Another Gift

by Alex Broun

A sequel to The Gift of the Gun

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INT. CHURCH - DAY

We start with a tracking shot at the back of a very opulent but near deserted church.

We are some way away from the altar but as we slowly move down the aisle towards it we realise we are at a very sparsely attended, but very expensive, funeral.

An ornate closed coffin stands on supports before the altar as an ANGLICAN MINISTER carries out the service.

The only other person we can see is a YOUNG MAN dressed in a smart black suit and tie, with a white shirt, standing with head bowed next to the coffin.

As we come closer we begin to hear the voice of the Minister intoning the funereal rites and also we see there are maybe ten to fifteen other MOURNERS scattered in the first few pews of the Church.

We reach the altar now and the coffin virtually fills our screen but slowly we move right, up and over the coffin and come to rest in a CLOSE-UP on the Young Man standing alone.

He is in his mid-30s with short dark hair and a slight unshaven shadow.

As we arrive his eyes are closed and his head is bowed but now as we hear the Minister deliver the final blessing on the deceased his head slowly rises.

Suddenly the Young Man's eye lids burst open and we see that his eyes are red from tears but despite that we can also make out a fierce intensity - a mix of rage and steely determination.

We track in again to an extreme CLOSE-UP on the eyes. We hold this for a few intimidating seconds then we dissolve to black.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

A dusty but new extra large size backpack slams in to the dust on a dirt road.

We pan up to see the carrier of the backpack - the same Young Man from the first scene - but he is now dressed in bush walking gear.

Like his backpack his clothing is dusty but new, as are his sturdy brown boots. He reaches down and pulls at the top of the back of the boot near his ankle, trying to ease the chaffing. We see the Young Man's face now and it is hot and sweaty. He takes off his hat to reveal his dark hair has been dyed fair. The trace of stubble on his chin and cheeks betrays his real hair colour.

He looks up the road and we cut to his POV - a deserted dusty dirt road stretching through a dry rainforest.

We see his POV of the other direction, virtually the same.

He now opens his backpack and takes out a bottle of water which he takes a generous drink from. He has been trekking for some time now along the road in the already stifling summer morning and he is unused to the physical exertion and the dry heat.

He finishes drinking the water and places the bottle back in his backpack.

He now checks around quickly once again and we see his POV of the sides of the road - thick dry rainforest on one side sloping down the hill and on the other the same rainforest climbing up a hill.

The Young Man now opens a pouch on the side of the backpack, it contains a vintage small black journal and another zipper.

The Young Man opens the zip and for a split second we see a shiny silver object inside. Suddenly a voice from the rainforest forces him to freeze.

BEN (O.S.) You're pretty slow.

The Young Man immediately closes the zip and shuts the pouch. He turns while still securing the pouch to see BEN emerging from the trees on the side of the road.

It is several years since we have seen Ben but he looks remarkably similar.

His face is a little less lean now and seems more relaxed, his blonde hair is a little longer and combed conservatively down by his sides and his tanned physique has filled out a little but he is still slim and muscular.

He is dressed in well worn hiking gear and carries a smaller, much more practical, backpack.

The Young Man stands as Ben steps out on to the road.

YOUNG MAN

Didn't realise it was so far down. I parked back on the main road.

BEN

Don't worry. I don't charge by the hour.

A beat and a slightly awkward pause. Ben holds out his hand.

BEN

I'm Greg. And you're Mr. Morris.

The Young Man takes his hand and shakes it.

YOUNG MAN

Andrew.

BEN

Andrew. Nice to meet you. Picked a good day for it. You want to go back and get your car.

(pointing further down road)

There's a place to park a bit further down there.

ANDREW

No, it's okay. I don't mind.

BEN

You will when you get back. Won't appreciate that extra k.

ANDREW

I'll know next time.

BEN

(smiling)

Repeat customer. I like it.

Beat. Another short, awkward moment.

BEN

So, you ready?

Andrew half smiles and nods.

BEN

Well then, let's hit it.

Andrew stoops and picks up his backpack. He struggles with the weight.

BEN

Woah! We're going for the day - not the month.

ANDREW

Didn't really know what to bring.

BEN

So you just brought everything.

(beat)

How many times have you actually done this?

ANDREW

This is my first.

BEN

Maybe we should start with something a little easier. All up this is a six hour trek.

ANDREW

No, no. I want this one. Very keen to see the waterfall.

Ben moves towards Andrew's pack. Andrew quickly lifts it on to his shoulders.

BEN

Well let's at least dump some of your crap then. Pick it up on the way back.

ANDREW

No, it's fine.

BEN

Won't get nicked out here.

ANDREW

It's mainly photographic gear. I want to take some photos.

BEN

Hence the falls.

Beat. Andrew nods.

(another smile)

Your funeral.

And Ben turns and heads up a narrow path into the rainforest, already leaving Andrew behind.

