. He runs up a hill and out of sight like a bat out of hell.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT - A LITTLE LATER

Fire trucks and police cars are at the scene of the horrific accident cleaning up as two ambulances drive away. The SUV is now a pile of rubble and hardly recognizable as the fire that engulfed it left it a mere pile of blackness and smoke.

The TRUCK DRIVER sits on the step of his truck weeping as a POLICEMAN writes his report.

We see the policeman's pad and close in to read: DRIVER CLAIMS TO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP. ALL 4 OCCUPANTS IN SUV DECEASED.

EXT. FORESTED AREA - NIGHT

The dog licks his shoulder and shakes. Every little noise causes him to sit up and look intently around. He whimpers and nervously looks at the flashing lights of the firetrucks and police cars off in the distance.

INT. RV - MORNING

Gary sleeps in his well used RV. Pots and pans are in the tiny sink and the place is a general mess. He's in the area that the dining table sits, directly behind the driver seat, but it is now turned into his sleeping area very close to the side door of his RV. He wakes up and looks at his alarm clock that reads 7:52 and curls back into his sleeping bag.

A knock at the door startles him and he sits up abruptly.

EXT. PARKING LOT - STRIP MALL - MORNING

A SECURITY GUARD knocks harder.

GUARD

Anybody in there? Hey, you can't park here all day. There are signs posted that say no loitering or trespassing. I'm sorry but you're going to have to move somewhere else.

GARY(O.S.)

Oh... all right. I'm not doing anybody any harm. I shopped here yesterday and bought some food.

(CONTINUED)

## GUARD

Sorry. Just doing my job. We let you stay the night but now it's time to go. Have a good day, sir.

## INT. RV - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Gary takes in a deep breath and gets out of bed. He's not wearing a shirt and is clearly undernourished - bony and frail. He dresses.

After his usual routine of starting up his cold and cranky RV he drives a few blocks away and parks by a boardwalk.

## EXT. OCEAN BEACH - MORNING

He gets out of his RV and nearby is Cannon Beach, OR. It's a typical blustery day at the coast and Gary is dressed in a large puffy coat complete with hood. The hood is tightly bound around on his face.

He walks at the ocean's edge never really looking at the water. He's deep in thought. Or is it worry? He's alone. He sees many people playing with kites and digging in the sand but pays little attention. The waves and sunlight are sights to see but his thoughts are on his own problems.

Gary sees a man throw a ball out in front of his dog and the dog runs after it. Gary pays little attention. It's of no concern to him.

He makes his way to the boardwalk and just sits and watches. Watches people having fun. Watches kids playing. Just watches. Alone.

After a long lonely time he makes his way back to his junky RV and simply goes inside.

## EXT. FORESTED AREA - DAY

Dog is coiled up and wide awake shaking. A wound on his left shoulder is open and can be seen clearly as the hair is parted at the gash. Blood is dry but the wound is fresh.

Dog gets up and looks all around. Nothing but trees. Even though it's day it's somewhat dark in the shadowy forest.

Dog looks as if he doesn't know which way to go. There's no trail. All around everything looks the same. Dog picks a direction and starts walking with a slight limp.

INT. RV - DAY

Gary sits in the driver's seat and stares at a map. It clearly shows Portland, Oregon, with the Pacific coast to the west and Mt. Hood to the east. He runs his index finger up a highway and pulls his finger away. He runs his finger up a different highway and pulls it away. He ponders, then runs his finger up a road that ends near Mt. Hood, OR and taps his finger up and down on the map.

He tosses the unfolded map onto the passenger seat and after a few tries and some throttle maneuvering with his right foot the old cantankerous beast starts up and he drives away.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Gary fights to stay awake as he pulls a large container from the cup holder and sips some steaming coffee. He fiddles with the radio dial and searches for something to listen to but finds nothing but static. He gives up and turns off the radio and all that's heard is the hard-working NOISE of the 4 CYLINDER ENGINE. It KNOCKS as he moves slowly up a steep hill barely doing 35mph.

He sees a sign on the side of the road that reads: CAMPGROUND AHEAD and follows that. There's no one at the gate but the gate is open so he continues in and finds a spot away from other campers and pulls into a camping stall.

He moves the RV back and forth to find the most level spot and satisfied he finds it turns the key to the off position. The RV continues to run and KNOCKS a few seconds before Gary puts it in gear and pops the clutch finally killing it.

Gary sits in darkness for a bit staring off into nothingness then rests his head against the driver side window.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - MORNING

A campfire is going as Gary pulls off a pot of coffee from above the fire and pours himself some into a tin cup. He's sitting in a lawn chair that has a low profile. Low to the ground like we might see at a beach. He reaches over to pull up a hot plate of sausage and eggs he just cooked and begins eating. The campground is well-forested and beautiful and looks to be the idyllic camping area complete with fire-pits and picnic tables. A lovely BREEZE is heard in the TALL EVERGREEN TREES and it's brisk enough to see steam coming from Gary's mouth when he breathes.

(CONTINUED)

Gary notices some movement in the nearby bushes and focuses on that area when he sees a black and white dog in the shadows. The dog stands on all fours and looks back with trepidation. Gary stands up almost knocking over the chair as he wrestles to get out.

GARY  
(gesturing with the coffee cup  
in his hand, spilling some)  
Shoo! Shoo! Go away!

The dog backs away a bit.

GARY  
Go back where you came from you  
stupid dog! I don't need another  
bite taken out of my ass. Go away!  
Get out of here!

Dog remains in place as Gary sits back down.

They have a staring match.

GARY  
Oh, you smell sausage, huh? Well,  
you're not gettin' any. These are  
the last few bites.

Gary picks up the plate and gulps down the last of it. They stare at each other some more.

GARY  
You just gonna stand there and look  
like an idiot all day?

The dog sits.

GARY  
Okay... you just gonna sit there  
all day?

After a time Gary sits back down. The dog lays down.

GARY  
Oh, you think you can wait me out,  
eh? Not gonna happen.

Gary goes about drinking his coffee and takes his eyes off the dog and stokes the fire.

A little time goes by and Gary gets up and goes into the RV. He always has a little trouble getting in and out of his low chair. In a bit he comes out and sits back down with a book in his hand. He reads.

The dog moved a little closer but sits down as soon as Gary comes out.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

As Gary sits reading he begins nodding off. He gets up and goes into the RV, leaves the door open and plops down on the bed.

The dog moves about the campground hunting for any scraps of food but finds nothing. Then gives up and takes a nap by Gary's chair.

Some time passes and Gary steps to the doorway and sees the dog still hanging around but closer than before. The dog looks up at him but doesn't move.

Gary ponders a bit.

GARY

You don't give up do you?

Gary reaches for something inside the RV and tosses it out to the dog. It's a single hot dog. It lands a few feet away from the black and white collie and rolls in the dirt.

The dog gets up quickly and sniffs it. He quickly swallows it nearly whole.

GARY

Geez, you could at least chew. It had dirt all over it. Maybe you should have licked the dirt off first, stupid.

The dog immediately sits. He wants more.

Gary reaches for another hot dog and carries it out on a paper plate and places it near the dog, all nice and clean.

The dog swallows that too then looks up directly into Gary's eyes.

Gary looks back with compassion.

GARY

All right, you win. I got one more hot dog and then I'm out. Sorry, there's no dessert.

Gary goes back into the RV and retrieves the last hot dog but this time holds it directly in front of the dog.

(CONTINUED)

The dog looks at the weenie and gently pulls it out of Gary's hand. It drops to the ground but then the dog eats it up.

GARY

I tried to keep it off the ground for you but you dropped it. Clutz. Hey, what's that? You get in a fight with a raccoon or something? Where'd you get all that blood from? Come here, boy. Or girl. Whatever the case may be.

Gary slowly moves toward the dog as the dog slowly moves toward him. Gary checks out the wound.

GARY

That's nasty. You want a band-aid? No? Come here and I'll clean that up for you.

Gary motions for the dog to follow him but the dog hesitates.

GARY

Come on. I won't hurt you. I'd grab onto your collar and pull you but you don't have one. Come on... Come on...

The dog follows Gary up to the door of the RV and Gary steps in. RUNNING WATER is heard and Gary comes out with a damp rag and a roll of paper towels. He sits on the step at the doors entrance and motions the dog to come closer.

GARY

You shouldn't go messing with other animals. You don't look like a fighter. You look more like a lover.

Gary cleans the blood off as best he can as the dog is just happy to have interaction with somebody. Not a sound is made by the dog as the blood is wiped away. He cleans up the last of it with paper towels.

Gary pats the dog on the head and feels like he made a friend. The dog sits down and takes in all the caressing Gary gives.

GARY

Looks like you're gonna be alright. Just take two aspirin and call me  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
in the morning. Hey, what's your  
name anyway? Where'd you come from?  
Who owns you? You belong to someone  
here in the camp?

Gary lifts the medium-sized dog up in such a way as to check  
the sex of the animal.

GARY  
Ahh, a boy. Good, who needs girls  
anyway? All they do is bitch. Get  
it? Bitch? Dog and bitch? Uh  
nevermind. So... what am I going to  
call you?

He pauses for a bit.

GARY  
Oh I don't know. I'll think of  
something.

Gary continues petting the dog and smiles for the first time  
in a long time.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - MORNING

Gary opens the door from inside his RV and stretches at the  
doorway.

GARY  
You sleep good? I sure did. Was a  
little chilly last night, wasn't  
it? Good thing you always wear your  
own sleeping bag. That's  
convenient. I'll cook up some  
breakfast in a bit. Just be patient  
with me bud.

(beat)

Hey, that's it. I'll call you Bud.  
Nice and simple. You like that?  
What was your name before? Sparky?  
Rover? Dude? Well it's Bud now,  
like it or leave it. You be my  
little buddy and I'll be the  
master. Okay? That's just the way  
it is. Sorry, I didn't write the  
rules. Just don't bite the hand  
that feeds you. If you do then it's  
bye-bye to you pal. I mean Bud.

Gary goes about making a pot of coffee and setting up camp for a new day. Bud is always attentive but stays out of the way and remains quiet.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

As Gary eats his breakfast of pork and beans so does Bud. Bud's food is on the ground in an old pot. Bud savors every minute of it. Gary does not. It's a chore to shovel yet another spoonful of the tired old meal into his mouth but he takes his mind off it by watching his new found friend eat.

GARY

You like that, don't you? I suppose it's new to you but I've had it a million times. You're gonna have it a million times too if you hang out with me. Poor guy. You should have picked some other camper to spend your life with. Well, I'm not all bad. Hope you like doing nothing because I'm king of doing nothing. I've done all the work I'm ever going to do and I'm in some kind of early retirement. Not much of a retirement package, huh?

Gary looks over to his tired old RV and quickly looks away. He opens a beer. There are many empty cans nearby.

GARY

I guess I did it all wrong, Bud. Divorced. Fired. Bankruptcy. Twice even. You name it I did it all wrong. This is what I get for all my toil and trouble. Hey, that's life I guess. Can't do much about it now. It is what it is.

He pauses for a bit and gets up from his chair and makes his way into the RV and comes out holding a long object.

GARY

It's not much but it's a little hobby I have.

He holds up an outdated metal detector.

GARY

Bet you don't know what this is. With it I find a few coins once in awhile and treat myself to some

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
beer or maybe just buy gas with the money. I know that doesn't mean anything to you but money comes in handy for us humans. Must be nice to be a dog and not even understand the concept of money.

He turns on the DETECTOR and waves it around in front. It SQUEALS. BUD backs up as if it's some kind of creature and BARKS at it.

GARY  
Don't worry Bud. It won't hurt you. You'll get used to the noise after awhile.

Gary waves it from side to side and keeps the coil an inch or two off the ground.

This goes on for some time before the BARKING subsides and Bud just stares at it intently as it moves. At one point Gary moves the coil near Bud's feet and Bud steps forward and bites the coil.

GARY  
No! Don't do that!

Bud backs off and obeys his master.

Gary gets a good signal and places the detector down on the ground and goes to the RV. He brings back a digging tool, a trowel. He digs at the spot and in a short time pulls out a coin and shows it to Bud.

GARY  
See? That's what I'm looking for here. Treasure. Okay, this 1978 Nickel isn't quite the treasure I've been hoping to find but at least it's something. I still haven't found that diamond ring or that giant gold nugget but you never know, Bud. Come on, let's go around the camp and see what we can find. I'm also gonna ask around and see if you belong to anyone here. Hate to see you go but maybe you belong to someone else.

Gary places a few items in his RV and locks up.

