

The Overpass
By
Randy A. Riddle

102 Quaker Creek Drive
Mebane, NC 27302
rand@coolcatdaddy.com
<http://www.coolcatdaddy.com/>
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FADE IN:

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - LATE AFTERNOON

SUBTITLE: JULY, 1976.

A few cars are parked out front of an old diner on deserted stretch of open road on a sunny, hot summer afternoon.

Through one of the large plate glass windows, two men sit at a booth having coffee.

SAM, is a grizzled man, mid-50's, medium height and build, dressed in the well-worn regalia of a 70's biker - old tee shirt, worn blue jeans vest with patches, tattered blue jeans.

He speaks to BLIND LUCKY, seated at the opposite side of the table. Lucky is about sixty, thin and frail, wearing dark glasses; as his name implies, he is blind.

Sam appears concerned as they speak. He nods and gets up from the table, shaking hands with Blind Lucky and giving him a supportive pat on the shoulder before leaving some cash on the table for the coffee and walking away.

Sam walks out of the diner, mounts his motorcycle, and starts it up. It is an older model -- an early 50's Harley Davidson Electra Glide, similar to one that might have been seen in the film, "The Wild One".

Standing at a telephone booth off to the side of the diner, is SNITCH, a rough-looking biker, average build, thirties, dark shaggy hair and tan. Watching Sam pull away, Snitch picks up the phone, drops some coins and dials a number.

SNITCH

You were right. It's him.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - SUNSET

Sam's motorcycle barrels down the highway, the low sun setting on the road ahead. He dodges in and out of traffic on a stretch of sparsely populated interstate.

From the distance, a group of a half-dozen motorcycles come up behind Sam. They catch up to him and follow closely. Riding the bikes are members of the "Rebel Ryders MC" motorcycle club; the colors (large back patches) on their vests incorporating a Confederate flag design. Snitch is among the group.

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Sam glances behind them and recognizes who they are. He speeds up, trying to get away. The Rebels keep pace with him.

The lead bike of the group, ridden by CRAZY PAUL, pulls up alongside Sam. Crazy Paul, thirties, long unkempt dark hair and a three-day old beard; he is tall, tan and well built, with many tattoos on his arms.

Sam glances over to Crazy Paul and tries to increase his speed. Snitch maneuvers on the other side of Sam, nudging him towards Crazy Paul.

Crazy Paul has a length of thick heavy chain in one hand. He aims and whacks Sam's back.

Sam loses control of the motorcycle. The machine skids and overturns beside the road.

The Rebels ride off into the distance, leaving behind the twisted wreckage and broken body.

MONTAGE BEGINS:

-Wreckage of Sam's motorcycle on the side of the highway, police cars and an ambulance at the scene.

-Policeman direct traffic around the wreck.

-Policemen cover Sam's body and place it on a stretcher.

-Policeman measures the black skid marks produced during the accident. Another policeman photographs the scene; another fills out paperwork.

-Men place Sam's body in an ambulance. The ambulance drives to a funeral home.

-Undertaker injects needles into Sam's arms; his blood flows through a series of tubes, exchanged with embalming fluid.

-Woman works with the body's hair and beard and she applies makeup to the face.

-Undertaker dresses Sam in a black tee-shirt, leather jacket and his colors.

-Undertakers place Sam's body in a coffin.

-Undertaker closes the lid of the coffin.

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CONTINUED: (2)

MONTAGE ENDS:

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE OVERPASS BAR - FRONT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The bar is a small, run down shack of a place. A beat-up sign in front, lights broken, letters askew, reads "The Overpass".

A sedan pulls up in front of the bar, parking among the many Harley and BMW motorcycles already there.

LAWYER steps out of the car. In his mid-fifties, somewhat thin, with crew-cut hair and conservative black rimmed glasses, typical of the early 70's, Lawyer wears a crumpled ill-fitting suit and carries a briefcase.

Two bikers, off at the side of the bar share a joint. They see Lawyer and quickly try to hide it.

Lawyer stops and looks up, observing several beat-up Honda and Yamaha dirt bikes hanging in a tree near the bar. There is a handwritten sign nailed to the tree that reads "RICE BURNER GRAVEYARD".

INT. THE OVERPASS BAR - NIGHT

Lawyer enters the bar and looks around. The Overpass seems to have been cobbled together over the years. Amongst the random posters, beer signs, and motorcycle parts used as decoration on the walls, are new-looking flags and decorations for the Bicentennial.

A group of good old boys whoop it up for the evening and they eye Lawyer a bit suspiciously. Some sit at the bar or scattered around random tables in the joint with their old ladies. Others are gathered around a couple of well-worn pool tables.

RACHEL, thirty-five, serves drinks behind the bar. She is thin, tan, with dark black hair; tough and working class, yet attractive and sensual.

Seated at the bar is PREACHER, late forties, tall, with greying long hair and beard that reaches down to his belly. He is dressed in tattered jeans, rumpled tee-shirt, and a well-worn jeans vest that has some patches on it shaped like crosses. He wears an old tattered and dusty formal top hat. He is loud, gruff, and gregarious.

