

One for the Road

A remix by  
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Based on the play "One for the Road"  
By  
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NICK looks up at them.

JOHN playfully quiets them. Respect.

TWO SECURITY GUARDS march NICK over to the chair, sit him down and check his mic.

JOHN takes a seat. The SECURITY GUARDS retreat to the shadows, heavily armed.

The AUDIENCE falls quiet.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (Mock intense.)  
 What have you to confess?

Silence. NICK stares at him. Trying to speak.

NICK  
 I --

JOHN  
 (Chuckling.)  
 I'm kidding.  
 (beat)  
 Good evening! Welcome. How's it going? Wait --

A pause and JOHN stands, walks over to him.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 You're a civilized man. So am I.

JOHN unlocks NICK's cuffs and drops them on the desktop. NICK eyes the cuffs and then the AUDIENCE.

The AUDIENCE murmurs a bit.

John stands over Nick, staring him down.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Quick tip before we begin, be specific. That's the key. The key is to be specific. Anyone who's walked out that door, and by door I mean the big one, knows through and through how far we like to stretch the details. Okay? Very good.  
 Now --  
 (to the audience)  
 You ready?

The AUDIENCE cheers. Huge.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Don't kid yourself. These people are hungry. These people, our people, are here for one thing and one thing only, the god's honest truth. And nothing else. Do you understand? Good.

They cheer even louder.

JOHN stares NICK down amidst the noise. Finally he respectfully shushes the AUDIENCE. They quiet.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Now, we'd like you to make a statement.

NICK looks at him. He doesn't seem to understand.

JOHN reaches in his pocket, pulls out an envelop and hands it to NICK.

NICK hesitates and opens it. He reads the paper and looks back up at JOHN.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

NICK does not move. A long beat.

JOHN grabs it from him and folds it back into his pocket.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Maybe you're just confused?

He marches back over to his desk.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Or maybe... you think it's a bit sensational? Some sort of gimmick. For the ratings. I see your point. You are very smart.

(sits)

Tell me, do you enjoy Television? The way it shines in your eyes?

(beat)

I think that's why I love it so much. *It shines*. Your little eyeballs can't help but zero in on it and watch.

(beat.)

That is, of course, if it's real. Not all TV is real. But when it is, you can tell.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Even these days, I think you can tell the difference. Seeing is still believing, don't you think? Who do you think blinks more, you or me? Do I seem serious to you? Something about you reeks and I'm not sure what it is. I'm going to have a drink.

He reaches into his suit coat and pulls out a flask, pours whiskey into his coffee cup. The AUDIENCE chuckles. He shrugs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You're probably wondering where your wife is. She'll be here soon. She was here yesterday, actually.  
(drinks)  
Real firecracker.  
(drinks)  
Mmmm... that hits the spot.

He pours another.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I can hold my booze.

The AUDIENCE laughs. He turns to them.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What?

They laugh harder. He plays up the joke, taking a drink. He looks over to NICK. The laughter dies out.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Enough. Let's get to work.

A single hoot from the AUDIENCE. John stands and strolls around the desk. *Begins his interrogation.*

JOHN (CONT'D)

(rhetorical)

I'm wondering, what kind of man you are. Every man has weaknesses. Many more than he's able to admit. Many that are quite surprising to him. This, I've come to learn, is always the case. I look at you and my mind fills with ways to make you talk in clear easily understandable sentences. The kind that answer questions. Good questions. Do you work hard enough?

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you believe in god? Do you love your father? Do you love your country?

(beat)

Do you love your country?

Pause. NICK wrestles with how to respond. JOHN marches to his face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's a simple question, sir! The simplest of questions. Are you a fink? Do you hate your people? That's the question I really want to ask. Do you hate your people? The people that would have you and protect you and fight for you?

Nick stares him down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Stand up!

Nick does. Slowly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Sit down.

The AUDIENCE laughs and claps. NICK realizes he's at the end of a another joke. Slowly sits back down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

God, look at you.

(drinks)

And what a firecracker your wife is too. Makes me wonder.

(drinks)

You know what? I don't think this is going too well. Something is missing.

(re: offscreen)

Todd, it's missing something don't you think?

The STUDIO CAMERA whip pans over to TODD, the floor director. He nods and shrugs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(re: Todd)

Maybe it's a chemistry thing?

