

Roll the Dice

by

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FADE UP:

INT. MEADOWS CASINO FLOOR

Three 20-something guys, JOE, DAVE and JOHN emerge from a bathroom onto the casino floor. Bad-ass music plays, as they fall into stride three abreast.

A blood stain (or is it?) decorates Dave's shirt front.

Joe's leather jacket covers his shirtless body. He carries a SpongeBob lunch box, brief-case style, at his side.

John's dingy-white tee shirt under his leather jacket, glows spots in the casino neon. His shoelaces are gone.

They're determined, disheveled, and maybe a little hung-over, barely glancing at the sexy servers, the flashing slot machines, the glitz and glamour, and the winners and losers, who all pause to watch them swagger past.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

LARRY struggles to free himself from being half-ass-edly bound in a bathroom with scotch tape, shoe-laces, and shirts.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Joe sets the SpongeBob case down and flicks it open revealing:

\$25,000, which he stacks on the table.

JOHN

Are we sure about this?

JOE

The discussion is over.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

Larry twists and tears free his hands. He grasps his other bindings, ripping his shirt completely, as he frees himself.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Joe scoops up a pair of dice and begins shaking them with a quiet confidence. He is in his world.

Dave fidgets, a silly grin giving away his thoughts of money, fame and stardom.

John looks on, chewing his fingernails, hoping, worrying.

Across the casino, doors burst open. Larry hesitates in the doorway, then, runs through, chunks of tape and restraining material trailing behind his shirtless body as he serpentine through the slot machines, pushing players aside.

LARRY

Stop!

DAVE

Roll the dice!

Joe rolls. In turn, each watch the dice bounce and careen into slow motion. But before they stop rolling ...

FADE TO:

INT. THEATER LOBBY

On screen graphic: 11 hours and 17 minutes earlier.

Several writers pass by a sign reading *Film Contest/winners announced today*. The four sign-in and put on name badges, as:

JOHN

\$25,000, that's a lot of money.

LARRY

I could pay my rent in advance.

DAVE

I could payoff the camera.

JOE

I could pay off my gambling debts.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM

They take their seats. Larry makes Dave switch as the place fills with writers in anticipation of the awards ceremony.

LARRY  
If we win this, it'll really put  
Hustlebot on the map.

JOE  
What map?

LARRY  
I don't know, the map of comedy  
troupes trying to make it, I guess?

JOE  
I bet there's no such map.

LARRY  
It's just a saying.

JOHN  
It's a metaphor. It just means  
we'll finally be noticed. Like if  
there was a map, you could find us.

DAVE  
I agree. It's a dumb saying, I  
mean, if there's no map.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE

Small montage of runner-ups accepting awards. Audience  
clapping. And then ... the moment.

PRESENTER  
And the winner is ... *One Roll of the  
Dice*, written by Hustlebot!

The four make their way to the stage, taking congratulations.

Joe leaps 3 feet onto the stage. Dave follows. John lets Joe  
help him up, but Larry refuses and walks around to the steps.

They accept and then pose with a 'Best Script' award.

PRESENTER  
And your check.

PRESENTER hands them a \$25,000 check. Another pose. Applause.

FADE TO:

## INT. BACK STAGE PARTY

The four get more congratulations from judges, other writers, and officials and drink. Dave talks to Presenter.

PRESENTER

We'll meet, talk about the rules for spending the money, what you can and can't do. But that's later, now, just enjoy it! You deserve it.

DAVE

I thought that money was ours.

PRESENTER

(laughs)

Funny. Quoting your own movie. That's good. Writing a movie for a contest about writing a movie for a contest ... ballsy. I love it.

She leaves shaking her head at the awesomeness of it all.

JOE

If we're going to make this movie worth while, we'll need more money.

JOHN

Clearly someone read our script and thought 25,000 was enough.

JOE

Yea, I guess, but wouldn't 50 thousand be better? It's called raising the stakes.

LARRY

You're quoting the movie paradigm?

JOE

Everything I do is a movie, even when I sleep. (pause) What? I get credits at the end of dreams.

DAVE

I really thought it was our money.

JOHN

It is our money, to make a movie.

JOE  
I'll double our money by tomorrow.  
(*They look at him. He pauses.*) One  
roll of the dice, BAM! Doubled.

LARRY  
That's insane!

JOHN  
Sounds risky.

