

Reverse

The only car in a large parking lot – a white 98 Ford Explorer – seemingly parked. Idling over the line of four parking spaces. I look at it from afar and keep walking home. The next night the car is still there. I pay it no mind as I got to get home. The next day I'm not working and go to the parking lot early just to scratch a curious itch I have. I look down multiple rows of frenzied traffic and there is no vehicle like the one I saw.

It's dusk and the sun dims below the horizon. I go back to the parking lot just before dark and double take at the Explorer, mouth agape. The parking lot is empty, the Ford is idling with its reverse lights on.

I approach it cautiously. From the back. The car is idling but it sounds like the gears are engaged as if the driveshaft is turning. The white lights are on indicating reverse. The front interior light is on, I peer in the driver side window and find it's empty. "rrrrr" "rrr" I hear distressed muffled talking inside and panic. The muffled whirring sounds like someone maybe tied up in the back seat that needs my help. I try the driver side handle and the door opens, I bend sound and sigh aloud not even a hair less worried. The radio displays in blocky green text "reverse" and the muffled talking becomes clear. "Reverse Reverse Reverse" I look around inside the car. It's cluttered with trash and dated electronics. Something starts clicking in the car. I look around for the origin by the driver's seat. I check the center console and remove a stack of papers. Every sheet has "reverse" printed on it repeatedly. Every single sheet. I look at the gear shift and double take. The gear shift on the wheel column is moving like it's stuck. I look down at the ignition and see that there are no keys inserted. Impossible. I try the gear handle and pull it back. The engine doesn't change from its high rpm state. I gently pull the gear handle and change the gear to park. The car goes silent in a snap. I find my footing back outside of the car. The lights are off on the outside. Suddenly I hear a massive crackling noise, snapping metal and broken debris landing inside the vehicle's engine. The car bursts into speed, I nearly fall back and hit my head against a light post. The car screeches wildly roaring into reverse gear and it rolls out of the area at about 50 mph.

My heartbeat is blasting out of my chest at twice the speed of normal. My hands sting from sliding on the rough asphalt. I look down at my hands "AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!" My hands are reversed! I try to run and trip and fall hard on the asphalt and immediately taste blood. I look at my shoes and they are reversed! I try to waked up. This has to be a terrible dream.