

EXT. BEACH -- SUNSET

RYAN CONRATH stands in front of a vast ocean, shoebox in hand. The waves crash and come up to his shoes.

Trash is scattered across the sand. Ryan finds a butt to a half-smoked cigarette. He picks it up and lights it.

Ryan places the shoebox in the sand in front of him. A wave breaks and rushes forward, enveloping the shoebox in water.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- DAY

An air freshener with a photo of MATT LAWRENCE, shaven and clean cut, and JACKI hangs on the rear view mirror.

EXT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- DAY

Matt, now bearded and haggard, sits in the driver side seat. He stares at the air freshener.

Matt reaches for the air freshener and yanks on it, breaking the elastic. He rolls down his window and tosses it out.

Matt closes his eyes and covers the bridge of his nose with his hand. Silence.

Matt makes a loud snorting sound.

A KNOCK comes from the passenger side window. Matt snaps out of his shame spiral and looks over.

Ryan stares into the car. He knocks again.

Matt reaches over and unlocks the passenger door. Ryan enters the car and shuts the door behind him.

RYAN

Yo. You ready to do this?

A beat. Ryan looks over at his friend.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Have you been crying?

Matt shakes his head "no." He doesn't make eye contact.

MATT

It's a high pollen count today.

Matt puts the car in drive and pulls away.

TITLE CARD: SHOEBOX REDHEAD

EXT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- MOMENTS LATER

The vehicle putters through a suburban neighborhood. Tied to the top of the wagon is a box labeled "Jacki."

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOODS -- DAY

Shots of suburban homes, one after another. Each one indiscernible from the next and the one that came before. The cuts signify a change in neighborhood but this could be a single neighborhood. A meta neighborhood.

A house having a garage sale is passed and then the car (camera, whatever) slows down, almost to a stop. It backs up slowly and stops, looking straight at the house holding the garage sale.

An OLD WOMAN sits at a table in the center. Rummaging around is an OLD MAN and TWO MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN with teased out hair and wearing nylon jogging suits.

We cut 180 degrees to reveal Ryan, sitting in the passenger side of a beat up wagon. After a few seconds, Matt appears from behind his friend. Matt yanks up on the emergency break.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE -- DAY

Ryan and Matt, who is carrying the box, walk to the front of the driveway, passing tables full of junk and blankets below those tables, full of more junk. They approach the Old Woman. Matt drops the box on the table in front of the her.

MATT

Hi. Do you want to buy this stuff?

OLD WOMAN

Why would I want to buy your stuff?

RYAN

Well, he can just trade it in for credit, right?

A beat.

OLD WOMAN

If you want to take a look around.

RYAN

Yeah. Thanks.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Matt and Ryan approach different tables. Ryan picks through VHS tapes.

RYAN

Matt, they've got Richard Simmons' Sweatin' to the Oldies over here for only a buck.

MATT

Wow.

Matt comes upon a shoebox and opens it. In it is a polaroid camera sitting on dozens of old photographs. Matt picks up the camera and examines it. He puts the camera back down and begins leafing through the pictures. In many of the photos appears a beautiful redhead 20-something, Mandi.

RYAN (O.S.)

She's a cutie.

Matt turns to find Ryan standing beside him.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You want to get that?

Matt closes the shoebox and heads over to the Old Woman at the table. He shoves the Jacki Box over and sets down the shoebox.

MATT

(motioning)

I'd like to trade this for this.

RYAN

Wait.

Ryan runs back over to the table he was at and yanks the Sweatin' to the Oldies VHS tape from the Old Man's hands.

RYAN (CONT'D)

And this.

OLD WOMAN

Five bucks.

Ryan reaches for his wallet.

MATT  
Five bucks? There's a lot of  
sentimental value in this box.

OLD WOMAN  
Then take it with you.

A beat. Matt touches the Jacki Box. Ryan grabs his hand.  
He hands the Old Woman a bill.

RYAN  
No. Five bucks sounds good to me.

Ryan puts the VHS tape on the shoebox.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
Mazel tov.

The two exit.

INT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- DAY

Ryan inspects the polaroid camera.

MATT  
You know, I didn't even check to see  
if the thing worked at the garage  
sale. So, knowing my luck, it's  
probably some broke piece of shit.

Ryan pushes the flash to the "on" position. The charge makes  
a high pitched sound. Matt looks over.

Ryan takes a picture of Matt. Out pops the picture.

RYAN  
Oh yee of little faith.

