

On The Open Road, Ghost Version

By

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A black screen. We hear the SOUND of some blues licks being played on a ukulele, as well as the whirring background noise one hears inside a vehicle traveling at a pretty steady clip on a rural highway.

TITLE CARD: ON THE OPEN ROAD

SLOW FADE UP TO:

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

A gorgeous, huge, wide shot of a straight rural road jutting through corn fields on a summer afternoon. A late model sedan zips through.

INT. CAR - DAY

The passenger of the car, a chubby and unkempt man of about 40, is revealed to be the source of the uke playing. This is LARRY, who is dressed in an ill-fitting T-shirt and cheap sunglasses. Seated next to him, driving the car, is JAMES, a slimmer, younger man of about 30. He is dressed in a nice bright-blue polo shirt and more expensive sunglasses. The uke playing continues for several moments.

JAMES  
Put that stupid thing away!

LARRY  
Fine, goddammit.

Larry places the uke in the back seat. He looks around for something to do and eventually just stares out the window.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

SLOW FADE UP TO

INT. CAR - DAY

Larry leans forward from the passenger seat and turns the radio on to a classic rock station. Pause. James turns the dial to talk radio. Pause. Larry turns the dial back to the classic rock station. Pause. James turns the dial back to the talk radio station. Pause. Larry turns the dial back to the classic rock station. Pause. James turns the radio off.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

SLOW FADE UP TO

INT. CAR - DAY

Larry is adding rubber bands from a plastic bag to a rubber band ball as James drives on.

LARRY

The double buck, the congress, the muskrat, the windsor...no, the windsor is a necktie knot...oh, I know, the saddlehorn, the trapper, the...the...oh, the sowbelly, the copperhead, the copperlock, the russlock, the peanut, the butterbean...and...and...and...THE BARLOW! Oh, and the whittler! Almost forgot the whittler. Grandpa taught me the 13 types of American pocket knives when we went camping with the cub scouts in, shoot, probably '82. I'll never forget that.

QUICK CUT TO

EXT. CAR - RURAL ROAD - DAY

The car drives by.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

SLOW FADE IN

INT. CAR - DAY

LARRY

Stop the car, I have to piss.

JAMES

Just hold it, we're almost there.

Larry squirms for a few beats. He indicates a fountain soda cup in the beverage holder on the car's center console.

LARRY

Can I piss in this?

James sighs and pulls the car over. Larry exits the car and walks a good distance away from it and takes a piss. Suddenly he realizes he is very close to a familiar place.

(CONTINUED)

LARRY

No way!

Larry starts running off into the field, away from the car. James exits the car quickly.

JAMES

LARRY! Where the hell are you going? Get back here!

Larry is giddy with excitement and howls with laughter as he continues to run.

JAMES

Larry!

James runs after Larry.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

SLOW FADE UP TO

EXT. DISUSED ATHLETIC FIELD

Larry and James are standing in an overgrown athletic field, catching their breath amidst the weeds, chain-link fences, rusting tackling dummies and track hurdles.

LARRY

I don't understand. It wasn't that long ago.

JAMES

What?

LARRY

It wasn't that long ago, James!

JAMES

What wasn't that long ago?

LARRY

The county championships! I won third place in the shot put here.

JAMES

Oh, Christ.

LARRY

Third place in the shot put, James! What did you ever do?

(CONTINUED)

James pauses to consider. Larry realizes his proximity to something important again. He takes off running.

JAMES

Larry, where the hell are you going?

LARRY

Russel's Toy Store is up the road from the school!

JAMES

Goddamit, Larry, if you're not back at the car in five minutes I'm leaving you here.

LARRY

Russell's Toy Store!

Larry runs off. James turns toward and walks toward it.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

SLOW FADE UP TO

EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - DAY

Larry crests a hill and sees a cemetery shrouded in misty, low-lying fog. A man dressed in a black suit is crouching near a grave, weeping. Larry approaches the man.

The man turns toward Larry, tears streaming down his face. He hands Larry a wrapped, unassembled balsa wood glider plane, then turns back toward the grave.

Larry turns and slowly walks off in the direction of the car.

INT. CAR - DAY

Larry is putting together the balsa wood glider plane.

JAMES

How was Mr. Russell?

LARRY

Russell's was long gone.

Larry finishes building the glider and pretends to fly it through the air a few times, making engine noises. Then he pauses, looks at James, and tosses the glider at his face.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES  
Goddammit, Larry.

James rolls the window down and tosses the glider out.

EXT. CAR - DAY

The car zips by and a balsa glider exits the driver's side window. It floats lazily to the ground.

INT. CAR - DAY

JAMES  
We're almost there. Can't you just sit still?!?

LARRY  
No, I won't! What the hell does a smoking stand have to do with anything anyway?

JAMES  
The old man wants it for Grandpa.

LARRY?  
What?

JAMES  
The old man said Grandpa wanted his old smoking stand from the old house to be next to him.

LARRY  
What the hell for?

JAMES  
To be next to him when he dies, okay? Grandpa is dying. He's almost dead. He might not even be alive by the time we get back.

LARRY  
So what the hell are we doing here instead of there! Turn the car around!

JAMES  
NO.

(CONTINUED)

LARRY

James!

JAMES

No. Dad said go get the smoking stand so that's what we're doing.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

SLOW FADE UP TO:

EXT. RURAL FIELD - DAY

A WIDE SHOT of an empty field, perhaps a pit where a house once stood. We hear the sound of car doors slamming as the brothers enter the frame from either side and walk towards where the house used to be.

LARRY

The old house has been gone for a long time.

JAMES

No kidding.

LARRY

Why did we come out here, James?

Pause as James considers. He turns squarely at his brother.

JAMES

Because you wanted your smoking stand, pop.

James's glare lingers on Larry for a few beats, then he turns and exits the frame. Larry follows shortly after.

FADE TO BLACK

An old, yellow-tinged photo appears against the black background with Larry in a rocking chair next to a smoking stand, and a young boy at his feet.