

LENNY'S VINTAGE

written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. REGENT SQUARE STREET - PITTSBURGH - DAY

A calm, tree-lined street. Kids on bikes. A woman power-walking, earbuds in. A lawn sign that says nothing political.

A sound arrives before its source = a strong, precise, old sound.

Around the corner comes a matte-black 1966 BMW R69S with a sidecar, sidecar wheel airborne through the turn. The rider wears vintage goggles and a leather cap. Dogs bail for the bushes. A KID ON A BIG WHEEL skids to a stop, watching, unbothered.

The bike screams down the alley, cuts into a gravel driveway, fishtails --

LENNY (O.S.)
Fucking gravel.

KID ON THE BIG WHEEL
Language!

-- recovers, rolls up the drive and stops beside a waiting PICKUP, tailgate down, a wooden ramp already in place. Like it was expecting him.

EXT. LENNY'S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The rider walks the bike up the ramp in one practiced motion -- no wasted steps, a thing done a thousand times. Chocks the front wheel. Two straps, cinched, then a third he doesn't need. He tests the bike with a shove. It doesn't move. Neither does he, for a second -- a gloved hand flat on the tank, the way you'd steady an animal.

INT. LENNY'S PICKUP - CONTINUOUS

He swings in and pulls off the goggles and cap in the rearview mirror. He is not the thirty-five-year-old daredevil the entrance promised. LENNY WARNEKE, 76, silver, wiry, a face that has decided aging is somebody else's problem.

He turns the key. The truck rumbles up -- and on the dash, an orange CHECK ENGINE light comes on and stays on.

Lenny looks at it. No surprise in him at all.

He opens the glove box. Inside, on top of the registration: a roll of BLACK TAPE. It lives there.

He tears off a neat strip and smooths it over the light with the same tenderness most men reserve for a face they love. Dash fixed. He backs out of the drive.

EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD - THE HILLS - LATER

The pickup, the bike riding tall in the bed, an hour out of the city, nothing but green.

Lenny slows at an unmarked gravel turnoff. Puts his signal on. Sits there with it ticking, no one behind him for a mile in either direction.

Then he cancels the signal and drives on. Nothing has been decided. Nothing ever is.

INT. LENNY'S GARAGE - DAY

The garage is a museum: a dozen BMWs in various states of undress, parts labeled in a hand that hasn't changed since 1974, a hand-lettered sign: WALK-INS WELCOME, CALLS PREFERRED.

The R69S is back on its spot like it never left. Lenny wipes down its tank with the tenderness most men reserve for a face they love. A rotary phone RINGS. He answers with his shoulder, hands still busy.

LENNY

(into phone)

Lenny's. ... A '73 R75? What's it doing. ... Okay, that's not the carburetor, everybody thinks it's the carburetor, it's never the carburetor. That's your points. When's the last time you set your points? ... That's what I thought. Bring it by Thursday, don't ride it in the rain before then, and don't let anybody at a chain shop touch it, they'll sell you a whole ignition you don't need. ... Yep. Thursday.

He hangs up with his elbow. GERALD, 60s, nervous, hovers in the open bay door in a leather jacket that looks like it's still on the hanger.

GERALD

Are you Lenny? I called about the R90. The one for sale.

LENNY

(one look)

You've never owned a bike.

GERALD

Is it that obvious?

LENNY

You're holding the helmet like it might lay an egg. Come here.

He walks Gerald to a restored R90. The gruffness doesn't leave, but it makes room for something patient underneath.

LENNY

Here's what nobody tells you. This bike is older than your marriage and it'll outlast it if you're not careful, because it asks for the same thing a marriage does and most people won't give it to either. Attention. Attention. You listen to it, it tells you what's wrong before it breaks. You ignore it, it leaves you on the side of a road at midnight to think about what you've done.

GERALD

That's, uh, surprisingly a lot of pressure for a motorcycle.

LENNY

It's the right amount of pressure. You want the easy one, go buy something Japanese with a computer in it that forgives you. This one remembers. You still want it?

GERALD

(a beat, sold)

...Yeah. I think I do.

LENNY

Good answer. We'll get you riding lessons before you kill yourself. On the house. I don't sell bikes to widows.

Gerald goes, happy. Lenny seats a socket wrench on a cylinder head when --

MARVIN (O.S.)

Lenny! Lenny, you back here?

LENNY
(not looking up)
If the bike's not running right,
leave a note. What'd you get,
airhead or K-bike?

MARVIN (O.S.)
I didn't buy a bike. It's me.
Marvin.

Lenny straightens slowly, wrench in hand, and looks at his younger brother the way you'd look at a parking ticket you knew was coming.

MARVIN WARNEKE, 74, stands in the doorway. A good haircut growing out. A suit-guy with no suit left.

LENNY
What the hell do you want.

MARVIN
I need a place to stay. I've been
through hell and back.

LENNY
What about Davey?

MARVIN
Busy with the harvest. Bad timing.

LENNY
I don't have a harvest. I have a
garage full of overdue invoices and
a knee that regularly says fuck you
to standing up.

Marvin corners him at a file table stacked with parts orders and index cards.

MARVIN
This is nice, Lenny. You're actually
making a living at this.

LENNY
I am. You?

