

Truckin' with Smilin' Jack  
an original screenplay  
by Steve Sherman

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FADE IN:

INT. KEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

JACK Jensen is a homely yet happy, single plumber and electrician in his late 30s with a ready, toothy smile. KEN Morgan is a handsome but somber computer engineer in his late 30s. Jack's TRUCK is large with standard sides, a back gate and a bed long enough for a casket.

Suggested music: "Truckin' with Smilin' Jack" theme.

Pan Ken's desk which has items and pictures of family, including a picture of Ken and Jack years ago with the truck.

INT. SCHOOL - PAST, ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO

JACK

Ken, I've got a surprise for you.  
You won't believe it.

KEN

I don't believe it already.

JACK

No, really. I spoke with Shelley.

KEN

Shelley? She's out of your league.  
Did you ask her out?

JACK

Yes.

KEN

You've got guts. She would have  
told me no.

JACK

Actually, she wouldn't have.

KEN

Really?

JACK

Sort of. She told ME no. Then, I  
said I was actually asking for YOU.

KEN

No.

JACK

Yes.

KEN

I can't.

JACK

You can and you will. Gotta go.  
Here she comes.

INT. KEN'S DESK - PRESENT

Startled, Ken awakens from his daydream, with the sound of his keyboard clicking, his hands resting on the keys.

Exhaling, he lifts his hands to massage his face, stopping the clicking of the keyboard.

Ken looks up at the clock. It's a little after 6:30 PM.

JORDAN, Ken's boss and friend, is in the mid-50s or 60s.

JORDAN

Staying late?

KEN

I'm leaving now.

JORDAN

You worked all day yesterday, too.  
You should rest on Sunday.

Ken gets his jacket and briefcase.

KEN

It's okay.

JORDAN

When was the last time you took a  
real vacation?

KEN

You're right. See you tomorrow.

JORDAN

Or, not. You deserve some time off.

Ken hurries out.

JORDAN

Run some errands. Do some yardwork.  
Go out on a date. Anything.

With head shaking, Jordan smiles as Ken heads out.

INT. KEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Ken pauses to pick up an express-delivery envelope as he enters his apartment.

With a sigh, he kicks off his shoes and hangs up his overcoat.

KEN

Another Monday. Go to work. Go home. Back to work. Nothing changes.

Ken wanders over to the trash can next to his desk.

He glances at the envelope and sets it on the desk.

Standing over the trash can, he examines his mail, flipping bills on the desk and junk mail into the trash with his left hand, revealing no wedding ring.

KEN

Junk ... junk ... bill ... bill ...

He looks at the singles advertisement and pauses. It reads, "Would you like to meet the love of your life?"

With a sigh, he flips the ad into the trash can.

KEN

Junk.

Ken sits at the desk and reaches for the photo of Jack, him and Jack's truck from about 20 years ago.

Ken thoughtfully fondles the photo frame gently.

KEN

Good times. It's been a while. I should give Jack a call, if I can find his number.

Ken moves toward documents on his desk.

Ken notices one message pending on the answering machine.

He hits the button and listens.

BUBBA'S RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Morgan, this is an important message from Bubba Markey of Bubba Markey and Associates representing the estate of Jack Jensen.

KEN

Estate? What happened to Jack?

BUBBA'S RECEPTIONIST

We are notifying you regarding execution of his will, a matter which requires your immediate attention. We realize this is short notice, but we have arranged for your transportation tonight, the details of which should have already arrived.

(MORE)

## BUBBA'S RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Please return this call to confirm  
reception of this message.

Frantically, he retrieves the envelope, rips it open and  
scans it as an enclosed airline ticket falls to the floor.

Ken fumbles with his phone and dials, dropping the letter.

## RECEPTIONIST 1

Our offices are open from 9 to 5,  
Tuesday through Friday. If this is  
an emergency, please dial 1.

Ken dials 1 and a different voice responds.

## RECEPTIONIST 2

Your mailbox is full. Please try  
again later.

## KEN

This is impossible. Unbelievable.

Ken fumbles with his shoes, overcoat and briefcase.

JACK'S GHOST looks and acts like Jack, healthy and in his  
late 30s but with a gentle ghostly appearance.

## JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

Don't forget the letter and the  
ticket.

Ken pauses briefly to pick up the letter and ticket, then  
hurries out.

