

THE CAR WASH

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FADE IN:

INT. CAR WASH AND LUBE - WAITING LOBBY - AFTERNOON

It's a modern lobby that's empty today. Bright colors adorn the walls lined with car care products, as an LCD TELEVISION blares the headline news. There are several large windows scattered throughout the room.

ADA CRINSHAW, 74, thin and middling height, reads a magazine beside STAN REID, 19, average weight and tall, tweeting on his smart phone.

A middle-aged BORED SECRETARY sits behind the reception desk as her radio beeps.

SCRUFFY MECHANIC (O.S.)

(on Radio)

The Focus is ready.

BORED SECRETARY

Ford Focus?

(to Ada)

Miss Ada, Ford Focus?

ADA

That's not mine.

BORED SECRETARY

The Focus? Anyone?

Bored Secretary EXITS to an outside waiting area, as Ada turns to Stan, interrupting a surely insightful tweet. He SMILES at her politely.

ADA

I drive a Taurus. The gas mileage is different.

STAN

Really?

ADA

The Focus is better for gas -- that and the Fusion.

STAN

But at least you like your Taurus?

ADA

It's alright. I've never driven a Ford before.

STAN

You sound like my Grandma. She only drives Buicks, and before that Oldsmobiles, but they're not around anymore.

ADA

My husband drove a Grand Marquis, a Mercury you know. He wrecked it and the insurance company gave us just enough money to buy a 2007 Taurus, so that's what we did.

STAN

They're good cars.

ADA

I guess. He only got to drive it a few weeks before he died.

STAN

I'm sorry ...

Stan looks away, playing with his phone, unsure if the conversation is over, until --

ADA

He died right there in front of us, you know; I can still see it. It was those stairs he'd been working on for several weeks, and he just fell off.

Ada looks away to the television, as if she's watching the events unfold on screen.

ADA (CONT'D)

He hit his head right there, probably didn't know what happened. At least that's what the doctors say. We were having a family gathering. Everybody was there. I can still see it.

Ada looks back to Stan, staring uncomfortably.

ADA (CONT'D)

He treated me so well, though we were only married four years. I'd been a widow for sixteen and never thought I'd marry again. But it's funny the things life does to you.

The door opens, breaking Ada's gaze, as Bored Secretary returns to her desk, giving Stan an awkward moment to think.

Bored Secretary acts like she's working, but we know she's listening to their conversation.

STAN

I drive a Jeep Compass; it looks like they'll be discontinuing it.

ADA

Is it a bad car?

STAN

People haven't been buying it. The thing is, it's a good car, but people don't expect an urban Jeep. They expect it to be rugged. If Ford made it, I think it would've been a big hit.

ADA

Like that Ford Fiesta. Nobody wanted a little car like that in the seventies.

STAN

You know they're bringing it back.

ADA

The Fiesta?

STAN

Yeah, in 2010.

ADA

Do you think it'll go over any better this time?

STAN

If they market it right, maybe.

ADA

I don't know, everybody wants one of those Asian cars these days. They'll buy us out before too long, but I don't suppose I'll be around to see it.

The radio crackles from behind the counter again, breaking Bored Secretary's attention to Stan and Ada's conversation.

SCRUFFY MECHANIC (O.S.)

The Taurus is ready.

BORED SECRETARY
Ford Taurus, Miss Ada?

ADA
That's mine.

Ada winces as she rises. Bored Secretary notes her pain.

BORED SECRETARY
We can bring it around.

ADA
Thank you. That's most helpful.

BORED SECRETARY
Yes, ma'am.
(to Radio)
I need the Taurus brought up front.

Stan turns to his phone for another try at his update, but --

ADA
You know, I think I'm going to go
buy groceries. After my husband
died, my daughter took me in, so I
don't have to shop anymore, because
she does all the cooking now.

Ada walks towards the window, as if looking through time.

ADA (CONT'D)
I'm getting old, you see, and I
don't move like I once did. But
everything is faster than me these
days ...

Ada turns around with a brief blast of youthful energy.

ADA (CONT'D)
I remember when I was little, Daddy
would always say, *you reckon you'll
ever amount to anything?* He's been
gone for fifty years, and I still
miss him.

A car whizzes by outside the window as Ada stares past it.

ADA (CONT'D)
Sometimes you cry about it all so
much, you stop and start again,
because you can't get it all out.

Stan fidgets uncomfortably with his phone, putting it down
for the first time.

Bored Secretary looks down at Ada, like she's a roach.

ADA (CONT'D)

But I think the thing I miss the most about Daddy is his smile. He always left you with a smile. I used to drop him off at Sunday school in the -- *Young Men's class*. It was my hour break from Daddy. I was always too young for that, but now I'm old enough. And I know my daughter must feel the same way about me.

Ada walks towards Stan again, collecting her purse.

ADA (CONT'D)

So I have to go out when I can, while I can. To the store, to the car wash -- whereever -- so I don't feel guilty about living with her.

Scruffy Mechanic enters with the keys to Ada's Taurus, parked directly outside the door.

SCRUFFY MECHANIC

Ford Taurus?

ADA

I'd better go.

STAN

Good luck with your groceries.

Ada reaches for his hand and, for the first time, *smiles*.

ADA

Thank you for humoring an old lady. Hopefully you won't have to wait much longer.

STAN

If you decide that your Taurus won't do, there's always the Fiesta next year.

ADA

I'm reconciled to the fact that in life, you can't have it all. But maybe so. Maybe so.

Ada exits with Scruffy Mechanic.

Stan is left alone. Bored Secretary looks around, noticing that no one else is in the waiting area.

BORED SECRETARY
You're a good person, you know.

Stan looks up, unsure if she's talking to him.

BORED SECRETARY (CONT'D)
I've heard Miss Ada's stories more times than I can count.

STAN
So she's a regular?

BORED SECRETARY
It's the same story over and over again, week in and week out.
(sighs)
I feel bad for her, but whaddya do?

STAN
It's funny. I talk all the time, Texting, Tweeting, Facebooking. But when she started speaking ...

Stan stops. Bored Secretary files invoices, paying no attention.

He fidgets with his phone again.

BORED SECRETARY (O.S.)
Haven't talked to my Mom in a long time. She's a little older than Miss Ada, and I never have the time to call.

Stan looks up, as Bored Secretary gestures at her computer.

BORED SECRETARY (CONT'D)
If she'd only get online, we could have a real conversation.

Scruffy Mechanic enters, as Bored Secretary's office phone RINGS. She answers O.S.

Stan looks up. A fly lands on a dated, dusty rack of air fresheners. He grabs his phone and types:

ON PHONE: "Some days, I wonder if I say anything at all."

FADE TO BLACK.