

# LOWBOY CHECKOUT

Written by

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EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - MORNING

SUN CRACKS OPEN over a wide and empty parking lot. Some morning fog is still hanging. Mostly empty, we hang on an expansive landscape like it was an Ansel Adam. Still, but a DRONING NOISE begins in the air, high and unnerving as a couple FLASHES appear. It builds in intensity and then-

Two SMALL FIGURES moving at the edge of frame, as they walk, one of their voices filters in-

MICAH

And she said it's cuz her moms spot  
is mad small and she'd hear us, but  
I know she lyin' cuz I was over  
there other day and-

Distracted and only half paying attention-

NICK

Oh yeah? She let you in?

MICAH

Yeah cuz I said was finna help  
babysit, she got like a younger  
sister and shit-

NICK

How old?

MICAH

Like 7 or something, but see I know  
she lyin' cuz her moms wasn't even  
in there and she was actin hella  
suss-

TITLE CARD: LOWBOY CHECK OUT

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on NICK, 16 years old, worn out work clothes, very tired eyes. He splits earbuds with MICAH, shorter, and with cleaner clothes that hang off his small body. Micah continues his therapy session, but Nick is clearly distracted looking over his shoulder again and again-

MICAH (CONT'D)

So, at this point it's like ion  
even know what to do cuz we been  
together for like 6 months and its  
already been hella bitches that was  
tryna get with me but-

During this talk focus especially on Nick's eyes, darting, shifting searching-

**NB: Whenever we are in Nick's POV we switch from a more traditional cinema language and modern technology to a 'docu-style' early 2000's handheld camcorder. Shadows and figures move at the corner of the frame. Colors and tones are exaggerated and terrifying. The DRONING from our intro penetrates this view growing in intensity over the course of the film.**

**ENTER NICK POV:**

**Looking forward at an empty parking lot searching until a shadow moves at the corner and BAM we whip around. Exit POV**

We stare a lone MAN waiting for bus looking away from Nick and Micah. Nick's eyes are trained on him. Searching. He breaths heavily-

MICAH (CONT'D)

What's good bruh? You aight?

NICK

Yeah...

MICAH

You seem sussed. You sure we good?

Nick looks at Micah, who's clearly on edge now too.

Nick adopts a calm bravado-

NICK

What you gonna do when she asks if you goin home?

MICAH

What?

NICK

Your girls mom right? What you gonna do when she asks if you goin home.

Micah shrugs-

MICAH

Shit ima just say yeah.

NICK

And when she sees you slumped on MUNI on her way to work?

He thinks, then cracks a smile -

MICAH  
Beauty rest.

Nick sucks his teeth-

NICK  
See this why she don't want you to  
come over.

MICAH  
But she can't resist this pretty  
face-

He pushes him-

NICK  
Headass.

MICAH  
So what you think I should do?

NICK  
I think you should move on. Can't  
wait for people.

Nick starts walking. Micah is lost in thought for a moment, but then realizes Nick is gone and catches up to him. Micah looks at Nick and adjusts his hands to be in his pockets like Nick's. Nick's eyes stop darting around for a second and settle on Micah.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Don't do that.

He stares down Micah for a minute before Micah takes his hands out of his pockets. They keep walking. From behind them we see they are walking up to a massive GROCERY STORE. It looms over head like a medieval fortress.

ON THIER BACKS we hear-

NICK (CONT'D)  
Ey hol up.

MICAH  
What's good?

NICK  
When we in there. You remember how  
to move?

MICAH

I remember.

Nick looks at him questions still lingering.

MICAH (CONT'D)

I remember!

Still nothing from Nick.

MICAH (CONT'D)

Eyes on you, but not too close,  
don't do nothing, and don't say  
shit to no one-

NICK

And if you see this?

CLOSE ON Nick's hand. He throws the first part of a sign, pointer and middle finger out, the rest down.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE- CONTINUOUS

Close on the same half of the sign on Nick's hand, he quickly switches to the second set, four finger out flat, thumb tucked in.

Pan up from this too see Micah.

MICAH

Get gone, don't wait.

NICK

Don't forget that shit.

