

DIRT CIRCLES

Written by

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FADE IN

EXT. COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS DIRT TRACK - NIGHT

MONTAGE

- A loud, chaotic, surreal dream sequence in both color and B&W archival footage of sprint cars racing wheel to wheel.
- Suddenly one swerves, causing a terrible, tumbling crash.
- Grandstand crowd comes to their feet. Screams fill the air.
- Tow cars, emergency lights flashing, rush toward crashed sprint car.
- Smoke drifts from wreckage.
- Men shout. Run across track with fire extinguishers.
- A track official pounds on wrecked car's cockpit screen as ambulance arrives, red and blue lights flashing.

END MONTAGE

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK CAB FRONT SEAT - NIGHT

Red and blue lights flash outside fog-shrouded truck window. PARKER, unshaven 35 year old, been there, done that, seen it all sprint car racer asleep behind the wheel, jerks awake.

SHERIFF, KEN GARDNER, a heavy-set, mustached 50 year old, wearing a cowboy hat raps on glass with flashlight.

Startled, Parker sees the Sheriff, and nudges empty whiskey bottle under seat with foot as he rolls down window.

EXT. PICK UP RIG AT ROADSIDE - PREDAWN CONTINUED

Sheriff shines light over mud-splattered #35 sprint car on a trailer towed behind Parker's old truck and camper parked in a dirt pull-out beside two-lane Napa Valley road.

Sheriff shines beam across faded graphics of Parker's picture and name lettered on side of the tired camper.

SHERIFF

Damn. That you, Parker?

Sheriff leans in, sniffs the truck cab's air.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
Thought you was still running the
outlaw circuit back east.

PARKER
Proverbial bad penny, Deputy Ken?

Sheriff smiles and points to the badge on his chest.

SHERIFF
That's Sheriff Ken to you, boy.
Been some changes since you punks
were in my auto shop class.

PARKER
(laughs)
Yeah, I imagine there's been a few
roads taken over the past 15 years.

Sheriff frowns and points down to the road shoulder.

SHERIFF
But this ain't one of 'em. You
picked a bad place to sleep it off.

PARKER
Hey, I'm cool, Ken. Just wanted
some shut-eye till the fog lifted,
and the fairgrounds opened up.

Sheriff checks his watch, then down the road as the SUN RISES
through the foggy haze behind his flashing squad car.

SHERIFF
Fog's clearing and the track opened
up an hour ago. You okay to drive?

A fancy semi rig roars past with a blast of its AIR HORN. Its
huge trailer emblazoned with the picture of a driver over the
phrase WEST COAST CHAMP-JEFF WILDE. Sheriff grabs at his hat.

A hand, middle finger raised, appears out passenger window.

Parker thrusts a middle finger out his window in reply.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil. You and Jeff
gonna get it on again?

PARKER
I just race whoever's on the track.

SHERIFF

After you left here for the big time, he kinda took over. You doin' a Prodigal Son thing here?

PARKER

No, just looking for another weekend of friendly competition.

SHERIFF

After all this time? Don't shit me. You got a reason to circle back?

Parker smiles at the Sheriff and turns key in ignition.

PARKER

I hope so. But one way or another, this weekend should tell.

SHERIFF

Well, whatever you're doin' back here, Parker...good luck on it.

Sheriff steps back, pans his light once again over the faded camper and dented, dirt-smearred sprint car, before rapping his knuckles on the roof of Parker's truck.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

'Cause looks to me...like you're gonna need it.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK CAB - EARLY MORNING CONTINUED

Parker's engine finally starts as Sheriff drives away.

PARKER

(to self)

Man...ain't that the truth.

He turns on radio only to hear static, hits dash board with fist and music starts, as the sun rises over Napa Valley.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING CONTINUED

Parker drives down the two-lane road as a country western road song PLAYS over. Fields, vineyards and orchards go by.

He drives past a 15 year old helmeted kid in leathers on a dirt motorcycle racing between rows of grapevines. The kid skids to a halt, waves and spins around to chase after Parker alongside the road.

