

"GUILT TRIP"

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

A dark, stormy night, a city cab waits at a red light as the rain pounds against the windshield, the wipers barely making a difference.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

JOHN, 45, slightly stocky built, graying, thinning hair. His eyes heavy.

The clock on the dashboard shows it's just past midnight.

EXT. CITY - CONTINUOUS

The light turns green.

A shadowy figure appears blocking the cabs path.

One by one, the streetlights die, leaving his face barely visible.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

John watches as the mysterious figure walks along the side of the cab stopping at the back door.

As he opens a loud "crash" makes him jump.

As the figure climbs into the back seat.

PASSENGER

Drive.

JOHN (CONFUSED)

Ugh..where ya headed this evening?

PASSENGER

....

The passenger points ahead not saying a word

The radio shifting through channels on the dashboard catches John's attention.

Static...then a whisper, faint but clear.

Are you guilty?

John's hand trembles as he reaches to turn off the radio, glancing nervously into the rearview mirror, hoping the passenger didn't notice.

A flash of lightning strikes, casting long shadows over the cab. For a moment, John's reflection flickers—his face, replaced by hollow eyes and a grinning skull.

The cab grows colder, his breath fogging up the rearview mirror.

The radio crackles again—distorted whispers in the static.

His breath catches, his grip on the wheel tightening.

He blinks rapidly as the flash fades, the figure returns to normal.

Beat.

John let's out a nervous laugh, rubbing the back of his neck.

JOHN

I guess my eyes are playing tricks
on me.

EXT. CITY - CONTINUOUS

The streetlights continue to go out, one by one, plunging the street into darkness.

The blackness deepens, like a yawning pit, swallowing the cab whole.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

John looks into the rearview mirror...

VISION - INT. CAB - NIGHT

John is driving on a rainy night...similar to tonight.

His phone rings...he looks down, taking his eyes from the road.

Thump He stops...exits the car.

He sees the boy...lying motionless in the rain.

John kneels beside him, his hands trembling as they reach for the boy's chest. Cold skin. No pulse.

The boy's wide, glassy eyes stare into John's soul—his empty gaze forever burned into John's memory.

John stands up, breathing heavily. He looks around the empty street, panic rising in his chest.

Beat.

No one in sight. His mind races.

He climbs back into the cab and leaves the scene.

EXT. CITY - CURRENT NIGHT

The traffic light goes black.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

John slams on the brakes coming to a sharp stop. He pulls over

EXT. CITY - CURRENT NIGHT

John gasps, his vision blurred as he snaps back to the present. His knuckles whiten as he grips the wheel, sweat beading on his forehead.

The traffic light ahead flickers...then dies.

John looks up, eyes wide.

One by one, the traffic lights go black, the darkness stretching toward him like a living shadow.

The blackness swallows the street behind him, the headlights barely piercing the void.

John's breath quickens. He presses the gas pedal...but the car stalls.

Beat

JOHN
Are you doing this

He glances nervously in the rearview mirror, heart pounding.

JOHN CONT'D
Who...who are you?

PASSENGER
(silent, staring)

John's heart races. He tries to meet the passenger's gaze, but the empty, accusing eyes bore into him.

PASSENGER (FINALLY) (CONT'D)
You thought you could escape. But
the past never disappears.

JOHN
My...my past? What do you know
about it?

(John's grip tightens on the wheel, his knuckles white. His voice cracks.)

JOHN (CONT'D)
You think I can just...let go?
After everything that happened?

John lowers his head, his shoulders slumping.

JOHN (CONT'D)
There was nothing I could do..

Beat.

A single tear escapes, sliding slowly down his cheek.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
I didn't see him...

Beat.

His hands shake, tears welling in his eyes.

JOHN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
But...that doesn't change what I
did.
(Voice cracks)
It was an accident, but...I left
him there.

PASSENGER
It's time to come clean.

JOHN
I can't! If I do...I'll go to jail.
You don't understand!

PASSENGER
You've been running long enough.

Beat.

John glances toward the passenger...the seat empty, as if no one had ever been there...

His heart pounds, eyes wide. He looks down. He's gone too.

EXT. CITY - DAY

The cab sits stalled in the middle of the road.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

A note lies on the passenger seat, words scribbled in shaky handwriting.

RANDOM COP

Detective Davis...I found a note
here on the passenger seat. Any
idea what it means?

Mark climbs into the drivers seat. Picks up the note.

NOTE (V.O.)

I hit him. I didn't stop. I'm
sorry.

Mark looks into the rearview mirror...

A devilish grin. A soul-piercing gaze.

Mark's breath catches. His heart pounds in his chest. He
whips his head around-nothing. The seat is empty.

He forces a nervous chuckle, shaking his head as if to
dismiss what he just saw.

EXT. CITY - CONTINUOUS

RANDOM COP

Are you okay...Detective Davis? You
look like you've seen ghost.

MARK DAVIS

Yeah...

MARK DAVIS (CONT'D)

(laughing nervously)
I must be seeing things...Right?

He rubs his neck, the same spot where John rubbed his
earlier, unknowingly repeating the gesture.

He glances into the rearview mirror, but it's empty now.