

ROAD TO TOLEDO

By Cory Barnett

FADE IN:

EXT. BELIZEAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

AARON CALDWELL, 30s, an American treasure hunter, and JACK, a 10-year-old Mayan, rush down narrow pathways between buildings.

A CAR cuts them off. They run in the other direction.

A TRUCK comes at them on the next street over.

JACK

Split up!

Aaron tosses a backpack to Jack and climbs up the gutter on a building.

Jack takes off down a separate alley.

AARON

Jack!

Jack spins around and looks at Aaron stranded on top of a building. He nods and points down the street.

Aaron runs across the rooftops in the direction that Jack pointed.

Jack darts through the streets, dodging into doorways and behind stands.

KLING, a burly thug with a huge scar on his face, skids the truck to a halt next to Jack and steps out.

Jack stops next to a bunch of tourists.

JACK

Mommy? Mommy?

Several tourists take notice of him and try to help, surrounding him.

JACK

Have you seen my mom?

Kline takes a step back and tries not to act interested in the boy.

Jack sees his chance.

JACK

There she is.

He breaks free of the tourists and runs down the street and around a corner.

Kline turns back around. The boy is gone.

INT. SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM - BELIZEAN APARTMENT HOUSE - DAY

Jack runs in out of breath, and tosses the backpack to Aaron.

AARON

Thought you were taking off on me.

Aaron takes a box out of the backpack and rolls the package in brown paper for shipping.

Jack waits with his hand out to take the package.

AARON

They'd kill you before they'd let you keep it.

Aaron keeps looking through the window.

JACK

Why do you think I came back?

Aaron gently cuffs the boy on the head.

The package is done, poorly wrapped and labeled, heading to the United States.

Someone pounds on the door, about to bust in.

Aaron hands the package and a wad of bills to Jack.

AARON

Hurry.

JACK

Yes, sir.

AARON

You can't get caught.

Jack climbs out the window.

JACK

I'm going.

EXT. BELIZEAN APARTMENT HOUSE - DAY

Jack clings to the outside wall, shimmying down the side with the package's strings wrapped around his shoulder.

He safely drops to the ground.

A crash erupts from upstairs. Jack looks up through the window to see thugs, RYAN and QUINT, manhandling Aaron. Aaron puts up a fight, but the thugs out maneuver him.

Jack hops on his bicycle and pedals away, past the car that was following them.

EXT. BELIZEAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Jack rides his bicycle past the post office and onto a paved road. Kline's truck rounds a corner, right behind him.

They weave in and out of alleyways until Jack rides his bike through the front door of a house.

Kline speeds around to the back, but there's no back door.

Jack emerges back from the front door and pedals back toward the post office.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

AMANDA, a 30s creole, and a thug-ish TAXI DRIVER watch Jack walk out the door.

They move in on him. Just as he's about to get on his bike Amanda grabs him. Jack fights her off until he sees who it is.

AMANDA

Where is it?

JACK

What?

AMANDA

Don't play dumb, Jack. Where'd you send it?

Jack goes limp in her grasp.

JACK

Aw, Amanda, you know I can't tell you that.

AMANDA

I'm not going to use it. I just want it back.

JACK

It was never yours. Ask me something else. Want to see a card trick?

Jack takes a pack of cards from his pocket.

AMANDA

I want it back, you little twerp.

JACK

Pick a card.

He gives her a winning smile and she gently knocks him over.

AMANDA

You're going to be the death of me, kid.

Kline rounds the corner and sees them. He immediately heads in the direction of the Post Office.

JACK

Crud.

He stuffs the cards back in his pocket as he watches Kline approach.

JACK

The U.S. He sent it to his brother.

Amanda heads into the post office.

JACK

Don't let him get it.

AMANDA

(over her shoulder)

I won't.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Amanda watches as WORKERS load several boxes into the back. A POSTAL WORKER leans against his desk.

AMANDA

I'm looking for a package. My boy accidentally sent it before it was ready.

POSTAL WORKER

Brown kid?

AMANDA

Mayan.

POSTAL WORKER

He ain't your-an.

AMANDA

What?

