

Freeway of Dreams

A
Screenplay
By

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From an idea
By
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FADE IN:

INT. QUASI CLUB - NIGHT

The SMOKEY club has an ad hoc quality to it, as if it were thrown together on the quick. The most expensive thing in it is the NEON SIGN above the bar: Quasi Club.

The crowd moves and sweats to the driving rhythms generated by the BAND playing on the postage stamp stage.

MICKIE KING, 29, sits at the bar smoking, listening to the music. She's a slim, coltish woman with short hair whose looks have managed to stay just ahead of her lifestyle.

DANNY, the young, English, bartender comes over.
He's smoking as well.

DANNY

Just an FYI, we're changing
venues next week. Gotta stay
ahead of the cigarette nazis.
You'll get a text letting
you know where.

MICKIE

Okay. How about one for the road.

She kills the drink, hands him the empty. He turns away.
Mickie glances around the room and sees group of HIPSTERS VAPING nearby.

MICKIE

(to herself)

Posers.

She stubs out her cigarette and digs into her handbag for money.
When Danny arrives with her drink she pushes the crumpled bills across the bar. He pushes them back.

DANNY

Compliments of the Gent
with the bedroom eyes.

A Struggling Musician type down the bar raises his glass.

MICKIE
Thanks, Danny.

She looks the man over. Not bad. She taps a new cigarette from the pack, but can't get a flame on her LIGHTER.

MICKIE
Christ.

A pair of hands strike a MATCH in front of her. It's the Musician. He lights her cigarette, then his own. Mickie smiles and slowly exhales the smoke in his face.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - SUNRISE

A desolate stretch of road by a SIGN: LOS ANGELES 109 MILES. OFF SCREEN a TRUCK ENGINE struggles to start. The engine doesn't respond. A door opens and slams shut.

A few seconds later, ENRICO RUIZ, 27, stumbles up the embankment to the highway. He has a desperate and dangerous air. He looks nervously at the OLD PANEL TRUCK in the arroyo below.

The highway is empty. Ruiz glances at the truck then starts towards the LIGHTS of a SMALL TOWN a few miles distant.

INT. SEEDY APARTMENT - MORNING

The small apartment is littered with the dirty dishes and broken dreams of a musician going nowhere in a hurry.

IN THE BEDROOM -

Mickie and her paramour from the night before lie on opposite sides of the bed.

She's woken by the SOUND of a GARBAGE TRUCK outside. She lifts her head groggily and finds her WATCH. It's 10:30.

MICKIE
Christ.

More alert now, she gets out of bed, gathers her clothes, along with a leftover package of CONDOMS and goes into

THE LIVING ROOM -

She sits on the couch, practically disappearing into the sagging cushions as she puts her boots on. She notes what a dump the place is.

MICKIE

Boy, Mickie, can you pick`em.

She struggles out of the couch and goes to the door. She takes a LIPSTICK from her purse and writes something on the door. When the door shuts the message is revealed: *Thanks!*

EXT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Mickie comes out and gets into a GREEN, 1993 ALPHA ROMEO SPIDER CONVERTIBLE. She slides in a CD, puts on her sunglasses, and roars off.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mickie comes to an intersection as the light turns against her. She speeds into a left turn from the right-hand lane, just ahead of the cross traffic and gets onto

THE FREEWAY -

where she drives with the same abandon.

EXT. LA BEAT OFFICE - DAY

Mickie pulls into the parking lot, gets out of the car and scoots inside.

INT. LA BEAT BUILDING - DAY

A second door beyond the entrances leads to the reception desk. She hurries through, past the Receptionist and into

THE STAFFROOM -

The space is divided by head high partitions which separate the desks. The cubicles are about half staffed.

A center aisle leads to the Editor's glass enclosed office. She goes to a cubicle in the farthest corner of the room.

INT. LA BEAT OFFICE/MICKIE'S CUBICLE - DAY

It's small and cramped. Above her desk is a CALENDAR with a DATE CIRCLED IN RED and the words, DON'T BE LATE.

An INVITATION to a Charity Polo Match is pinned by the circle. Mickie drops her bag and collapses into the chair.

MICKIE

Why do I do it?

She gets a cigarette and grabs a book of matches off her desk. The print on the calendar, Monet's BASIN AT ARGENTUEIL, catches her eye.

In a kind of reverie, she hears the SOUNDS of the painting, flowing water, a bird's call. She wants to be there.

Still daydreaming, Mickie opens the book of matches. It's empty. She snaps back to reality.

MICKIE

Christ.