Wider we see Nick, who is in the front area of the grocery store where the aisles spill out into the check out lanes. He leans up against a LARGE SODA DISPLAY and gets to work scoping out the landscape. As he looks up we see a "eye-in-the-sky" style security cam-

**ENTER NICK POV:**

*We see many SECURITY CAMERAS, dotting the ceiling. Our vision zooms in on each as THE DRONING returns.*

*Concentrate on, A WOMAN CHECKING OUT, the BEEP BEEP BEEP of her items being scanned joins THE DRONING.*

*On AN EMPLOYEE sweeping, the WSH WSH of the broom joins THE DRONING.*

*On A TOMATO FACED MAN, large and imposing dressed in knee length khaki's and a LYNRD SKYNRD shirt rolling a grocery cart through the store the EEH EER of a squeaky wheel joins THE DRONING.*

**THE MAN LOOKS UP AT NICK WITH A BURNING STARE.**

**EXIT POV**

The TOMATO FACED MAN, pulls down a box of Wheaties. He doesn't seem to notice Nick at all. We look back to where Nick was and -

HE'S GONE moving off from his designated spot, hitting himself in the head as he goes.

NICK (SOTTO) (CONT'D)  
Shut up, shut up.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE, BEER AISLE CONTINUOUS

Close on Nick's eyes as he peaks over the a display of wine bottles that come up to his height. He's leaned casually but the intensity in his stare betrays him.

REVERSESED - We see Micah hovering by the beer. He looks nervous shifting back and forth onto each foot as he stares around him.

NICK (SOTTO)  
Come on bruh...

We watch from Nick's vantage point, as Micah leans his hand down and grabs one of the racks of beer. He picks it up and starts to walk away and then freezes. Nick follows his eye line to an OLD MAN, 70's wearing a cardigan and walking with a cane, who is selecting a bottle of wine.

**ENTER NICK POV:**

**The Old Man's head SNAPS to look directly at Nick. THE WHIR of camera's all turning to look at him at the same time.**

**EXIT POV:**

Nick jumps back. We see the Old man holding two bottles up trying to decide between them. Nick holds his breath trying to stay calm. He looks down the aisle.

Micah begins to walk quickly towards him, beer in hand. As he approaches, the old man looks up and smiles at him. He starts to head nod and TRIPS.

The beers go spilling out from the package, a few bursting open spilling liquid all over the ground.

OLD MAN  
Are you okay young man?

On Nick he holds his breath, as he watches the Old man hold out his hand to Micah. Micah stares at it for a moment and then-

He pops up leaving the smashed beer packaging on the ground and speed walks towards the end of the aisle.

**ENTER NICK'S POV:**

**The Old Man looks after Micah, rage starting to contort in his face**

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
**HEY! HEY! COME BACK HE-**

**EXIT POV:**

CLOSE ON Nick's hand as it GRABS Micah's shoulder and pulls him close

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE, CHIP AISLE

Nick shoves Micah up against the chip bags, as the CRUNCH AND SQUISH.

NICK  
What the fuck was that

MICAH (SOTTO)  
I can't do it. I can't do it. Im finna get caught.

NICK (SOTTO)  
Your not finna get caught, I did this 300 times.

MICAH (SOTTO)  
You tol' me if something felt off just dip. You said-

Nick releases Micah.

NICK (CUTTING)  
 Fuck that. I tol' you get in get  
 out. That's it.

MICAH  
 I can't do it let's just dip.

NICK  
 We can't-

MICAH  
 It's just some beer. Let's go bruh  
 I can't get caught my mom's finna  
 beat my ass. Its already suss  
 cuz I walked in an out like 4 times  
 and I know this couple saw me-

Nick is looking around wildly while Micah continues to talk over him. As he does the Tomato Faced Man, rounds the corner of the chip asile slowly pushing the cart up.

**ENTER POV:**

**LONG ON THE MAN - A STARE FULL OF MALICE AND HATE**

**EXIT POV:**

Nick wraps his arm around Micah and turns him away, in a whisper-

NICK  
 You finna go back there. And you  
 finna grab this shit alright?

MICAH  
 Why you want this so bad?

Nick looks at Micah, who's hands are shaking like a kid waiting to be let into the principles office.

