

OFF THE GRID

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A rugged man RAY (40s) in plaid shirt stands at a podium.

RAY

I've been asked to tell you sacks
of crap what it's like hiking in
these mountains. I've lived in
these woods alone for over twenty
years. And you have to be able to
handle it all yourself.

He rolls up his pant leg revealing a vicious scar.

RAY (CONT'D)

This, is what happens when you
don't pay attention. I was jumped
by a savage wolf miles from home.
It tore at me like I was a buffalo
wing. Flesh pulled right off --

FRANK (30s) the forest park ranger is surrounded by Boy
Scouts six years old.

FRANK

Okay! Let's all thank Ray for
coming today to tell us about how
to be safe on our first hike.

BOY SCOUT 1

What did you do?

FRANK

He called for help and stayed put,
which is what you should always do.

RAY

If you're a pansy like Ranger
Frank. A real man takes care of
himself. I did the only thing I
could. I bit the wolf back.

FRANK

You bit it?

RAY

I did. And he did not like that. We
fought like two pigs in slop. And --

BOY SCOUT 1
You killed it?

RAY
No, I made him my pet.

BOY SCOUT 1
Your pet?

RAY
He was my pet for a long time. I was never lonely with him. But he died last year, and it feels like I lost my best friend.

FRANK
See kids there's nothing to fear --

RAY
After I got the wolf away, my leg was still bleeding. Even the smallest scratch can turn serious. So I took out my knife.

Ray holds up a massive knife.

RAY (CONT'D)
And put a lighter under it, till it was redder than a hot pot lobster. I put that burning knife to my leg to seal the wound.

BOY SCOUT 1
On your leg?

RAY
My leg sizzled and cracked, like popcorn.

A kid runs over and pukes in a trashcan.

FRANK
I think that's a good place to stop today --

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Ray sits on the porch whittling. His cabin sits alone on a picturesque mountain with a view off of a cliff. Frank approaches Ray's porch.

FRANK

About yesterday, I wanted to thank you for talking with the kids. They, ah -- it opened their eyes.

RAY

Those brats are okay. Someone has to tell them what it's like out here. Same time next week?

FRANK

Next week? About that, the kids are going to be doing crafts inside for a while.

RAY

What? Kids need to be outside. They shelter kids too much these days. Don't let them get a scrapped knee, get sick off eating mushrooms, go out and spend the night in the woods, get lost.

RANGER FRANK

I don't think many parents would want that.

RAY

They need to toughen those kids up or they'll never grow up to be men.

FRANK

That wouldn't work for the girls.

RAY

Girls, what girls? It's Boy Scouts. Next you'll tell me boys are in Girl Scouts.

FRANK

Some are.

RAY

I just don't understand it. Makes me glad I'm up here all alone.

FRANK

Right. Still all this with no one to share it with.

RAY

I did for ten years I had Bernard.

He pets a life sized wood carving of a fearsome wolf.

FRANK

Animals aren't people.

RAY

No, they're better. Don't talk back or judge you. They let me keep things how I like them. And not change anything.

RANGER FRANK

Without someone with you. Just seems sort of lonely.

RAY

Lonely what of this is lonely?

A lone bird crows in the distance.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

A small store with a gas pump sits alone on the road.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

A metal bell dings as the door opens.

LYDIA

Oh no, get those out.

LYDIA (40s) quick-witted, stands behind the counter. Ray puts down animal pelts and a few wood carved animals.

RAY

Come on Lydia. I need the money.

LYDIA

And I don't need squirrel skins. Fur trapping went out of style two hundred years ago.

RAY

What about a carving of a squirrel?

LYDIA

I'd rather have the pelts. Maybe I can use them as grease traps.

RAY

Now I feel bad for killing that whole squirrel family.

He reaches for a candy, she smacks his hand.

LYDIA

No, no treats.

RAY

Put it on my tab.

LYDIA

You're cut off.

RAY

I'm good for it.

LYDIA

No, no you're not.

RAY

I guess I can do some odd jobs for people.

LYDIA

Not after last time. No one wants you around.

RAY

Is it because of that house I painted?

LYDIA

Yes.

RAY

I did a perfect job, no one could have painted better.

LYDIA

But they would have worn clothes.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Ray naked on a ladder paints a wall. A woman inside pulls the curtains shut.

BACK TO SCENE:

Ray adjust his pants.

RAY

I wasn't going to get paint on my best things.

LYDIA

Never mind that, you need to pay your taxes.

RAY

Can't they leave me alone? I don't use water, power or sewage.

LYDIA

You still have to pay tax on your land. Or they'll take it.

RAY

I'd like to see them try.

LYDIA

We both no you won't Waco them.

RAY

Only because I'm low on bullets.

LYDIA

Here is what you can do.

She unrolls a blueprint on the counter.

RAY

You want me to build you something?

LYDIA

God no. This is your property. See there's your cabin.

RAY

Ah-huh.

LYDIA

And here's this little piece of land.

RAY
That's rock, you can't build there.

LYDIA
Exactly. It's a campsite.

RAY
Why would I need a campsite? I have a house.

LYDIA
You sell it.

RAY
I'm not selling my house.

LYDIA
Not your house, stupid. The campsite.

RAY
Who would want a campsite?

LYDIA
The park doesn't allow camping. Only your place can, since it's grandfathered in.

RAY
I did buy at the right time.

LYDIA
See you sell this small piece and it covers all your expenses for years.

RAY
Why can't I rent it out?

LYDIA
You want to be booking it like a motel and get a phone, make appointments. Put in water, power.

RAY
I'd have to do all that?

LYDIA
And it would take years, and wouldn't even cover what you owe me.

RAY
Isn't there another way?

LYDIA
How are your kidneys?

