

Retribution

by
James Temple and Juan Mas

Story by
Juan Mas

Purple Crayon Pictures
434 West 26th Ave
(509) 370- 3449

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EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

The BACK TIRE

of a car SCREECHES to a stop, leaving a trail of smoking rubber on the asphalt.

The car's front end halts just short of a blurry human figure ZOOMING past on a bicycle. Another CAR following hard on his heels halts just short of the first car.

Without giving a thought to the other vehicles missing him by even thinner margins, the CYCLIST swerves into a side street and cuts into an alley.

The cars start again, but -

SCREECH! They lurch to a stop again to avoid two motorcycles flying through the intersection, obviously also after the cyclist.

The drivers wrestle with their steering, trying to pick up the pace - one goes down the side street, the other down the alley -

EXT. ALLEY - AFTERNOON

ZAK, 22, lithe and focused and crouched low on his bike, FLIES through the barren, tunnel-like passage at a blistering speed.

Sunlight FLASHES every time he TEARS through one of the deserted cross streets - with each blaze of light we catch a glimpse of his face, cut and bruised and pitted with two hollow, deep-sunk eyes - they widen when he sees -

A DELIVERY TRUCK

Dead ahead, parked diagonally, blocking the whole alley. Its driver casually unloads supplies off the lift gate.

Zak glances behind him - that motorcycle is gaining fast -

Even though he's bearing down on the truck at a frightful speed, Zak's mind is thinking so far ahead that to him, the gap is closing at a snail's pace -

The delivery man saunters onto the lift gate, engages the motor - with a grinding WHIR, it lifts off the pavement -

Zak is almost at the truck - the motorcycle is breathing down the back of his neck - the driver finally notices the motorcycle's approaching ROAR, looks up -

Zak SNAPS the handlebars back - suddenly, the bike is airborne-

- its tires KISS the moving lift gate -

- and WHOOSH - he's back on the pavement and away.

The driver's head spins around to watch Zak vanish into the distance - his hand is still on the controls, the lift gate still rising -

The motorcycle tries the same maneuver but -

BAM!! The front tire hits the gate dead-on. Both rider and cycle are sent flying.

The driver can only watch in horror as man and machine pirouette through the air before -

CRASH! Both shatter on the unforgiving pavement.

Zak looks back at the carnage, smiles.

He doesn't get to enjoy the moment for long - the second motorcycle SKIDS into the alley from the side street, completely out of control.

Like the truck, it's coming at him like a cannonball, but to Zak, it's practically crawling - he cuts into the same side street it just emerged from, ducking out of the alley altogether - it skids toward the opposite wall -

CRASH! One more perfectly good motorcycle, instantly reduced to shrapnel.

EXT. SIDE STREET - AFTERNOON

Again Zak looks back. He takes a deep breath - that's two of them, at least, that won't be getting up again.

Suddenly, a pallet of toilets pulls out in front of him - he cuts a hard left, leaving only centimeters between himself and the pallet -

Before he can regain control, a car backs onto the street from a side garage -

This time, even in his hyper-alert state, there's no time to react. At all.

ZAK (V.O.)
Ever had one of those days ...

BANG!! The bike's front wheel sinks three inches into the car's sheet metal.

ZAK (V.O.)
Really toilets

Zak's body shoots over the car's roof like a human missile.

ZAK (V.O.)
Seriously. And why are they always getting into the path of the speeding getaway car, chase car, whatever?

He clears the car, looks down at the asphalt - to anyone else, it would be a blur, but to him, it's like a stroll.

ZAK (V.O.)
But this moment, compared to the rest of today - it's not so bad. Kinda relaxing, actually.

The pavement is slowly getting closer. The inevitable coming at him at a snail's pace -

ZAK (V.O.)
It's not so bad. Kinda relaxing, actually. Sucks that this has been the best part of my whole day.

Suddenly, the ground ROARS back into fast motion -

ZAK (V.O.)
This is gonna hurt.

WHAM!!!

And with the impact -

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Aglow with a riot of streetlights, the hustle of large metropolis.

ZAK (V.O.)
I've learned to look.

