

SURVEILLANCE MAN

By

JAMES ELLISON

JAMES ELLISON
P.O. BOX 1216
Long Beach, MS 39560
jamespaul54@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY OF TUPELO MISSISSIPPI – NIGHT

QUICK CUTS OF

A police cruiser driving by a highway sign WELCOME TO TUPELO – BIRTH PLACE OF ELVIS PRESSLEY.

A sanitation truck exiting onto a city street from a dark alley.

A semi truck rolling onto the highway.

A Waffle House full of customers.

A black Toyota Camry in the rear parking lot of LOSTUM INVESTIGATIVE OFFICE.

Two people, dressed in all black, exiting the vehicle with a small bag.

Two people, prying open a back window and climbing in.

INT. LOSTUM OFFICES – NIGHT

The offices are pitch black. The two intruders hold very small flashlights in their mouths so they can work hands free. One opens file cabinets and hands the files to the other, who is busy making copies on the office copy machine. NOISE from passing traffic can be heard in between the SOUNDS of the copy machine doing its job. One intruder takes the flashlight out of his mouth to speak.

INTRUDER # 1

(male voice whispering)

Make sure we get the whole client list.

Intruder number two does not say a word. A police cruiser hits it SIREN and stops a motorist in front of the building. The intruders continue to make copies of documents on the copy machine.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

A U. S. Postal Jeep with CITY OF TUPELO painted on its sides, stops at a rusty old mailbox and places mail inside. The driver continues down the rural, pot holed and dusty road. A dozen cows with their heads sticking out between strands of barb wire, follow the driver as he drives by.

EXT. JOEY'S SHACK - DAY

Just off the rural road stands a two bedroom rundown shack. Sitting in rocking chairs on the front porch are WILMA RAMSY and her only child, JOEY RAMSY, age twenty. ROCKY, a large mix breed dog sits by Joey's feet. Wilma knits a dog collar while Joey reads the classified ads of the Tupelo Tribune.

WILMA

One of us needs a job. Bills are higher
than the dog.

JOEY

Harry's Diner closed a few weeks ago, Ma.

WILMA

Been closed five months now.

JOEY

Been that long?

WILMA

Your last job paid our bills.

JOEY

(whining)

That was hard work Ma. Up at four, ride my
old bike twenty miles to wash dishes at
Harry's Diner.

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(CONTINUED)

WILMA
Miss those leftovers.

JOEY
My butt don't miss the old bike seat.

Joey scans the classifieds.

JOEY
(continuing)
Here's one Ma. Investigative company now
hiring. Apply in person. I ride twenty
miles for that!

Joey puts the newspaper down and walks outside.

EXT. OLD SHED – DAY
Joey removes his old bike and pumps up the flat tires.

EXT. LOSTUM INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE- DAY

View of the two story building. Company signs are displayed on all sides.
Applicants stand in a long line outside the building, on the sidewalk.

EXT. VERY BUMPY DIRT ROAD – DAY

Joey rides his old bike. He has a difficult time with potholes, wild dogs
nipping at his heels and large commercial trucks zooming by, kicking
dust and small pebbles his way. The Postal Jeep drives by in the opposite
direction and Joey waves.

EXT. LOSTUM INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE- DAY

Joey waits in a long line. Joey steadies his old bike with one hand. Joey
looks like hell from the long ride. Joey pats his shirt and dust flies
everywhere. An old lady in her eighties hands out appointment slips to
each applicant. The old lady is BETTY JO LOSTUM, the mother of the
owner. Betty Jo stops in front of Joey and hands him his slip.

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BETTY JO

Young man, your appointment time is tomorrow at three.

JOEY

(wide-eyed)

Three tomorrow? I just rode twenty miles on this old bike to apply today.

BETTY JO

My late father once told me, you are lucky it wasn't forty miles!

EXT. BUMPY DIRT ROAD - DAY

Joey rides the same route back to his shack with the wild dogs nipping at his heels.

EXT. JOEY'S SHACK - DAY

Joey rides up to his Ma, who is knitting while sitting in her rocking chair. Their dog Rocky is by her feet.

WILMA

Rocky bit the postman on his left leg.

Joey quickly enters and exits his shack with a large chew bone in his hand. Joey bends over his loyal guard dog.

JOEY

(continuing)

Good job, Rocky, good job. We don't want any more bills from the Postman.

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(CONTINUED)

Joey sits in his own rocking chair and hands Wilma her favorite Hershey candy bar.

JOEY

(continuing)

I have an interview at three tomorrow, Ma.

Rocky continues to wag his tail and chew on his bone.

EXT. LOSTUM INVESTIGATION BUILDING – NIGHT

Ground floor lights are on.

INT. JOHN LOSTUM'S OFFICE – NIGHT

JOHN LOSTUM, is in his mid-forties. He sits at a fancy mahogany desk. His mother Betty Jo, sits near him, using a magnifying glass. They both are looking at applications and putting some in the trash can. Suddenly, Betty Jo bends down and retrieves an application from the trash and hands the form to her son.

JOHN

Mother, we are looking for the best, remember?

BETTY JO

(looking at the photo attached)

This man has large, strong hands.

John has a blank look on his face as he accepts the rejected application from his mother.

EXT. RURAL DIRT ROAD – DAY

Joey rides his old bike. He is now sitting on a large, fluffy pillow which is attached to his bike seat. Wild dogs run along side, nipping at his heels.

INT. JOHN LOSTUM'S OFFICE – DAY

John slowly looks over his three P.M. applicant standing in front of him, all dirty, dusty and sweaty.

JOHN
Take a seat young man.

Joey sits on the leather sofa and puffs of dust rise in the air. Joey waves his hand to dissipate the cloud.

JOEY
(serious)
Sorry for how I look, but I just rode
twenty miles on my old bike, for this interview.

JOHN
(smiling)
Dedication- I like that.

JOEY
(sitting up)
I live with my Ma, we have no car, I
have a tenth grade education and my Pa
died of cancer two months ago. I need a job.
Our bills are piling up.

JOHN
Most applicants I interview have a
High school diploma, college, military, or
police background, and more than one car.

(CONTINUED)

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JOEY
(looking earnestly)
If you teach me and help me
buy a car, I will be your best
investigator.

JOHN
(chuckling)
You should be a salesman.

Joey pulls out his old wallet, removes a photograph and shows it to his future boss.

JOEY
(talking fast)
This was Pa. His name was Jake. He
drove a truck rig all his life. He was gone
all the time. I don't want to leave my Ma.
I'm street smart. It's easy to get
people to talk and get information from
them.

Joey points to Betty Jo in the adjoining office, not knowing that Betty Jo is John's mother.

JOEY
(continuing)
That old lady out there? She took this job to
get away from her husband, who drives her nuts.

JOHN
Well that woman out there
happens to be my mother, Betty Jo.

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JOEY
(gulping while smiling)
A nice lady, your Ma.

JOHN
I like you, but.....

JOEY
(interrupting)
I'll work hard, very hard.

JOHN
(sighing)
Tell you what young man. Come in tomorrow at nine sharp and attend my intense three day course on the art of surveillance. If you pass the test, I will hire you.

JOEY
(now standing)
Thanks. I won't disappoint you.

Joey walks to the door. Joey looks back and gives a thumbs up to John. Joey gives a surprised Betty Jo a hug on his way by her desk and hurries out of the building.

EXT. RURAL BUMPY DIRT ROAD – DAY

Joey rides his old bike down the pot hold and dusty road, this time with a huge smile on his dirty face. Joey rides fast to avoid the wild dogs chasing him.

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INT. LOSTUM INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE – NIGHT

Betty Jo places training manuals around the training room tables.

INT. LOSTUM TRAINING ROOM – DAY

Ten new recruits stand around talking among themselves. John Lostum enters and motions for them to take their seats.

JOHN

Morning.

CLASS

(in unison)

Morning Sir.

The students watch John set up a movie projector and pull down a large white screen from the ceiling. John opens a desk draw and removes a remote control unit. John turns to face his class.

JOHN

Out of the hundreds of applicants,
you ten are the ones I feel have the best
chance of completing my tough course on
the art of surveillance.

I am the owner of a very large Nashville,
Tennessee private investigative agency.
Tupelo will be my first out of state
branch. I plan to hire five of you at
the most. Please stand up one at a time
and tell us your first name and
current occupation. We'll start over here.

John points to the man on his left.

QUICK CUTS TO ALL TEN.

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