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Ray tends to a small garden. A horn honks, he looks up at ZAYNE (50s) in skin tight yoga clothing on a four wheeler.

RAY
Zayne I thought I smelled a skunk.

ZAYNE
Hemp is a wonderful shampoo, you should try it. I understand you want to be away from people, but you don't need to smell like an animal.

RAY
I can shoot you like an animal for trespassing.

ZAYNE
I'm not trespassing, I'm browsing.

RAY
It's not a grocery store.

ZAYNE
I don't want those. I'm here to measure the land.

RAY
You already have a yoga retreat, what do you need with this?

ZAYNE
I'm expanding.

RAY
Keep your pants on.

ZAYNE
Oh Ray, if I didn't know any better. I'd think you're coming onto me.

RAY
You can't build anything there.

ZAYNE
Sure I can. An outdoor patio.

RAY
A patio? You going to hold
weddings?

ZAYNE
For sunrise yoga.

RAY
Sunrise yoga?

ZAYNE
At dawn. Just like how we entered
the world.

RAY
Most people entered naked, and got
spanked.

ZAYNE
Which we'll do too, minus the
spanking part. Maybe.

RAY
Naked yoga? Well I've gotten lots
of offers, who knows if yours will
even be enough.

ZAYNE
Oh honey, I know no one has put in
an offer. I'm all you have. I just
have to wait a little while and
you'll be begging me to take it. So
make me happy okay?

He puts a card in Ray's shirt pocket.

ZAYNE (CONT'D)
Come try a class, on the house.
We're doing hot yoga. All week,
clothing optional.

Montage - Ray going through his day alone.

- Ray wakes up and stretches, revealing he's buck naked.
- Ray drinks his coffee staring out at his view.
- Ray hikes in the woods with a rifle, spots a rabbit.
- Ray takes a nap in a hammock.
- Ray tends to his small garden.
- Ray whittles a piece of wood on the porch.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Ray reads a book in bed. He looks down at the card that Zayne gave him, and flips it over. He puts the book down, and kisses a framed photograph.

RAY
Goodnight Kelly.

In the framed photo is a smiling woman in her late twenties.

INT. CABIN - DAY

A loud BANG. Ray's eyes fling open with rage.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Ray burst out with his gun blasting it in the air.

RAY
It's not sold yet Zayne! Back off!

A shocked MITCHELL (20s) falls to the ground, carrying a giant backpack with pans strapped to the side. A loud electronic BEEPING emits from him.

RAY (CONT'D)
You're not Zayne.

MITCHELL
No, I'm Mitchell.

RAY
You always beep when you back up?
You part robot?

MITCHELL
No, my blood pressure jumped three points. But I am in Elon Musk bio mod enhancement alpha waitlist.

RAY
Gesundheit.

MITCHELL
I was told to come here, they gave me a map. I'll show you. I'm reaching to get it. Don't shoot.

Mitchell holds his hands up. Ray rips the paper away.

RAY
They did? Let me see that.

Mitchell looks at the gun.

RAY (CONT'D)
Don't worry it was just bird shot.
Wouldn't have killed you.

MITCHELL
Uh-huh. The GPS coordinates
triangulate the location to just
twenty feet away.

RAY
The only thing twenty feet from
here is my cabin. You with the IRS?

MITCHELL
I was told you were selling.

RAY
Oh you're interested in buying?

MITCHELL
Maybe if it's as good as I heard.

RAY
It's the best around sit right
here, let me grab it.

He pushes Mitchell back to the ground, and runs in his cabin.
Bewildered Mitchell gazes about. Ray runs back outside.

RAY (CONT'D)
How many do you want? Three? Four?

MITCHELL
Want? I was told it was just one.

RAY
One? I've got tons.

Mitchell looks down confused.

RAY (CONT'D)
These are the finest furs around.
Feel them. This is possum. So soft.

He reluctantly touches them.

RAY (CONT'D)
You won't find any better. How many
you want?

MITCHELL
I don't want any.

RAY
Why are you here then?

MITCHELL
The woman at the store said you had some land.

RAY
Oh no, it's not for camping. I'm selling it.

MITCHELL
I have money.

RAY
Okay fine you can stay tonight. How about twenty?

MITCHELL
I don't keep cash.

RAY
What? How do you buy things?

MITCHELL
Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ada Cardano, Dogecoin.

RAY
You having a fit?

MITCHELL
She said I could try it, before I buy.

RAY
She told you to stay here? With me? I've been the only one here for twenty years.

MITCHELL
Great you can show me all the tips. Neighbor.

RAY
Neighbor?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Ray storms into the store.

LYDIA

Two times in a month, you're getting right sociable.

RAY

You want to tell me why there's a orange tent outside my window.

LYDIA

Oh good he made it. I was afraid he might get lost.

RAY

He must be lost, because he said you told him to come there.

LYDIA

That's right, and it's good I did. He was on his way to a public campsite, and I convinced him to stay at your secluded place.

RAY

It was nice and quiet until he showed up.

LYDIA

You put the land up for sale and he's interested in looking at it.

RAY

What did he save all his milk money.

LYDIA

That kid happens to be very rich, he's from silicon valley.

RAY

Is that a new coal mine?

LYDIA

Read the news now and then. That's Mitchell Mathews. He's probably got more money than anyone you've met.

RAY

He was supposed to look not move
right in.

LYDIA

If you're lucky he'll buy the land
and just come up here to camp on
holidays and long weekends.

RAY

Lucky? He'll be coming up more?

LYDIA

It's him and Zayne that are
interested in your land and that's
it. So you better kiss this kid's
ass.

RAY

I've got to be nice to that kid?

LYDIA

Or you can start looking for places
under bridges. Because that's where
you'll be living.

For the full script email gregpgleason@gmail.com