NICK  
 You a bitch.

He drops his arms and walks away from him.

MICAH  
 Where you goin?

NICK  
 Im finna do this shit myself.

MICAH  
 You sure?



NICK

Get the fuck outta here. They  
already got you on footage.

On Micah, deeply hurt.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE, BEER AISLE - LATER

Close on the COOL MIST floating down off the beer aisle refrigerators. Follow it down to Nick's eyes shifting back and forth.

**ENTER POV:**

**Beer cases, stock boy carrying toilet paper past the aisle, Security cameras, beer cases, wet floor sign, beer cases, security cameras, A hand reaching down to grab a beer case, a couple entering the aisle.**

**EXIT POV.**

Nick is staring at a YOUNG COUPLE, laughing and talking as they push a full shopping cart down the aisle. He's frozen, his hand already wrapped up in the handle of a 30 rack of beer.

They look up at him.

**ENTER POV: Couple staring, security cameras, exit sign far in the distance, carts moving, couple staring, couple taking a step towards him, young man lifting his finger to point. THE TOMATO FACED MAN PUSHES HIS CART AROUND THE CORNER BLOCKING THE EXIT TO THE AISLE.**

**EXIT POV.**

Nick RUNS. Not the plan.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

LONG on the aisle as we see Nick fast walking down it carrying the Modelo.

Camera tracks across several aisles, quickly as Nick walks through the store.

**MIXED QUICK TRACKING FOLLOWING NICK AND NICK POV:**

**CAMERAS, PEOPLE, CAMERAS, CHECK OUT AISLES, CAMERAS, PEOPLE STARING, EVERYONE STARING, CAMERAS. TINGLING REACHES PEAK, OVERBEARING WHINEY DRONING EXIT DOOR. EXIT DOOR. EXIT**

**CAREY**

**Nicholas?**

**EXIT POV.**

CLOSE ON sweat stopping. Nick turns around.

CAREY, mid 40's in Target brand leggings and a sweater. She has crows feet begging to form around her eyes, and chestnut brown hair recently dyed. She looks back at him searching for a response.

HEART BEAT.

**NICK**

Hey mom.

Like she's approaching a feral animal-

**CAREY**

How have you been?

**NICK**

You know, normal.

**CAREY**

What are you doing here?

**NICK**

I-

She notices the beer in his arms.

**CAREY**

Are you working here now?

**NICK**

Yeah-

**ENTER POV:**

**NICK looks behind Carey and sees two security guards exiting the aisle looking around the shop for someone**

**CAREY**

**Nicholas what are you doing?**

**No sign of Micah, empty aisles, empty aisles, security cameras**

**CAREY** (CONT'D)  
*Look at me!*

**EXIT POV:**

Wider, we see Carey staring at Nick concerned but reserved.

**CAREY** (CONT'D)  
 Are you okay?

**NICK**  
 I'm good, I'm fine.

She waits, but he doesn't offer anything to the conversation as Nick looks around the store wildly.

**CAREY**  
 Dad's out of town if you want come over for dinner.

**NICK**  
 I've got food.

**CAREY**  
 That's not what I was-

**NICK**  
 I've got food.

He's only half there, able to maintain eye contact for mere moments.

**CAREY**  
 You look tired.

**NICK**  
 I'm not.

A stare down between them, but A SHOPPING CART LIGHTLY HITS THE CHECKOUT COUNTER.

**ENTER POV:**

*Security camera's are turning, Nick notices the same couple from the beer aisle parked now by a STORE MANAGER talking to him. They all look at Nick.*

**THE TOMATO FACED MAN COME OUT OF THE AISLES SCANNING THE STORE UNTIL HIS FIREY EYES COME TO REST ON NICK.**

**CAREY**  
*What's wrong with you? Why can't you just listen to me?*

*Farther behind them the security guards notice Nick. One leans over to the other talking to the other.*

**EXIT POV:**

CAREY (CONT'D)  
You don't seem alright. What's wron-

NICK  
Nothing.

CAREY  
Nick be honest with me.

