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T H E N C A M E B R O N S O N

A LONG TRIP TO YESTERDAY

Prod. #6456

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THEN CAME BRONSON

"A Long Trip To Yesterday"

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

1

It is early morning...and we are looking down a long, desolate stretch of desert highway. Momentarily, we HEAR A MOTORCYCLE approaching. Then, BRONSON, at first a mere dot on the horizon, rides into view.

MOVING SHOT - BRONSON

2

riding easy, at a smooth clip. His manner is carefree and without immediate purpose. Then, he reacts to something he sees up ahead.

BRONSON'S POV - MOTORCYCLE

3

stranded by the side of the road. (NOTE: Bronson's view of the rider is largely blocked by the man's bike ...a big Harley with full fenders, racks, tandem, mirrors and AM-FM radio. This type of bike is commonly referred to as a "hog.")

BACK TO BRONSON

4

He rides past the stranded bike, giving the situation a concerned look, then broadens his bike smartly and rides back to the hog. Bronson cuts off his engine, then approaches the rider.

BRONSON

Need any help?

TATE (warning)

Don't touch my hog!

Bronson reacts to the warning. Then, HENRY TATE, a powerfully-built, black man, in his late twenties, comes

from behind the hog. Bronson reacts to the sight of Tate...taken slightly aback.

4
CONT'D
(2)

Tate's manner is feisty...making it more than apparent he wants no assist from Bronson. The black man mounts his hog, tries to kick it over...but to no avail.

BRONSON

It's not getting any gas! Try choking it.

Tate gives Bronson a long hard look.

TATE

Man, why don't you ride on! I don't need your help.

Bronson smiles, stating:

BRONSON

You're a long way from nowhere...

TATE

My hog ain't never failed me yet.

(beat)

Ride on, man...we'll make it without you.

ANOTHER ANGLE

5

Bronson regards Tate briefly, then walks over and mounts his bike. He turns on the ignition, kicks the engine over, then gives Tate a thoughtful look.

CLOSE SHOT - TATE

6

He is somewhat angered by the ease with which Bronson has started his bike. Tate reflects briefly, then angrily attempts to kick his hog over.

CLOSE SHOT - BRONSON

7

watching the angry, black man with concern and a hint of amusement.

CLOSE SHOT - TATE

8

He has lost his cool and is angry as hell. The black man, in frustration, kicks the hog over again...again... again...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - CLOSE SHOT - TATE - DAY

9

We are in TIGHT on Tate, riding his hog smoothly down the highway...his mood angry. Then, WIDEN ANGLE to reveal a smiling Bronson...towing the black man.

OVER SCENE we HEAR the strains of "Little Red Wagon" as we INTERCUT the glowering Tate and grinning Bronson.

LONG MOVING SHOT - BRONSON AND TATE

10

as they travel along the highway.

EXT. HARVEY GAS STATION - FULL SHOT - DAY

11

The station garage is the small roadside type and it proclaims itself to be "The last chance for gas till you reach El Mirage." Bronson tows Tate into the station... stopping in front of the gas pumps.

EXT. STATION OFFICE - PETE - DAY

12

PETE HARVEY, the crafty old codger who owns and operates the station, sits in a rickety old chair, in front of the station office, observing Bronson and Tate with some interest. Pete's manner is lethargic. The old codger slowly and with great effort, lifts himself out of the chair and approaches Bronson and Tate.

PETE (to Tate)

You run out of gas, boy?

Tate reacts to the word "boy."

TATE

No. You got a mechanic?

PETE

What's your trouble?

12

CONT'D

(2)

BRONSON

Fuel pump is shot.

Tate gives Bronson a look.

PETE

You sure?

Tate nods, reluctantly. Pete turns toward the garage and yells:

PETE

Buster!?

(beat; louder)

Buster! You got a customer!

EXT. GARAGE - MED. SHOT - BUSTER - DAY

13

A big, slow-witted man of thirty, ambles out of the garage. His overalls, face and hands, are covered with grease. This is BUSTER HARVEY, Pete's son.

BUSTER (shouts)

What'd you say, Pa?

EXT. STATION - MED. SHOT - BRONSON, TATE, PETE - DAY

14

Bronson and Tate exchange a questioning look.

PETE (shouts)

You got yourself a customer!

TATE (apprehensively)

He's your mechanic?

PETE (nods)

Yep!

(beat)

Best in the neighborhood.

(he laughs at his little joke)

When it comes to things mechanical...

Buster's a whiz.

NEW ANGLE - FAVORING BUSTER

15

The big man ambles over to the bikes and looks at them...
a bit confused.

BUSTER

Which one needs fixin', Pa?

PETE

The fancy one with all the do-dads!

Buster mounts the hog, then kicks it over a couple of
times.

TATE

You know what you're doing?

BUSTER

Uh huh! My Pa'll tell you...I'm the
best mechanic in the...

BRONSON (cutting in)

Neighborhood?

BUSTER (nodding)

Uh huh!

Bronson smiles pleasantly at the worried Tate. Buster
kicks the hog over a couple more times, then states:

BUSTER

It ain't gettin' no gas!

BRONSON

We know, Buster. Can you fix it?

BUSTER (proudly)

Sure, I can fix it! I'll put another
fuel pump on 'er...and you'll see.

Without any further exchange, Buster unhitches the tow
chain, then pushes the hog off into the garage...leaving
Bronson and Tate momentarily at a loss for words.

