

ALL THAT MATTERS

Written by

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INT. DERRICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Sunlight pours through the windows of a meagerly furnished studio apartment.

DERRICK, 25, discharged Marine with a chiseled body and tattoos to prove it, sits at the side of his bed looking at a handwritten list of names, of which, Lizzy, is circled.

The knuckles of his right hand still bare the bruises from some recent altercation.

He looks past the empty beer bottles, automobile repair bill, and Narcotics Anonymous 12 step handbook on his dinette table at a backpack sitting in a chair.

INT. DERRICK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Derrick spits toothpaste into the sink. He pauses, looks at the reflection of his face, then peers up at a photo of a woman and a baby girl taped to the mirror.

He brushes and spits again, this time looking at a piece of paper on the opposite side of the mirror which reads, "Step 8: We made a list of all persons we harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."

He looks at his reflection.

DERRICK

You can do this. No excuses.

EXT. HIGHWAY 62 - DAY

Derrick walks the gravel-filled shoulder, desert sun blazing, and thumb erect. Several cars zoom by.

A 1977 blue Caprice rolls to a stop beside Derrick.

AARON, late 50s, a scraggly and unkept stoner, peers through his lowered passenger window.

AARON

Hey, where you headed?

DERRICK

Yucca Valley.

AARON

I'm headed that way. Hop in.

INT./EXT. AARON'S CAR - DAY

AARON

I'm Aaron.

DERRICK

Derrick.

AARON

You got a death wish or something?  
It's hotter than balls out and  
you're walking?

Derrick smiles.

DERRICK

This is nothing. I've walked  
farther in hotter weather.

AARON

What's in the pack?

Derrick looks down at the pack, then looks at Aaron.

AARON (CONT'D)

I guess its none of my business.

Derrick looks back at the road.

AARON (CONT'D)

We're about forty-five minutes  
away.

Aaron flashes a devilish grin before returning his attention  
back to the road.

AARON (CONT'D)

You want a joint?

He grabs a spliff and lighter from his shirt pocket and  
brings the joint to life.

Derrick watches the white cloud escape from Aaron's lips.

His purses his lips, and flares his nostrils. His breathing  
becomes noticeably shallow.

He lowers his hand to his pants pocket, feeling for  
something, and takes a deep breath.

DERRICK

I'm ok.

AARON  
Suit yourself.

Derrick sinks in his seat and closes his eyes.

EXT. YUCCA VALLEY - CIRCLE K - DAY

The blue caprice pulls up to a weathered gas station as the sun sets.

A beat-up diner, Franky's, sits across the road.

Derrick exits the car and shakes Aaron's hand through the window.

DERRICK  
Thanks for the ride.

AARON  
Be safe, Derrick.

The car pulls away as Derrick crosses the street and heads into Franky's

INT. YUCCA VALLEY - FRANKY'S - DAY

The diner appears empty save two men seated at the bar and a server.

GRADY (40s) and GRADY'S FRIEND (40s), bullies who aged but never matured, sit and stare at the fresh meat, aka Derrick.

WAITRESS (40s), a plump woman with the voice of a cigarette smoking angel, motions to the benches near the front windows of the diner.

WAITRESS  
Have a seat, Honey. I'll be right with you.

Waitress grabs a menu, glass, and a pitcher of water from behind the bar and walks over to Derrick's booth.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)  
What can I get you?

DERRICK  
Can I have a minute?

WAITRESS  
Sure thing, Honey. Just let me know when you're ready.

Waitress walks away.

Grady rises from his bar stool and heads over to Derrick.

Derrick reaches into his pocket and pulls out a photo.

GRADY

Damn, that's one sexy lady.

Derrick's head whips upward as he meets Grady's gaze.

GRADY (CONT'D)

The things me and my boys would do  
to...

Derrick's chest rises and falls more quickly. His hands curl into fists, the right one, crushing the picture.

DERRICK

Just...Back off, Man. Please.

WAITRESS

That's enough, Grady.

GRADY

What?

Grady shrugs jokingly. His eyes find the backpack in the booth next to Derrick.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Hey, Boy. What you got in that  
pack?

GRADY'S FRIEND

Probably drugs. Look at him.

Derrick looks past Grady to his friend.

GRADY'S FRIEND (CONT'D)

He looks like one of those fucking  
meth heads.

DERRICK

Dude, get the fuck away from me.  
Now.

GRADY

Is that what you are boy, a Meth  
head? You got drugs in that pack,  
huh?

Grady reaches across Derrick to grab his backpack.

Derrick rises and lands a punch across Grady's temple.

Grady hits his head on the bar as he falls. Blood flows, spreading around his head like a crimson halo.

WAITRESS

Get out of here! Now!

Waitress sprints to the phone behind the bar.

Grady's friend rushes to Grady's side.

Derrick grabs his pack, views the crushed photo one last time before placing it back in his pocket.

EXT. YUCCA VALLEY - FRANKY'S - DAY

Derrick runs out the door of the diner.

EXT. YUCCA VALLEY - EX-GIRLFRIEND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Derrick approaches a small fenced home with pink and silver birthday balloons lining the driveway.

The PLAYFUL SCREAMS of children grow in volume.

He takes a deep breath and rings the DOORBELL.

DERRICK

You can do this.

JUDY, early 20s, a beauty with a mean spirited tongue, hosts her daughter's birthday party. LIZZY (5), birthday girl, looks on as her mother answers the door.

JUDY

That was a quick...

Her smile fades.

JUDY (CONT'D)

...Derrick?

Judy's eyebrows shoot toward the heavens in amazement, but quickly lower as she purses her lips in disgust.

JUDY (CONT'D)

You look like shit.

LIZZY

Daddy! You came.

Lizzy pushes past her mom, arms stretched toward Derrick.

He kneels and scoops Lizzy up in his arms and enters the doorway.

INT. YUCCA VALLEY - EX-GIRLFRIEND'S - ENTRTY WAY - NIGHT

Judy closes the door behind Derrick.

DERRICK

I wouldn't miss my baby girl's  
birthday party for the world.

Lizzy hugs his neck tightly.

Derrick lowers Lizzy to the ground.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

I got something for you.

Lizzy looks, her eyes open wide, and her tiny hands cover her mouth.

Derrick reaches into the main pocket of his pack and presents a teddy bear to Lizzy.

Lizzy grabs the bear and squeezes it tightly.

LIZZY

Thank you, Daddy.

Lizzy kisses Derrick on the cheek.

The sound of POLICE SIRENS grow in the distance.

DERRICK

Go show everybody your new teddy.

Lizzy darts back inside.

JUDY

Those are for you, aren't they?  
You're such a screw up.

DERRICK

Tell my baby girl, I love her.

Derrick opens the front door and walks out shutting the door behind him.

Judy's face grows somber as the door shuts.

JUDY

I will.

POLICE (V.O.)

Get on the ground now! Hands  
behind your back!