MARVIN
I'm not. Bankrupt. Divorced. Lauren
threw me out the week after the
filing. My head's still spinning.

LENNY
(genuinely surprised)
Bankrupt? You were killing it in the
market.

MARVIN

You remember Madoff.

LENNY

That was a while ago.

MARVIN

Different Madoff. Local guy. Called himself "the next Madoff" like it was a business plan. Turns out it was.

LENNY

And you get the blame.

MARVIN

I get the blame. Lost my clients' money, lost my house, lost Lauren, lost the kids' respect, and now I've lost the last of my dignity standing in your driveway.

Something crosses Lenny's face -- not quite compassion. More like recognition of a debt coming due.

LENNY

Your kids?

MARVIN

Not returning calls. What do you think, Lenny? Your poor, huddled brother, yearning to breathe free --

LENNY

Don't go Emma Lazarus on me. One night. Two, tops.

MARVIN

I have nothing. Everyone I know has ghosted me.

LENNY

Because you lost their money.

MARVIN

Right.

LENNY

You drive here?

MARVIN

(hems)
Sort of.

EXT. LENNY'S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

A vintage BMW. A Prius. A newish Honda. And a dented green 1982 Ford Fiesta with a bumper sticker: FOLLOW ME TO WALL DRUG.

LENNY

Tell me you did not drive that thing from Jersey.

MARVIN

Tops out around fifty-five. But it got me here. And I've got a suitcase. I do have a suitcase.

INT. LENNY'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - LATER

LENNY

This room doesn't get much use.

MARVIN

Or ever.

LENNY

Enjoy it.

Marvin undresses for the shower, emptying his pockets on the dresser -- twenty-eight dollars, a wallet, a phone with a cracked screen. He exits to the bathroom.

Lenny returns with a towel. Sees the pile. Can't help himself. Counts the cash.

LENNY

Twenty-eight dollars is everything you have?

MARVIN (O.S.)

(from the shower, not remotely embarrassed)
You looked in my wallet?

LENNY

Big deal. Twenty-eight dollars.

MARVIN (O.S.)

There's equity. In some non-standard holdings.

LENNY

Twenty-eight dollars, Marvin.

MARVIN (O.S.)

Yes. Basically. I didn't want to say it out loud. Sorry. I was embarrassed.

A long beat. Then, quieter --

LENNY

Forget it. I'm still mad at you about the cottage. Ten years mad. But I'm not a man who kicks his brother when he's down and driving a Fiesta held together by a bumper sticker. You can stay a little while. Don't get comfortable.

MARVIN (O.S.)

I figured you were still pissed. No calls, no cards. Figured I'd roll the dice anyway. If it doesn't work out, the Steelers are still in town, right?

LENNY

Maybe they'll put you up.

MARVIN (O.S.)

Lenny. It was a third mine. Legally it was a third mine.

Lenny stops in the doorway. Doesn't turn around.

LENNY

It was a hundred and sixty feet of creek and a dock our father built twice and a roof he put on himself the summer I was nine. You and Davey saw a number.

MARVIN (O.S.)

We saw a number we needed.

LENNY

Everybody needed. Nobody thought to ask me, because I was fine.

(a beat)

I was fine.

He goes. Marvin leans out of the shower, dripping, and grins -- he's found the soft spot.

INT. LENNY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Marvin comes down in Lenny's good silk robe.

LENNY

Found my robe.

MARVIN

Hope that's okay.

LENNY

It's a surprise. I'm used to living alone.

MARVIN

How long's it been since the divorce?

LENNY

Lost count of the year. I remember throwing out a lot of polyester after.

MARVIN

And since then? No takers?

LENNY

I became the Elie Wiesel of marriage. Never again.

MARVIN

I can get behind that. But -- girlfriends? Companions? What do you do?

LENNY

I do fine. The vintage cycle business is fertile ground. Very fertile.

He clears his plate and heads for the garage.

MARVIN

(alone, muttering)

Laconic Lenny. A ladies man. Huh.

INT. LENNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marvin wanders, taking in framed photos on the walls: family, weddings, three brothers as boys on a dock somewhere green. He lingers there.

Then the other wall -- a row of vintage guitars on proper mounts. A Telecaster. A couple of old Gibsons. A hollow-body with a finish like honey. Each one worth real money, and each one clearly played, not displayed.

Marvin stares at them like he's meeting a stranger who's been living in his brother's house the whole time.

MARVIN

(to himself)

Since when do you play guitar.

He reaches up to touch one. Thinks better of it. Moves on.

INT. LENNY'S GARAGE - LATER

Marvin wanders in among the bikes and the paperwork chaos.

MARVIN

So business is good. Who does your website?

LENNY

There's no website. It's paper, cards, mail, phone.

MARVIN

The only guy on earth whose business isn't on the internet, and it's my brother. I'll build you one. Pay my keep.

LENNY

No. Why bother. Everything's fine.

MARVIN

I was in IT before I was a broker. Let me build it. Double your business.

LENNY

I've got one garage, Marvin. I can't double a garage.

MARVIN

Faster turnaround, wider reach --

LENNY

It works the way it works.

MARVIN

Just give me a shot. Won't cost much.

LENNY

Cost me?

MARVIN

Computer, software, hosting, wifi. Couple thousand.

LENNY

This was supposed to make me money, not cost me money.