(sits down and scoots up to Nick)

Listen, something about you and me just doesn't gel.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

It happens of course, in the industry. You've seen it. Two people go head to head, try their best, but one of them just can't hang. A weak link. Which one of us do you think that is?

Silence.

JOHN stands in presentation of the argument.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Well, there's me. I maintain two million viewers a night. Two million. They tune in, to me, for the God's honest truth. They tune in because they know I'll get it. When you're good at something, people take notice. That's me.

A slow building applaud. NICK is silent.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Then there's you. Pigfuck. Pigfuck with no respect. Tell me something...

(pours another drink)

... One for the Road I think.

(beat)

Tell me. Pigfuck. I'm curious, do you respect me?

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you respect me?

NICK guesses.

NICK

I don't know you.

JOHN looks to the AUDIENCE in mock amazement. They hoot and holler.

JOHN

What did you say?

(beat)

You don't *know me*?

(beat)

Now, do you mean, you don't know me? Never come across me?

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Just have that one blind spot,  
never turned the dial to this  
particular channel, or is it that  
you don't *know me*? Or simply that  
you don't *know me*?

Pause.

NICK

I don't know you.

Pause. JOHN smiles.

JOHN

I see. You don't know me.  
Probably don't understand the full  
nature of your predicament, do you?  
(beat)  
Todd, let's go ahead and run the  
promo, why don't we?

The CAMERA whip pans over to the TODD, who waves his hand to  
a video booth nearby.

Respectful APPLAUD as --

A studio monitor in the foreground begins to run a flashy  
promo with a very serious announcer. The image is out of  
focus, we never see it clearly, something of an awful metal  
torture device.

ANNOUNCER

The last resort. The final arbiter  
of truth. When we must, we call  
upon *The machine*.

As the promo continues, Nick looks around in horror.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

With over sixty-three enhanced  
interrogation techniques, the  
machine has proven time and time  
again to break even the most  
hardened criminals and devoted  
evildoers. Phillips, Armando, The  
Flarety's, no matter what they're  
hiding, everyone speaks!

NICK looks over to JOHN, who quietly brushes an excess dust  
off his desk and doesn't look back.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)  
 Once onboard, they face the human  
 limits of pain, panic and  
 humiliation. We'll do what we must  
 to get that which matters the  
 most... the God's honest truth!  
 Show your respect for THE MACHINE!!

Mechanized machine sounds.

4

INT. THE STAGE

4

The AUDIENCE with a sure applaud.

NICK is silent. JOHN adjusts his tie as the applaud dies  
 out. Goes back into game face.

JOHN  
 (offering)  
 Whiskey?

NICK doesn't move.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Goodness, how did it come to this?  
 (pours)  
 That really is the question, isn't  
 it?  
 (drinks)  
 Thing is, it's always the same  
 story. Always. Confused young  
 man, means well, but falls in with  
 the wrong crowd. And why not?  
 They're hip, charismatic, probably  
 seem very smart. They make great  
 friends. One step leads to another  
 and then one day, I come knocking  
 at your door.  
 (pause)  
 And the sad part is, these friends  
 of yours, these people... they roll  
 over on you pretty quick. Because  
 sooner or later, one way or  
 another, everyone talks. Everyone.  
 Your neighbors. Your coworkers.  
 Your wife. Your son.  
 (beat)  
 Oh shit. Did I mention that your  
 son is here?

Something shifts in NICK.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I should have told you, I guess.  
He's going to be on the show  
tonight. Congratulations.

(drinks)

Nice kid, but I'm not sure he's all  
there. Might have a disability of  
sorts. Not all parents can tell.  
That's okay.

NICK buries his head down. The AUDIENCE wows. JOHN is on to  
him now.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Is this upsetting you? Talking  
about your son? I think it is. It  
upset your wife. A lot. She  
didn't look her best, I think.

(beat)

Of course, being on the show will  
do that. Especially several times  
in the same week. The machine can  
really grind a person down.  
Particularly young women. Couple  
days in and they stop making sense.  
Start mumbling, sputtering sentence  
fragments, incoherent blather. It's  
bad for moral. Not to mention  
audio.

(beat)

Did you wanna make a statement?

NICK mumbles something.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Come on. Don't hold back, say it  
like you mean it.

NICK

Fuck you!

JOHN stands and calls upon the Gods.

JOHN

Fuck me? Fuck me? I think not. I  
think you're desperate. A  
desperate man. A desperate pigfuck  
of a man who implicated his wife  
and his son --

NICK

They don't know anything!