DAVE  
I'm intrigued, but leery ...

They argue and gesture, pointing fingers as:

FADE TO:

INT. RITTER'S DINER

A homemade *Reserved for Hustlebot* sign hangs in a booth where  
the four sit and the argument continues.

LARRY  
... and maybe you win. But, if you  
lose, what kind of movie do we get?

JOHN  
Well, really, we could make a movie  
for 50 bucks, if the story's good.

JOE  
So you're in!

JOHN  
That's not what I said.

DAVE  
The story's good or we wouldn't  
have won.

JOE  
But it could be twice as good with  
twice the money, right?

Larry opens a SpongeBob box/briefcase and pulls out a script.

LARRY  
What can we do with 50,000 we  
couldn't do with 25?

Joe grabs the script and flips through the pages.

JOE  
Here. Do you want Rachel Leigh Cook  
in this movie, like we wrote it?

DAVE  
Yes!

JOE  
Let's roll the dice. Do you want  
Zooey Deschanel to score the sound  
track like we wrote?

DAVE  
Yes!

JOE  
Roll the dice. Do you want to smoke  
a bowl with Matthew McConaughey?

DAVE  
Yes!

JOE  
No, really. Do you want to smoke a  
bowl with Matthew McConaughey, he's  
right there.

Pan to reveal him (or is it?) sitting in a booth.

MATTHEW  
What's up?

DAVE  
I'm in! Let's roll the dice!

LARRY  
Rachel Cook and Zooey whoever,  
aren't actually in the movie,  
they're just frivolously mentioned.

JOHN  
And Matthew McConaughey certainly  
isn't integral to the story.  
(turns) No offense.

JOE  
Sure, he's not integral, but it'd  
be better, more realistic. That's  
how we wrote it. That's how we're  
living it, with minor edits.

LARRY  
This seems like the movie we wrote,  
but it isn't. This is real life,  
(MORE)

LARRY (cont'd)  
which we based the movie on, about  
guys basing a movie on, on.

JOE  
Dave's the only one who gets it.

Dave, unseen by the others, slides the check from the table  
and then purposely spills ketchup on himself.

DAVE  
Joe, come help me get this out.

Dave shows the check only to JOE, and they exit.

Larry sees them running past outside and searches the table.

LARRY  
They took the check.

JOHN  
That was nice of them.

LARRY  
No, they took the \$25,000 one and  
stuck us with the one for 22.74!

John and Larry fumble through their pockets and wallets,  
calculate tip, throw money on the table and give chase.

They bound down the steps. John runs across the street, but  
Larry stops, looks both ways. They race up the street, around  
the corner, and stumble to a stop at a car. Dave is in the  
passenger side, as JOE waits to pull into traffic.

John motions for Dave to roll down the window. He does.

JOHN  
I agree it would be nice to have  
McConaughey, but with a lower  
budget, we just get Jim Brewer.

JOE  
Not as funny. There's a hierarchy  
of stoners. McConaughey, Brewer,  
the older Pete from Pete and Pete.

JOHN  
It's just a cameo, if none of them  
do it, we'll get Donnie Iris.

DAVE  
Will he smoke a bowl with me?

JOE  
No.

Joe pulls out. John chases the car. Larry, hesitates then heads the opposite way to another car. Joe and Dave stop at a red light, a mere 20 feet away, where John catches them.

JOE  
And what about the car chase?

JOHN  
What car chase?

JOE  
This car chase. It would be bad-ass  
... with 50K.

The light turns green and Joe pulls out.

JOHN  
It doesn't change the story!

John backs away, frustrated then turns to wait for Larry to pull up with the other car. But ...

Larry is in the passenger seat. He sticks his head out.

LARRY  
You drive!

CUT TO:

EXT. BLOOMFIELD - CAR CHASE

John chases Joe, finally pulling his car beside the other car as both careen down the road. John yells out the window:

JOHN  
Kevin Smith made Clerks for  
\$27,000.

JOE  
20 years ago. You gotta consider  
inflation. How much did a candy bar  
cost 20 years ago?

JOHN  
35 cents.

Joe and John see an oncoming car, they swerve around it opposite ways and then come back together.

JOE  
What is it now?

JOHN  
A dollar?

JOE  
That's 3 times more.

Joe swerves. John narrowly misses a utility pole, skids and slides to the other side of Joe's car.