GARY

Let's go Bud. Let's see what we find.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

Gary and his new companion search the campground with the detector and Bud, still nervous of the strange contraption, keeps a close eye on it but doesn't bark anymore.

Gary sees some campers coming toward him and waves.

GARY

Excuse me. I found this dog wandering the campground and wonder if he might be yours? Or maybe you know who owns him?

CAMPER 1

No. Sorry. Not ours. First time I've seen him.

CAMPER 2

Nice looking dog though.

GARY

Thanks. Oh well. Thought I'd ask.

They move from campground to campground asking around but no one has any information about the dog.

After a long time searching for an owner and finding none they head back to their RV.

GARY

Looks like we only came up with 43 cents worth of coins today. And I guess you're my dog now. This is your chance to make a run and get the hell away from me. You sure you want to stay?

Pats him on the head.

GARY

Okay. It's official then. Bud, I now pronounce you my dog. Congratulations. You're my new best friend.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - EVENING

A cold wind blows through this campground.

Gary is bundled up with his thick puffy coat on and putting out the fire.

GARY

Time to call it a day. It's too windy for me. I'm turning in early tonight. Sleep good and don't let any critters in our campsite, will ya? Nighty-night.

Gary opens the RV door and walks up the three steps when he hears a whimper.

Looking back:

GARY

What? You telling me a tough guy like you can't stand a little cold? You're just going to have to grow a thicker coat is all.

He's about to close the door when he hears another whimper.

GARY

Aww, come on. I thought you were a manly dog. Are you telling me you're a wuss?

Looking at the dog's begging eyes:

GARY

Oh all right. You can come in but don't get used to it. This is only for tonight. You're an outdoor dog. Remember that. Out door. Come on.

INT. RV - NIGHT

They get in the crowded RV and Gary has to keep from stepping on Bud as he gets ready for bed.

GARY

Watch it now. Don't wanna squish your feet.

Gary climbs in bed while Bud sits next to it.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Oh no. This bed's not big enough  
for the two of us.

(beat)

Hey, that sounds like a western.  
Nope Bud, you're sleeping on the  
floor. Stay down. Down, Bud. Stay  
down.

Gary picks up a book to read as Bud lays on the floor  
looking up at Gary.

After awhile Gary turns out the light and rolls over to go  
to sleep.

Bud lies on the cold vinyl floor now. We can see him because  
a nightlight near the bathroom casts a greenish glow.

INT. RV - MORNING

Dawn breaks and we notice that Bud is no longer on the  
floor. Tilt up to see Bud on the bed at Gary's feet.

Gary goes to turn over and realizes Bud is there.

GARY

Hey... Whaddya think you're doing?  
Get down. I said you're on the  
floor. This is my bed.

Bud reluctantly gets down and plops on the floor, letting  
out a sigh.

Some time passes and again we see that Bud is no longer on  
the floor.

We start at Gary's feet. The dog's not there. We slowly pan  
up Gary's legs to see Bud snuggled up against Gary's back.  
His nose presses up against it making it tilt up. The dog  
sleeps soundly but his lips are open enough that healthy  
white teeth are seen.

Gary wakes up and hears breathing. He looks over his  
shoulder and sees a dog ear. Bud wakes with a guilty look.

Gary shakes his head.

GARY

You rat. You sure are a pushy sort.  
What do you want next? Room  
service? A massage maybe? What a  
spoiled brat.

Gary gives in and goes back to sleep. So does Bud.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY

Gary whittles a stick down with a small chrome pocket knife when a very large RV drives in and parks nearby taking up two spaces, still barely fitting in. It's a 40ft. Class A and it looks like it just rolled off the assembly line. It has all the bells and whistles, including a satellite dish on top and a Harley-Davidson at the back. Out pours a girl, age 9, and two adults in their mid thirties. They are the CHAPMANS. They begin to set up and get situated when the girl waves at Gary nearby.

Gary places the knife back in his pocket and puts a hot dog on the end of the stick and holds it over a fire. He sees the girl and waves back but his eyes are fixed on the large coach that makes his RV look like a rust bucket.

Gary roasts his hot dog as Bud sleeps nearby.

In a short time Gary's neighbor greets him.

KENNY

Howdy. The name's Kenny. Kenny Chapman.

Kenny is a large man dressed in shorts and wearing a baseball cap with the Texas Rangers logo emblazoned across the top. He reaches out to shake Gary's hand.

Gary reaches out nearly falling out of his chair.

GARY

Oh. Hi. Good to meet you. Gary.

KENNY

That's my wife over there and that's my daughter.

They all wave to each other.

KENNY

I'd appreciate it if you would come over and have a beer or two with us. I see by these cans here that you do drink.

GARY

Oh yah. I love the suds. I suppose I can come over and have a few brews. That would be fine.

(CONTINUED)

Gary gets out of his short lawn chair and closes the door of his RV. He sees Kenny eying it over and is embarrassed by it and hopes the conversation moves onto something else. It doesn't.

KENNY

What year is she?

GARY

Oh, she's an '81. Pretty old but it still gets around.

KENNY

You live in it?

GARY

Yah. How'd you guess?

KENNY

It looks...

GARY

Lived in?

KENNY

Well, yah. How many miles she got?

GARY

Lots. Around 160,000. She keeps breaking down and I keep patching her up. Nothing too serious. Radiators. Water pumps. Brakes. It's a good thing I'm mechanically inclined. Strong engine though. It's got a 4 cylinder 22R Toyota engine and is nearly bullet proof. Very reliable motor.

KENNY

Four cylinder? Must be a slug in these mountains.

GARY

You're not wrong there. Good gas mileage though.

They begin walking over when Kenny sees Bud sitting in the shade, wide awake now.

KENNY

You can bring your dog too if you want. Ellie loves animals.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Oh. Okay. I suppose he won't mind playing with someone other than me for a change.

Gary motions for Bud to come along.

They walk the short distance over to Kenny's coach.

Gary's eyes are wide open as he looks over the large vehicle.

GARY

My goodness. This is huge. I can't imagine what this feels like on the road.

KENNY

Oh it's not as bad as you might think. It's very stable and has tons of power. Sitting way up high makes it easier to see the road ahead. Sitting low like you have, now that would be weird. To each his own I guess.

Gary isn't sure if that was an insult but keeps his cool.

KENNY

Gary, this is my wife, Dierdre and this is Ellie. She's nine.

(to Ellie)

You are nine, right?

ELLIE

Yah dad. I'm nine. My birthday was only two months ago.

KENNY

Sorry.

(to Gary)

Hard to keep up. Seemed like yesterday she was this big.

Kenny puts his hand down to her shoulder height.

GARY

Nice to meet you. Or should I say y'all?

They laugh.

(CONTINUED)

DIERDRE  
Accent's that apparent, huh?

Gary smiles.

ELLIE  
We're from Texas.

KENNY  
I think he figured that out,  
Pickles. I call her Pickles. Long  
story.

EILEEN  
You ever been to Texas, Gary?

GARY  
Nope. Can't say that I have.  
Someday though. I have one of those  
maps on the back of my RV where you  
place stickers on all the states  
you've been to. So far I've been to  
24 states but not Texas. Yet.

KENNY  
Sounds like you get around. Have a  
seat, my friend. We only got this  
RV a year ago and haven't taken her  
out much.

They all sit down in expensive looking chairs.

GARY  
Really. Looks like it just came off  
the lot.

KENNY  
We keep it in our heated garage.  
That way we don't have to wash it  
much.

ELLIE  
What's your dog's name, mister?

GARY  
Bud.

ELLIE  
Just Bud?

GARY  
Just Bud.

ELLIE

Not Buddy?

GARY

Oh... no. It sounds too funny to call him that. You can call him Buddy if you want to though.

She reaches out and pets him.

ELLIE

Hi Buddy. You're a nice doggy.

Bud is very calm and loves the attention.

ELLIE

Mind if I play with him?

DIERDRE

Now honey, we just met them. Let's...

GARY

Hey, no problem. I'm sure Bud would love someone younger to play with. I can't keep up with him.

They're all looking at the dog when:

KENNY

Ellie, why don't you get the Frisbee?

Bud's ears perk up and his eyes widen. His head cocks over to one side.

Everyone chuckles.

KENNY

Hahaha. Did you see that? His ears went straight up when you said Frisbee. That's too funny.

Ellie goes into the RV and in a short time comes out with the frisbee. Bud sees it and jumps up and down waiting for her to throw it.

She does and even though it's a bad throw Bud snatches it up just before it touches the ground.

DIERDRE

Wow. That was good. You train him to do that Gary?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Not me. Must have been the previous owners.

We see Ellie and Bud playing with the frisbee and Bud is an expert.

KENNY

Previous owners?

GARY

Yah. I found him at another campsite. No one claimed him so he's been mine ever since.

They all watch as Ellie throws better and Bud continues to amaze. He launches high and long and if the throw is anywhere good he gets it every time.

After awhile and a few beers:

KENNY

How about a tour of the bus?

GARY

Sure. I swear I've never seen one this long before. I'm surprised they even let one this long into this camp.

DIERDRE

Shh. It is actually a little too big for this campsite but we're not going to be here long. Just overnight is all. We're on our way to another site that's way bigger and we won't have any problems there. Don't tell on us okay?

She smiles.

GARY

No, not me. I won't tell. As long as you're not hurting anyone you're okay in my book. That's my golden rule. As long as you don't hurt others then you can do whatever the hell you want. That's my philosophy anyway.

KENNY

Good philosophy. Come on in.

INT. KENNY'S RV - DAY

They step inside and it's like a palace. Ornate decorations abound and everything possible that could be in an RV is there. Flat screen TV's, washer/dryer, two bathrooms each with their own shower and toilet, huge bed in the back and more sitting room than seems possible inside an RV. It has slide-outs and Kenny pushes a button and the front room gets wider.

Kenny gives Gary the details of his RV as if it's featured in a car show.

Gary is amazed and jealous at the same time.

GARY

I love it Kenny but I gotta tell you. It's too big for me. I could never park this in the places I go.

KENNY

I hear ya. We don't live in ours like you but we still see a lot of enjoyment with her. We're going to the Indy 500 in May and then a whole bunch of Nascar races.

After a lengthy tour they sit down in the front room area. Gary keeps looking around while conversing.

GARY

Question Kenny...

He hesitates.

GARY

How do you afford all this?

KENNY

Well... gotta tell you Gary. We got lucky. We own land in Cleburne, Texas and they discovered natural gas on it. Lots of natural gas. Only problem is the fracking.

GARY

Fracking?

KENNY

Yep. They gotta get that gas out of the ground and they use hydraulics to do it. They drill a wellbore and pump water in at high pressure and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KENNY (cont'd)  
that breaks up the dirt and  
releases the gas. Causes  
earthquakes some say, but that's  
neither here nor there. I don't  
really know that much about it but  
they send me a check every 6  
months. Before, I was a rancher.  
That was hard work and not much pay  
but like I say, we got lucky when  
they found gas on our property. Now  
we just collect the money. Don't  
have to do anything.

Gary says nothing. He's envious and uncomfortable now.

GARY  
(getting up)  
Well, better get Bud something to  
eat. I need to feed him.

They both exit the RV.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY

Ellie is still playing with Bud and Bud is having a blast.

GARY  
(whistle)  
Let's go Bud. Time for chow.

Bud comes to him panting heavily with saliva dripping out of  
his mouth.

GARY  
You gave him a workout, Ellie. I  
bet he loved it.

ELLIE  
I loved it too. Dad, can we get a  
dog like this?

Kenny glances over to Gary's RV and scratches his forehead.

KENNY  
Wanna sell your dog, Gary?

Ellie's eyes light up.

Gary looks to the ground.

Kenny looks over to his wife seeking approval. She nods.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Umm... I don't know. He's become a good companion to me now. I don't...

Kenny reaches for his wallet.

KENNY

How about a hundred?

He pulls out a crisp \$100 bill.

Gary looks at it wide-eyed.

ELLIE

I'd take really good care of him mister. Promise.

Gary is tempted but looks at Bud.

KENNY

How about \$200? That's a pretty good price for a dog you found, wouldn't you say?

Gary bites his lip. He takes his eyes off Bud and looks at the money.

GARY

\$200 huh?

KENNY

That buys a lot of gas for that little RV.

DIERDRE

Honey...

KENNY

No, I don't mean nothing by it. It's little is all I'm saying. No offense Gary. Really.

GARY

That's all right. No offense taken.

Ellie nods as if to say offer more. I want the dog.

KENNY

Okay. \$500. That's all the cash I have on me. Honey, you have any cash on you.

She shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

Gary is almost in a sweat now. Thinking hard.

GARY

I'm sorry. That's a lot of money  
but I think I'll keep him.

ELLIE

Daddy...

KENNY

Honey, what do you want me to do? I  
can't take his dog. I don't have  
any more money with me.

ELLIE

But dad...

KENNY

I'm sorry Pickles. We can find  
another dog when we get back home.

She pouts.

KENNY

Hey Gary. I don't blame you. That's  
a fine animal you have there. You  
did the smart thing. You did the  
right thing. Have a good evening my  
friend. No hard feelings?

GARY

No hard feelings. Come on Bud.  
Let's go eat our pork and beans.  
Nice meeting you all. Have a safe  
trip.

They say their goodbyes and Gary, with Bud close at his  
side, walk back to their camp.

Gary is halfway back to his RV and out of earshot when he  
shakes his head and murmurs:

GARY

Fracking. Why couldn't it have been  
me? What's wrong with fracking me?  
Some people are so lucky.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY

Gary is metal detecting along with Bud when he sees a bright green tennis ball in the bushes. Bud is smelling a tree nearby. The ball is fairly new and Gary picks it up and gives it a squeeze. It still has a lot of pressure in it.

GARY

Hey Bud. Bud. Lookee here. See what I found? It's not my kind of treasure but I bet it's your kind of treasure.

Bud looks and his tail immediately wags.

GARY

You as good with a ball as you are with a frisbee?

Gary holds it up and out at arm's length.

GARY

You wanna play catch? Huh fella? Do ya? Huh do ya? Get the ball.

He tosses it underhanded and it skirts along the ground. Immediately Bud goes after it and snatches it before it stops rolling.

Bud brings it back as if he's done it a million times before.

Without hesitation Bud places the ball at his master's feet and sits.

GARY

Good job Bud. You're a fast one, aren't ya?

Gary picks up the ball and holds it over his head about to throw.

Bud jumps up and down with glee and springs high with each jump. Impressive.

This time Gary throws the ball overhand and high and it goes farther. Bud zooms to the ball and grabs it high out of the air after a couple bounces.

He brings it back, wanting more.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Not a bad throw for an old man, eh?  
I used to play a little ball back  
in school, ya know. Long before you  
were born, my friend. Long before.

Gary continues to play with Bud and changes up his throws, keeping it interesting for his dog.

Now Gary tries the old tried-and-true-fake-throw-trick. Gary pretends to throw far and Bud quickly starts after it. Bud doesn't see it and looks back at his master.

GARY

Where is it? Where is it? Go get  
the ball Bud. Find the ball.

He points and Bud looks in that direction but still doesn't see the ball. He looks back.

Gary holds up the ball.

GARY

Haha. Gotcha. You think you're so  
smart, don'tcha? Well I'm the smart  
one.

Gary pretends to throw again and hides the ball behind him.

Bud looks in the direction of the throw but sees nothing. He doesn't move but just stands there. Then he glances back.

GARY

What?

After a few seconds Bud sits down and waits.

GARY

Geez, you catch on fast. I guess  
you're the smart one after all.

They continue playing fetch and Bud has a blast.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DUSK

Gary and Bud are just out for a stroll around the campground. Behind them we see a PARK RANGER in a truck slowly driving up. Gary hears the truck and walks over to the side of the road and calls Bud to come next to him. He expects the truck to just roll on by but it doesn't.

The truck pulls up next to them and they all stop.

(CONTINUED)

PARK RANGER  
Excuse me sir.

GARY  
Yes...

PARK RANGER  
I'm afraid I have some bad news.

GARY  
Oh...

PARK RANGER  
You have to keep your dog on a  
leash at all times.

GARY  
Really? A leash? This is a park.  
Why do I have to have him on a  
leash at a park?

PARK RANGER  
Sorry sir, it's the law. Don't kill  
the messenger. Just doing my job.

GARY  
At all times?

PARK RANGER  
Yes, all times.

GARY  
Is that just at this park or every  
park.

PARK RANGER  
Every park in the state, sir. I can  
look up the regulation if you'd  
like.

The ranger holds up a book.

GARY  
Nah. I believe you. That's okay.  
He's not really even my dog though.  
I found him wandering at another  
campground.

PARK RANGER  
Did you attempt to find the owners?

GARY

Yes, no luck though.

PARK RANGER

Well, if you like I can take the dog off your hands and put him in a shelter. We do pick up stray dogs from time to time and try to find their owners. If we can't find them we put the dogs up for adoption.

Gary looks at Bud for a second then looks back at the Ranger.

GARY

Nah, I'll get a leash.

PARK RANGER

Okay, he's your responsibility if you keep him.

GARY

That's fine. I'll take good care of him.

PARK RANGER

Okay then. Get him a good leash and you have a nice day, sir. Take it easy.

GARY

You too.

The ranger pulls away and Gary looks at Bud.

GARY

Sorry Bud. Gonna have to get you on a leash. Wish I didn't have to but I can't afford to pay any fines. Let's go.

They continue walking.

INT. RV - MORNING

Gary and Bud are sleeping next to each other in the RV.

Gary wakes up.

GARY

Up and at 'em, boy. We gotta go into town and get you a collar and  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
a leash. We need propane and some  
other stuff so we might as well get  
it done.

In a bit Gary sits at the wheel and turns the ignition key  
on. Nothing. Dead. He tries again. Nothing.

GARY  
Aww, crap. Battery's dead. Not  
again.

Gary looks over at Bud in the passenger seat and shakes his  
head in frustration.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - MORNING

A pickup truck is parked just inches away from the RV's  
engine compartment and battery jumper cables are attached  
from the truck battery to the RV's battery. The TRUCK ENGINE  
RUNS AT HIGH RPM'S and Gary sits behind the wheel.

HELPFUL CAMPER  
(loudly)  
Okay, give it a try.

After CHUGGING a few seconds the RV starts up and the  
muffler spits out a plume of black smoke.

Gary gets out and they both unhook cables and shut their  
respective engine hoods.

GARY  
Hey, I really appreciate that.  
Maybe that battery has suffered  
enough abuse and it's time to send  
it to the battery graveyard. Time  
for a new one, I guess. Anyway,  
thanks again for the help.

HELPFUL CAMPER  
That's perfectly okay. I'm sure if  
the situation was reversed you'd do  
the same for me. Glad to assist a  
fellow camper in need.

GARY  
Hey, I promise you... if I ever see  
you on the road broken down  
somewhere, God forbid, I'll just  
keep truckin' on by.

They both have a laugh, shake hands and part ways.

INT. PET STORE - MORNING

In town now Gary enters a large pet store. Bud is with him. Pets are allowed in this particular store but are expected to be on a leash.

A female store employee sees him.

STORE EMPLOYEE  
Sir, he has to be on a leash here.

GARY  
Of course. A leash. That's why I'm here. To buy a leash.

She looks at the dog and sees he's well mannered.

STORE EMPLOYEE  
Okay sir. Not a problem. Aisle 6.

Gary walks over to the aisle while Bud has a field day smelling everything.

GARY  
Come on Bud. I gotta get you a rope. Apparently you can't be the free spirit you should be. I mean I can understand leashes sometimes but in a park? That's just silly.

Gary finds the leashes all hanging neatly up high on a rack. There are a lot of them in many colors and price ranges.

GARY  
(murmuring)  
Golly. \$12.99 for a piece of rope? That's nuts.

He picks up a nice black leather one and turns it around to see the price tag.

GARY  
I don't believe it. \$40 for a leash? It says here handmade by the Amish. For crying out loud. So that's why the Amish are so rich.

After looking a few minutes he finds one that's priced low enough.

GARY  
Oh well, I'm here and this one looks okay. Guess you still need a  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
collar too. What size neck do you  
have? What's your shirt size?

The collars are nearby and Gary picks out a sturdy leather one.

GARY  
I guess this one will work. Sorry  
Bud, no sequins or gold artwork for  
you today. We gotta be on the  
cheap, as always.

Gary pays for the items and leaves the store carrying a bag.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

Back at the camp Gary puts on Bud's collar and leash. Bud is quiet and obedient not putting up any fuss at all.

GARY  
Well that wasn't too bad was it? If  
someone tried to put a collar  
around my throat I would have quite  
a fit. You're such a great doggy.  
Whoever owned you before trained  
you very well. Very well indeed.

Pats him on the head.

GARY  
I wish you could talk, my friend.  
You're a mystery. Where did you  
come from anyway? I don't know  
anything about you.

A quick thought enters Gary's mind:

GARY  
You weren't abandoned were you? I  
hope some idiot didn't pull over to  
the side of the road in his truck  
or whatever and just leave you  
sitting there. If that happened  
that jerk deserves to be beaten.  
Seriously. That's low. Real low.

Gary checks out the collar and finds it too loose around Bud's neck. He buckles it into another hole.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Sorry if that's too tight. It should loosen up after time. You let me know if that's choking you, okay?

Gary tries out the leash and Bud is fine with it. He obeys every command even though Gary's uncoordination with the leash is evident at first.

GARY

Yep, things would be a lot easier if you could talk.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - MORNING

Gary and Bud are at a different campground checking out the scenery at a leisurely pace. Bud is leashed up and is fine with it.

Gary has a windbreaker on as it's a cool morning. Many campers are around going about their business and pleasure and all is calm when:

A girl, 6, a short distance away screams. A boy, 11, yells:

BOY

Bees! Bees! Run Amy! Let's get away!

Gary sees the commotion and takes Bud over to a picnic table and quickly leashes him to the table securely.

GARY

Stay Bud. Stay.

Gary runs faster than he has in decades and catches up to the little girl. She waves her hands frantically trying to keep the bees away.

Her brother runs fast and is already back at his family's campsite yelling for his mom and dad. They're inside their RV.

Gary pulls off his windbreaker and wraps it around the girl. He picks her up and runs in the direction the boy ran. Bees are stinging him but he keeps his arms and hands tightly wrapped around the girl.

Bud sees the frenzy and pulls at the leash but he can't get away. His pull isn't real hard because he's in a quandary. He was told to stay so he doesn't put up much of a fight. He whimpers.

(CONTINUED)

Most of the bees are gone as Gary, carrying the girl, is met by her parents and brother. The sound of bees quiets down quickly as they fly away.

GARY  
(breathing heavily)  
She's stung.

MOTHER  
Oh my God! Oh my God! Amy? Amy? Are  
you okay?

The little girl cries as if she was poked with an ice pick.

MOTHER  
Where are you stung? Amy, tell me  
where you're stung.

She doesn't answer but keeps crying.

FATHER  
(to Gary)  
Are you stung too?

GARY  
I'm okay. Just a few stings. I'll  
be fine.

BROTHER  
They got me too. Only once in the  
head though.

He rubs his head but keeps his cool.

MOTHER  
You'll be okay. It's all right  
honey. They're just a couple bee  
stings is all. You'll be okay in a  
little while. I promise.

The mother is about to pull out a stinger.

GARY  
Wait. Don't do that.

They all look at him surprised.

FATHER  
Why not?

GARY  
It just so happens I know a little  
something about bees. I had an  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
uncle that used to be a beekeeper.  
What you want to do is scrape the  
stinger away. Have you got a butter  
knife?

FATHER  
(to his son)  
Bobby, go in and get us a butter  
knife.

He eagerly runs into the RV.

Gary points to a stinger left in his arm.

GARY  
See that right there?

The boy is back in a flash, not wanting to miss anything. He  
has two butter knives in his hand.

BROTHER(BOBBY)  
This one's for you, mister.

GARY  
Thank you Bobby.

Gary takes a knife from the boy.

GARY  
See that right there on top of the  
stinger? That's the venom sack.  
When you pull out the stinger you  
end up squeezing the toxin and it  
enters into the skin. It's the  
toxin that causes the pain. Once  
you get the stinger out then the  
pain immediately goes away.

Gary uses the knife to scrape away the stinger on his arm.

GARY  
See? That's it.

MOTHER  
Wow, that's great.  
(to her husband)  
Stan?

Stan takes the other knife and scrapes away a stinger on his  
daughter's arm. She cries louder.

MOTHER

Oh, honey. It'll be okay in a minute. You'll be all better real soon.

The father scrapes another and then another.

STAN(FATHER)

I think that's all. I don't see anymore. Kate, you see anymore?

She shakes her head.

The daughter stops crying but still wears an ugly cry face.

MOTHER

See? We got all the nasty stingers out. Those bees won't be bothering you anymore.

