

FADE IN:

EXT. BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA – EARLY MORNING

Black screen. The steady hum of a dirt bike engine.

LUKE (V.O.)

This is it. I've been dreaming of this day my whole life.

FADE TO:

A golden fall morning in Boone, North Carolina. A 1993 Suzuki DR350 gleams in the sun.

EXT. THE COOP – FRONT YARD

LUKE (21), high-strung and insecure, double-checks the gear on his bike. His helmet shakes slightly in his grip.

SAM (21), grounded and pragmatic, sips black coffee on the porch, watching with quiet amusement.

RILEY (21), idealistic and restless, adjusts his bulky camcorder, already filming.

RILEY

(to camera)

Today's the day. The beginning of something epic. Or at least weird.

LUKE

You don't have to film everything, you know.

RILEY

We'll want to remember this. Especially when you wipe out.

SAM

Can we *please* leave before someone breaks something?

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD – DAY

The three cruise the winding Appalachian roads. It's beautiful — leaves burst with color. But something's tense beneath the surface.

MONTAGE:

- Luke keeps glancing in his mirror
- Riley's camcorder occasionally blocks his view
- Sam calls out turns, but Luke ignores him
- A near-miss with a truck startles them all
- At a gas station, Luke steps away to calm himself while Riley interviews an old man about the "freedom of the road"

EXT. TRAILHEAD – LATE AFTERNOON

Luke's bike sputters and dies.

LUKE

No. No no no.

RILEY

(grinning)

This is our *first* setback. Good content.

LUKE

(turns on Riley)

Do you ever stop filming? Can't you just *be here* for once?

RILEY

(caught off guard)

I thought that was the point.

SAM

Let's check the bike.

They work on it — Riley still filming quietly. Luke mutters about how this was supposed to go perfectly.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING – NIGHT

Campfire flickers. Luke paces.

LUKE

I planned this. I checked every part of that bike.

SAM

So it broke. Stuff happens.

LUKE

You don't get it. I needed this to *work*.

RILEY

(turns off camcorder)

Why?

A beat. Luke doesn't answer.

SAM

We're here now. That's what matters.

Silence. The tension simmers under the crackle of fire.

EXT. FOREST – EARLY MORNING

Riley sneaks a clip of Luke sleeping.

RILEY (quietly)

Don't worry. Not uploading. Just archiving.

Luke stirs.

LUKE

You ever think maybe people don't want to be archived?

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL – MIDDAY

Riley begins to limp. He hides it at first, then stumbles badly.

RILEY

I'm good. Just a roll.

SAM

We should rest.

LUKE

We're on a clock. My phone's dead, and Riley's ankle's getting worse.

Suddenly, a RECLUSIVE OLDER MAN appears. Rifle on his shoulder. They freeze.

RECLUSIVE MAN

Jerky?

SAM

Hell yes.

RILEY

(half-laughs, filming)
This is peak weirdness.

LUKE

You can stop filming now.

RILEY

(slowly puts down camcorder)
Right.

EXT. TRAIL – LATER

Rain begins to pour. Riley's limp worsens. They argue about direction. Luke wants to keep moving; Sam wants to stop.

INT. ABANDONED BARN – NIGHT

They take shelter. Riley collapses, in real pain.

LUKE

We should've stayed back.

SAM

Stop blaming everyone. You're not the only one carrying weight.

LUKE

You think this is about the trip?

SAM

Yeah, Luke. Because we don't know anything else.

A beat.

RILEY

I got the fight on tape. You want me to replay it for you?

Silence.

RILEY

I thought filming everything meant I was *part* of it. But maybe I'm just... outside.

LUKE

We've got to stop pretending this is some perfect story. It's not.

INT. BARN – DAWN

Sam and Luke create a makeshift crutch for Riley. They move with shared purpose now.

EXT. FINAL STRETCH – DAY

Miserable. Sore. Riley wobbles but keeps going. They help each other. It's not dramatic — it's stubborn.

EXT. RANGER STATION – PORCH – LATER

They sit, drained. No cheers, no laughs — just quiet understanding.

LUKE

I thought if I pulled this off... maybe I'd stop feeling like a failure.

SAM

You didn't pull it off.

(beat)

SAM

And we still don't think you're a failure.

EXT. CAMCORDER FOOTAGE – MONTAGE

Shaky footage: – Luke breaking down quietly by the fire

– Riley wincing but smiling

– Sam holding Riley steady

– Silent nods

– Morning sun lighting up the barn

RILEY (V.O.)

We film because we want to remember. But the best moments — the real ones — they're the ones you don't *need* to watch again. You just feel them.

FADE OUT.

THE END.