LARRY  
But craps is too risky!

DAVE  
Writing a script about writing a script, about writing a script was risky. You didn't want to do that, but we did and we won. \$25,000.

Dave waves the check as Joe makes a sudden turn, losing John.

JOHN  
What? Shit! I thought we were going to Mountaineer.

LARRY  
We rewrote the script when PA got table games! Go to the Meadows!

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - OUTSIDE MEADOWS CASINO

John and Larry screech into a spot and jump from the car.

JOHN  
You check the tables, I'll head to the cashier stand.

The two run past a floor 3 sign to the elevator. It is out of order. They take the stairs, round and round, emerging on the first floor. Joe's car is parked first spot from the entrance. John shakes his head.

LARRY  
How'd he get this spot?

JOHN  
His life really is a movie.

They enter. Larry hesitates, then searches the floor.

John scans the crowd, seeing nothing. He turns a corner, and runs into Joe and Dave. Showdown. John narrows his eyes.

JOHN  
 (pulling out script)  
 Our movie is about guys who win and  
 then gamble 25 thousand, right?

DAVE  
 Right. It was a good dramatic idea  
 when we wrote it, and it still is.

JOHN  
 But ... they lost, in this script.  
 So I don't think we should do it.

Dave, karate-like, wrests the script from John's hand and in red pen, scratches out parts and then writes, *They win*.

JOHN  
 All right. I'm in.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Larry gives up, then sees John motion him into the bathroom. He enters, then stops short when he sees Joe and Dave.

The three overpower him, pushing him into a stall tying him with shirts, shoelaces and rolls of scotch tape.

LARRY  
 Don't do this! Craps is too risky!

JOE  
 Sometimes you gotta take a risk.

Joe picks up the SpongeBob case and all three exit.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO FLOOR

We see the opening sequence again, bad-ass music, swagger, and a \$25,000 bet. Larry escapes and chases, but Joe rolls the dice. They bounce and careen and stop on ...

TABLE GAME GUY  
 Eight.

Larry slows, seeing the looks of confusion on the other's faces, mistaking them for disappointment.

LARRY

Did you lose it? He lost it. I knew it! Did you lose it? Did you?

JOE

Did you just run across the casino shirtless? Yelling?

LARRY

I needed to stop you before you lost the money. Did you lose it?

JOE

No.

LARRY

No? NO! Yes! \$50,000?! Zoey Leigh Cook! A real car chase. You're in!

Larry points across the casino floor where Matthew McConaughey sits at a slot machine. He nods.

JOE

By the way we didn't win.

LARRY

Didn't win? How's that possible?

Larry looks around for an explanation, including at the slot machine where now sits Donnie Iris. Larry is confused.

TABLE GAME GUY

Go again, sir. You need to roll another 8.

JOE

It's no good. One roll of the dice, that's dramatic, that's intense, but two rolls? Three? Or more? That sucks the drama right out of the whole situation. In a movie, there would be just one roll of the dice, and we'd win.

TABLE GAME GUY

Or lose.

JOE

Not in Hollywood.

JOHN

You know, it doesn't matter. We won the contest. We're on that map - metaphorically.

DAVE

And we just lived the script, sort of. And it *was* good. Excitement, action, a car chase. There may or may not be a celebrity cameo. We totally should have been filming.

JOE

But ... it's not as dramatic now.

LARRY

Maybe the story's not about a comedy troupe trying to make it, maybe it's about one guy learning to take a risk, for something. Anything. And he does. But there needs to be that Hollywood payoff. Another roll. It's called raising the stakes.

Joe turns to the table scoops up the dice and shakes them.

Dave resumes his silly grin. John resumes chewing his nails. Larry looks at Joe and gives him one nod of the head.

Joe rolls, and the dice tumble to a stop on ... 8!

JOE

Yes!

John, Dave and Larry celebrate with fist bumps, hugs and jumping. Table Guy slides another \$25,000 onto the table.

JOHN

Ha, HA! \$50,000!

DAVE

Rachel Leigh Cook!

LARRY

You're in!

Larry points to Matthew McConaughey, who is frantically pointing toward the craps table. The three revelers don't understand, until they turn to see ...

Joe shaking the dice.

JOE

Let it ride!

As the others leap to stop him, Joe let's 'em fly ...

FADE OUT