Ryan takes the picture and begins to shake it.

MATT  
How do I look?

Ryan's POV: In his hands, Ryan holds a photo of Ira  
Livingston, a clown, in much the same position as Matt.

RYAN  
You're an clown.

MATT  
What?

Ryan hands Matt the photo. Matt tries studying it while still keeping his eyes on the road.

RYAN

Do you think it's warped?

MATT

No. Warped film doesn't cause a person to magically appear in place of another.

A beat.

MATT (CONT'D)

Take a picture of yourself.

Ryan points the camera at himself and makes a funny face. He takes a picture. The photo comes out. Ryan starts shaking it. Matt keeps looking over.

RYAN

I'm gonna myspace this one for sure, man.

A beat.

MATT

How's it look?

Matt grabs the photo and looks at it.

Matt's POV: Another photo of Ira. It looks like he was taking the photo of himself, much like the way Ryan took his.

Ryan leans in, looking at the photo.

RYAN

Well, that's distressing.

A beat.

Matt pulls over.

MATT

Give me the camera. Give me the camera. Give me--am I fucking speaking to myself?

Matt grabs the camera and gets out of the car, slamming his door.

RYAN  
What are you doing?

EXT. ROAD -- DAY

Matt exits the car, followed by Ryan. Matt walks out into an open field where a lone tree stands.

Matt kneels down and takes a picture of the tree. A picture comes out of the polaroid. Matt shakes it.

A few moments pass. Ryan sits on the front hood of the car, smoking a cigarette. Matt comes back to him and hands him the picture.

MATT  
We're going to get our money back  
from that gypsy.

Matt hands Ryan the photo.

Ryan's POV: A picture of Ira, standing next to the tree, in the open field.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE -- DAY

OLD WOMAN  
No refunds.

MATT  
Well, what if the camera only takes  
pictures of a clown man?

OLD WOMAN  
No refunds.

Matt turns to Ryan

RYAN  
If you look at the pictures, I think  
you'll see what we mean.

Ryan hands her the photos of Ira. The Old Woman examines them and hands them back.

OLD WOMAN  
(shaking her head)  
Nope.

Matt throws his hands up and begins to leave.

Ryan follows suit. He grabs a stuffed duck from the table and turns back to the Old Woman.

RYAN  
I'm taking this. This is mine.

EXT. ROADWAY -- DAY

The beat up station wagon speeds down the one-lane road.

INT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- DAY

Silence.

Ryan shakes his head.

RYAN  
You know, that woman should never work in retail. Terrible interpersonal skills. By the way, do you think I could borrow five bucks? I spent the last of what I had at the garage sale.

Matt stares straight ahead.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
What?

MATT  
I shouldn't have gotten rid of the box.

RYAN  
Are you going to start on this again?

MATT  
What if we get back together?

RYAN  
Not happening.

A beat.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
Holy shit. Look at that. Pull over.

EXT. BIG TOP DRIVE-IN -- DAY

Ira, the clown, holding balloons in one hand and a tray in another, stands near the side of the road. The beat up wagon pulls over, backs up quickly and pulls right beside him.

Matt rolls the window down. The two stare at the mysterious clown in the flesh.

IRA

Hi, welcome to the Circus Drive In.  
Would you like one of our Big Top  
Burgers?

MATT

(to Ryan)  
Get them out.

Ryan opens the shoebox and grabs the photos. He hands them to Matt who in turns hands them to Ira.

EXT. BACK OF BIG TOP BURGER -- LATER

Ira sits on the curb, holding the photos. Matt and Ryan sit on either side of him, eating the burger samples.

IRA

Well, that's bizarre.

RYAN

And you have no idea why this is  
happening?

IRA

I don't, actually.

A beat.

IRA (CONT'D)

Wait.

RYAN

What?

IRA

I did have a twin brother and he had  
a camera just like this one. He  
carried it with him all the time.  
And when he died, my family used to  
say that maybe his soul got  
transported into the camera. So  
maybe that's it. Maybe you found my  
brother's camera.

Deafening silence. Matt and Ryan sink closer to Ira.

RYAN

Really?

MATT  
You're kidding.

IRA  
How could you believe that?  
(under his breath)  
Jesus.

A beat.

RYAN  
Wait. Give me the camera.

Matt hands Ryan the camera.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
(to Ira)  
Could you.

Ryan motions for Ira to turn and face him. Ryan takes Ira's picture. He shakes the photo. It's a picture of a bench overlooking the beach with a pier to the right.

