

property of

THE EXCHANGE

A Really Short Film

Screenplay by

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"THE EXCHANGE"

CUT FROM BLACK:

INT. STORE OFFICE — DAY

The MANAGER, a gruff middle-aged fat guy in a short-sleeved shirt and shrunken tie, studies a RESUME like a doctor diagnosing an x-ray. The office has a stifling blue-collar feel, like a closet with a desk.

MANAGER

Mmm hmm.

Across from him, DOUG, a bony college-age guy with long hair tied back and heavy stoner eyelids, looks on nervously. He is dressed similar to the Manager, but his threads exhibit more of a thrift-shop, reserved-for-special-occasions flair.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Three months at Walgreens, huh?

DOUG

(nodding)

Deli specialist.

The manager eyes him suspiciously.

INT. COFFEEHOUSE — DAY

CUSTOMERS talk amongst themselves in line while the COUNTER-JOCKEY takes their orders. A CUTE WAITRESS brings a tray of tall CUPS out to a table of THIRTYSOMETHING WOMEN in front.

Across the room, SLOW WIDE PUSH toward TRAVIS, an average-looking college guy, poring over a stack of BOOKS and making notes. As we near him, two HOT GIRLS cross frame behind him, and we suddenly change direction to follow them from behind.

TRAVIS (O.C.)

Hey!

SWISH-PAN back to Travis.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
(into camera)
So what brings you out in the
daylight hours?

Facing him is SID, a neo-hippie in camouflage shorts,
skull cap, and long goatee. He's in a daze.

SID
Class, man.

Travis throws him a surprised look.

SID (CONT'D)
Just got out of my Horticulture
lab. We're growing this crazy
shit--

TRAVIS
Is that part of the Pharmacology
program?

SID
Farmer who?

Travis starts to make a gesture as if to explain,
then suddenly:

TRAVIS
Shit, what time you got?

SID
What am I, Big Ben?

Sid grabs a passing CUSTOMER, startling him.

SID (CONT'D)
(to Customer)
What's the time, yo?

CUSTOMER
(looking at watch)
Umm, 1:55.

SID
(to Travis)
1:55.

TRAVIS
Dammit! I gotta jam. Civil
Law.

He jumps up and slams his books and NOTEPAD into a BACKPACK, which he slings over his shoulder. This knocks his CUP off the table, and soils the time-telling Customer from the waist down. The Customer screams, grabs his crotch, and waddles away awkwardly.

Travis winces in sympathy. He looks back in the direction of the Cute Waitress, patting down all of his pockets looking for something. Finding nothing, he grabs a PEN and writes on a NAPKIN:

CU INSERT: "I.O.U. tip. 555-2337 Travis."

He looks up and smiles in her direction, but she's busy, only managing a quick wave. He bolts out of frame.

Sid stands there alone, laughing vacantly as he's fixated on the coffee-soaked Customer in the distance explaining his situation to another WAITRESS. Sid looks down and wipes up some of the spilled coffee on the table with The Napkin.

INT. STORE OFFICE — CONTINUOUS

Doug has loosened his tie and leans forward in his chair. The Manager eyeballs him over his GLASSES, which rest on the end of his nose. He SNORTS.

MANAGER

And what about this two-year gap
between Krispy Kreme and...
(checking the resume)
Community Service?

Doug shifts in his chair, struggling. He overemphasizes with hand gestures.

DOUG

Um, a lot of "odd" jobs you
could say. Laundry... uh, meal
preparation... Oh! And I was
also like the librarian for the
other inma— uh, the others in
my um... school.

MANAGER

(big smile)
A bookworm, eh? Well, I don't
read a lot, myself. The other
grocery ads maybe... and the
occasional Penthouse letters.

They share a knowing grin. A beat.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Ya know, I got a good feeling about you, kid. Tell you what, you can start on Wednesday, how bout that?

Doug gets up, excited, and reaches across the desk to shake the Manager's hand vigorously.

DOUG

Great, fantastic! Thank you so much! I wanna do a really good job for you.

MANAGER

I'm sure you will, Doug. Now you'll be sacking and pushing carts to start out, but after a few weeks I think we can get you into a stocking position.

Doug snaps both fingers and points at him like a cheesy game-show host.

DOUG

(in character)

"Paper or plastic?"

They both laugh, and the Manager trails off as he reaches into a desk drawer.

MANAGER

Now there's just the matter of a few formalities, and we'll get you going.

DOUG

(still smiling)

Oh? And what are those?