Zak CRUISES down the street, once more on his bicycle, weaving between the trucks and tricycles and mopeds of Saturday night traffic with acrobatic grace.

ZAK (V.O.)

Look ahead. To the side. Behind.
Everywhere.

He's so good that random drivers give him SHOUTS of disapproval, and he acknowledges them with a cool wave of one hand.

ZAK (V.O.)

When you're traveling close to 35 miles an hour on a vehicle that has no door and no seat belts, and a road with plenty of idiots, you never know.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHT

He turns off the large commercial street to one full of nightclubs and young people, the whole place alive with the anticipation of a wild evening out.

He hops off the bike seat and glides with such grace through the crowd.

ZAK (V.O.)

So I can feel this is where the story really begins. You know, before the shit hit the fan.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

Zak glides to halt next to the block-long line of young patrons waiting to get in. He takes a second to straighten his clothes, smooth down his hair -

ZAK (V.O.)

See? No cuts, no bruises, no scars, no mad, corrosive, psychotic terror. That all comes later. Right now my life is good.

He walks up past the line outside and the bouncer lets him in as though he is some kind of celebrity. A HOWL of protest goes up from the rest of the line, but the bouncer doesn't seem to notice.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Zak swaggers through the crowded night club. The lights pulse to the DJ's driving a beat, the party is in full swing.

ZAK (V.O.)

How can I complain? I'm 22 years old, I've shrugged off the pressure to go into the mind-numbing drone lifestyle half these people are trying so hard to forget about.

He walks up to the bar - two men his age, Lou and Calvin, raise their shot glasses to him in greeting -

LOU & CALVIN

ZAK!!!!

ZAK (V.O.)

Meet Lou and Calvin. Friends since we were twelve, and all of us junkies.

They toast and slam back the drinks.

ZAK (V.O.)

Not that kind of junkie, genius. We're not geniuses either, but we're not that dumb. Adrenaline junkies.

Calvin, six feet tall and built like a linebacker, gives Zak a bear hug.

ZAK (V.O.)

What's the celebration? Calvin here doesn't have to go to jail.

EXT. HIGH RISE ROOFTOP - DAY (FLASHBACK)

ZAK (V.O.)

You see, there was a little trouble over something he had to try. Heck, we all wanted to try ...

Calvin CLIPS a harness shut around his ample midsection, slips on a mask, gives some unseen buddies a thumbs up -

- and takes a running leap right off the edge.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGH RISE - DAY

Calvin skims just over the mighty glass flank of the building, watching his reflection dance and ripple next to him -

ZAK (V.O.)
 Hey, tall buildings are made for
 parachuting off of. They just are,
 y'know?!

He pops the cord and -

WHAM! Rockets back up.

ZAK (V.O.)
 So jealous. But we played rock-
 paper-scissors. He won.

EXT. CITY STREET-- DAY

Like a rotund Bacchus descending to earth, Calvin THUMPS onto
 the sidewalk among the pedestrians.

They only take a second to get over their shock before
 BREAKING into applause. Calvin stands, gives a gracious bow,
 throws a three finger gesture and then -

UGH! Three police officers knock him to the ground.

ZAK (V.O.)
 You know what? I think the cops
 were jealous, too.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Another round of shots goes down the hatch.

ZAK (V.O.)
 Dumbest thing ever? Hell yeah. The
 last? Not even close.

They POUND their fists on the bar, call for another round.

ZAK
 So what did they say?

CALVIN
 Okay, first they asked: why? No,
 really, why?

LOU
 That's what they all say!

ZAK
 And what do we say?

ZAK, CALVIN & LOU
Because it was there!

A round of LAUGHTER.

CALVIN
Then the amazing part: she
convinced them to let me off with
community service!

LOU
"Hello, children. My name is Calvin
and I am an idiot!"

Calvin delivers a punch to the upper arm that almost sends
the shorter, weedier Lou spinning down the bar.

CALVIN
Not even, stick-boy. What you say
is: "Hello, children, I did a very
stupid thing and you should never
do it ... UNLESS IT'S FREAKIN'
AWESOME!!!"

The shots arrive. They each grab one. Toast.