JOHN

What?

NICK

They don't know anything.

JOHN

What?

NICK

(begs)

They don't know anything.

JOHN looks to the audience. Looks back.

JOHN

Do you honestly expect us to just... take your word for it?

(beat)

Huh?

Pause. John turns to the AUDIENCE.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Should we take his word for it?

The AUDIENCE hoots "No!" JOHN turns back to NICK. Nick looks at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Don't look at me. You made your bed. I told you they were hungry for one thing and one thing only.

(beat)

Jill, let's fire that thing up shall we?

We hear promo music for the MACHINE begin. An APPLAUD from the AUDIENCE. JOHN nods to the security guards. They handcuff NICK and stand him up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(To the audience.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not like doing this. You do not like watching, I know. But I must do this, and you must stand witness. Unfortunately, it is necessary, sometimes, to do what is ugly in the service of what is right.

CUT to WIDE. NICK is struggling against his captors.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

This man is a symbol of the corruption that has too long stalked our great land. The safety and prosperity of every man, woman and child is at stake. We will not tolerate another fallen city!

Cheering from the crowd.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We will continue the spirit of this great nation!

More Bigger cheering!! John's voice booming over everything.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We will find, through any means necessary, the God's honest truth!

APPLAUD. Cacophony. The audience is on its feet, the machine whines away. Nick Struggling against the gurads for dear life. Total bedlam.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Right after this message from our sponsors!

CUT TO:

5 COMMERCIALS. SEVERAL OF THEM. REAL ONES. HAIR DYE, BEER 5 AND TV SHOW PROMOS.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. STAGE

The TV CAMERA zooms up to JOHN. THE APPLAUD in the background. JOHN nodding to a return APPLAUD.

JOHN

So many questions. What about toys? You like toys?

CAMERA swings over to a small boy in the chair. This is KEVIN.

KEVIN

Sometimes.

AUDIENCE giggles.

JOHN

What toys do you enjoy the most?

KEVIN

Video games.

JOHN

Of course. Everybody likes video games. But toys you can hold in your hand. They're things you can touch and feel. Do you have any of those?

KEVIN

Yes.

JOHN

Do you have a favorite?

KEVIN

I guess so.

JOHN

Okay, I want you to close your eyes picture it in your mind.

(pause)

Go ahead.

KEVIN does.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Okay now I'm guess what it is. Okay? You ready? Let me think. Let me think.

(beat)

Do you like your mom and dad?

Pause.

A little laughter. KEVIN doesn't seem to understand.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you like your mom and dad?

Pause.

KEVIN

Yes.

JOHN

Why?

Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Why?

Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Is that a hard question to answer?

Pause.

KEVIN

Where's my mom?

JOHN

You don't like your mom and dad, do you?

KEVIN

Yes I do.

JOHN

Why?

(beat)

Why?

Long pause. JOHN sits back, pours himself a drink. He brings his finger to his lips, "Shhhh." The AUDIENCE giggles.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Was it a dragon? A blue dragon about this big with battle armor and fiery red tongue.

Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm tricky aren't I? Do you want to know how I did that?

KEVIN

Did you go in my house?

JOHN looks at the AUDIENCE. They laugh with him a little bit.

JOHN

You might be smarter than you look.

Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you wanna know how I really did that?

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)  
*(whispers)*  
 I see inside you.

Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 I think deep down, you're an angry  
 little boy.

Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 I think you've got a lot of little  
 things bouncing around in there.  
 Things you don't understand.  
 (beat)  
 I'm here to help you. I'm here to  
 make this... not what it has to be.  
 What do you think about that?

KEVIN  
 I want my mom.

JOHN  
 You don't think I can help you?

Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Buddy... you don't think... I'm the  
 kind of person that could help you?

6 INT. CONTROL ROOM

6

CAMERA PROPER pulls out and we realize we're watching a TV  
 feed in a control room. TV techs move about in black  
 silhouette, working quietly while we zero in on the show.

CUT TO:

7 INT. THE STAGE

7

A close-up profile of JOHN'S face as he stands, facing the  
 CROWD. SWEAT beading on his forehead. Stage lights in the  
 blackness.

JOHN  
 Let's go again, shall we?  
 (beat)  
 Where did you meet your husband?

GILA  
At a party.

JOHN  
A party. Like a rally?

GILA  
A cocktail party.

