

Beat It

by

Jeff DeGrand

&

Jenna Ryan

EXT. FREEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Cars race down the busy freeway. In between the blur of vehicles, we see a roadside figure thumbing a ride. It's Nora, her shirt tied like Daisy Duke.

FROM A DITCH

Jonas and Freddie poke their heads up.

NORA

Get down! No one's gonna pull over
if they think I'm a package deal.

Jonas scowls. Freddie ducks back down.

FREDDIE

She's right, Jonas.

Jonas obliges, but peeks his head up enough to keep his eyes fixed on Nora -- a two-second kiss being the closest he's ever come to having a girlfriend.

SIDE OF THE ROAD

An old pick-up truck screeches to a halt a few yards in front of Nora.

INT. TRUCK

A REDNECK thinking it's his lucky day. He pulls out a black pocket comb, quickly runs it through his greasy hair.

Nora leans in the passenger side window.

NORA

What is this -- a sixty-four, sixty-five Ford S-series?

REDNECK

It's a seventy-six. F-series.
Where you headin'?

NORA

Just up the interstate a bit. Can
you give me a ride?

FROM THE DITCH

Jonas tries to get a better look. The driver notices something in his rearview mirror.

REDNECK

Just you?

Nora glances at Jonas -- could he *be* more conspicuous?

NORA

Yep, just me.

REDNECK

Well then, pretty lady. Hop on in.

Nora gulps. Thinking fast--

NORA

You know, I've always wanted to drive an S-series. Whatdya say?

REDNECK

It's an F-series.

(then)

Oh, I don't know. She's tricky. The clutch's shot. You drive a stick?

Not for this plan--

NORA

(pulling out her cell
phone)

How 'bout just a picture then. Me behind the wheel.

She holds out her phone. A final killer smile and--

NORA

Then we're off.

EXT. TRUCK

Redneck aims the phone at his own truck, kinda tickled the photo opp was requested.

REDNECK

One, two...

NORA

Can you move back a little? So you can get the whole truck in.

Redneck shrugs -- good idea.

REDNECK

Okay. Say cheese-

Nora guns it, spraying dust up around Redneck. Freddie runs along the road, then hops in the back.

Redneck kicks at the gravel. Then starts after his truck. Yelling after her:

REDNECK

Oh yeah?! Well, I got your phone!

Jonas sprints past Redneck -- snagging the phone from his hand -- then jumps into the bed of the truck.

INT. TRUCK

Nora drives wildly, her eyes searching the traffic.

Jonas opens the back window, tosses Nora her phone, then climbs inside the cab head-first.

JONAS

Where'd you learn to do that?

NORA

Dukes of Hazzard.

BACK OF THE TRUCK

Freddie stands up and leans against the cab. He opens up his arms and--

FREDDIE

Woooo! I'm the king of the world!

Nora swerves into another lane, knocking Freddie on his posterior.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

JONAS

Careful. We'll need him.

NORA

You wanna drive?

JONAS

(sotto)

I can't drive a stick.

NORA

(taunting him)

What's that Jonas -- I couldn't hear you?

JONAS

I said, I can't drive a stick, you wonderfully awesome girl I have no business hanging out with.

NORA

That's better.

BACK OF THE TRUCK

Freddie peeks up over the side of the truck. He catches the eye of a PASSENGER riding in a BLACK SUV. Freddie panics. The passenger does a double-take.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

She looks in the rearview, sees Freddie looking like a deer caught in headlights. Nora notices the SUV -- and the military truck behind it.

NORA

They're right beside us.

The Passenger stares in their direction. He looks puzzled, then looks away and shakes his head. He looks back at them, sees: Jonas in a MACK TRUCK hat, a wad of chew in his mouth, and -- driving now??

Jonas presses the brakes to slide behind the motorcade -- a little too suddenly, smashing Freddie against the rear cab window.

EXT. AIRFIELD - MAGIC HOUR

Jonas slows to a stop a hundred yards from the Black SUV, parked ahead.

NORA

What do you think they're doing here?

FREDDIE

My guess is they're up to no good.

JONAS

Probably gonna take off right after the exMINGE to somewhere warm and tropical. And completely off the radar.

From the truck, we see Cable and his posse enter a hangar; Walters and Ava, prodded by two Henchmen bringing up the back, enter last. Jonas opens his door.

JONAS

Come on.

FREDDIE

Come on? We can't just walk in there like we own the place.

JONAS

You're right. There's got to be another way in.