POSTAL WORKER

That ain't your kid.

She pulls a gun on him

AMANDA

Where is it?

Eh, he gets guns pulled on him everyday.

POSTAL WORKER

Gone already. He caught us just in time for the last truck out.

Kline walks in, sees the gun, and draws his own on Amanda.

KLINE

Drop it, Amanda. The urn is mine.

Amanda lowers her weapon.

AMANDA

It's already gone anyway.

Amanda walks out, but Kline stays. He aims his gun at the worker.

KLINE

I have a couple questions for you.

INT. BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY

BURKE CALDWELL, 30s, shuffles papers. His orderly appearance and stiff posture fit his office perfectly.

He opens his briefcase and adds a folder, everything in its place.

INT. INTERVIEW OFFICE - DAY

Burke sits across from DENNY, an 88-year-old in a cast. Burke leans in, entranced by the story.

DENNY

So then these tigers come up over the hill and the only bridge across the gorge is washed out.

BURKE

What did you do?

DENNY

What could I do? I jumped.

BURKE

You didn't fight the tiger?

DENNY

What? Am I crazy? No, I was actually aiming for the other ledge, but landed in the water. These knees don't spring as much as the used to.

Denny laughs like he's remembering another good story.

BURKE

So that's when you broke your leg?

DENNY

Aw, heck no. I was roller blading down this hill in the Sudan.

BURKE

Now you're just pulling my leg.

Denny raises his left hand and puts his right hand over his heart.

DENNY

God's honest.

BURKE

Wow!

DENNY

Hey. Why don't you come with me next time?

Burke instantly tenses up and straightens his already straightened paper.

BURKE

So, Mr. Johnson.

DENNY

Come on, Burke, it's been Denny to you for six years.

BURKE

Denny. It looks like we're going to have to deny your claim.

DENNY

What?

BURKE

We just can't cover irrational and suicidal behavior.

DENNY

It's not suicide. It's living.

BURKE

Right. Well, it's not covered.

INT. BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Burke closes his door and leans up against it. Safe.

Several packages rest on his desk. He opens one.

SCUBA gear. Burke shoves it back in the box. He slumps down into his chair.

INT. BURKE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nothing is out of place. Every book on every shelf sits aligned perfectly with all the others. The rug lies flat, the couch cushions rest perfectly fluffed.

Burke enters, flicks on the living room light and hangs his keys on a hook by the door. He has flowers under his arm.

He sets his suitcase on the desk against a wall. He takes the flowers into the kitchen. Water runs, and he returns with a vase.

Burke puts the vase of flowers next to an urn on the mantel.

BURKE

Happy birthday, Mom.

He takes his box of scuba gear and tosses it in his closet, filled with other boxes of adventure gear it looks like he's never used.

Someone knocks on the door.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Burke's neighbors PIERCE and ZACK stand in the doorway.

ZACK

We're heading down to Zelli's.  
Wanna come?

Burke looks back in his stale apartment and grabs his jacket.

After closing the door he remembers something, goes back in and returns with his briefcase.

ZACK

Ah, come on, man.

BURKE

What? I have work to do.

PIERCE

You're never going to get laid.

BURKE

I've been-

ZACK

You can't work at the bar.

BURKE

Sure I can, I'll just move the pretzels.

PIERCE

Fine. Come on.

INT. ZELLI'S BAR - NIGHT

Burke's briefcase is all but forgotten as he leans over it to tell his story.

BURKE

There he was between a chasm and a hungry tiger, with no way out. He weighed his options, checked the hunting knife in his hand, and jumped into the water below.

ZACK

No way!

PIERCE

Did he die?

BURKE

Nah, he swam to safety and made his plane to the Sudan with just three minutes to spare and none of his luggage.

ZACK

Man, I love your job. You get to hear all the coolest stuff.

PIERCE

If I have to process another complaint I may have to kill myself.

Burke beams as if the adventure were his own.

INT. BURKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Burke walks in and hangs his keys on the hook by the door.

He flips on the light.

The entire apartment has been trashed.

His new adventure equipment and boxes spill out of his closet.