

EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

ANGLE in the POV of a cellphone camera held by TODD (24).

NED (fat, 30's) is standing in water up to his waist, attached by ropes to a contraption behind him that resembles a parasail, which is attached to a motorboat containing Todd and another friend CLETUS. It is hot and the three LAUGH a lot, having recently imbibed a substantial amount of alcohol. Occasionally, Todd whips the phone around to show US Cletus and unrelated things.

NED

Okay Cletus, move forward slow to take the slack out. Then, floor it. But wait 'til I tell you.

CLETUS

You tell me what?

NED

To floor it. Todd, you ready with the camera?

TODD

Yeah.

NED

Okay.

He checks the rigging one last time.

NED (cont'd)

Go ahead slow!

Cletus moves the boat forward. He shakes his head, can't believe what he's doing. The line tightens.

NED (cont'd)

Stop!

Ned checks everything one last time, and then gets in position.

NED (cont'd)

Okay. Floor it!

Cletus gives the boat full throttle. Ned jerks forward and noses into the water a few times. As the speed increases, the chute opens and he begins to rise. They WHOOP it up. Faster.

The chute and rigging look dangerous and half-ass, but they slowly lift Ned out of the water. He HOWLS and CHEERS.

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He is flying - not high, 30 or 40 feet - and Todd catches every moment of glory on the cellphone.

The boat nears the shore on the other side of the cove.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH PARK - DAY

ANGLE ANOTHER CELLPHONE CAMERA held by a drunk man at a beach party. Fifteen people are eating and drinking, watching Ned's antics. Like Todd, the drunk whips the camera around to show US things or when he forgets he is holding it.

He focuses on various sun-burned party-goers, who WHOOP, LAUGH and make faces. Then, he moves in on a young guy sitting by himself at a picnic table, NELSON PAXELL (20). Nelson does not appear drunk, sun-burned or particularly interested in the people or party.

DRUNK

Hey Nelson, can you film this thing?

NELSON

I guess.

Nelson takes the cellphone from the drunk. The image wobbles, as Nelson checks it over.

NELSON (cont'd)

So it's on now?

DRUNK

Yeah.

NELSON

Okay.

DRUNK

Thanks.

The image straightens out and WE SEE the drunk walk back to the center of the party.

Nelson ZOOMS IN on Ned, as he approaches.

Ned clicks some switches on a harness. Two rockets that are rigged to the chute ignite with a LOUD THUMP and ROAR. Flames, gas, and sparks shoot out of them. The ROAR increases to a maximum intensity, and then NED releases the rope from the boat. The crowd CHEERS.

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The cameras stay with NED, as he shoots ahead. Somehow, the rockets work. They propel Ned like a 300 pound soap-on-a-rope across the beach toward the road. Unfortunately, Ned has forgotten to include a way to properly control the apparatus.

The rockets meander violently, carrying him over a few trees, then quickly down into a few more. The crowd reacts accordingly, as Ned is dragged along, crashing and bouncing through the foliage.

Almost out of camera range now, the rockets lift and drop, slamming Ned against a light pole, then a power pole. The rigging becomes snarled in power lines, sending up huge sparks and claps of THUNDER. The mood of the crowd quickly changes to panic.

The rockets finally break free and fly off in two directions, and Ned falls 100 or more feet, with ropes and rigging trailing behind him.

The crowd SCREAMS and runs toward the road. Nelson places the cellphone on a picnic table, so WE can see the panicking crowd. Then, he walks after them with his hands in his pockets.

EXT. BEACH HIGHWAY - DAY

ANGLE LOW (No longer the CELLPHONE ANGLE), as Ned and the rigging hit and bounce on the busy four-lane highway.

INT. RON'S SUV - DAY

RON PULLMAN is driving along in his oversized SUV, talking on a cellphone, fumbling with the music system. WE can't make out what he's saying over the SCREAMING STEREO.

EXT. BEACH HIGHWAY - DAY

As Ron's car approaches the unconscious or dead lump that is Ned at high speed.

INT. RON'S SUV - DAY

Ron drops his phone, as the SUV's spongy suspension glides easily over O.S. Ned with only a few minor bumps. The brief inconvenience, however, is not enough to distract Ron from his conversation. He fishes around on the floor and finds the phone.

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ANGLE SIDE VIEW, as a car pulls up alongside Ron and matches his speed. The couple in the car are pointing frantically, trying to get Ron's attention. The driver BLASTS his horn repeatedly, but the sound is barely audible.

Finally, Ron turns his head to the side and sees the couple pointing. He checks the rearview mirror.

ANGLE RON'S POV IN THE MIRROR. The bloody hunk of meat that was Ned is attached to Ron's bumper by a rope, and is bouncing and dragging behind the SUV, leaving a skid mark of red that extends for half a mile.

RESUME RON as he SLAMS on the brakes.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

ANGLE ON a computer screen, as someone surfs a porn Web site cluttered with sleazy flashing ads.

ANGLE ON the user, a large man, drooling over the images. A small fiery dot appears in the window behind him and grows rapidly. The man closes his eyes in ecstasy.

The flaming disk fills the small window, as the ROAR of the rocket increases. Then, In an instant, the sputtering, sparking rocket CRASHES through the window and EXPLODES in a ball of flames.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - DAY

As a scrawny seven-year-old batter waits for a pitch. The ball dribbles in slowly, bounces off home plate, misses the diminutive catcher, flies up and hits the backstop.

UMPIRE

Stee!

ANGRY MAN (O.S.)

That's bullshit!

After a long wait, another pitch enters, sailing over the batter's head.

UMPIRE

Stee!

ANGLE FROM SIDE. The ANGRY MAN is visible in the bleachers, drinking a beer. He wears a skimpy tank-top stretched over a hairy, well-fed body.

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ANGRY MAN

No way was that a strike! That ball was over his fucking head! It was a mile over his head! Get some fucking glasses!

The umpire blows his whistle to stop play, and points at the angry man.

UMPIRE

Keep it up asshole and I'll forfeit the game.

The angry man hops down from the bleachers and SHOUTS through the chain-link backstop.

ANGRY MAN

You can't fuckin' do that!

UMPIRE

Try to stop me!

ANGRY MAN

I'll fuckin' stop you! Come here!

UMPIRE

Sit down and shut your fucking face, so we can get on with the game.

ANGRY MAN

I'll sit down when your ass is out of here!

UMPIRE

That ain't going to happen, pal. So sit the fuck down and shut up!

ANGRY MAN

You want to come over here and make me?

UMPIRE

I don't have to.

In an instant, the second rocket flies in out of nowhere and augers into the ground in front of the angry man. On impact, the scene erupts in flames, blowing the angry man back into the bleachers.

Flaming debris flies out and ignites people and everything within 30 feet. Kids and parents panic and SCREAM, run in all directions, every man for himself.

EXT. BEACH HIGHWAY - LATER

The accident scene is a gridlock of slow, smoking cars filled with fidgety kids and inebriated adults. Passengers gawk as they drive slowly by Ron's car, two police cruisers, at least one ambulance, and a throng of grossed-out onlookers, who can't get enough of the grizzly scene.

ANGLE BY RON'S CAR, as an officer approaches Ron, who is still talking on his cell phone.

RON
(To phone)
I'll call you back, okay?

OFFICER
Mr. Pullman?

RON
(To phone)
I... I can't talk anymore. I...
everything is okay. Yes, I'll call
you back.

OFFICER
Mr. Pullman, can we talk?

Ron holds up his index finger.

RON
(To phone)
Listen, I can't talk now. Trust me.
Trust... The man. I don't know. I
didn't even see him. He just came
out of nowhere. Yes. I have to go.

OFFICER
Mr. Pullman, please.

RON
(To phone)
He was tied. Yes. A rope was tied
to him and it got caught in the
bumper. I don't know. I'll call you
later.

INT. BLACK SUV STUCK IN TRAFFIC

As the driver waits impatiently in the heat with six hyper kids. He POUNDS the wheel angrily, HONKS the horn. He looks out the side window.

ANGLE HIS POV an empty, two-way, left-turn lane.

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RESUME the driver, as he cranks the wheel left, and slams down on the gas. The overweight SUV lurches into the turning lane and flies past several cars.

ANGLE DRIVER'S POV through the windshield, as a green SUV with the same idea, pulls out recklessly in front of our car. The driver SLAMS on the brakes. The tires SCREECH, the rear end breaks away, and WE SLAM into the green SUV, shoving it forward into another car.

RESUME DRIVER as he gets out of his car.

EXT. BEACH HIGHWAY BY GREEN SUV

As the driver approaches the other driver, SHOUTING angrily.

DRIVER 1

Son of a bitch. I hope you know you pulled right out in front of me.

DRIVER 2

This is a left-turn lane, dude. You're not supposed to be doing 50 in it.

DRIVER 1

And I suppose you were turning left. Into what?

DRIVER 2

That doesn't matter.

DRIVER 1

You can't fuckin' make up your own rules.

DRIVER 2

And you were turning left?

DRIVER 1

I was already in the lane and you pulled out in front of me!

DRIVER 2

This is a left-turn lane.

Driver 1 shoves Driver 2.

DRIVER 1

Fuck off, asshole.

Driver 2 shoves him back.

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WE PULL BACK, as the shoving proceeds, to reveal others getting out of their cars and approaching them. Oncoming traffic slows to get a better view.

In a matter of seconds, traffic is ground to a halt. A hundred cars and ambulances are packed in tightly. No one is moving, the temperature is rising, and tempers are flaring.

ANGLE HIGH ABOVE. WE see the whole picture and the red trail that started it all.

EXT. BEACH HIGHWAY PARTY CROWD

The party-goers are sober now, as police interview a small group. WE MOVE THROUGH the crowd. At the edge of the group, WE SPOT Nelson, leaning against a tree, alone, observing the event dispassionately.

INT. BIG OPINION SET - DAY

As RUSTY KANNON, host of this daily conservative, cable news talk show finishes grilling a liberal guest, JAMES FAVA. As is the case with most of Rusty's liberal guests, he is a wimpy, prissy intellectual with thick glasses.

FAVA

The best way we have right now to save what's left of the native salmon population is to enforce the legislation we already have and the current-

RUSTY

I don't see the problem. We have cans for saving salmon. You can save salmon for years in cans. What's the problem?

FAVA

(Doesn't know how to react)

We. I. The current administration seems bent on eliminating endangered salmon and is unwilling to even listen-

RUSTY

The point I'm trying to make is, you know what the problem is? You don't listen-

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FAVA

We do listen, but-

RUSTY

You don't listen to reason. There's no middle road with you. Your only solution for saving salmon is-

FAVA

As I explained earlier, we have many compromise proposals and-

RUSTY

Your only solution is more laws and more regulations that strangle the livelihood out of the local farmers-

FAVA

That's not true-

RUSTY

Put farmers and an entire agricultural industry out of business. Your problem is you are only focused on saving salmon and you're killing the farmers-

FAVA

I don't see how-

RUSTY

We all want to save salmon, but we need balance. Balance. I don't think you know what that is.

FAVA

As I have said over and over-

RUSTY

(To Camera)

We have to take a break. When we return, I'll have some final comments on this whole saving salmon issue. Stay tuned.

ANGLE TV as WE CUT WIDE on the set and the theme MUSIC SWELLS.

ANGLE on the set, as WE SEE what goes on during the break. Fava angrily rips his microphone off, as Rusty nonchalantly stands and grabs a cellphone handed to him by an assistant.

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FAVA

I don't see what the point is of
having guests on your show, if you
don't let them talk!

RUSTY

I did let you talk.

FAVA

Bullshit.

RUSTY

Thank you for coming on the show.
I'm sorry things didn't work out.
What more can I do?

FAVA

You can let me talk!

RUSTY

Sorry, Mr. Fava. I didn't hear
anything I haven't heard a million
times before.

FAVA

Why? I...

RUSTY

Excuse me, I have a call.

Fava storms off. Rusty pretends to take a call.

RUSTY (cont'd)

Yes. Yes. I agree. Yes.

As soon as Rusty sees that Fava is clear, he hands the cell
phone back to the assistant.

RUSTY (cont'd)

You got a haircut.

RUSTY'S ASSISTANT

Yeah.

He steps off the set and walks away from her to the studio
door.

RUSTY

Looks better than that fright wig
you were wearing before. Jesus.
(To the floor director)
How much time I got?

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FLOOR DIRECTOR
Back in seven.