EXT. HANGAR

The enormous hangar looms before Jonas, Nora and Freddie. It's ominously lit by a purple and orange sky.

The tranquility of the setting sun is eclipsed by a gagged scream inside -- Walters. Freddie winces, then notices Jonas and Nora already climbing up a service ladder that leads to the hangar's roof.

FREDDIE

(making the sign of the cross)

William Shatner, Boba Fett, Stephen Hawking.

Then climbs the ladder.

INT. HANGAR

Raul ties Ava to a chair. From her reactions, we can tell his knots are on the overly conservative side.

Next to her, Walters -- gagged and already tied up. Blood drips out of a badly broken nose.

IN THE RAFTERS

Jonas, Nora and Freddie peer down at the scene below.

FREDDIE

That had to hurt.

JONAS

Imagine what they'll do if they find out we're up here.

NORA

What do we do?

Jonas puts a finger to his lips. Down below:

RAUL
You two make me sick.

Cable looks over at Walters and Ava. Agrees.

RAUL
Cable, are you thinking it's kind
of... crowded in here?

Raul points his gun at Ava. She squirms.

CATWALK

Nora covers her eyes. Freddie covers his ears. Jonas --
searches the treacherous intersecting beams... for anything.

He stumbles on an old wench system. It unwinds a bit.

BELOW

RAUL
What was that?

Cable nods and two of his Henchmen dart up separate steel
staircases. Frustrated--

CABLE
Go!

CATWALK

Jonas, Nora and Freddie have regrouped.

FREDDIE
How long till they figure out we're
up here?

JONAS
Two minutes. Tops. We gotta
get... down there.

The gang looks below. Walters spots them, can't believe it.
Shakes his head no.

JONAS
But first we gotta untie Walters
and Ava.

Cable has his gun drawn on said tied-up hostages.

FREDDIE
How are we gonna do that?

JONAS
Have you seen Mission Impossible?

FREDDIE
Only like a million times.

Jonas looks at the wench. Freddie follows his sight line.

FREDDIE
But I wouldn't really consider
myself a fan.

CUT TO:

IN THE RAFTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Freddie hangs high above Walters, Ava and Cable attached to --
ironically -- a cable.

FREDDIE
(hushed)
What's gonna make Cable take his
eyes off of Walters and Ava?

NORA
That's gonna.

Nora points to a FIRE ALARM at the bottom of the staircase.

BELOW

Cable presses a handgun to Walters' temple.

CABLE
Looks like third time's a charm, eh
Walters?

A dull, metallic CLANK from across the warehouse. A loading
door opens -- perfectly framing a dozen SHADOWY FIGURES.

One figure steps forward. Impeccably tailored black
overcoat. Italian shoes. Chinese descent. MING XI, 30's.

MING
Am I interrupting something, Mister
Reign?

Beat. Cable slowly retracts the gun from Walters' head.

CABLE
(to Walters, quietly)
I'll take care of you later.

Cable tucks the Glock into his shoulder holster, calmly straightens his suit coat. He faces Ming.

CABLE

I thought we agreed on midnight.

MING

Never give opponents the luxury of time.

CABLE

I prefer the term business partners.

The Figures behind Ming step into the dim warehouse light. All wearing black, all armed.

MING

You are a Federal Agent. We each have something the other wants. Until those elements have changed, we remain opponents.

IN THE RAFTERS

The cable slips a bit and Freddie lunges down three feet. Fear-stricken, Freddie looks up at Jonas.

CATWALK

Jonas tightens his grip on the wench reel.

JONAS

(sotto)

Sorry.

Jonas carefully lowers Freddie.

HANGAR FLOOR

Cable and Ming square off at the center of the warehouse, their respective henchmen close in tow. If stakes weren't so high, this could be the video for *Beat It*.

CABLE

I trust you brought the payment.

Off Ming's nod, one of his ASSOCIATES produces a TITANIUM BRIEFCASE.

CABLE

Where's the rest of it?

Ming smiles coyly, motions to his associates. They step forward with five more identical briefcases.

MING

And the schematics?

Cable extracts the data prism from his front suit coat pocket as casual as you would a stick of gum. Ming grins, satisfied.

CABLE

Set the briefcases on the ground.

Ming studies Cable's countenance, a few seconds longer than any comfortable measure.

MING

If this is a set up...

CABLE

The building's been secured. No one knows we're here.

Cable's eye contact remains fixed. Ming motions and his associate places the briefcases on the smooth cement floor.