The father gives Gary a good look-over.

STAN(FATHER)

Looks like you got the worst of it. Thank you so much. That was great what you did. I can't thank you enough.

BROTHER(BOBBY)

(to Gary)

Can I scrape out your stingers?

Bobby holds out his hand. Gary hands him the butter knife he was holding.

GARY

Okay. I think I have some on my neck and chest too.

Bobby goes about scraping off the stingers and Gary barely reacts.

STAN(FATHER)

Hi, we're the Cranstons. My wife is Kate and you already met Bobby. Amy is my daughter. I'm Stan.

He puts out a hand and they shake.

GARY

Gary. Gary Clover.

The son scrapes off the last one.

(CONTINUED)

BROTHER(BOBBY)

Thank you for helping my sister,  
mister. Those bees would have stung  
her to death if you didn't help  
her.

GARY

(to Bobby)

I hope she isn't allergic.

(to Stan)

She's not allergic to bee stings,  
is she?

STAN(FATHER)

Not that I know of. We'll keep an  
eye on her. I'm going to take her  
inside now and check on her so  
thanks again Gary. That was  
wonderful what you did.

MOTHER(KATE)

Yes, thanks a million.

GARY

Hey, my pleasure. Well, not exactly  
pleasure but I was glad to be of  
assistance.

STAN(FATHER)

Hey, after things calm down a bit  
why don't you come over and we'll  
treat you to a nice barbeque?

GARY

Umm... Sure. Be happy to. When?

STAN(FATHER)

Give us an hour. That sound okay?

GARY

Sure. I gotta go feed my dog  
anyway. He's over there.

He points.

They all look.

BROTHER(BOBBY)

Oh cool.

(CONTINUED)

STAN(FATHER)

It's okay if you want to bring him along. We have a dog too. He isn't with us today but we can chat about dogs while we scarf down some burgers.

They say goodbye and Gary walks to his dog. He carries his coat and checks out the welts on his arms.

He gets to his dog.

GARY

Sorry to leave you but it was Gary to the rescue. Imagine that. I did something good for a change.

He unties him and they walk.

GARY

Sorry I didn't bring you along but trust me, you wouldn't like bees. Just watching out for my little pal, that's all.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - EVENING

MONTAGE:

Gary smiles with a large juicy hamburger in one hand and a bottle of cold beer in another. He has a good time with Stan and his family. The little girl long ago forgot about the bees and grooms Bud with a dog brush. He loves it. Bud's eyes look like they're half-asleep but he loves the attention and the feel of the brush stroking his coat.

At various campgrounds in Oregon, Washington and Idaho and a few rest stops along the highway, Gary and Bud are seen talking to people. Bud's friendliness with everyone helps Gary break the ice.

At one campground Gary lies in his hammock that is attached at one end to his RV and the other end a tree. He's asleep.

Bud wakes him up with a nudge. He has his tennis ball in his mouth.

Gary lazily throws the ball and his energetic dog brings it right back to him. They continue that for some time while Gary sways in his hammock enjoying the sunshine and the summer breeze.

(CONTINUED)

At another campground Gary sits at a picnic table and across from him sits another man about his age. Bud is finishing up a meal.

GARY

Oh yah, Border Collies are quite intelligent. They're herding dogs. It takes quite a bit of smarts to keep goats and sheep corralled. Watch this. I just taught him this a week ago. Bud. Get me a beer.

The door to the RV is latched open.

Bud looks excited but a little forgetful.

GARY

Bud. Get me a beer. Get me a beer.

Bud suddenly remembers and goes inside the RV and in a few seconds comes out with a can sideways in his mouth. He brings it to his master and sits after Gary takes the can away. Gary reaches down and gives him a hug.

GARY

(to the man at the table)  
See what I mean? All I have to do is leave the door open and tie a towel to the fridge. He does the rest.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

It's a crowded campground and a hot 4th of July. Gary chops small pieces of wood with one hand as Bud lies on his side trying to stay cool under their picnic table.

Suddenly we hear FIRECRACKERS going off a few campsites away.

Bud startles. He gets up and turns to face the noise. Gary notices and stops chopping.

GARY

It's okay. It's all right. Nothing to be afraid of.

A BOTTLE ROCKET ZOOMS nearby. Bud freaks out and runs over to his master.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

I had a feeling this would happen.

He looks at Bud as he wipes sweat off his brow.

GARY

How about we go for a little drive.  
We can come back here tomorrow when  
they've all had their fun.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Their RV drives down a busy highway and makes a turn down a dirt road. The RV leaves a trail of dust in its wake. It keeps going until it's far away from everyone.

EXT. RV - NIGHT

They've stopped in the middle of nowhere and Gary opens the side door to multitudes of CRICKETS CHIRPING. The moon is full and bright and the stars are many.

They get out and Gary goes to the back of the RV and loosens a few bungee cords that hold up his lawn chair.

Gary takes it to a level spot and opens it up. Then he goes into the RV and brings out a couple beers and a small fold up table. He unfolds the table and puts his beer cans on it.

The lawn chair sits low to the ground and Gary has a difficult time sitting down but does.

GARY

Come over here, Bud. Keep me  
company.

Bud is used to going to strange places but has a look of wonder as to why they're out in nowhere land.

GARY

It's quiet here, my furry friend.  
Kinda nice to get away from all  
that noise, isn't it? I don't know  
how many fourth of July's you've  
been to but I know it's killer on a  
dog's ears. Thought I'd get you  
away from all that. Peaceful here,  
isn't it? Except for all those darn  
crickets anyway.

Bud gets comfortable and just listens.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Look. We can still see fireworks  
way over there. You see that?

Bud looks in the direction Gary points but pays little attention to the lights in the sky. They're low and very distant. Now and then a BOOM can be heard but Bud barely notices.

Gary is hot and drinks up his beer fast. He's feeling tipsy. He tries to get up out of his chair and fumbles. It takes a couple tries before he gets out.

He brings back a couple more cold beers, sits down awkwardly, and starts in on them immediately.

GARY

(pointing skyward)

Can you see those? Do you have any idea what those points of light are? They're stars. Like the sun. You wouldn't understand that but I for one think stars are amazing.

Another drink.

GARY

Can you imagine how many stars there are? I can't. They say there are more stars in the universe than there are grains of sand on all the beaches on earth. I mean every sand. Every grain of sand, excuse me. Think of all the beaches everywhere and then the Sahara desert and all those grains of sand and then add them all up. Now get this... that's not even all of it. They say... that there are 10 times that many stars. Unbelievable. Wow.

He looks down at Bud. Bud listens.

GARY

You know what's silly? I talk more to a dog than I do to people. That's sad. Don't get me wrong, buddy old pal, but that isn't the way it's supposed to be. But you know what?

Drinks again.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Where was I? Oh yah, you know what?  
You're a good friend. You listen  
better than anyone I know. And you  
don't even have a clue what I'm  
saying most of the time. Do ya?

He pauses and watches the climactic ending of the distant fireworks show.

GARY

Well that's over. At least you  
don't have to go through the fourth  
of July again for another year.  
Anyway, where was I?

Another beer pops open.

GARY

Haha. Watch this... Frisbee.

Bud gets on his feet.

Gary laughs.

GARY

I love that. Sorry Bud, I'm just  
messin' with ya.  
I don't really have a  
f-r-i-s-b-e-e.

Bud gets excited again.

GARY

Hahahaha. You can spell too?  
Hahahaha. What are you going to do  
next, smart alec? My taxes?

Gary gives Bud a good rub on the head.

Bud sits.

GARY

(still chuckling)  
I gotta pee.

He tries to get up but has such a hard time he just rolls out of the chair. He laughs again and barely makes it to his feet.

Gary walks a little ways away and pees on a bush. He sways as he stands there. When he's done he walks back to his chair.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Hey, if you can pee anywhere so can I.

He picks up a beer can and notices it's empty. He picks up the rest of them one at a time and notice they're all empty.

GARY

Damn, Bud. I'm really going through these today. I must be dehydrated or something 'cause I'm really feeling it. Feels good. Bartender, I'd like another please?

He goes into the RV and brings out three more.

He goes to sit down and nearly plops down in the chair, falling backward.

GARY

Hahaha. I'm drunk.

Bud thinks he's playing and walks over to Gary's face and licks it.

GARY

Oh gross, Bud. That's nasty. Dog breath. Saliva. Yuck.

Gary wipes the slime off his face with his short shirt sleeves.

GARY

Hey I like you too but you don't see me licking your face, do I? Stop that. I don't understand why people let dogs lick their faces. Dog germs are disgusting.

Bud stops licking and wags his tail.

Gary rolls out of the chair again and uprights the chair. He gingerly gets back in.

GARY

Good thing nobody's around to see me this way. I'm sauced. Must be hungry or something 'cause my head is spinning.

After some time and a few more beers:

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Come here Bud. Sit on my lap. I'm feeling lonely tonight. Back when I was married I used to spend holidays with the wife. You're all I have now.

Gary pats his lap and Bud gets up and comfortable.

GARY

Do dogs get lonely? I think so. Do they get bored? I think so too. You guys are almost human. Sometimes better than human. Sure, there are mean dogs but that's because they're taught to be mean. You don't have a mean bone in your body, do ya? You wouldn't hurt a flea. No you wouldn't.

A little time goes by and Bud sits on Gary's lap in such a way that Bud's forehead rests on Gary's cheek. Bud is cradled in his master's arms.

Hold for a time.

EXT. MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - MORNING

The RV pulls away to reveal that the area is cleaned up of beer cans, the fold up table and anything else - except for the lawn chair. It's left sitting where it was the night before.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Gary washes dishes as he hears someone drive in. He peeks out and sees a large truck sitting high on very large wheels and tires and towed behind it is a fifth-wheel trailer. Gary watches the truck and trailer rolling on by as he dries off a pot with a towel. They park in the stall directly next to Gary.

GARY

(murmuring)

Geez, guys. There's a whole empty campground here and you have to park right next to me?

After getting all situated in their parking space THREE MEN get out of the truck. The driver is a TALL MAN in his mid-thirties, rather lean, and the two other men are a

(CONTINUED)

little younger. One of the men is FAT and the other is SHORT. The fat man wears sweatpants while the short man dons a long overcoat and tall leather black boots. They set up camp and immediately begin drinking large quantities of beer.

Gary is incensed at the NOISE they make and tries to shrug it off. He closes his door.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Gary tries to read but the RUCKUS next-door overwhelms his concentration. Bud sits on the floor but is clearly tense as well. Fireworks go off and Gary becomes steaming mad.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

He takes Bud outside and stands and stares at the three men as they act like drunken fools.

GARY

Alright Bud. I've had enough of this. Let's go have a little chat with our neighbors.

He pauses.

GARY

On second thought I think I better handle this one alone. Who knows? They might not be dog friendly.

Gary ties Bud's leash to the mirror bracket of his RV.

GARY

You stay here and guard the fort. I'm going in.

He walks about ten yards and the closer he gets to the men the more he sees how drunk they are. He sees them lighting their campfire with gasoline and lighter fluid. They spray fluids in arcs and light up the night sky as they dance like crazed men. He gives up and makes his way back to his camp.

GARY

Changed my mind. I got a better idea. Let's bug out, as they say, and not tempt fate. Time to pack up and move on. This site is closing for the winter in a few days anyway so let's just be on our way.

He begins putting things away and goes in and out of the RV.  
He now unties his hammock and goes back inside.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Gary straps things down and puts dishes in cupboards when he  
hears BUD BARKING.

TALL MAN(O.S.)  
Hey neighbor. You got any beer?

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Gary steps out.

GARY  
Bud. It's okay. Stop barking.

Bud quiets.

TALL MAN  
Don't mean to disturb you but dufus  
here...  
(points to the short man)

TALL MAN  
...forgot to bring more beer.

Lit only by a camp lantern the three men appear menacing.  
They stand and look around at the possessions at Gary's  
campsite.

GARY  
Nope. Sorry fellas. No beer here.  
Looks like you had enough alcohol  
already.

FAT MAN  
No, were just getting started.  
We're going into town to get more.  
You sure you don't have any?

Four empty beer cans are seen at the site.

SHORT MAN  
Yah. Come on. Don't bogart your  
beer, man. Show some love and  
share.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Hey, what can I say. That was my last.

The Fat man sees the metal detector leaning against a tree and walks toward it.

FAT MAN

Hey, it's a White's. I've always wanted one of these.

He picks it up and eyes it.

FAT MAN

You find anything good with this?

GARY

Nah. Just some newer coins. Nothing valuable. So far anyway. I did find a ring here yesterday and it's sterling silver but it's not worth much.

TALL MAN

How much? Can I see it?

Gary reaches over to a drawer and pulls out the ring and holds it in the air.

SHORT MAN

Hey, cool. Can I have it man?

Gary twirls it around in his hand for a moment.

GARY

I suppose. It's only worth 5 or 10 bucks. Maybe.

FAT MAN

That'll pay for some beer.

Gary walks over to the short man and hesitantly hands him the ring. They share a few comments.

Bud's attention focuses on everyone but he keeps quiet.

Tall man whispers something into fat man's ear.

Tall man distracts Gary by attempting to walk into Gary's RV.

Gary steps in front of tall man and holds an arm out to block him.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Hey. Hold on there. I think it's  
time for you guys to go now.

Fat man quietly walks over to the truck bed and places the  
metal detector in it.

Tall man stalls for a few seconds by holding his hands up  
and moves back a bit.

TALL MAN

Okay. Okay. We're out of here.  
Let's go boys.

Fat man in his drunken state doesn't know when to quit. Gary  
sees him stealing his axe.

Gary erupts.

GARY

Put that back! That's mine!

BUD sees Gary's anger and begins BARKING at the men.

SHORT MAN

Hey, shut up you dumb dog or I'll  
kick you in the teeth!

Gary tries to keep an eye on all three men but has too much  
going on.

As Gary attempts to calm his dog down the tall man takes the  
opportunity to step into the RV.

GARY

I said get out of there!

Gary follows him in while the other men take items from the  
site and place them in the truck bed.

Gary is nearly pushed out of the RV as the tall man is  
behind him making his way out.

Tall man holds up a case of beer.

TALL MAN

Look! He said he didn't have any  
beer. What the hell is this?  
Chocolate milk?  
(to Gary)  
You lied to me!

Gary loses control of the situation. He notices some of his  
items are gone and he goes back into the RV.

(CONTINUED)

FAT MAN

Let's grab everything. If it's not nailed down grab it. We're pirates now! Camping pirates! Hey...

Fat man starts doing a crazy dance.

FAT MAN

...camping pirates sing this song  
Doo-da, Doo-da, camping pirates  
sing this song,  
Oh, de doo-da--

Gary steps to the door pointing his gun at all three of them one at a time.

GARY

I told you guys to leave! Now leave! Get out of here!

Tall man walks right up to Gary as BUD continues BARKING.

TALL MAN

Or what man?!?! What are you gonna do? Shoot me? For a case of cheap-ass beer? Go ahead! Come on! Go ahead!

Gary freezes stiff. BUD BARKS UP A STORM and pulls at the RV so hard it moves from side to side. One of the rusty bolts holding the mirror onto the RV breaks. The bracket loosens but still holds.

Short man throws a rock at the dog and hits him in the ribs. BUD BARKS LOUDER than ever. Next, the short man kicks Bud in the side with a tall black boot. Bud whimpers and backs off til he recovers. Bud goes back for more but now the short man is far enough away that Bud can't reach him. The SHORT MAN taunts the angry dog with BARKING SOUNDS of his own.

Gary points the gun at the short man.

GARY

Don't mess with my dog!

As Gary has his attention on the short man the tall man grabs the gun from Gary's hand and smacks him against the head with it. Gary falls to the ground stunned.

TALL MAN

Screw this guy! Let's teach him a lesson! It's wrong to lie! Jake, throw some of that fire into his RV!

(CONTINUED)

Without hesitation JAKE, the fat man, takes a shovel laying near the fire and shovels in a load of hot coals. Then another. Then another.

Gary, still in a daze, pleads with them to stop but it makes no difference.

The short man runs to the truck and opens a rear door.

SHORT MAN

I got a better idea. This will  
really heat things up.

Short man throws in a box of fireworks and then lights up a flare and throws it in. Then he squirts lighter fluid all around the inside of the RV.

Instantly we see a reddish glow and quickly the RV erupts in a blaze. Fireworks quickly begin to go off.

Bud reacts as if a war has started.

Gary musters up all his strength. He gets up and goes after the nearest man, the fat one, and swings with all his might. Fat man definitely has the weight advantage though. He bearhugs Gary and rolls him over to the ground. They both topple over. Gary gets crushed by the man's weight and the wind gets knocked out of him.

BUD continuously BARKS while pulling at his leash but can't free himself.

Now all three men engage themselves in beating Gary with punches and kicks. To his sides. To his legs. To his face. No mercy is shown.

Gary takes a heavy beating but the fire burns so high and hot that the THREE MEN call it quits and SCREAM and YELL at Gary with PROFANITIES as they back away.

Gary and Bud are very near the flames and now Bud turns his attention from anger to complete fear as he hears BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! from fireworks going off. He pulls away from the RV with all his might and nearly strangles himself in an attempt to get away.

TALL MAN

Grab everything! Let's not leave  
anything!

They take every last thing they can from the site and put it in the back of their truck. They even hunt the site for anything that they might have left behind.

(CONTINUED)

With very little strength left Gary rolls over to Bud and pulls out his small pocket knife. It reflects in the fire's glow and as he tries to open it with bloody fingers he drops it. He fumbles for it then finds it. It takes him a long second to open it and when he does he cuts the rope with one swift swipe.

GARY

Run Bud! Run! Get away!

Short man picks up unburned logs and holds them up to his chest. BUD GROWLS and short man turns to him. Bud runs at him with absolute speed and puts a jaw lock on short man's crotch.

SHORT MAN instantly drops the firewood and SCREAMS like a terrified schoolgirl.

GARY

No Bud! No! Run away Bud! Get out of here! Now!

Bud twists and turns with all his might but his jaws-of-life-teeth do not let go.

SHORT MAN

AHHHHHHH!!! Get him off me!!!  
Help!!!

Fat man stands back. He moves around erratically not sure what to do. His fat jiggles like he's dancing. He holds onto his sweatpants.

Tall man quickly moves to the scene and points the gun at the dog's ribs and pulls the trigger. Nothing. Pulls it again. Nothing. Pulls it a third time. Still nothing.

TALL MAN

Dammit! You don't have any bullets in it? That's stupid!

Tall man hits Bud in the back with the gun and after a few seconds Bud loosens his grip and goes directly at him.

Now tall man has his gun arm gripped in the dogs ferocious teeth. Tall man hits Bud with his weaker left hand but it has no real affect.

TALL MAN

Get this dog off me, Ben! Hurry before I lose my arm!

Ben is no help at all as he is doubled over, holding his groin.

(CONTINUED)

Gary, nearly faint now and on his back, sees and hears everything with perfect clarity. The blazing fire seems to be in slow motion and is eerily beautiful.

Gary has almost no strength left but still tries to get up. He can't.

The fat man grabs Bud's tail and pulls. Bud let's go of the tall man's arm and drops to the ground.

TALL MAN

Don't let go! Throw him and let's get out of here!

Fat man swings Bud around a couple times like a hammer throw and tosses him quite a distance. When Bud lands after rolling a few times he instantly hones in like a missile on its target. He runs as fast as he can and leaps over the still burning campfire. It's too late. The three men barely have time to get into the truck and slam the doors.

TALL MAN

(yelling)

Thanks for the gun, old man! A little piece of advice: next time put some bullets in it! A gun without bullets is useless!

Tall man starts up the truck and quickly puts it into gear. The two rear truck tires spit up a trail of dirt.

Bud nearly bites the tires and chases the vehicle out of the park almost getting run over in the process.

Bud runs back and sees Gary on the ground very near the fire. Bud hesitates. He frantically paces from side to side surmising the situation. He can feel the intense heat but makes his way over to Gary and BARKS incessantly.

Gary is out. There's no sign of life in him.

The BARKING continues as Bud tries to arouse his master.

The fire engulfs the nearby trees and sends up a plume of gray smoke.

Bud licks Gary's face. Nothing. No response.

Bud gently grips onto one of Gary's sleeves with his teeth and pulls. Only Gary's arm is moved to the side.

Bud keeps trying but Gary's weight is too much for the medium sized canine.

(CONTINUED)

Bud grabs the clothing on Gary's shoulder area and pulls with all his might but only moves the stiff body a few inches away from the inferno.

Bud pulls and pulls and pulls.

INT. ROAD NEAR CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

A TEENAGER driving a sedan and his GIRLFRIEND see light ahead.

TEENAGER  
That don't look right.

GIRLFRIEND  
Is that a forest fire?

TEENAGER  
Could be. We'll see in a moment.  
We're pretty close.

GIRLFRIEND  
You got a fire extinguisher?

TEENAGER  
Yah, but I don't think that's gonna  
be enough. That fire looks huge.  
Use your cellphone and call 911.  
We're gonna need the fire  
department for this.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

The sedan pulls into the campground but not too close. The fire rages high. They park and get out.

Bud is so engrossed in his task that he never hears or sees the car come in.

GIRLFRIEND  
Am I seeing what I think I'm  
seeing?

TEENAGER  
I think so. It looks like that dog  
is eating him?

GIRLFRIEND  
Hurry! Get your extinguisher and  
chase it away!

(CONTINUED)

The teenager pulls the ring on the extinguisher and rushes toward the dog spraying it with retardant.

TEENAGER

Get away! Scram! Go on!

Bud is scared out of his wits and retreats into the cover of darkness.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Bud watches as fireman put out the flames. Sirens and lights keep him at a distance.

The ambulance leaves.

The fire trucks leave.

Policeman leave.

Bud is all alone.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

A NURSE, CHRISTINE GREENE, 45ish but quite youthful, shakes Gary's shoulder.

CHRISTINE

Sir? Sir? Wake up sir.

Gary stirs awake, disoriented.

GARY

Huh? What?

CHRISTINE

Are you awake now? You've been asleep for 4 days. How you feeling, darling?

GARY

Four days. What happened? Where am I?

CHRISTINE

You got a little beat up. You're in a hospital. You're going to be okay but you'll have to keep still or you're going to rip out those stitches.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Oh. Thought that fight was a dream.

The nurse points to Gary's left side as she pulls up his gown.

CHRISTINE

We had to take out a kidney. It was just too damaged to do you any good. I'll have the doctor come in and tell you all about it. You just relax now and drink some juice.

GARY

A kidney? You took one of my kidneys?

CHRISTINE

I'm sorry sir but we had to. You're lucky to still be alive. Whoever beat you up nearly killed you.

GARY

Yah. Lucky. Three young punks against one old man. Wish I would'a had bullets in my gun.

The nurse pours him something to drink and checks his IV, tubes and bandages.

GARY

Who has my dog?

CHRISTINE

I'm sorry sir but I don't know anything about a dog.

GARY

What? No one's seen Bud? He's my Border Collie. Why didn't anyone pick him up?

CHRISTINE

I'm sorry sir but I can't answer that. I wasn't aware of any dog.

GARY

Well, can I talk to the police or something? I gotta find him. He needs me.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE

I'll see what information I can find out about your dog. You say his name is Bud? I'll see what I can do. In the meantime I want you to rest.

GARY

(antsy)

Rest? For how long? How long am I going to be in here?

CHRISTINE

As long as it takes for you to heal up.

GARY

How long will that be?

CHRISTINE

I can't say for sure. Everyone heals up at different speeds. Could be a week. Could be two. Could be more. I can't really say for sure.

Gary tries to move just a little bit but winces in pain.

CHRISTINE

Mr. Clover... that is your name, correct?

GARY

Yes.

CHRISTINE

The police say they were able to find that information from a serial number on the frame of your vehicle and then trace that to you. Of course finding your wallet the next day laying in the brush with your I.D. in it didn't hurt either.

GARY

Oh yah, my RV. It's all burned to a crisp isn't it?

CHRISTINE

I'm afraid so. That's what they tell me anyway. I'll let the Sheriff know you're awake now so he can come in and get a statement from you. It's a small town here

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE (cont'd)  
Mr. Clover. We'll find those idiots  
that did this to you. And hopefully  
we'll find your dog too.

GARY  
Thanks... Miss?

CHRISTINE  
Mrs. Green. But call me Christine,  
okay?

GARY  
Okay. You call me Gary then.

CHRISTINE  
Sure. Get some rest now Gary. I'll  
be in from time to time to check up  
on you. I'll have the doctor come  
in and he can bring you up to date  
on all the we did here to put you  
back together. I'll talk to you  
later, hun.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Bud lays under the picnic table at the campsite that's now  
blackened and ugly.

The campground is closed for the season and no one is around  
anywhere. It's very silent.