Pete smiles broadly as he regards Tate...somewhat amused
by the black man's reaction.

PETE (teasing)

You ain't worried about your motor-
cycle...are you, boy?

Tate regards Pete, his expression clearly indicating he is more than worried, then Tate nods. Pete's smile broadens and he states:

15
CONT'D
(2)

PETE

Ain't no need to worry. Like I said, that boy of mine is a pure-dee whiz when it comes to engines.

(beat)

He's a might slow, but he can fix anything from a power mower...to a diesel tractor.

TATE

How long will it take?

PETE

Two...maybe three hours.

Tate reacts.

TATE

I can't wait that long.

PETE

You ain't got no choice, boy.

(beat)

You can't rush Buster.

Pete heads for the garage, but stops at:

BRONSON

Where's the nearest cafe?

PETE

Hank Gibson's. About eight miles up the highway.

Pete walks off in the direction of the garage. Bronson regards Tate for a brief moment, then questions:

BRONSON

You want to get a bite to eat?

Tate reflects for a beat, then slowly shakes his head.

BRONSON (continuing)

You're not hungry?

Tate reflects for a beat, then states:

15
CONT'D
(3)

TATE

...I'd just as soon wait here while
they fix my hog.

Jim regards Tate for a moment, turns on his ignition,
then kicks his bike over. He revs the engine a couple
of times. Tate regards Bronson coolly, then states:

TATE

I don't want no more favors from you.

(beat)

Can you dig it?

Bronson reacts, then states:

BRONSON (beat)

I wasn't offering to buy.

Tate mounts Bronson's bike and Bronson takes off.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOVING SHOT - BRONSON AND TATE - DAY

16

as they ride down the highway at a good clip. There are
several bends in the road and Bronson corners them
smoothly. Bronson's mood is reflective and a bit con-
cerned. Tate's mood is quiet and pensive. After several
moments:

BRONSON

What's got you up-tight?

(beat)

Your hog?

TATE

Is that what you think's got me
up-tight?

BRONSON

I don't know.

TATE (beat)

You've got your strokes...and I've
got mine. Let's leave it that way!

EXT. BILLBOARD - FULL SHOT - HIGHWAY PATROLMAN - DAY

17

on a motorcycle...partially hidden by the billboard. The PATROLMAN watches with purpose as Bronson and Tate ride past. Then, he kicks his cycle over and takes off after Bronson.

EXT. HIGHWAY - BRONSON AND TATE - DAY

18

The patrolman pulls up alongside Bronson and motions him to stop. Bronson reacts to the patrolman, then questions, "Who, me?" The patrolman nods and Bronson breaks his speed down.

NEW ANGLE

19

as Bronson and the patrolman pull their bikes onto the soft shoulder, cut their engines and dismount.

PATROLMAN (friendly)

How are you?

BRONSON

Fine!

(beat)

What's the trouble, officer?

The patrolman regards Bronson and Tate, friendly, then states:

PATROLMAN

No trouble.

(to Tate)

May I see your driver's license, please.

Tate regards the patrolman...a bit annoyed.

TATE

What for?

PATROLMAN

I'd like to see it! Just routine.

(to Tate; politely)

Your license, please.

Tate regards the patrolman and an angry scowl begins to etch the black man's face.

TATE

He was drivin'!

19

CONT'D

(2)

PATROLMAN (nods)

I know.

The patrolman smiles in a friendly manner at Tate...his manner in no way pushy. Tate reflects for a moment, then takes his license from his wallet and hands it to the officer.

PATROLMAN

Thank you.

Bronson and Tate exchange a look. The black man is on the verge of losing his self-control and fights to keep his cool. The patrolman examines Tate's license, then questions:

PATROLMAN

Henry Tate?

Tate nods, slowly.

PATROLMAN (continuing)

From Los Angeles?

TATE

That's right.

PATROLMAN

What brings you to Arizona, Mr. Tate?

Tate exchanges a look with Bronson, then states:

TATE (flatly)

A funeral!

The patrolman reacts ever so slightly, then hands Tate his license.

PATROLMAN

Sorry I detained you, Mr. Tate.

(beat; smiles)

You're not the man we're looking for.

Bronson and Tate react.

PATROLMAN (continuing)

The fellow we're looking for is a
couple of inches shorter than you!

19
CONT'D
(3)

Tate regards the officer briefly. Slowly, a sweet smile etches the black man's face and, with hidden meaning, he questions:

TATE

Haven't you caught that cat, yet?

Patrolman reacts.

TATE (continuing)

That cat's been doggin' me all my
life.

The patrolman reacts, a bit flustered. Bronson regards Tate with a smile...completely enjoying the confrontation. The patrolman regards Tate briefly, then mounts his cycle and kicks it over. The white officer gives the black man another look, then slowly, a smile etches his face and he says:

PATROLMAN

Have a good day, Mr. Tate.

Tate gives the patrolman a big smile and states:

TATE

I'm tryin', officer.

The patrolman rides off. Bronson regards Tate with a hint of admiration, then questions:

BRONSON

Did you enjoy yourself?

TATE

Nobody lays any mess on me.

(beat)

I don't shuck...and I don't jive...
and nobody shucks and jives me.

(beat)

Can you dig it?

Bronson reflects for a beat, nods, then states:

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BRONSON

I can dig it.

19
CONT'D
(4)

Bronson and Tate mount Bronson's bike. Bronson kicks
the bike over and they take off.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE