

The Road to Vegas

...

I already knew. I just knew – I didn't have to open it.

Welcome to my world; decisions of the lawless, where we sleep with loaded guns under our pillows, the weight of the world constantly on our shoulders – and the world around us just grows darker and colder. I could do this, I could. Get back in the van, and just drive the fuck on. Not look, not care, give zero fucks about this cargo – and make my delivery.

There was only **one** problem.

Guilt.

What if – whoever was back there – was someone I knew? The possibilities of this was low, nevertheless. That thought crept up and refused to stand down no matter how many times I pushed it back. Faces appeared up from the dark corners of my mind as I smoked a cigarette and stared at the back doors to the van.

How could I do this, if it was someone I know. Fuck. *Fuck.*

What if -- it was one of the friends of my friends. I had NO idea who was back there – but my mind was all over this and refusing to let it go.

Goddamn it, fuck you Jimmy.

I took a final drag from the cigarette, let it drop to the ground beside me and stepped on it with my boot. A slow, self-condemning exhale of smoke left me as I unlocked the backdoors with the key. Shook my head, and pulled them open.

The starlight that was cresting with the faint wash of morning reds, oranges and yellows – a desert sunrise without the tequila; just a van full of gagged, bound, young girls. Races? Shit, all of them? Yea` that's what it looked like! Instantly they began to scuffle! Whimpered out of fear – their eyes wide, terrified, red-stricken from countless tears shed. They moved away from the opened door like if I was the **Devil**.

Jesus Christ..

“Hey.. hey easy. Easy..” I tried with my calmest voice, held my hands up to show them I had nothing, just...keys. There was no calming them, just the sound of my voice made them wince, others sobbed deeper; what Hell had these girls seen?

Other than my face..

They were wearing hardly anything – well, some of them. Hands bound to a railing that had been welded to the inside of the van. There were a few girls that still looked drugged – the whole floor of the van was just a pile of old blankets so if they kicked, it would be muffled. The walls were padded too.. fuckin’ ay`..

Was this me now?

Without another word to them – I closed the doors, one at a time – their whimpers and sobs were muffled through their gags and the padding of the van, but I knew they were louder than before.

I got back into the driver's seat, started the bitch up, checked the side mirrors – no cars – and I turned that van around and drove back to Yermo. Just there outside of the town I pulled the van off to the side. Parked it, left the engine running – slipped out and went directly for the back doors. Popped them open.

Morning was cresting up behind me. The back of the van was a mixture of these horrible cries – just beyond scared. Some place where panic just claims you and refuses to give any room to breathe. I climbed in, and they began to shake, squirm and buck away from me even though I meant them no harm – *fuck man*. “Yo`, easy! I’m cutting you loose! Okay? Easy! No one’s going to hurt you...you’re okay now.” It was ten girls – of different ethnicities. They looked young... and no older than eighteen.. I undid the binds of the first girl and instantly she recoiled from me – but I just moved on to the next.

“Please..sir, don’t hurt us..” One of the girls began after she had pulled down the gag. My heart was just sinking. I was shaking my head as I fumbled with another girl's binds. “I’m not gonna do anything to you, any of you.. you’re going home..” Was all I could say to them. One by one they all had their hands freed – to which they undid the ropes at their feet and pulled the cloth gags off and threw them down with fear and disgust. “Look...there’s a town, right down there. See it? There’s a small cop station right down the main road, across from the small shopping center, you can’t miss it.” I was climbing out of the back of the van as I pointed it out for them. “..now here’s...like three hundred.” I stuffed the bills I had from my money clip in one of the girl's hand, a pretty brown eyed brunette thing that hadn’t stopped shaking from the very first moment her hands had been unbound. It was actually three hundred and twenty seven dollars – but that didn’t matter. “Use it for whatever you guys need, food, bus tickets, to call home, I don’t know..”

What do you say to someone in a situation like this? They just huddled there, in the morning sunlight – staring at me...mixtures of appreciation in their eyes, and accusatory stares while tears just fell without stopping.

“..go. Go! You’re free. Go home!” It’s like, they didn’t believe it. They looked at me and between each other – then one finally took off running, just ... running for the town. The rest soon followed, some holding hands, others just trying to get there, to run away from the nightmare they had just experienced. The one that held the bills in her hand, lingered for a moment. Looking at me, there was something left unsaid in her stare as she looked at me, it was in her eyes that she wanted to form words but her lips would not budge; and like that she turned from me and ran.. all of them. Not a single thank you.

Not like I’ve done anything worth praising – I couldn’t linger, I couldn’t stay. As soon as they reached that town or the police station, people would know. The Cops would soon be looking for this van. *Fuck. Just, fuck.* I slammed the back doors closed – got back into the van and hurried back to Los Angeles...

Where I could easily be returning just to have my own life ended.

All for the price of a good deed.