MING

Now the schematics.

STAIRCASE

Nora tiptoes down a steel-grate staircase. She hugs the shadows of the wall. She spots the fire alarm one floor below -- two of Cable's armed HENCHMEN stand in the way.

CATWALK

Jonas checks Nora's progress -- then stops lowering Freddie.

HANGAR FLOOR

Cable studies the data prism in his hand. He drops to one knee -- eyes on Ming the whole time -- then sets the prism on the ground.

CABLE

Call your men off.

MING

You as well.

Both men signal their respective entourages to back off.

STAIRCASE

Nora gingerly makes her way down the stairs. They're old. And unstable.

She slips, all eyes turn her way.

CATWALK

Seeing Nora in trouble, Jonas instinctively lets go of the reel -- sending Freddie plummeting toward the ground.

FREDDIE

Agggghhhh!

The cement floor barrels toward Freddie until-

-the cable goes taut. Freddie dangles like a pinata just above Ming and Cable.

HANGAR FLOOR

The two men look up at their newest intruder. Ming looks at Cable, his rage boiling over.

MING

(yells, in Chinese)

Feds! It's a bust!

GUNFIRE lights up the hangar as Ming's army unloads their weapons on Cable's men. Both sides scurry for cover behind oil drums, crates, and stacked lead pipes.

Cable and Ming also dive for cover -- leaving the data prism and briefcase on the floor in no man's land.

STAIRCASE

Jonas races down the stairs. A Chinese agent lays at the bottom, exchanging fire with Cable's men.

Jonas spots an old fire extinguisher mounted to the wall. He rips it from its holder, sneaks up behind the masked agent, then CLUNKS him over the head. Out cold.

HANGAR FLOOR

Nora crawls across the floor behind Cable's men -- too busy firing their weapons to notice. Nora reaches Walters and Ava, starts untying them. Meanwhile...

Freddie dangles in the middle of no man's land as bullets whiz by his head.

FREDDIE

Jonas! Get me the hell out of here!

A MASKED FIGURE aims his weapon at Freddie-

FREDDIE

No!

-then tilts the gun barrel slightly higher.

RATATATATATATAT

The bullets sever the cable, sending Freddie to the floor. The figure removes his mask -- it's Jonas.

JONAS

Get over here!

Freddie collects himself briefly then races to Jonas through an obstacle course of lead pipes. Freddie huddles with Jonas behind a stack of crates.

FREDDIE

Obviously the expression bro-before-hos is not a principle you subscribe to.

STACKED OIL DRUMS

Cable fires a handgun at his opponents while intermittently glancing at the data prism and briefcase laying a mere 10 feet from him.

Cable spots two of his men behind a crate to his right.

CABLE

Edmunds.

EDMUNDS glances toward Cable who motions him over. He crawls over to Cable in a low tuck position.

CABLE

I'm going for the briefcase. I need cover.

EDMUNDS

One on one cover formation-

Cable shoves Edmunds into no man's land. Edmunds becomes the lightning rod for all enemy bullets. Cable snags the briefcase and data prism, then sprints to the opposite side of the warehouse.

He catches his breath behind a beam. He scans his surroundings. Amazingly, an exit door directly behind him.

Cable stuffs the data prism into his coat pocket, sneaks over to the door. Just as opens it a crack-

A gun barrel presses to his head.

CABLE

(flustered broken Chinese)

The briefcase. Take it. Just take it!

JONAS (O.S.)

I don't want the briefcase. I want the prism.

Cable smiles. He knows the voice. And knows it isn't capable of killing another human being. Not even a bad one.

He turns to face his adolescent aggressor.

JONAS

Don't move. I'll shoot.

CABLE

I see you survived the blast. Impressive.

JONAS

Give me the data prism.

FREDDIE

You heard him. Fork it over.

CABLE

I would, but it might mean something you care very dearly about would get hurt.

Cable's eyes motion up toward the catwalk. Jonas stays fixed on Cable. He's not gonna fall for this one.

JONAS

Freddie. What's up there?

Freddie spots one of Cable's SNIPERS with his assault rifle trained downward. He traces the trajectory of the gun barrel... to a RED LASER DOT on the back of Nora's head.

FREDDIE

You don't wanna know.

Must be Nora.

CABLE

Your choice, Jonas. You can save one life or mankind's.

Jonas contemplates the dilemma. Then lowers his weapon.

CABLE

Wise decision.

Cable motions off the sniper, then ducks out the door with a smirk.