She throws the matchbook aside and calls across the aisle.

MICKIE

Hey, Dexter, got a light?

DEXTER (OS)

Sure.

Mickie spins, puts her feet on the bookcase, and shoves her rolling chair out the door and across the aisle to

DEXTER'S CUBICLE -

where she bumps to a stop. The office is crammed with meticulously organized, HORROR MOVIE MEMORABILIA.

DEXTER, the Beat's B-movie critic, is about 30. He wears glasses and has a quiet, studious demeanor.

He's watching a slasher film on his computer

MICKIE

Why aren't you working from
home, like everybody else?

DEXTER

It's quieter here. And the
AC works.

MICKIE

What are you watching?

DEXTER

The Gruesome Dead.

MICKIE

How is it?

Dexter takes a GUN off his desk and points it at Mickie who
doesn't flinch.

DEXTER

Stupefyingly sanguinary.

He pulls the trigger. A FLAME pops out from the gun's barrel.
Mickie leans in for a light.

MICKIE

Thanks.

She pushes off and rolls back into

HER CUBICLE -

She pulls herself up to the desk as she rolls by.

MICKIE

Notes, notes.

She digs up a folder. She opens a drawer in her desk and shakes
out assorted VITAMINS from a huge selection.

She tosses them in her mouth and washes them down with the last
of yesterday's coffee, which she immediately regrets. She Checks
her watch, stuffs the invitation in her bag, and goes out.

INT. SY'S OFFICE - DAY

SY HAVERMAN, the Beat's Editor, sits with his back to the Staffroom, talking on his phone. He's a misplaced New Yorker in his early 40s.

SY

I'm telling ya, it was a real
"A" list party. You had to have
three national covers just to
get your car parked. So what was
I doing there? Ha-ha, very funny,
Marty. Yeah, I'm in stitches.

(MORE)

He spins around casually and does a double take when he sees
Mickie at WATER COOLER outside his office.

SY(CONT'D)

I'll call ya right back.
Mickie, what are you doing
here? What happened to the
Culotti interview?

MICKIE

I don't know. I haven't gone yet.

SY

What do you mean you haven't
gone? You were supposed to
be there half-an-hour ago.

MICKIE

I know, I know.

She hands him the empty water cup, lifts her cigarette to take a
puff. Sy snatches it out of her hand and stubs it out in the
cup.

She scowls, steps around him, slips into the bathroom next to
his office, and closes the door.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM -

Mickie drops her bag and turns on the water. She sees her
reflection in the mirror and flips the glass to the wall.

SY (OS)

The man won a prize at the Berlin Film festival. His film opens next week and he's got a ton of Oscar buzz and we have an exclusive, a deadline, and you're not even there.

Mickie half listens as she washes her face.

MICKIE

Sy, it took him ten years to raise the money to make a movie that's four-and-a-half hours long, about the oppression of Italian peasants during a war that ended eighty years ago.

OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM -

SY

So, what's your point?

Mickie sticks her head out the door.

MICKIE

He can wait half-an-hour to have somebody come and talk to him about it.

SY

I'll call the restaurant.

MICKIE

Right.

She shuts the door as Sy bolts back to his office.

EXT. DESERT -DAY

TRAFFIC moves easily along the highway above the arroyo. The sun continues to beat steadily on the abandoned truck. A PHONE RINGS OFF SCREEN.

VOICE #1

Hello.

VOICE #2
Ruiz never got here.

VOICE #1
This is the last load, let's
not make a mess of it. Get on
it and find out what happened.

INT. LA BEAT OFFICE - DAY

Mickie comes out of the bathroom just as SY ends a call. He catches her at the door of his office.

SY
He's still there. I told him
your last interview ran late.

MICKIE
Thanks. I'm sorry I screwed up, Sy.

SY
I don't believe it. Is that an
apology?

MICKIE
Yeah, mark it on your calendar.
It's like the solstice, it only
happens twice a year.

She heads out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mickie weaves through traffic with MUSIC BLARING from her CD player. She passes a bus with an advertisement on the side: LA BEAT - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S PREMIER SITE FOR ART, POLITICS AND CULTURE. THE BEAT GOES ON.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Mickie follows the Maitre'd into the dining room and is pointed to a booth in the back. She crosses the room to where Italian director MARIO CULOTTI is waiting impatiently with his TRANSLATOR.

Mickie puts on her brightest smile and extends her hand.
Culotti's mood suddenly improves.

MICKIE

Hi, I'm Mickie King. I believe
we have an interview.

You've just read the opening scenes of

FREEWAY OF DREAMS

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