Between his legs rests a charred tennis ball.

Confused and alone - he waits.

INT. NURSE'S DESK - EVENING

Christine puts on her coat and picks up her purse. Another  
nurse, a black female in her thirties, just got off the  
phone.

CHRISTINE  
Well, Goodnight Rebecca. Same time  
tomorrow I guess. I'm glad it's  
almost my Friday. I'm beat.

REBECCA  
I hear ya. These 12 hour shifts are  
messing with my love life. Not that  
I had much of a love life anyway  
but still.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE

I know exactly what you mean. My husband is all frisky when I get home and you should see him pout because I'm never in the mood.

REBECCA

Haha. At least you have a man that wants it. Mine never does anymore. Goodnight.

Christine walks down the hallway towards the elevator when she decides to make a short detour.

She peeks in Gary's room and sees Gary in bed. A FEMALE SHERIFF, 30ish, stands beside him with a notebook and a pen in her hands.

Gary sees Christine and waves.

The Sheriff looks back.

CHRISTINE

Oh, didn't mean to disturb you. I'm on my way out Gary. You be good now. I don't want to hear you've been doing jumping jacks when I come in tomorrow.

GARY

Not me. I never learned how. Goodnight Christine.

She leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

FEMALE SHERIFF

All right then Mr. Clover. I think that should do it. You've got a good memory for details. It should help quite a bit that you remembered names.

She looks at her notes:

FEMALE SHERIFF

Ben and Jake. Got it.

GARY

Get those guys, maam. It's one thing to kick a man when he's down

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
but they kicked my dog. I wish I  
would have had bullets in my gun.

She gives him a look of disapproval.

FEMALE SHERIFF  
Okay then. Get better sir. We'll do  
what we can.

The sheriff leaves and Gary shapes his hand into a gun and  
stares at it.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Nurse Rebecca steps into Gary's room with breakfast.

REBECCA  
How you doin' this morning?

His TV is on but he's not paying any attention to it.

GARY  
A little sore to be sure.

REBECCA  
Well, you let us know if you want  
us to up your pain pills. Don't be  
a hero. No reason to suffer. This  
is a hospital and we've got plenty  
of medication here.

She gets him situated with his meal and checks his wounds.

REBECCA  
Lot's of bruises. Oh my. Bet you  
want to meet up with those guys  
again.

GARY  
You got that right. I may not be  
able to handle three of them at  
once but gimme them one at a time  
and we'll see who has the most  
bruises.

REBECCA  
I bet. Hey, there's a reporter down  
in the lobby that wants to talk  
with you.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Talk? With me? Why?

REBECCA

You're kinda famous. People all over are talking about what happened to you in that campground. I heard there was a little blurb on the local news a couple nights ago. Did you see it?

GARY

Really? My story? No, guess I was out of it and missed it.

REBECCA

Yah. That's right. You were still asleep.

GARY

Did they say anything about my dog that's missing?

REBECCA

Well, I didn't have a chance to see it myself since I was on shift but you could ask the reporter if they said anything about a dog.

GARY

I'm not really sure I want to see a reporter. I'm not one to bring attention to myself.

REBECCA

Hey, if it helps find those guys that did this to you then it might be worth it.

GARY

I suppose you're right. I'll talk to the reporter.

Awhile later.

Rebecca comes back with a female reporter and gets Gary's attention at his door.

REBECCA

Here she is Gary.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Okay. Thanks.

She leaves and in steps ROBIN HERON, mid-twenties. An attractive brunette with medium length hair.

ROBIN

Mr. Clover?

GARY

Yes. Please come in.

ROBIN

Hi, I'm Robin Heron and I'm with the Willamette Weekly. How are you today?

GARY

Getting better everyday. Hopefully I can get out of here soon. This place is boring the heck out of me.

She smiles and has a seat in a nearby chair.

ROBIN

So, Mr. Clover...

GARY

You can call me Gary.

ROBIN

Okay. Great. Can you tell me what happened at the campground?

GARY

Well... You probably know the story already, right?

ROBIN

Kind of. How about you tell me in your own words though.

GARY

Okay... I was just minding my own business when three guys drove in to the campground and started making a lot of noise. I was going to go have a little chat with them and ask them politely to keep the noise down but decided to just hightail it out of there before any trouble started.

(CONTINUED)

ROBIN

And?

GARY

Well, they surprised me and came over asking if I had any beer. Actually I did but they were so drunk already I didn't want to give them anymore.

ROBIN

Just how drunk?

GARY

Very. I know drunk when I see it. Been there a few times myself. They just lost all inhibitions and started doing irrational things.

ROBIN

Like?

GARY

Like stealing my stuff. That's not the friendly campers I'm used to. Then they started messing with my dog. You know, the one that somehow got lost. Or the one that got chased away. Or whatever happened.

ROBIN

Yes. We heard about a dog. Tell me more about it.

GARY

Well, I was hoping you had information about my dog.

ROBIN

Sorry Gary. We have nothing. Nothing at all. Continue.

GARY

Oh... Anyway, the A-holes kicked him and threw him around but that little guy never backed down. He's tougher than I thought. You know, he never disobeyed me. Ever. But when I cut him loose. Why...

(beat)

You should have seen him.

At this point Gary starts tearing up.

(CONTINUED)

ROBIN

That's all right, Gary. If your dog's as tough as you say then I'm sure he's fine.

GARY

(wiping his cheeks of tears)  
Yah, he'll be all right. He's smart too. He'll figure out how to survive. I don't think he's used to being that kind of dog that has to fend for himself but he's a fast learner. He'll be all right.

Robin and Gary talk longer while the reporter gets more information.

After awhile Robin stands up and is about to leave.

ROBIN

We'll get the story out there. We're not a big paper but hopefully that one person will read the story and see your dog somewhere and get him back to you.

GARY

Thank you Robin.

ROBIN

You take care of yourself now. Hope you find a place to stay soon. Goodnight.

She leaves while Gary leans back and stares at the ceiling.

INT. CRANSTON FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN

Kate Cranston, the mother of the girl that got stung, sits at her computer. It's a modest home with lots of living done there. The place is full of knick-knacks, mementos and many refridgerator magnets holding up pictures of their kids and their animals. Dog dishes are on the kitchen floor and one is filled with clean water and the other one with hard dog food. Some food is spilled onto the floor.

Kate reads a blog at her small computer desk as her husband sits in the front room nearby reading a car magazine. Their kids aren't at home. It's quiet.

The silence breaks when:

(CONTINUED)

KATE  
Stan. Come here.

STAN  
What?

KATE  
Come here. You have to see this.

He gets up and meanders around their large L-shaped couch then stands at her side.

KATE  
Look at this.

She points to a paragraph in a forum page.

Stan bends down and takes a couple seconds to read. His face is seen against the glow of the screen and his eyes quickly pan from side to side. His facial expression quickly turns to one of surprise.

STAN  
Hey, that's the same man that helped Amy when she got stung.

KATE  
I know. I know. Can you believe it? Someone burned up his RV. That's terrible. Who would do such a thing? What's he going to do now?

An adult golden retriever walks over and stands next to Stan. Stan rubs his neck.

STAN  
(reading on)  
And his dog is gone too. My gosh.  
That poor man.  
(beat)  
Hey, remember Sylvia? She's giving away some Border Collie puppies. Maybe we can get Gary one.

KATE  
He needs a place to live more than a dog. Besides, where would he keep a dog without a place to live?

STAN  
True. True.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

We've got to help this guy out.  
Maybe we can take up a charity and  
get him into one of those assisted  
living places.

STAN

Sure. One that takes dogs though.  
I'm going to give Sylvia a call  
about those puppies.

KATE

(looking at her screen)  
Okay. I'll spread the word.  
(looking up at Stan)  
Where do you think he'll want to  
live?

EXT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

A green and white Sheriff's car pulls up to the gate. A  
heavysset male sheriff gets out and unlocks the gate and  
drives in. He leaves the gate open.

The sheriff parks at the spot where the RV burned.

Bud's POV:

He sees the car with the funny lights on the top and backs  
up behind a tree and some bushes.

The car door opens and TWO BLACK LEATHER BOOTS step onto the  
ground. Bud focuses intently on the boots.

The door quietly closes and a man in a LONG OVERCOAT puts on  
his hat.

Bud remains silent.

Return to scene.

The sheriff has a good look around. It's very quiet. He gets  
back in his car and drives slowly through the campground  
while scanning around intently.

He drives back to the original camp, stops briefly and looks  
again.

He leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSES DESK

Gary walks the hallway. He exercises his legs. There's a limp but Gary builds up strength.

Christine is on the phone and as Gary walks by her she whispers. He doesn't notice.

She hangs up the phone and stands up.

She pretends to be reading a chart but really she's only waiting for Gary to come closer.

CHRISTINE

Gary... I just got off the phone  
with the Sheriff's office.

She scratches her head.

CHRISTINE

They sent an officer over to the  
campsite to look for your dog. I'm  
sorry. The officer didn't find him.  
Nobody was there. The place was  
empty.

Gary pauses and is about to say something. He adjusts his hospital gown but just keeps on walking.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

A gas station on a lonely road is open and well lit. No one is at the pumps and in pulls a pickup truck. It's the same truck that carried the men that beat up Gary but this time it's not pulling a fifth-wheel trailer.

It parks at the far end of the parking lot and out of sight of anyone that might be inside. It's not far from the road it came in on. It's pulled straight in to a parking space, not backed in.

All three men are getting out of the truck when:

TALL MAN

Jake, you just stay here. I think  
we got this covered. You just keep  
the engine running.

FAT MAN

Whatever.

(CONTINUED)

Fat man gets behind the wheel and sits down sidesaddle. His feet are still on the pavement. He grabs a large bag of potato chips and feeds himself with a handful while he watches the other two walk toward the store.

Fat man and short man walk in like they're going in to purchase a gallon of milk. Nonchalant. Only short man is still reeling from the crotch grab from Bud and walks in bowlegged. Every once in awhile he holds his leg very near the wound and winces.

INT. GAS STATION - STORE

An Asian man, in his mid-twenties, mops the floor near the back of the store. He and the other two men are the only ones inside.

The two men browse the aisles as if they're normal customers. Tall man sees the clerk peek over at him. The clerk looks away.

Tall man signals his accomplice to get over to the area where the alcohol is. Short man complies at a leisurely pace.

The clerk places the mop against a shelf and walks behind the counter where the till is. He pretends to be straightening out cigarettes above but he's really only trying to keep an eye on the two.

Tall man has a bandana on his head that looks like an American flag. Complete with stars and stripes.

Short man opens the refrigerator door and pulls out two cases of light beer. They are both 24 packs. He walks over near his friend and stands behind him with a case dangling from each hand.

Tall man walks up to the counter and pulls out a gun, pointing it straight at the clerk. It's the same gun that he stole from Gary.

The clerk puts up his hands and freezes.

TALL MAN

Give me all your money, now!

The clerk is petrified and just stands there with hands raised.

(CONTINUED)

TALL MAN

Hey squinty eyes, can't you see I  
got a gun pointing right at your  
face? Give me the cash! Open the  
register!

The Asian man can't believe what he just heard and plays  
dumb. He says nothing.

TALL MAN

What's wrong with you, Chink? Don't  
you understand English?  
(mocking him)  
Ching Chi Cho Chow Mein.

Short man moves back a little towards the door at his back.

SHORT MAN

Hey, steal some scratchers... and  
some smokes.

Tall man doesn't look back but only rolls his eyes.

The clerk keeps a poker face.

Tall man points his gun at the register and motions.

TALL MAN

(in drawn out syllables)  
Open it up. Open it up.

The clerk puts down his hands and fiddles with the buttons.  
He raises his hands again and quickly repeats the process  
twice more.

Tall man looks back at short man and sees him carrying the  
cases of light beer.

TALL MAN

What are you doing, idiot? I'm not  
drinking that crap. Go get the good  
stuff. And get the 30 packs not the  
24!

Small man goes back to the reefer and places the cases back  
in their original spots, like he was stocking shelves. He  
closes the reefer and stands there looking as if he's  
browsing. A, hmm, what should I get look.

Tall man nervously paces while he looks at his partner in  
crime.

(CONTINUED)

TALL MAN

Come on, moron! Make up your mind  
and grab something!

Looking back at the clerk, tall man clearly loses patience. He reaches over to the register keys and starts pounding. It does no good.

The clerk looks under the counter almost too obviously but not directly in front of him. Over to the side. It's a distraction.

Tall man sees his eyes and fixes on the direction.

TALL MAN

What? You have a samurai sword...  
(he pronounces the w in sword)  
...under the counter? You gonna  
throw some ninja stars at me,  
chinaman?

Clerk's POV below counter: nothing there.

Return to scene.

Tall man slowly leans over the counter trying to keep one eye on the clerk and the other looking over the counter. Of course he isn't able to do that and for a split second takes his eyes off the clerk.

In an instant the clerk reaches under the counter directly in front and pulls out a gun of his own.

At the exact same time tall man and the clerk point at each other and pull their triggers. Simultaneously. BANG! BANG!

Both bullets hit tall man directly in the right shoulder and he falls to the ground. His gun was empty from the beginning but instinctively he keeps pulling the trigger, shooting way off aim.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Tall man hears the gunshots and springs up. He smacks his head against the door frame. He grabs his head with one hand while the other hand drops his bag of chips.

INT. GAS STATION STORE - CONTINUOUS

As tall man falls he careens into some shelves and items go flying. SHELVES CRASH to the floor beside him.

At this time, short man backs out the door and makes a run for it with the cases in his hands.

Tall man writhes in pain, holding his right shoulder with his left hand. His gun hand flails in the air.

The clerk runs around the counter and kicks the gun out of the would-be-robber's hand. No martial arts style points here. Just a normal kick.

The clerk runs out the door with his gun directly in front.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Short man runs awkwardly with the heavy beer cases.

SHORT MAN

Derrick is shot! Derrick is shot!  
Let's get out of here!

He gets close enough to the truck and tosses one case with his left arm. His hope is to throw it into the bed of the truck but it falls short and hits the side of the truck instead and plops to the ground. Closer to the truck now he tosses the other case. It goes over the bed and out of sight.

Fat man sees and hears him. He gets in fully and with the engine already running crams it into gear.

Short man leaps in the back of the truck bed.

SHORT MAN

Drive! Drive!

The truck has to pull in reverse to make a getaway and the clerk, now much closer, takes good aim at the tires. The TRUCK SCREECHES forward as TIRES SPIN and the clerk shoots three bullets.

After the truck has moved far enough away both cases of beer are seen laying on the pavement.

Short man is forced to the rear of the bed and hangs on for dear life.

(CONTINUED)

A front tire is hit and the truck swerves and flies into a ditch next to the road. It hits a concrete abutment and all forward motion stops immediately. The rear end of the truck rears up like a bucking bronco and short man launches into the air as if he's shot out of a cannon. He does a graceful midair somersault. The ensuing hard impact knocks him out cold.

The truck sits cattywompus in the ditch and out climbs fat man, stumbling as he tries to get up.

The clerk holds his fire and fat man runs down the empty dark road trying to keep his sweats on. His fat butt jiggles and so does the sides of his belly as he fades away.

The clerk pauses briefly and then runs back into the store.

INT. GAS STATION - STORE

He sees tall man still lying there in pain and runs around the counter. He picks up a phone and dials 911.

Beat.

The clerk speaks in perfect American English without any accent at all.

CLERK

There's been a robbery at Blaton's Gas Station on Cascadia Blvd. One man is shot. He's bleeding. I think another man is injured and another man ran away, east on Cascadia.

Pause.

CLERK

No, I'm fine.

Tall man hears the clerk and with his good arm angrily tips over multiple shelves. Gum, pastry cakes and various other items spill onto the ground. The SHELVES SMACK against each other.

Hearing the noise, the clerk puts the receiver down on the counter and runs around it. Faintly in the background, the dispatcher is heard asking if the clerk is okay.

He points the gun at tall man.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK  
Stop that! Stop that!

Tall man ends his tantrum and lies there looking up at the clerk.

The clerk goes over to the door and looks around. Assured that he's safe he walks back over to the man lying on his back.

The clerk bends over and turns the gun away a bit.

CLERK  
Dude, what's wrong? Did'ja forget  
to bring bullets to your little  
stick-em-up?

Tall man shakes with fear and pain.

CLERK  
By the way, I'm an American... and  
proud of it. I was born here.

He points his gun at the flag.

CLERK  
You're not American. You're just a  
racist loser.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Christine sits at the nurse's desk, on the phone.

CHRISTINE  
Good, they got what they deserved.  
Thanks for the call.

She hangs up and walks briskly over to Gary's room.

INT. GARY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christine knocks on the door frame.

CHRISTINE  
Are you decent?

Gary is sitting up, doing exercises with his arms.

GARY  
Sure, come on in.

She enters with a smile and sits on the end of his bed.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE

I got good news...

Gary's eyes get bigger and he stops exercising.

CHRISTINE

...I just got off the phone with the police and... they caught those jackasses that beat you up. The police said they tried to rob a gas station but things didn't quite go as planned.

Gary remains silent.

CHRISTINE

Well? Isn't that good news? The policeman said one guy was shot in the shoulder, another guy somehow got a broken arm and broken ribs and the other guy was found down the road from the gas station. Apparently he fell over or something and they found him with his pants down to his ankles.

She chuckles.

GARY

(without much emotion)

That is good news.

Christine pauses a second.

CHRISTINE

But not the good news you were hoping for.

GARY

No, really, I'm glad they got caught. It's just... I thought... I mean I was hoping it was about Bud. That he was found.

Christine puts her hand on his shoulder.

CHRISTINE

I know. I know. Let's not give up yet. You always have to have hope.

GARY

Yah, I suppose.

Christine stands up now.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE

Listen Gary... I'm concerned about you. What happens when you're released from here? What are you going to do? Where will you go? You have family somewhere?

He takes a deep breath.

GARY

You know Christine... I really have no idea what I'm gonna do. Fact is, I have no family and nowhere to go.

CHRISTINE

No wife or kids?

GARY

The ex passed away 9 years ago and we never had kids. Not sure if that was either the smartest thing I ever did or the dumbest.

Beat.

CHRISTINE

I talked to someone in Human Resources and she would like to chat with you sometime about your future. She may be able to get you a place to stay.

GARY

A place to stay? Like what? An old folks home?

CHRISTINE

Gary... it may just be that time.

Gary looks out the window.

GARY

No. Not yet. I still have a lot more states to go.

She looks at him puzzled.

GARY

I used to have a map of the United States on the back of my RV where I put stickers on the states I've visited. Well, the RV is gone but I can always get another map. Maybe

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
I'll be a hobo and ride the trains.  
Or I'll take up hitchhiking. I  
still have more states to go.

She gives him an understanding look and grabs an empty food tray.

CHRISTINE  
Give it some thought Gary. Please?

INT. GARY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Gary points a remote control up towards a TV and changes channels when he hears a ROAR of rain hitting against the hospital.

He puts down the remote and gets out of bed. He doesn't limp but holds his side.

He sees torrents of rain coming down and puts his other hand up against the glass.

Hold for a time.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DUSK

Bud stands under a picnic table. It's raining hard and it's very dark under thick cloudy skies. He's not drenched but he's wet from the droplets that seep through the cracks of the table. He stares off into the distance.

Hold for a time.

INT. GARY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Gary stands there for a minute then walks back to his bed and reaches for the remote.

He scans many stations before he comes upon a channel that reports the weather.

He listens.

WEATHER REPORTER.  
...high wind advisory for the  
coast. In the mountains the rain  
should taper off by midnight or so  
but then turn to snow as a second  
front moves in behind. It's a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WEATHER REPORTER. (cont'd)  
freight train out there, folks.  
Batten down the hatches because  
these systems are going to stick  
around for awhile.

Gary pushes a button on the remote and turns power off to the TV. He goes back to the window and watches the rivers of water in the parking lot rush downhill.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Gary lies in his bed staring off into the distance.

He moves his legs over to the side of the bed and plants his feet on the floor. He thinks for a few moments then gets up and walks over to the closet and puts on his clothes. They are tattered. Even though they have been washed they still have blood stains and burn marks visible.

He walks over to his door and peers out. There are people milling about and he sees Christine talking to a handsome gentleman in a suit. Gary can't hear the conversation and keeps ducking around the door as people go by. He notices the man in the suit has a briefcase and is holding it up to Christine and that they are joking around. It looks like they are flirting. For all he knows it could be her husband. As they're talking a hospital security guard walks up to them and joins in the conversation.

Gary pays little attention to them and looks for the right time to make his move.

Seeing that the coast is finally clear he sneaks out of his room and makes his way to the elevator. He pushes the button and waits for the elevator doors to open. It takes an inordinate amount of time.

The doors open and he gets in. He quickly hides near the buttons as the doors close.

INT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

The elevator opens on the first floor and Gary makes his way over to a phone. He pulls out his wallet and takes out his one credit card.

GARY  
(talking to the card)  
I swore I'd never use you... except  
for emergencies.

(CONTINUED)

He opens up the phone book and finds TAXI in the heading and chooses a taxi service. He makes a call.

GARY

Yes. I'd like a taxi to pick me up at the McNary Hospital. You do take credit cards, right?

EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

A taxi pulls up to the main entrance and before the driver even gets out Gary is at his door. It's wet all over and cold but not cold enough at their level for snow.

GARY

That took a long time. You busy today?

The driver eyes Gary's tattered clothes.

TAXI DRIVER

Sorry sir. Had to take someone home from church. I apologize for the wait. Where can I take you?

GARY

I need to go to Billson Campground.

TAXI DRIVER

Okay... That's quite a drive. That's not going to be cheap.

GARY

Yes, I imagine it will cost me a bundle but I need to get there anyway.

TAXI DRIVER

Okay hop in.

The driver is surprised to see Gary open the front passenger door.

GARY

Okay if I ride up front?

TAXI DRIVER

Uh, sure.

INT. TAXI - MORNING

The seasoned TAXI DRIVER is a black 40ish man who is not prone to talk much to his fares but only wants to do his job and get home. He's a giant of a man who looks quite uncomfortable in his seat.

As they ride down the road Gary tries to converse with the man but the driver mainly only listens.

GARY

I lost my dog at the campground and sure hope he's still there. I had a little mishap and we got separated. He's a good dog and I just know he's waiting for me to show up someday. He's very patient.

The driver barely gives a nod.

GARY

I haven't really had him that long but he's all I got. If I don't find him I sure hope he found someone else that will take care of him.

Not getting any response Gary gives up and keeps silent for the remainder of the long ride.

INT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

During the ride they move up in elevation and see the wet streets from the previous rain turn to slush on the road. Off the road it is snow covered and beautifully white.

As they pull in to the campground entrance area they see the gate is closed and locked. They park at the gate. The snow is six inches deep but the roads are relatively clear.

GARY

Well, this is the right place. I'm gonna walk around and see if I can find him. Guess you can just wait here. Is that okay?

TAXI DRIVER

Yah, I can wait. I get paid for waiting too, you know.

The driver shuts down the engine and the meter keeps running.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

I know.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

Gary gets out of the taxi and is somewhat bent over to one side. He holds his hand against his side as he walks around the gate and continues off into the distance. Steam puffs from his mouth.

After a brief walk he comes up on the very campsite where he last saw Bud and where his RV used to be. He sees snow blanketing partially blackened trees and calls out:

GARY

Bud! Bud! Where are you Bud?

He spends quite awhile around his camp site looking everywhere and calling out but then moves on to other campsites.

GARY

(cupping his hands over his mouth)

Bud! Budddd!!! Buddy!!! It's me!  
Don't be afraid! It's me! Come on  
Bud! I won't hurt you! Come here!

He searches the whole campground taking quite a long time but makes his way back to his original site.

INT. TAXI - AFTERNOON

The taxi driver pays little attention at first but after seeing his fare in various areas trudging through the snow and calling out to his dog he pays more attention.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - AFTERNOON

Gary's voice is now hoarse but he continues to call out. Steam comes out of his mouth at every call.

Reality sinks in and Gary wipes away snow on a picnic table bench and sits down. He drops his head.

Hold for a bit.

TAXI DRIVER

(very loudly but from a distance)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TAXI DRIVER (cont'd)  
Buddy!!! Buddy!!! Can you hear us  
Buddy?!?!

Gary turns to see the driver walking towards him.

TAXI DRIVER  
Sounds like your voice is going.  
Luckily the good Lord gifted me  
with a deep loud voice.

Gary rises to his feet with renewed vigor.

They yell at the same time.

GARY  
Here Buddy! Come on boy!

TAXI DRIVER  
Bud!!! It's okay Bud!!! I'm your  
friend too!!! Come here boy!!!

After a few minutes and no results they quiet down.

TAXI DRIVER  
Well. We tried. Guess he's just not  
here. He would have heard us if he  
was. Sorry sir. We should probably  
get going.

Gary gives it one last long look around.

GARY  
Suppose you're right. He's just not  
here. I do appreciate your help  
though.

TAXI DRIVER  
Sure. Just wish we could have found  
him.

They get back to the taxi but Gary opens the rear passenger door and gets in. He's heartbroken.

INT/EXT. TAXI - LATE AFTERNOON

The driver sees him in his rear view mirror from time to time as they drive down the road but neither of them say anything. They've gone lower in elevation and the road is back to slush.

After quite a long drive the driver speaks:

(CONTINUED)

TAXI DRIVER

Mind if I pull into this store and get some cigarettes? I'll turn off the meter.

Gary half-heartedly nods.

The driver exits the taxi while leaving the motor running.

He's almost to the door of the convenience store but hesitates.

TAXI DRIVER

(speaking loudly over the noise of the engine)

Can I get you anything?

GARY

(muffled)

Umm, yah. I'm kinda thirsty. How about something to drink.

The driver doesn't hear him clearly and holds his hand up to his ear.

Gary rolls down the window and sticks his head out.

GARY

(loudly)

How about a root beer. Get me a root beer?

The driver acknowledges and enters the store. At nearly the same time, and out of Gary's view, a dog peeks his head around the corner of the store. It's Bud. Bud takes a couple steps forward.

Gary rolls his window back up and sits with his head down.

Bud is confused. His head tilts from left to right then right to left as he ponders the situation. Is this my master? He doesn't look like him but he sounds like him. He looks different. His hair is all gone.

Bud calls with a timid bark.

No reaction from the man in the car.

He barks again, slightly louder.

Still nothing. He stares.

The taxi driver exits the store carrying a bag and gets into the taxi.

(CONTINUED)

TAXI DRIVER

You did say root beer, right?

The driver hands him the root beer over the seat.

GARY

Thanks.

The driver starts the meter again and puts it into gear and reverses the taxi.

Bud is seen more clearly out the side window but Gary doesn't notice him. Bud just stands there. A trash can is spilled over and some food is on the ground next to it.

It's clearly Bud. His leash is still on and he's trailing the rope behind.

The driver puts it in forward and is a split second from stepping on the gas.

BUD BARKS VERY LOUDLY one more time. One last attempt to get the back seat passenger's attention.

Gary looks over and freezes.

GARY

Stop! Wait! That's my dog!

The driver steps hard on the brake.

Gary exits the taxi and closes the door quickly.

GARY

Buddy!!!

At his master's call the dog reacts instantly. It IS him! It IS my master!

Bud runs to Gary and leaps into his arms.

Gary winces and holds his side with his empty left hand but doesn't care about the pain. He has his dog back.

GARY

Oh Bud! It's you! I can't believe it! I can't believe it!

Bud is nearly frantic with joy and licks Gary's face all over. Gary moves his head around but doesn't call for Bud to stop. He loves it.

Gary laughs like we've never seen him laugh.

(CONTINUED)

The driver puts it in park and steps out of the vehicle.

TAXI DRIVER

Wow. So that's Bud. How great is that? Thank the Lord, you found him.

GARY

Nah. He keeps finding me.

INT/EXT. TAXI - HOSPITAL

Gary sits in the front seat with Bud on his lap as they pull up to the hospital entrance. No snow is visible, only wetness. The sun is bright but there are patches of clouds.

Gary exits the taxi and places Bud on the ground. Bud nearly trips him, not wanting ever to leave his master's side. They walk around the taxi to the driver's door.

GARY

Thanks you so much sir for taking me out there and for helping me find my dog. If you hadn't gone to that store I never would have found him. I'm eternally grateful.

TAXI DRIVER

Just glad to be of help. I'm glad it all turned out so well.

GARY

Thanks again. How much do I owe you. I bet it's not gonna be cheap but it was worth every penny.

TAXI DRIVER

Sir. I'm embarrassed to say how much. How about this? You owe me nothing.

GARY

Huh? No. I can't do that. It's no problem, really.

Gary holds the credit card out to the driver.

The driver puts his hand up.

TAXI DRIVER

No sir. This one's on me. I think you deserve it. You gave me a great story to tell my kids.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Are you sure? Really, it's okay.

TAXI DRIVER

That's all right. Have a nice day,  
my friend.

The taxi pulls away and Gary stands there and waves in awe of the compassion of the man he met not too long ago.

Bud is active at Gary's feet and keeps his eyes focused on his master.

GARY

Come on Bud. I got some people I  
want you to meet.

He picks up the dog and walks up the steps to the entrance.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Gary enters the hospital carrying Bud and gets strange looks from a few people that are just milling around in the lobby.

He carries his prize possession like it's his firstborn and pays no attention to anyone else.

A FEMALE RECEPTIONIST in her thirties sees him and reacts:

RECEPTIONIST

Sir! Sir! You can't bring a dog in  
here. This is a hospital. Please  
take the dog out immediately.

Gary keeps on walking to the elevator.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm going to call security. Sir!

She picks up a phone and is seen speaking into it.

Gary gets into an elevator with Bud and an old man already inside just looks at him surprised.

Now on the third floor they exit the elevator. He sees Christine sitting at her desk.

GARY

Christine. Look what I have.

She looks up in disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE

Gary! What are you doing? You know we can't have animals here. I'm glad you found him but this is not the place to bring a dog.

GARY

I know. I know. I'm just so overjoyed I had to tell someone.

She gets up and walks over to Gary and the dog that is still in Gary's arms. She doesn't touch the dog.

CHRISTINE

So this is Bud, eh? Well, I'm happy for you but you gave us quite a scare. Where did you go? Security was all over this hospital looking for you.

GARY

I went to the campsite where I last saw him but...

In mid-sentence TWO SECURITY GUARDS come out of a second elevator. Other people gather around.

GUARD 1

Why did you bring an animal into a hospital? What were you thinking? Come on, he's got to go out now. Don't put him on the floor. Just carry him out.

GARY

All right. I apologize. I guess I just got overly excited. I'll take him out right now, just don't arrest me or anything.

GUARD 2

We're not going to arrest you, sir but that wasn't the smartest thing to do. He's got germs that shouldn't be in here. There are sick people here. Let's not make them sicker.

GARY

Okay. Okay. Again, I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE

Come on Gary. I'll walk out with you. Now tell me how you found him?

Gary, Bud, Christine and the two guards all get into an elevator together as we hear Gary giving her the story.

INT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

They all exit on the first floor and Gary begins to walk toward the main entrance.

GUARD 1

Sir. Let's go this way.

Gary turns around as the Guard places his hand on Gary's shoulder to escort him.

GARY

Why this way? The exit is right there.

CHRISTINE

It's okay Gary. They know what they're doing. Trust me. Let's go out the back of the hospital.

GARY

Okay. I don't understand but if you say so.

They all continue to walk the long walk to the back of the hospital as people watch and some follow. A few are seen whispering to each other.

Christine notices blood on Gary's shirt that looks fresh. Without Gary noticing she lifts his shirt.

CHRISTINE

Gary. You're bleeding. Look, your stitches have come apart. What have you been doing?

GARY

Oh, it's nothing. Bud jumped into my arms when I found him and I guess that's when that happened.

CHRISTINE

When we're done here we gotta get you back in and get you stitched up again.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Done here? What do you mean? Where are we going anyway? Is someone going to take Bud away from me? Is that it? Is there someone from animal control waiting outside? Please don't take my dog from me. Please.

GUARD 2

No sir. That's not it at all. Just follow us.

Gary looks at Christine for reassurance.

CHRISTINE

No, Gary. Nobody's gonna to take Bud away from you. It's gonna to be all right. You'll see.

They all come up on double doors with an exit sign above and one of the guards opens the doors to the bright light outside.

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATE AFTERNOON

Gary is instantly taken aback as there are reporters and cameras and boom mikes shoved in his face. A couple dozen people are also gathered about.

REPORTER 1

Mr. Clover. Security told us you found your dog. So this is Bud. Hi Bud.

Bud puts out a paw and the reporter shakes it and laughs.

Multiple people gather together to pet the dog and to congratulate Gary. Many questions are thrown out at Gary at the same time and Gary is at a loss for words.

REPORTER 2

Gary, may I call you Gary? This is your lucky day. Have we got a surprise for you.

Gary only sees throngs of people gathered around him. It's quite an experience and he clutches Bud like a security blanket.

(CONTINUED)

REPORTER 2

Everyone - please make a hole.

They part and Gary sees a brand new RV with a large purple ribbon on it. He doesn't know what to think. It's an RV that's just right for Gary and Bud. Not too long but not too short. Perfect.

CHRISTINE

Gary, this is yours.

GARY

Wha?

REPORTER 1

She's right, sir. Come take a look at it. It's brand new.

Gary looks at Christine again.

CHRISTINE

Go on Gary. You're not dreaming. You and Bud are back on the road. What do you think?

Gary's mouth hangs open as he slowly walks towards the shiny new RV.

A MAN IN A SUIT dangles the keys out in front of him. Gary is hesitant to reach out for them but does.

MAN IN SUIT

Congratulations! I'm from Gresham RV and I'd like to show you around if that's okay with you. You're gonna love this RV. It's a beauty.

Gary is still stunned.

GARY

Who? Why?

REPORTER 2

You're famous. Your story went viral on the net and people and organizations got together and pooled enough money together to buy you this. It's yours. All paid for.

GARY

I don't know what to say. I... I... mean thank you. Wow. This is incredible.

(CONTINUED)

Gary finally puts Bud down but holds onto the leash that has a tattered end.

He walks with the dog as they tour the RV on the outside. He's so amazed that he barely hears the man in the suit explaining the details of the RV.

They make one quick round about the RV and are now back at the side with the ribbon.

CHRISTINE

There's more Gary.

Another man in a suit hands her a briefcase and an envelope.

CHRISTINE

Do you remember the Chapmans from Texas?

GARY

Uh... Sure.

She hands him the envelope.

He opens it and sees a Chapman family portrait with a note that reads: GET WELL, MY FRIEND. COME DOWN AND SEE US SOMETIME.

CHRISTINE

He had a lot to do with this and wanted to give you some spending cash as well. He says this thing will eat up a lot of gas, you know, and you have to promise to buy insurance and suntan lotion and that sort of thing...

She opens the briefcase. There are gobs of cash and many envelopes inside. Some fall over the side.

Bystanders pick up the envelopes and put them back in the briefcase.

CHRISTINE

...so here's something to get you on your way. That's 25,000 dollars! Also, there are letters from other folks that wrote to wish you well. I heard it all started off with a family you met once and they initially wanted to get you a puppy, but it picked up steam and morphed into an RV instead. They

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE (cont'd)  
figured you'd want to pick out a  
dog for yourself but, of course,  
now that you found Bud that's no  
longer necessary.

People pat him on the back and congratulate him even more.

GARY  
(nearly in tears)  
This is so great. This is so great.  
I feel like I'm dreaming. Thank you  
all for everything. I can't thank  
you enough. I really don't deserve  
this.

CHRISTINE  
I think you do. It's your time,  
Gary. It's your time.

INT./EXT. LARGE STORE - DAY

Gary enters the driver's area of the RV from outside and places a bag between the seats. He now sits at the wheel of his beautiful RV and has a smile on his face. He's clean shaven and has a fresh haircut. He's dressed in new clothes and looks like a different man. Bud is also clean and has a healthy shiny coat.

Bud is sitting on the passenger seat and is excited.

Gary reaches down and shows Bud what's in the bag.

GARY  
Okay, my friend. I picked up some  
new toys. I got tennis balls. I got  
Frisbees. I got chew toys. I got  
premium dog food. You name it.  
Let's go Bud. We're heading to  
Texas to meet up with some friends.  
And to many more states after that  
to meet up with even more friends.

He starts up the engine and it purrs. He pulls out onto the road and nearby is an on-ramp to a highway. He takes it.

Now on the freeway he reaches over and pats his companion on the head.

GARY  
Guess what? Remember Kenny and his  
pretty wife, Dierdre? The one's  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)  
that offered to buy you? I just  
talked to them and they said they  
got a new dog. A Border Collie. And  
get this... it's a girl. Woooo.  
Maybe you'll get a girlfriend.

Gary turns his attention back onto the road and smiles.

GARY  
I wonder if Dierdre's got a sister.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

We now see the RV from above on a nearly empty highway. The mountain scenery is spectacular. As the RV pulls away we see on the passenger side: Bud's head sticking outside the rolled down window. From behind, his ears flap in the wind.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**