RACHEL

Hey Preacher - the usual?

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PREACHER

Just a small beer, dear child, just a small beer. I'm not drinking to get drunk, you understand ...

Rachel grabs a beer for Preacher, pausing a moment to push the hair out of her face and fan herself.

PREACHER (cont'd)

(noticing Lawyer)

Who's that?

RACHEL

Dunno. He don't look like a cop.

RED, late twenties, with a bushy beard and long wild red hair, loudly shows his bravado at one of the pool tables. Tall and probably weighing well over 300 pounds with a bit of a belly, his large hands and beefy tattooed arms seem to dwarf the pool stick. Despite his size, Red is constantly moving, full of energy as he downs a beer and gets ready for his next shot.

JASON, carrying a bit of a limp as he moves around the table, plays pool with Red and he watches with some amusement, chalking up his cue. Jason is strikingly handsome, rugged, late thirties, with brown hair and a bushy moustache. He exudes a kind of inner strength and determination with his round, deep brown eyes.

JO JO, late twenties, with shoulder-length blonde hair, a "fu manchu" moustache and "John Lennon" glasses, sits on a bar stool near the table, watching the game. He almost has a twinkle in his blue eyes, accentuated by the large round glasses. Jo Jo exudes an aura of good-natured cool.

Red takes his shot at a pocket in the far corner.

A small mouse scurries out of the pocket that Red was aiming for, causing the ball to go in the opposite direction.

RED

Goddamn!! What the hell ... !?!

Jason, Jo Jo and others around the table loose it and begin laughing uncontrollably.

RED (cont'd)

(flustered)

You can't count that shot!! That goddamn thing ruined my shot!!

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CONTINUED: (2)

Lawyer stands at a distance, somewhere half-way between the bar and the pool table, watching the players, slowly developing a half-smile on his otherwise grim face.

The mouse runs around the table, scared witless. Red tries to chase it around the table.

Red holds the pool stick high above his head, ready to slap it down on the table.

Red slaps down the pool stick on the mouse as it tries to get away.

Lawyer turns and goes to the bar.

Red picks up the mouse by its tail and places it in a beer mug. The mouse appears unconscious.

JASON

(taking position at the pool table for his shot)

Now, Red, whaddya want to go and do that for? That little old mouse never did anything to you.

An attractive biker babe watches Jason cue up and he is distracted by her for a moment. She looks at him with an alluring smile. He looks at her, and, turning on the charm, smiles back.

RED

C'mon, c'mon, man -- get on with it.

Still smiling and looking at the girl, he gives her a wink. Not taking his eyes away from hers, he hits the cue ball hard and sinks one of the balls.

Jason rises from his position at the table, his eyes still on the babe. He walks towards her and makes small-talk.

Some bikers and their old ladies at the bar laugh about Red's troubles with the mouse. Lawyer slides in between a couple of the bikers towards Rachel.

LAWYER

Are you Rachel? Rachel Hughes?

RACHEL

(distracted by the laughing and noise)

What?

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CONTINUED: (3)

LAWYER

You Rachel Hughes?

RACHEL

Yeah – what do you want?

LAWYER

Is there some place quiet we can talk?
This is important.

RACHEL

(to Preacher, motioning towards
one of the pool tables)
Tell Tina to take over for me for a
minute.

Rachel starts moving around from behind the bar, motioning Lawyer to join her to her right.

The mouse begins to wake up and move inside of the upside-down beer mug, sitting on the rail of the pool table.

RED

(proud of himself)
That'll learn the little fucker!!

Lawyer and Rachel talk to each other at the end of the bar, as TINA, a woman about Rachel's age, passes them, going behind the bar. Lawyer looks over a sheet of paper.

LAWYER

Miss Hughes?

RACHEL

Yes?

LAWYER

I need to speak with you privately. I'm
afraid I have some bad news.

The smile disappears from Rachel's face. She is curious, more serious.

LAWYER (cont'd)

Do you know any of these other people?
(reading from the paper)
Jason Miller? John Joyner?
Franklin Leslie Howard?

Rachel yells and motions for Jason and Jo Jo to come over to where she is standing with the lawyer.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (4)

RACHEL
'Franklin Leslie Howard'?
(yelling at the people in the
bar, getting them to quieten
down)
Hey! Quiet!
Does anybody here know Franklin Leslie
Howard?!?

There is a slight murmur among the people in the bar.

The smiles leaves Red's face and he looks down at the floor.

RED
(quietly, embarrassed)
I'm him.

The people in the bar burst out laughing as Red walks over to the group.

EXT. THE OVERPASS BAR - PATIO - NIGHT

Rachel, at the head of the group, leads Lawyer, Jason, Jo Jo and Red through a set of doors that lead out to a patio. The door closes behind them. The patio has some picnic tables and a pit used for grilling on special occasions. There are more decorations for the Bicentennial celebrations on the patio.

Jo Jo sits on top of a picnic table. Red stands off in a corner as Jason leans back against railing resembling an old wooden fence that surrounds the patio. Jason gets out a pack of cigarettes, takes out a smoke, and lights it with a Zippo.

JASON
This guy a cop?

RED
(a little pissed, moving closer
to Lawyer)
Nobody calls me that, pig.

JASON
(coolly, with a grin, blowing a
smoke ring)
Cool it, Franklin.

RACHEL
(to Lawyer)
Yeah, what's this all about?

(CONTINUED)

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LAWYER

I'm not a policeman. I'm an attorney --
Jeff Graham.

Graham sits down on one of the tables, facing the small group. He hands his card to Jason, who eyes it with suspicion.

LAWYER/JEFF GRAHAM

I'm afraid I have some bad news for you.
Do all of you know Sam Murtry?

RACHEL

We should. He owns the place.

JEFF GRAHAM

I got a call from the police in Johnston about an hour ago. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but there's been an accident.

(beat)

Sam is dead.

The group is stunned. Rachel moves closer to Jo Jo and puts her arm around him. She puts her hand to her mouth, quietly saying "Oh, no." Jo Jo gives Rachel a hug.

Red stares at the ground, a little unsure how to react.

Jason, still leaning against the rail, tosses his cigarette to the ground and exhales the smoke of his cigarette very slowly, as he looks off into the distance. He looks down and snubs out the lit cigarette with his boot.

JEFF GRAHAM (cont'd)

There was some kind of accident. Sam was driving on the interstate and lost control of his motorcycle. The police said he was probably doing eighty when it happened.

RACHEL

Why did they send you here?

JEFF GRAHAM

The police found my number on him and gave me a call.

(taking off his glasses,
reaching in his pocket for a
handkerchief to clean his
glasses)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF GRAHAM (cont'd)

Sam left some instructions in case of his death. He wanted me to talk to you personally if something happened to him.

JASON

(cold, standing up from the rail)

Well, you've told us. Now, why don't you just leave us alone.

(starts to go back in the bar)

C'mon, Red.

JEFF GRAHAM

There's a will.

Jason stops. Graham retrieves some papers from his briefcase.

RACHEL

Sam couldn't remember to order beer for this place, but he had a will?

JEFF GRAHAM

(looking at the papers)

Rachel ... Jason ... John ...

(glancing at Red)

Mr. Howard ...

You now own the Overpass.

JO JO

Why us? Sam knew lots of people.

JASON

We hung out at his bar. We rode together, partied sometimes.

JEFF GRAHAM

There's more.

(looking at the papers)

Sam left very specific instructions. Before you can take ownership of the Overpass, you have to ... take Sam ... on a ride.

RED

A what?

JEFF GRAHAM

A ride.

RACHEL

Sam's passed away ... and we have to take him ... for a ride?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

JEFF GRAHAM

He wanted you to take him so that he could say goodbye to certain people he knew. He made a whole map for you -- there's a whole list of people here.

Graham gives the papers to Rachel.

RACHEL

(examining the papers, shaking her head)

I don't know any of these people.

Rachel hands the papers back to Graham.

JEFF GRAHAM

I'm only acting on Sam's behalf as a client here. I helped him draw up the papers when he bought this place ... oh, I guess it was almost twenty years ago. He was one of my first clients when I opened up the office here in town.

(beat)

Sam came in last year, wanting me to help him make out his will.

(examining papers)

I can't say I know who any of these people are myself.

JASON

Wait a minute. You mean to tell me that we're supposed to take Sam's body and see each of these people?

(beat)

Sam is dead -- how are we supposed to take him? You don't just go driving around with a dead body.

JEFF GRAHAM

I've arranged for a permit so you can carry the remains. You shouldn't have any trouble from the authorities.

(beat)

The rest of the trip is up to all of you.

RED

Man, this is weird. You mean we can't just bury him?

(CONTINUED)

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JEFF GRAHAM

Sam was very insistent that his body be carried on the trip and that each person on the list would have the chance to see him and say a few words.

(glaring at Red)

He was very specific in the instructions in his will. It's a legally binding document.

(beat)

Of course, you have the option of contesting the will. But, that can be a difficult process. It could take months. Perhaps even years.

JASON

I guess we'll take it as it comes.

JEFF GRAHAM

Jason, come by my office tomorrow morning. I'll have all of the papers ready for you and your friends.

(closing up his briefcase,
beginning to step away)

I must be going.

(beat)

I am terribly sorry about Sam. I know he meant a great deal to you.

Graham turns, opens the door to the bar and goes inside.

Red, Rachel and Jo Jo, still in shock, slowly move towards the door of the bar.

Jason and Rachel look at each other.

JASON

You okay?

RACHEL

I'm fine. You?

JASON

Yeah.

Rachel goes into the bar, following Red and Jo Jo.

Jason lights up a cigarette and looks out into the night, leaning against one of the rails of the patio.

An old beat up pickup truck emerges on the road that runs in front of the Overpass, rushing into the gravel parking lot. There are a group of the Rebels on the back.

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