**ENTER POV: TWO SECURITY GUARDS COMING TOWARDS HIM, THE MANAGER ON THE PHONE, STOCK BOY COMING OUT FROM THE ASILE LOOKING AROUND, CAMERAS, CAMERAS, CAMERAS.**

**THE TOMATO FACED MAN BEGINS TO WALK MENACINGLY TOWARDS NICK.**

CAREY (CONT'D)  
**NICK! WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?**

*Carey holding her hand back ready to strike Nick, she takes a step towards him*

**THE DRONING nearly explodes as it cuts into the PA SYSTEM-**

MANAGER (V.O)  
Employees, please be advised - we have a possible theft near exit 2.

*Nick looks behind him, A LARGE NUMBER 2 PAINTED OVER THE*

**EXIT.**

**EXIT POV:**

*Wider we see Carey, her hand earlier ready to strike, is now laid on Nick's shoulder.*

CAREY  
I'm sorry-

*A moment between them. Nick searching for some help in her eyes.*

MANAGER  
RIGHT THERE-

*They both look behind them seeing the security beginning to charge at him-*

CAREY

Nick are you-

Back on Nick totally frozen. Unsure of how to move, or where to go. He searches around frozen until he sees MICAH. He makes eye contact with him, and Micah freezes & looks around. Micah makes a very quick assessment of what's happening.

**ENTER POV:**

**A LONG MOMENT on NICK'S EYES, and then MICAH'S EYES. A moment held in time as the DRONING has reached AIR RAID SIREN levels.**

**EXIT POV:**

Close on Micah's face, his eyes widen, his nose flares, his eyebrows raise and all the real world sound comes rushing back as he-

MICAH

AAAAAHHHHHAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

The YELL quiets all other sound as everyone in the grocery store stares at Micah. Nick looks at his Mom.

Micah drops the chips and FULL ON CHARGES the massive soda display Nick was standing against earlier.

HE CRASHES into it - as stacks of orange sodas and colas come falling down, exploding and bursting open. Each can falls like a bomb - spray and fizz exploding.

The tower comes down right as the TOMATO FACED MAN is walking by it, causing cans and soda to rain down on him. A fury growing in his already red face.

CLOSE ON MICAH - He looks up at Nick - that familiar smile coming to his face in slow motion. He throws up the first half the sign as a glint comes off his teeth-

CRUNCH. IN AN INSTANT THE TOMATO FACED MAN'S FIST HAS CONNECTED WITH MICAH'S SMILING FACE.

ON NICK'S EYES WATCHING. A HORRIFYING CRUNCH ECHOES OUT

ON NICK as he watches with horror as the TOMATO FACED MAN lays into Micah. Far enough away we don't hear the sounds or see the damage but close enough that it is impossible to deny the pain. He is frozen-

CAREY

Nick-

He turn and looks at her. Tears welling in his eyes.

Close on his wrist. Her hand grabs it. They leave.

WIDE ON THE GROCERY STORE - We look above the aisles, an eerie ringing coming out from the florescent lights.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASSAVA RESIDENCE - LATER

From outside on the street we watch as Nick and Carey eat quietly together. She takes careful bites, never looking at her food. Her eyes always on Nick. He doesn't look at her.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSAVA RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Nick sips his soup quietly as Carey stares at him.

CAREY

You should stay here tonight.

Nick looks down into his bowl of food.

CAREY (CONT'D)

Will you?

He looks up and strained says-

NICK

Yeah okay.

She flashes a warm inviting smile.

CAREY

I'll make up the bed.

She gets up from the table. Close with Nick as he stares into his food. She arrives at him. She places her hand softly on his shoulder

CAREY (CONT'D)

You can't save everyone.

He looks up at her. She leans down and kisses him on the forehead, and leaves.

On Nick. As we push slowly, methodically towards him he stares out into the night. THE DRONING returning.

LOUDER THAN BEFORE. CRASHES AND GLASH SMASHING AS A PUNK GUITAR LINE BUILDS WITH IT.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASSAVA RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

We watch as Nick BOLTS up from the tables and runs out of the front door. He dashes past the camera into the night. Push in slowly on the empty table.

**ENTER POV: MICAH SITS AWAY FACING AWAY FROM US STARING AT WHERE NICK JUST WAS.**

THE END.