INT. KEN'S CAR - LATER

As Ken drives, he calls Jordan, juggling his cell phone.

## KEN

Hi, Jordan. I've got an emergency  
and need to head out of town.

## JORDAN

Sure, no problem. What happened?

## KEN

A close friend of mine ... He just  
passed away.

## JORDAN

Oh, I'm so sorry.

## KEN

His lawyer contacted me, something  
about his will.

JORDAN

Take what time you need.

KEN

Thanks. I only plan to be a couple of days. Talk to you soon.

Ken hangs up the phone.

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

You should pay more attention to the road. Don't get yourself killed.

KEN

Look who's talking.  
Look who's hearing voices.

Ken wipes away tears on his wrist.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO

Jack comes up to Ken who is eating lunch.

JACK

Hi. I'm Jack. This seat taken?

KEN

Take it. I'm Ken.

JACK

Thanks. So, what are you into?

KEN

Computers.

JACK

Cool.

Some boys start playfully fighting nearby.

KEN

You?

JACK

Dunno, yet. But, I've been doing some volunteer work ...

The boys playfully fighting land on Jack, knocking him on the floor and causing his lunch to get spilled and tossed.

KEN

Hey.

The boys run off, laughing.

KEN

You okay?

Jack smiles broadly, picking himself up and laughing it off.

JACK

It could have been worse. They could have knocked out some teeth. Could have ruined a perfectly good smile.

Ken helps Jack clean up.

KEN

Here, I'm not that hungry. You can have the rest of my lunch.

JACK

Thanks. You're a good friend, Ken.

INT. CAR - PRESENT

KEN

Glad you think so. But, I could have been a better friend. You deserved better.

Ken pulls into the airport parking lot.

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

Well, aside from not calling for, how many years has it been? Anyway, I still always knew you were my friend, that you always would be.

Ken pulls over to a parking spot at the airport.

KEN

You don't understand. Your passing comes at a time when I already feel like such a failure.

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

Failure? You?

KEN

Sure. I fail all the time.

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

Funny. It seems to me you are pretty much always successful.

KEN

I've done okay with work. But, not with life. Not like you. I never struck out, never took any chances.

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

Yeah, I'm the success at life -- and I'm dead.

Pause as Ken slumps in dejection.

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)  
Come on, Ken. I'm just kidding.  
You're good at figuring out how to  
succeed. You'll figure it out.

Ken gets out of the car and collects his items.

KEN  
Just kidding. That's probably what  
he'd really say.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Ken and Jack's Ghost walk to the terminal. Jack's Ghost is now visible, but only to Ken and the audience.

KEN  
I meant to call, Jack. I really  
wish you hadn't died.

JACK'S GHOST  
Yeah. Me, too.

INT. TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER

Ken steps up to the terminal desk.

JACK'S GHOST  
Hey, she's cute. Do you think she  
could go for me?

The TERMINAL CLERK is professional, courteous and beautiful.

Jack's Ghost gets up on the counter and lies on his side facing the lady Terminal Clerk.

TERMINAL CLERK  
Hi. Can I help you?

JACK'S GHOST  
Oh, baby, can you.

KEN  
Yes, I'm Ken Morgan. I understand  
you have a ticket for me?

TERMINAL CLERK  
May I see a picture ID, please?

JACK'S GHOST  
Why settle for just a picture when  
you can have the whole package?

Ken presents his driver's license.

TERMINAL CLERK  
Thank you. Just a moment.

JACK'S GHOST  
Take all the time you like. Being  
near you is timeless.

Ken struggles to ignore Jack's Ghost.

TERMINAL CLERK  
I'll print out your boarding pass  
now. Anything to check in?

JACK'S GHOST  
How about checkin' me out, baby?

KEN  
Nope.

TERMINAL CLERK  
And, you're all set.

Ken receives the boarding pass and hurries off.

Jack's Ghost hops down and follows Ken down the terminal.

JACK'S GHOST  
No matter how hard I try, girls just  
ignore me. Sometimes it's like they  
can't even see me.

KEN  
Face it, women tend to ignore guys  
like us. But, for once I'm glad.

JACK'S GHOST  
I think she wants me. She just  
couldn't admit it, a little shy.

Ken pulls out his cell phone and puts it up to his face.

JACK'S GHOST  
Who is it?