ZAK
To Stupidity!

CALVIN & LOU
To Stupidity!

CLINK! And there goes a third round.

ZAK
So, this miracle worker ...

CALVIN
(halfway to soused)
Hm?

ZAK
This attorney that got you off. She
around here?

Calvin leans back on the bar, stretches his face into a big,
goofy grin, and points right between Zak's eyes.

CALVIN
Right *there*.

Zak looks quizzical for a second, then turns to look behind
him, out over the dance floor ...

... And there she is. A beauty with the face of an angel, and a body that moves like the crack of a whip.

ZAK (V.O.)

Her name: Mia. A 26-year-old professional. Very serious, very proper ... until she hits the floor.

Zak heads her way. The boys watch the show from the bar.

Zak cuts in, starts strutting his stuff. She ignores him at first, but he's the only one there with moves to match hers.

She gets interested - they move closer - he leans in close, so close that when he whispers in her ear, it doesn't matter what he says, the sound is as physical as a caress ...

Somehow her arms find their way around his neck and they both start moving in unison, enjoying each other to the music ...

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door flies open and light from the hallway floods in. Zak and Mia come spinning inside, locked in what amounts to a sexual wrestling match, each one battling toward exquisite mutual conquest -

He somehow gets a leg free long enough to KICK the door shut - everything goes to black again -

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

And they go spinning through another door. Their hands attack each other's clothes - zippers open, buttons pop off, clasps unsnap - they just can't seem to get through all the layers fast enough.

With loose clothing fluttering down everywhere, they CRASH onto the bed, nearly nude - they wrestle and jockey for position without ever seeming to give up on the deep, passionate kiss that ignited it all -

ZAK (V.O.)

Now, you may ask, what's my secret for getting a girl into bed with me just like that? Well, it's actually pretty ... oh, wow ... uhm, pretty simple ... you just pick one, and...

The night stand clock reads 1:12 a.m. as the mad lovemaking scene pauses for an instant, just long enough for him to say -

ZAK

Hey, it's October 6 now. Happy anniversary.

She LAUGHS, they plunge right back into it -

ZAK (V.O.)

Dating her for three years straight. Living together one year.

They calm down a little, start getting down to business.

ZAK (V.O.)

Mmm, this would be a nice memory to just stay with for a while. But that's the problem - I can't ever think of this now without immediately thinking of the day after ...

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - MORNING

The sheets are a tangle, the mattress halfway off the frame, every piece of furniture is toppled or askew - geez, kids. From the bathroom comes the sound of -

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - MORNING

THE SHOWER coming on. Mia stands under the water, letting it cascade over her face.

Zak leans against the sink, halfheartedly brushing his teeth. Really, he's just taking any excuse to look at her.

MIA

Never thought I'd hear you say those words.

ZAK

Aw, c'mon, I've used that line on you in three other clubs -

MIA

(giggling)

Not that one. 'Happy anniversary.'

He all but chokes on his toothbrush. She GIGGLES again. And it's not a little girl's giggle, either - she knows exactly what she's doing.

MIA

Gotcha. Seriously, I could print you a list of all the good legal reasons to get married, it'll be as long as your -

PTOO! He spits in the sink.

MIA

Or do I just love you because you're so refined?

ZAK

You know, in some countries, the wife is literally the property of her husband.

MIA

I write the contracts, sexy, that's not in there anymore.

ZAK

Hey, we had a great night, a great day, what more can you expect? A great year, that's too much pressure, but day-by-day, c'mon, that's something we can always handle.

MIA

Until I 'forget' who you are at the next club.

And there's that GIGGLE again.

ZAK

Oh, now, that's it -

He jumps into the shower with her and another wrestling match is underway. This time, it's more playful, and with the sound of her LAUGHTER -

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Marriage or not, this is a couple's apartment, with his-and-hers everywhere. A small law library versus a rack of DVDs and CDs. Glass desk versus a gaming console on wood and cinderblocks.

Far outnumbering photos of the happy couple are snapshots of Zak's trio in the midst of (or immediately after) some outlandish stunt, always holding up three fingers to the camera.