The three crowd around, looking at the picture.

MATT  
Now what does that mean?

A beat. The three study the photo.

IRA  
Wait. That's Rigby Pier.

RYAN  
You know this place?

IRA  
Yeah, they have a roller coaster  
that goes right over the ocean.

Ira points to the upper right hand portion of the picture.

IRA (CONT'D)  
I used to do balloon shows there a  
few years back. Yeah, it's only  
about 40 minutes away from here.

INT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- DAY

Matt drives. Ryan sits in the passenger seat. Ira sifts through the shoebox of pictures. He takes one of the photos out and examines it.

RYAN

Feeling pretty good about this, man.  
I think this is going to be a fun  
adventure we're on here. I'm excited.

A beat.

IRA

Wait. Who is this?

Matt looks over and grabs the photo. He hides it in his  
dashboard.

MATT

No one.

RYAN

Oh, she's cute. That's Matt's Russian  
mail order bride. She's going to be  
coming in in a couple of weeks.  
It's gonna be a spicy affair. It's  
gonna be fun.

IRA

Nice.

RYAN

Yeah.

Matt shakes his head.

MATT

Yeah, that's funny. Actually, my  
fiancée recently broke off our  
engagement so, at the moment, not  
quite ready to enter into the dating  
game.

RYAN

Yeah, dude. I don't mean to define  
things, or whatever, but six months  
doesn't seem like a recent thing.  
So when do you think you're going to  
get back on that horse...with the  
dating...if ever. Why are you  
stopping the car? Are you ever going  
to enter the dating game?

A beat.

INT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- LATER

Ryan sings passionately to a song playing on the stereo.  
Matt and Ira stare straight ahead at the road.

After a few moments Matt ejects the tape, stopping the song.  
He grabs the tape from the deck and throws it out the window.

Silence.

INT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- LATER

Matt drives. The car is silent.

RYAN

So do you think that guy really fired  
you?

IRA

Yeah, Wally's a big tool but the job  
honked anyway so it's cool.

RYAN

Hey, that rhymed!

IRA

Well, I'm also a lyricist.

RYAN

Are you really?

IRA

No.

RYAN

Do you mind?

Ryan reaches for Ira's clown nose.

RYAN (CONT'D)

So can you make a living off the  
clown thing?

IRA

No, not really. But I did just get  
this sweet gig where I started  
breeding these snakes. And those  
thing--

MATT

Wait. Is that it? Is this it?

IRA

Yeah. It's the roller coaster going over the ocean.

MATT

Okay am I speaking to myself? Where's the parking?

The three men look outside to be greeted by a gigantic sign reading, "Welcome to Rigby Pier!"

EXT. BOARDWALK -- DAY

Matt holds up the photograph of the bench overlooking the ocean. The picture matches exactly what lies before the three of them.

Matt reaches down into the shoebox and takes out the camera. He takes a photograph. He shakes the photo. The three men look.

It's the same picture of the bench overlooking the ocean, only now the red-headed girl, Mandi, is sitting on the bench.

MATT

Alright. Fuck this.

Matt throws the camera into the shoebox and begins to walk off.

RYAN

Will you quit feeling sorry for yourself?

Matt turns around.

MATT

Excuse me?

RYAN

It's just that this is the first time, in I don't know how long, where I haven't seen you cry? Or better yet, where you've spent more than a half an hour outside of your apartment.

A beat.

MATT

I was crying when I came to pick you up this morning.

A beat. Matt pulls out his wallet and takes a bill out. He walks over and hands it to Ryan.

MATT (CONT'D)

Here. I owe you this.

Matt turns and walks to the bench. He takes a seat.

Ryan looks at Ira and then pulls the camera up and snaps a photo of Matt sitting on the bench, alone. When Ryan pulls down the camera, Matt is gone.

The two stare in disbelief. They turn to look at the photograph which is now of Matt and Mandi, sitting on the bench together.

EXT. BEACH -- LATER

The water engulfs the shoebox, dragging it slowly to its watery grave.

Ryan takes a last drag from his found cigarette and turns around to Ira, who has been watching from back where the beach begins. Ira waves. Around his neck hangs the camera.

INT. BEAT UP STATION WAGON -- DAY

The picture of Matt and Mandi hangs from the rear view mirror, much like an air freshener. Ryan drives as Ira sits in the passenger seat.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

The beat up station wagon races forward, into the sunset.