Ken talks into the cell phone as he talks to Jack.

KEN  
Just trying not to look like a goof.

JACK'S GHOST  
Don't want to look like a goof.

Jack playfully prances about, buck-toothed.

KEN  
Please, a little more down to earth.

JACK'S GHOST

What, six feet under isn't far enough?

KEN

Let's talk about something else.

JACK'S GHOST

Like what?

Both pause, then say at the same time, "Girls!"

Ken and Jack's Ghost laugh as they walk to the terminal.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Ken falls asleep during the flight.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - PAST, ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO

JACK

Okay, you can open your eyes.

Ken opens his eyes and sees Jack's brand new truck.

KEN

Wow. And it's yours?

JACK

Almost. I still need to make some payments. With what my dad left me, I was able to pay for most of it.

KEN

It's beautiful.

JACK

Wanna ride?

KEN

Absolutely.

Jack and Ken joyfully hop into the truck.

INT. TRUCK - LATER

JACK

I've always wanted a truck like this.

KEN

What are you going to do with it?

JACK

Well, first, this is the ultimate babe machine. A girl can't resist a guy driving a truck.

KEN

It is a sweet ride, but ...

JACK

And, I'm thinking this can help me  
with my work.

KEN

Yeah. But, don't girls prefer guys  
driving sports cars?

JACK

When the right girl comes along,  
she'll kiss me in this truck. Then,  
I'll know she'll love me forever.

KEN

Good luck with that. Believe me,  
nobody will ever get kissed in this  
truck. Ever.

JACK

I can see it now. She'll be  
beautiful. She'll snuggle up beside  
me and in this really sexy voice  
she'll say ...

INT. AIRPLANE - PRESENT

STEWARDESS

(seductively)

... fasten your seatbelt.

Ken suddenly awakens.

Ken freezes as the Stewardess looks into his eyes.

STEWARDESS

(normal, professional)

Sir? Your seatbelt?

KEN

Oh, sorry. Thanks.

Ken stretches a bit and looks around.

EXT. PARKING LOT WITH TRUCK - LATE EVENING

A taxi pulls up to the parking lot.

Ken steps out.

The taxi drives off.

Ken looks again at the letter.

KEN

This seems to be the right address.  
Shouldn't there be someone here?

Ken looks around and sees a bunch of junk vehicles.

He spots what looks like Jack's truck.

Ken walks up to the truck and touches it gently.

KEN

I don't believe it. Jack's old truck.

JACK'S GHOST

Yup. It's my baby.

KEN

A little worn down, but that's it.

Ken pulls out the letter again.

KEN

I should give them a call, I guess.

Ken calls Bubba's number.

KEN

Hello? This is Ken Morgan. I was  
expecting someone to meet me here.  
Could you have Bubba return my call?

There is an unintelligible response.

KEN

I'm sorry. Could you repeat?

There is another unintelligible response.

KEN

Hello? Say again? Hello?

Ken hangs up the phone in frustration.

JACK'S GHOST

It'll be fine.

Ken notices a note on the windshield under a wiper blade.

Ken retrieves the note.

KEN

From Bubba Markey and Associates.

Ken opens the envelope and reads the note.

KEN

"Mr. Morgan ..." Blabbedy, blabbedy  
 blah. "Now that Mr. Jensen has passed  
 on ..." "insurance proceeds ..."  
 "As administrator of the estate, my  
 office will first receive due  
 compensation ..."

JACK'S GHOST

Bubba sounds like a real nice guy.

KEN

We should find an envelope in the  
 glove box with the truck key and a  
 post office key.

JACK'S GHOST

Couldn't anybody have come along and  
 just stolen my truck?

KEN

I don't think anybody here cares.  
 "Drive carefully. Avoid traffic  
 stops and try to avoid attention."

JACK'S GHOST

I admit, it's seen better days.  
 Probably won't pass inspection now.

KEN

"Jack's remains are in the sealed  
 casket in the bed of the truck."  
 What?

JACK'S GHOST

Don't look at me.

KEN

A sealed casket?

Ken runs to the back of the truck.

He opens the gate.

He flips the tarp over, revealing the casket.

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

(from inside the casket)

Yup. I'm in here.

KEN

Is this even legal?

JACK'S GHOST (V.O.)

Sure. Why not?

Ken looks nervously around to see if anyone else sees this.