MANAGER

(handing him some PAPERWORK)

I need you to fill out this W-4, look over these two pamphlets...

DRAMATIC MUSIC FADES UP.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

... and this is for the clinic to fill out on Monday.

DOUG

Clinic?

MANAGER

(nonchalant)

Just a standard drug screen.

HITCHCOCK IN on Doug as the smile fades and he tries to hide his shock. He swallows.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - A SHORT TIME LATER

LOUD ROCK MUSIC blares as a shitty old CAR pulls into frame, going way fast. Suddenly, it brakes with SQUEALING TIRES as a STRAY DOG trots out of the way just in time to avoid being hit.

INT. SHITTY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Doug's eyes follow the dog. He sweats, gripping the steering wheel tightly and exhaling. He checks the rearview mirror. His face twitches, and his eyes dart around in desperation, like a tweaking spaz. He blinks, then his eyes go wide in an inspired moment of clarity.

CLOSE on the gas pedal as his sandaled foot floors it.

REVERSE ANGLE through the windshield as he smiles and PEELS OUT of frame.

WHITE FLASH TO:

INT. SMOKY ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

SOFT-FOCUS BLACK AND WHITE, SLOW SHUTTER with REVERB: The dimly-lit room resembles an opium den as a group of FIVE COLLEGE KIDS sit in a loose circle having a weed-smoking session. Doug is separating stems and seeds on top of an ALBUM COVER. A GOTH GIRL's face springs up from her lap with a long SNIFF as her eyes glaze over.

Sid stares intensely at the dancing flame from a LIGHTER. Dopey laughing and merriment abound. Doug offers a rolled JOINT across frame as we PAN to reveal Travis strumming an ACOUSTIC GUITAR outside the circle.

DOUG
A little Vitamin J?

TRAVIS
(waving it off)
Nah.

Doug produces a BONG and offers it instead.

DOUG
(holding in a hit,
with SUBTITLE)
Play the bassoon for us?
Travis motions with his BEER BOTTLE.

TRAVIS
Can't mix 'em. Fucking makes me
puke. You go ahead.

GOTH GIRL
(to Doug)
I wish my roommate was half as
cool as Travis. Can hang out
for a setting, but ya don't
gotta worry about him bogarting
your shit, ya know?

She gives Travis a weary smile. Doug makes the
headbanger horns with his fingers in salute as he
breathes in bong smoke. Travis takes a big swig off
his bottle.

WHITE FLASH TO:

EXT. CAMPUS BUILDING – DAY (NORMAL)

STUDENTS exit the building, books in hand, and
scatter off to other things. Travis comes out behind
them and after a few steps, stops as he looks up and
sees:

WIDE on Doug, standing under a tree with one leg
resting against it, drinking from a BOTTLE OF
CRANBERRY JUICE, and looking back at him, waiting.
Travis cocks his head, smiles, and heads over.

DOUG
S'up, fiend?

TRAVIS

I heard you might be coming back
into town.

(beat)

How was it?

DOUG

Cake. I'm settin' up shop here
again for awhile.

(off Travis' books)

School kickin' your ass?

TRAVIS

Had a presentation.

Doug takes a drink and shakes his head.

DOUG

Who'd a thought? Travis gonna
be a lawyer.

Doug puts his arm around him and leads him out of
frame.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Well, counselor, I've got your
first case...

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. DORM ROOM — EVENING

CLOSE on a large GLASS OF WATER as Travis sets it
down on the nightstand next to him. He glances at
the TV, sitting up on a bed while he doodles on a
PAD.

INSERT: It's a crude sketch in the corner of the
page featuring a stick man bending over a stick
woman.

With a satisfied giggle, he flips all the pages as
the couple animates into hot doggie-style action.
The PHONE RINGS. He reaches across and answers.

TRAVIS
Chel-low... Yeah, this is.
(pause, eyes
searching)
Oh yeah, yeah, from the coffee
shop! Sure.

He picks up the base of the phone and crosses frame
with it.

TRAVIS
So. How's... stuff?

EXT. DORM BUILDING – EVENING

Doug stands out front in a trenchcoat. He looks
around a little shifty, and takes a few drags off his
SMOKE.

INT. DORM HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

Travis strolls down the hall passing other doors,
scratching himself through his boxer shorts. He
enters:

A PUBLIC RESTROOM

Travis looks at his face in the mirror under the
unflattering fluorescent light, splashes it with
water, and dries off with a PAPER TOWEL. Then he
lowers his head, checking under all of the stalls,
and enters one in the middle. The door closes.

EXT. DORM BUILDING – CONTINUOUS

Doug glances at his WATCH, throws down his cigarette,
looks around, and enters the building.

INT. PUBLIC RESTROOM – CONTINUOUS

OVERHEAD SHOT of Travis preparing himself to whiz. He
WHISTLES while he works.

LOW ANGLE SLO-MO: The restroom door opens and we see
combat boots walking toward the camera, with the
bottom edges of a black trenchcoat flailing. The
feet stop, spin 90 degrees and exit frame as we hear
a stall DOOR OPEN, then SHUT.

OVERHEAD of Travis: he pisses, but the sound is not your usual porcelain fare. It's odd, like a SMALL CONTAINER FILLING UP.

LOW ANGLE: A PLASTIC CUP, filled, lowers into frame and is set on the floor. The side of Travis' foot pushes it under the divider to the next stall.
Pause.

EYE LEVEL: A CASE OF BEER slides back under the divider and rests at Travis' feet.

SPLIT SCREEN: Both guys smile with their treasures.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. GROCERY STORE — LATE AFTERNOON

Doug, looking very cheery, transformed even, in a colored APRON and BUTTON-DOWN HAT, sacks groceries at the end of a register. An ELDERLY WOMAN writes a check and hands it to the CASHIER.

ELDERLY WOMAN
(to Cashier)
Can I get this for pick-up,
please?

CASHIER
Sure, no problem.

The Cashier nods to Doug, indicating he should accommodate her. Doug flashes the Elderly Woman his game-show-host smile.

DOUG
See you out there in just a few
minutes, ma'am.

INT. DORM ROOM — LATE AFTERNOON

Sid grabs a BEER out of a tiny fridge and cracks it open. It's the same brand Travis got from Doug in their exchange. Across the room, Travis and the Cute Waitress are on a couch. She sits lengthwise, with her legs draped across his lap.

SID
 (off beer can)
 Last one, dude. You mind?

Travis furrows his brow in disbelief, then throws his head back with a sigh. He tosses the Waitresses legs to the side and jumps up to see for himself.

TRAVIS
 I can't believe we went through that whole case already.

SID
 I'll get ya next time, 'ite?

TRAVIS
 Nah, it's cool. I'll just go make a run.

He grabs his KEYS off the dresser and heads out.

Sid and the Waitress avoid eye contact for an awkward moment, then look up at each other. She bites her lip sheepishly.

INT. GROCERY STORE – CONTINUOUS

Doug checks his reflection in one of those huge round fisheye MIRRORS in the corner of an aisle. He straightens his hat, licks his finger and tucks a patch of hair back behind his ear, smiling. He's da man.

INT. CAR – CONTINUOUS

Travis looks a little bleary-eyed, one wrist over the wheel, as he cruises down the road. He changes the radio station.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT – A SHORT TIME LATER

Doug pushes a CART OF GROCERIES out the front sliding doors and into the street. The Elderly Woman stands near her CAR in the front row with the trunk open.

A bottle in the cart gets Doug's attention, and he pulls it up out of the bag to look at the label. CLOSE on the BOTTLE OF WINE. We hear LOUD SQUEALING BRAKES.

INT. CAR — CONTINUOUS

DRIVER POV: Through the dashboard, in a series of fast stills, with bulb flashes: [cheaper than a real stunt]

- A) Doug looks at us like a deer in headlights, with the bottle still in hand.
- B) Doug is bent at the waist over the hood as the car hits him.
- C) Doug is flattened against the windshield, his wide-eyed face very close, staring creepily right at us.
- D) The remaining visible part of Doug's body as it flips from the windshield over the top of the car.
- E) The broken bottle of wine at the moment it hits the ground.

Travis sits frozen, with both hands glued to the wheel at ten and two, now very sober.

The Elderly Woman picks up her items from the mangled, knocked-over cart in front of the car, re-bagging them.

Travis squints his eyes shut hard. After a moment, he looks in the rearview mirror, then turns his head around to look out the back window.

SLOW ZOOM OUT FROM SCENE: Travis gets out of the car, walks behind, and squats over Doug's lifeless body, whose neck is turned so far he's obviously dead. A small CROWD of onlookers begins to form. The STRAY DOG walks into frame, hikes its leg nonchalantly, and pisses right on Doug's body.

ROLL CREDITS OVER WIDE SHOT

THE END