

KILLER ON THE CROSSROAD

BY

DAVID BUCKLEY

It was a searing hot day. The sun was perched high in the sky, a yellow dot on the blue horizon. Despite the heat Sam O'Neill was in a good mood. He was only a hundred miles from his home town, had a full tank of diesel, and was looking forward to seeing his family. Sam was twenty eight and a computer programmer. A bit of a loner, Sam was always doing things his own way. He had olive skin and swept back brown hair which settled behind his ears. He was going at a nice steady pace, leaving behind him a trail of dust. As he travelled over the worn out dirt road he sang along with the radio and drank thirstily from his bottle of water. After he finished the first bottle, he flung the empty bottle over his shoulder into the back seat and leaned over the passenger seat to get another one. As he sat up a dark figure was heading for his windshield.

He slammed on the brakes, barely missing the mysterious figure. Sam's body jerked forward and he nearly collided with the windscreen. As his eyes refocused he could finally see the figure he had nearly struck. A tall, gruff, scruffy man stared back at him standing there motionless. He had a slight stubble, shaved head and his clothes were full of dust.

Petrified, Sam stayed in the car and waited for the stranger to make the first move. After thirty seconds he was at the passenger door, making a rolling motion with his hand. Sam rolled down the window. The man poked his head in intrusively and warned Sam. "You should be more careful fellow". "I'm really sorry I just took my eyes off the road for a minute". "Don't worry, I'll forgive you," he said with a twisted smile. "Thanks", blurted out Sam. "You wouldn't be able to give me a ride to the next town could you? I just want to call my wife to tell her that I'm okay" he said. "Sure no problem" Sam answered slightly intimidated.

Silently, the mysterious stranger slowly opened the door and sat in. Sam started the car and began to drive at a steady pace. For the first while no one talked. The silence was putting Sam on edge so he said "So how long have you been married?" "Ooh I'm not married, I just wear the ring and tell the wife story so people will trust me." Sam turned nervously and looked at the stranger. He had tanned skin which was weather beaten. He had a devilish grin which stretched across his wrinkled face.

Just as Sam put his eyes back on the road, he felt the touch of a cold blade at his throat. Sam shifted his eyes to his right and saw the glint of a metallic object at his throat.

The stranger had taken off his safety belt and was holding the blade expertly in his hand. Sam was paralysed with fear and spluttered “What are you going to do?”. “Just keep driving until I tell you to stop” ordered the dangerous passenger.

Sam settled his mind and at a steady pace, began to accelerate, until he reached 200mph. He hammered on the brakes as hard as he could and the knife wielding maniac, with no belt on, flew into the windshield, cracking it on impact. Stunned with the pain, he dropped the blade and it slid under the seat.

With the weapon gone it was now Sam’s turn to act as quickly as he could. He kicked the passenger door open with full force and summoning up all his energy with one final heave the stranger tumbled out hitting the dirt road with a thud. As Sam looked back, all he saw was a motionless figure in the middle of the road. Sam didn’t stop driving until he reached his destination.