MONTAGE

- Kid catches air leaping culverts between fields and vineyards to catch up and get ahead of Parker's rig.
- Parker marvels at rider skillfully leaping fences.
- Kid swerves left to fly high over roadside drainage ditch out onto two-lane road, skidding in front of Parker's truck.
- Parker has to hit brakes as kid gets control of bike.
- Both see empty 4-Way stop just ahead.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ROADSIDE STOP SIGN - DAY CONTINUED

Parker halts alongside motorcycle at crossroads. A green county highway sign reads: CALISTOGA - 3 MILES

PARKER

Kinda living on the edge, kid?

KID

I saw it was you. Had to catch up.

PARKER

There are safer ways, young man.

The kid now takes off the helmet, hair spilling, revealing a young teen girl. Parker does a double take.

KID

I'm a girl.

PARKER

So I see...now.

CARLY

My name's Carly, and you're Mr. Parker. Number 35.

PARKER

Yeah, I know.

CARLY

I got one of your posters.

PARKER

Must be an old one.

CARLY
You really gonna race here this weekend?

PARKER
No. I only tow all this stuff around to impress the tourists.

CARLY
Really?

PARKER
No.

CARLY
'Cause you haven't raced here since before I was even born.

Parker laughs and shakes his head.

PARKER
Seems like a lifetime to me too.

CARLY
I read you crashed last week at Santa Maria. You don't look hurt.

PARKER
No, but ol' 35 took a hit.

Carly looks back at his dirty sprint car on the trailer.

CARLY
Bad?

PARKER
Not too. I managed to do a little triage on her myself.

CARLY
I know what triage means. My Mom's a doctor.

PARKER
Yeah? Keep flying around like that, kid, you're gonna need one.

CARLY
I guess that was kinda stupid.

PARKER
Agreed.

Parker points down to the motorcycle.

PARKER (CONT'D)
You race that Honda?

CARLY
Uh huh. I come out here early to practice when the vineyards are empty. Did you race dirt bikes?

PARKER
Gotta start somewhere. Dirt's dirt, right?

CARLY
You bet. I love it. What did you ride?

PARKER
A Triumph 500.

CARLY
Wow. Don't see them much anymore.

PARKER
Nope. Nothing but your rice rockets today. All sound like sewing machines on steroids.

CARLY
I know, that's why I wanna race sprints. I like 'em loud.

PARKER
If you can ride dirt and win on two wheels, you'll do okay on four.

CARLY
Is that what you did?

PARKER
Yep. Stop by the pits this weekend.

CARLY
Really?

PARKER
Bring your poster and I'll sign it.

CARLY
That's so cool.

A car comes up behind. Parker puts truck in gear and steps on accelerator.

PARKER
 (sardonic)
 Yeah, that's me, kid. Mr. Cool.

EXT. CALISTOGA FAIRGROUNDS & RACE TRACK - DAY

MONTAGE

- Parker drives past carnival rides and merry-go-round.
- Drives through gate into interior oval of 1/4 mile dirt track to pit lane opposite the empty grand stands.
- Racers unload trailers, set up pit tents for their racer and a 4-track war wagons filled with tools and spare parts, plus chairs and ice chests for the long weekend.
- Parker rolls past crews taking their campers, empty trailers and semi-rigs outside track to a safe parking area.
- Crews busy setting up their pit tents stop to look at Parker, a few point at number 35 as he goes past.
- Parker passes Jeff Wilde's fancy semi trailer rig. JEFF and his mechanic, MICK, are unloading his sprint car.

END MONTAGE

EXT. PIT LANE - DAY CONTINUED

JEFF WILDE, a big brush cut blond with Ray Bans, Rolex and a red jump suit with white scarf, stops to glare at Parker.

JEFF
 (shouts)
 Well, look who's back. Got kicked
 outta the big boy sand box, Parker?

MICK, 39, a swarthy mechanic stands behind his boss, a phone to ear. He waves as Parker passes.

MICK
 Hey, Parker.

PARKER
 Hey, Mick.

Parker ignores Jeff and continues to end of pit lane as crews watch. He stops his rig, steps out, walks back to his racer.

PARKER (CONT'D)

(to self)

You up for this old girl? One of us
better be.

(Sorry about cutting it off here, folks. But teasers are teasers. Let's all hope the script gets bought and turned into smash hit. It has a happy ending and all involved grow into adulthood one way or another. What more can we ask for.)