JOHN  
What for?

GILA  
What for?

JOHN turns.

JOHN  
What was the cocktail party for?

CAMERA whips over and pushes into GILA. She is badly beaten.  
Her eyes locked on JOHN.

GILA  
A friend.

JOHN  
A friend? What for?

GILA  
Why was she my friend?

JOHN  
Why was she having a cocktail  
party?

GILA  
She was graduating.

PAUSE. JOHN strolls around the desk.

JOHN  
Did he approach you?

GILA  
No.

JOHN  
Why not?

GILA  
Why not?

JOHN  
Why not?

GILA  
I approached him.

JOHN  
Why?

GILA  
I thought he was funny.

JOHN  
Did he tell jokes?

GILA  
Yes.

JOHN  
Tell me a joke.

PAUSE. JOHN chuckles.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Can't think of one?  
(to audience)  
This is a new kind of desperation.

Barely a chuckle from the audience.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Let's go again. Where did you meet  
your husband?

GILA  
In a street.

JOHN  
What were doing in a street?

GILA  
Walking.

JOHN  
Just walking?

GILA  
Yes.

JOHN  
Were you in a hurry?

GILA  
Yes.

JOHN  
And you ran into him?

GILA  
No.

PAUSE. JOHN turns.

GILA (CONT'D)  
I tripped. He helped me. He was kind.

Pause.

JOHN  
You were drunk. You were wasted. You vomited in the gutter and he held your hair. He had cash, so you took him home. And you fucked him in the foyer. Right on the ground. You opened the door, and fell, and pulled him right down on top of you and you fucked. You didn't even brush your teeth. Do you love this? Is that what this is? You enjoy playing games.

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You think we like looking at you? There on our stage. Handcuffed and battered, wretched and stinking in front of all of us? You're a ruined woman. Sullied. Of course you came in that way.

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Do you like the way this is going? Do you like our toys?  
(beat)  
Is that what you would call them? What would you call them?

GILA  
Not toys.

JOHN  
How did you meet your husband?

GILA  
In a park.

The AUDIENCE laughs a bit. With her. This catches JOHN off guard. He laughs. Desperately.

JOHN  
How many times have we done it?

She looks at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You and me. On the machine. How many times have we done it?

She looks at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Do the math, already. How many times? Five? Ten?  
(beat)  
Todd, what episode is this?

TODD doesn't know.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Turn it on.

The MACHINE kicks on. The PROMO music on in the background.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Maybe I do something different this time? Maybe upside down. Maybe naked. Anything goes, till we find the thing you don't like. How many times have we done it!?

GILA  
I don't know.

Long pause.

JOHN  
And you call yourself a reliable witness?

The AUDIENCE does not laugh. JOHN walks over and pours a drink.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
This is boring.  
(beat)  
I feel bad for your son. I really do. Poor little shit, has no idea. Could have grown up different. You had a choice. You could have told him the truth.  
(MORE)



NICK

*In the presence of these patriots which represent our country, I hereby renounce my past, my education, and my deeds. I will no longer live in shadow. I swear henceforth to do my duty and to obey the laws of man, and I am willing and ready to give up my life for these things. This is the God's Honest Truth.*

The crowd jumps to their feet in huge APPLAUD! MUSIC and LIGHTS fill the stage.

JOHN marches over and slaps NICK on the back.

JOHN

And that's why we're number one!  
Welcome to the team. You're a new man. How do you feel? You feel good, right?

NICK nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Right?

NICK

Yes.

JOHN

How about a drink? One for the road?

Pours two drinks and slides one over to NICK.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Take a drink.

NICK carefully grabs it with his fingers. Drinks. APPLAUD.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Now go.

(beat)

Leave. No one's stopping you. Go out there and live a life! Work hard. Be good. Enjoy the time you have.

(beat)

Your wife will be joining you in about a week or so. Maybe. We've still got some things to work out. I fear she's lost her mind.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Dementia perhaps. Something  
certifiable for sure. But I'm  
telling you that here, on this  
show, we never give up. Never.  
Alright?

NICK nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Alright.

NICK starts to stand, but mutters something to JOHN.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
What?

NICK mutters.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
What? Speak up.

NICK  
My son.

JOHN  
Oh yes, the boy. The boy. Must've  
slipped my mind.  
(beat)  
We're going to keep him around for  
awhile.

NICK stares at him.

CUT FEED: