

WE GOTTA GO

Written by

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Eric's friend Bryce comes to him in a panic after his online skin-gambling ring has been busted. While arguing over how to proceed, Bryce reveals that he has falsely implicated Eric in his scheme and proposes they leave the country. However, Eric has his own ideas, and his own secret he is hiding from Bryce.

EXT - ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see the outside of a fairly standard mid-century Southern California home- one level, shrubs in front of the windows, and a palm tree by the driveway. A small porch light glows next to the garage door, illuminating the dark with warm orange. Crickets chirp.

INT - ERIC'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

We see a side view of ERIC (male, early 20's) as he sleeps in his bed. He's slightly splayed out as his face is smooshed into the pillow, facing the camera- he's deep in slumber, and slightly drooling.

CUT TO- Eric's nightstand nearby. A utilitarian digital clock-radio displays "3:17 AM" in piercing, glowing red numbers.

Eric's phone lies face-down nearby, charging- we see light emitting from it softly, from the gap between the screen and the surface of the table.

It goes black again- then lights up, then goes back to black- he's missing notifications.

We hear nothing but the muffled sound of crickets outside, and the gentle hum of the AC vents.

CUT TO- a slight overhead view of the bedroom- as if from a non-existent corner security camera. We see how tangled Eric's blanket is around him. The room, otherwise, is tidy, and almost impersonal- the only suggestion of its occupant being a generic motivational poster with a whale's tail on it.

We then see the blinds of the window- almost as if from Eric's POV. A wave of orange-red, the rear lights of a car, swiftly shines through from one end to the other. We then hear the sounds of an engine turning off, and a vehicle door opening and shutting. The footfalls of somebody on the grass can be heard.

Beat.

TING. We hear the sound of a small rock hitting the bedroom window.

C.U. on Eric's face- he shows no signs of stirring.

Beat.

THONK. A second rock, this time sounding larger. Eric makes a soft sound and rolls over a bit, but doesn't wake.

From outside, we hear much more frantic, thudding footsteps moving away from the direction of the bedroom- and more towards somewhere on the left.

Suddenly, we hear the obnoxious yet ubiquitous chime of a Ring doorbell. And then again. And again, as it is spammed, and the sound overlaps.

Eric begins to grumble, and moves a bit as he blearily cracks open his eyes with confusion.

BANG! The sound of shattering glass fills the air.

CUT TO- Eric shooting up from the bed, like Frankenstein's Monster- his face going from the pillow up and forward into the camera with shocked, wide-shot eyes.

The Ring chime stops, and we hear someone fiddling with the door lock before it audibly glides open.

BRYCE (O.S.)
ERIC! ERIC?

INT - ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

We see BRYCE (male, early 20's) withdraw his arm back through the hole he has punched in the decorative glass of the door, away from the latch lock.

He has a hefty black duffel slung over one shoulder, and a 60's-style hardshell suitcase in his other hand. He appears visibly sweaty and disheveled, wearing a hole-y white tank top, black sweatpants, and Birkenstock sandals with gym socks. His hair is both frosted and greased-back, but in his frenzy, several flyaways have become stuck to his sweat-slicked brow.

He flicks on the light switch- evidently familiar with the home- and looks around as he claps his hands in quick succession, slamming the door behind him.

BRYCE (CONT'D)
ERIC! Come on man, this is it- WE
GOTTA GO!

CUT TO- Eric entering from down the hall. He rubs his eyes and squints with pain at the brightness of the room. He stands near the kitchen-area isle, looking in confusion at where Bryce came in. His gaze follows Bryce as he enters the frame and heads over to Eric's direction.

ERIC
Wh- Bryce...? What the fuck- Man,
what time is it?

BRYCE

Oh, good. You're up. Anyways, the time isn't important. What IS important- is that we gotta go.

Bryce throws the suitcase onto the isle with a clatter. He then power-walks over and cracks it open, beginning to open and empty seemingly random contents of the surrounding pantries as the conversation continues. Chips, jerky, a whole bag of chocolate chips, etc. are haphazardly shoved inside.

ERIC

WE? What- Go? Go where? What-

BRYCE

(Interrupting)

Can you get the lights? I only turned them on to make sure you would be awake, we can't afford anyone seeing up at this hour.

Eric gestures exasperatedly before kneading his temples and brow in confusion.

ERIC

Sure, whatever- but- dude, you're not making any sense, what-

Bryce nonchalantly unplugs Eric's toaster from the counter before tossing it in the direction of the switchplate. It smacks into it aggressively with a burst of sparks, turning off the lights and exploding crumbs all over the floor, alongside the broken glass.

Eric's mouth goes agape.

BRYCE

TOO MUCH YAPPIN' AND NOT ENOUGH HAPPENIN', ERIC! GET WITH THE PROGRAM!

Bryce throws more nonsense into the suitcase before forcing it shut. He then takes a beat, and seems to visibly be pondering something.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

Actually- it's still too open here. They could see us from the street. They could be listening in RIGHT NOW. Come on.

Bryce grabs Eric by the wrist before handing him the suitcase, dragging both in the direction of a door off to the right. He swings it open and we see both boys descend the stairs into the dark.

INT - ERIC'S HOUSE - BASEMENT

The basement is semi-furnished. A beat-up brown sectional occupies one wall, with a ratty rug covering up a small portion of cement flooring in front of it, alongside a cheap card table. A CRT TV rests on top of an ancient entertainment center, with a PS5 sitting next to it. The only illumination comes from a bare chain-pull bulb, that Bryce tugs on on the way down the stairs.

Bryce throws the suitcase on the ground and places the duffel on the card table, unzipping it and pulling out a road atlas that he begins thumbing through. Eric trails behind him in confusion, before his face begins contorting into something grim.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

I marked everything down on this road map I stole from my Ma's sedan- see, I'm no fool- I'm no moron they can get by tracking my GPS-

ERIC

Bryce. Who did you kill.

BRYCE

Fuckin'- NOBODY, alright? Relax. Relax, it's not THAT bad.

ERIC

Then what is...?

Bryce's face sours at Eric's inquiry. He slams the road atlas down on the table before slowly turning to face Eric behind him.

BRYCE

Okay, so- first thing- you can't get mad.

ERIC

Oh God.

BRYCE

So, the thing is- you KNOW I'm all about that CS:GO lifestyle. You know that's what gets me the viewership numbers. You know what the people love me for.

(MORE)

BRYCE (CONT'D)

But I ALSO got really good at playing the skin market recently, yeah? 'Cause I'm also always about that hustle. I diversify my skillset, Eric.

Eric's brows knit together as he begins processing Bryce's thinking.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

But 'Ric, the thing you gotta understand is you gotta risk big to win big. And the capital I had at the moment- the capital, it just wasn't enough to maximize the profit. And then, I was like- Oh shit, that's what banks are for.

ERIC

Bryce. What the fuck are you-

Bryce gestures in the direction of the suitcase on the ground with an urgent hand.

BRYCE

If you got anything else you're gonna need, now's the time to pack it up, by the way. Anyways, I took out a loan online, right, because how's an APP gonna know I'm not opening a dog bakery? Checkmate. And then I used that money to do skin hauls.

ERIC

(disbelievingly)

Bryce... Bryce- You took out a loan- a loan on- on- on- FALSE pretenses- for fuckin'- skin gambling?

BRYCE

I mean, that's the cut-and-dry of it, I guess, if you don't understand the nuances between gambling and lootboxes. Anyways, I don't know how the feds got tipped off, but now they know, and that's why we gotta leave.

ERIC

IT'S THE SAME- GOD! Bryce. Bryce Bryce Bryce. God DAMMIT Bryce, what were you THINKING?

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

Bryce, I'm NOT getting you out of this one- you have to face due process, Bryce.

BRYCE

Oh, I didn't come here for you to help ME, I came to help YOU. I mean, you're cosigner on the loan. Like, not in the way you ACTUALLY co-signed it, but in the way I faked your signature.

Beat. Bryce uncaps a pen with his teeth and begins jotting down notes on the map while Eric stands, jaw agape in horror, in the background.

ERIC

...WHAT!?

Bryce scoffs and puts the pen down, glancing back around over his shoulder at a furious, mortified Eric.

BRYCE

Oh, please. Like it would be THAT big a deal for you if things ended up going south like they did. You should be grateful, Eric. I'M gonna have to break my lease 4 months early. I couldn't even fit all my stream setup in the car. You barely have anything even going ON half the time. This should be, like, exciting for you, if anything. When do you do fun stuff outside of being around me?

ERIC

Fun...? You... didn't think my life was as... INVOLVED as yours... so you IMPLICATED ME in FRAUD!?

BRYCE

Listen, okay- we don't have time to be arguing like this. We can play the blame game in the car, but first I need you to go get your ID papers, and then you gotta help me pick which route we're taking.

ERIC

To get to WHERE?

BRYCE

Where do you think? Mexico,
obviously.

Eric begins pacing the area as he unravels.

ERIC

And you just- THOUGHT that my life
afforded me the ability to DROP
EVERYTHING and FLEE THE COUNTRY IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT? GOD,
BRYCE! Do you ever HEAR yourself!?
It's like you don't even know
anything ABOUT me! How long have we
been friends? 4, 5 years? And yet
in all that time it's like you
haven't bothered to learn one thing
about MY life.

BRYCE

I know enough to know you're
overreacting right now.

ERIC

No, see, you don't, Bryce. I don't
think you actually do. Because if
you HAD bothered to even give two
shits about me when you weren't
roping me into things, you would
know I work at the IRS.

Beat. Eric stops pacing and stares stonefacedly at the back
of Bryce's head. Bryce freezes and drops the pen back on the
road atlas, his face dropping into one of realization.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I really wish you had given me less
of a reason to do it, Bryce.

Eric peels off a taped EARPIECE that has been hidden out of
view under his hair. Upon it flopping to his chest, we hear
the sounds of doors slamming and yelling upstairs.

CUT TO-

EXT - ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SWAT members bursting out of the bushes and smash-rolling
through the upstairs windows.

INT - ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

More file through the doors, all armed. They yell at each other to go and we see them making their way to the basement door.

INT - ERIC'S HOUSE - BASEMENT

Back to the other side of said door- we watch as the SWAT members kick it in, and swiftly file downstairs.

Bryce is pushed down onto the table, head landing on the open road atlas as his hands are cuffed behind his back.

C.U. on Bryce's face- turned to the side. We see his expression evolve from one of shock and bewilderment to one of bemused resignation. He ceases struggling.

He looks up in Eric's direction as Eric makes his way closer behind him.

BRYCE

You know, that's on me. I misread you, man. Maybe that's what I get for passing you off from the get-go.

Eric nods at one of the SWAT members, and they pull Bryce up on his feet. They begin escorting him up the stairs under close watch.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

Wait. I just gotta ask something.

The SWAT member holding Bryce looks to Eric. Eric holds up a hand, letting them know to pause. He looks to Bryce, who is still avoiding eye contact with him.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

I don't know how much of this was real with us, but- can you do me a favor, and maybe, we keep doing-

ERIC

(finishing the thought)
Wing Tuesdays? ...I'll see what I can do.

Bryce smiles slightly at this, and finally shoots a glance back at Eric, who similarly has a tired fondness on his face. He motions at the SWAT team to move, and the shouting between them starts up again.

S.W.A.T MEMBERS
SUSPECT IN CUSTODY- CLEAR PATHWAY
FOR EVACUATION TO THE VEHICLE!
NOTIFY HEADQUARTERS AND SEND
ESTIMATED E.T.A!

From Bryce's POV, we see Eric watching him go up the stairs with that same expression, before he reaches down into the suitcase, opens it up, and begins snacking on a can of Pringles Bryce stuffed in there.

THE END