Caught by surprise Andrew hesitates for a moment then starts with a jolt, hurrying after Ben.

EXT. RAINFOREST - DAY

A short while later Ben is picking his way up the track which has already become quite steep. Ben uses his hands to haul himself up over exposed rocks and to push away vines and low hanging branches.

Ben talks as he climbs.

BEN

We go up this hill for about half an hour then we snake along the top for the next forty five minutes or so. There's a lovely view in to the next valley.

Behind Ben we see Andrew already puffing, struggling to keep up.

BEN

Then it's another steep climb for about twenty minutes up to the waterfall. We have a couple of hours up there before we need to head back. Tell me if you want to slow down.

Andrew struggles over a particularly difficult patch. He clearly does want Ben to slow down but he's too stupid or proud to ask.

EXT. TOP OF HILL - DAY

A half an hour later Ben sits on top of a rock on the top of the hill. He breathes easily and takes a sip of water from a plastic container.

He gazes back down the hill and we see his POV - the deserted track disappearing back down the hill.

Ben takes another gulp of water. He closes the container and puts it back in his backpack.

He looks back down the track and from his POV we see Andrew's head pop up from between some rocks. He is noticeably struggling now and gasping for breath.

He hauls himself over the rocks with some difficulty and then drags himself to his feet. He stands for a moment trying to steady himself and catch his breath.

He then trudges the last ten metres or so to where Ben is sitting.

BEN

Thought I told you to tell me to slow down.

ANDREW

(still gasping for breath)

I'm alright.

BEN

Don't look it.

Andrew takes off his pack and lays it on the ground. He plonks himself down on the dirt, back to a rock.

BEN

This isn't actually a scheduled stop. I was just waiting for you.

ANDREW

Just need a minute.

Andrew breathes heavily. He reaches into his top pocket and pulls out an expensive looking cigarette case. He opens it to reveal mini cigars.

He takes one out and produces an engraved solid silver zippo lighter.

BEN

And there's the culprits.

Andrew takes no notice and lights the cigar. He takes a long puff.

BEN

As I was saying - this isn't a scheduled stop.

ANDREW

Just let me catch my breath.

BEN

(referring to cigar) And like that's gonna help? (MORE) BEN (cont'd)

(sniffing)

What is it? It stinks.

ANDREW

Cohibars. Rolled in France from one hundred percent Cuban tobacco. Best small eigar in the world.

BEN

And I'm meant to be impressed?

Andrew does not respond.

BEN

Look, hate to be a party pooper but at this rate we won't make the falls.

ANDREW

I paid for the full six hours.

BEN

I'll refund your money then. I really don't think you're up to it.

(beat)

Sorry. Don't mean to offend.

ANDREW

You're not but I paid for the waterfalls and I want to go to the waterfalls.

BEN

Then we better swap packs at least.

Andrew is momentarily concerned.

BEN

Half the problem is that cargo load you're carrying on your back. No wonder you're struggling. You take the lunches and I'll carry the baby elephant.

Ben moves towards Andrew's pack. Andrew puts his hand on it.

ANDREW

No.

Ben stops. He looks at Andrew.

ANDREW

Sorry, I've just got a lot of precious equipment in there.

BEN

I'm not gonna drop it.

Beat. Andrew does not respond.

BEN

Listen Andy, paid up or not - either I carry your backpack or this is as far as we go.

(beat)

I don't mean to bruise your ego but that's the only way it's gonna happen.

Ben looks at Andrew.

BEN

So, you choose. What's it gonna be?

Andrew looks away. Beat. He nods.

BEN

Good, then like I said - this isn't a scheduled break.

Ben picks up Andrew's pack with some ease and hauls it on to his shoulders.

BEN

(pointing to cigar)

And you need to stamp that out, pour some water on it and pour some dirt on top of that. We need to come back this way so we don't want to be frying our own arses.

Andrew starts to stamp out the cigar and follow Ben's instructions.

Suddenly Ben appears beside him, holding the engraved zippo lighter.

BEN

And I gather you don't want to lose this.

Andrew takes the lighter.

Ben turns and heads off up the track.

(walking away)

Next couple of k's are pretty easy so give you a bit of a breather. Keep looking out to the left - lovely view in to the next valley as I said.

And Ben is away up the track. Andrew hurriedly finishes covering up the cigar stub with dirt. He quickly grabs Ben's much smaller and lighter pack and scrambles after him.

EXT. RAINFOREST TRACK - DAY.

From Andrew's POV we see the gentle slope of the hill running down to a lush green valley with a bubbling creek dissecting the middle.

Cut back to Andrew as he looks down the hill, making his way along the track.

The last forty minutes or so the pace has been gentle, the path smooth and level and in the shade of the thick rainforest canopy the temperature is a little more pleasant.

Up in front of him we see the back of Ben, carrying Andrew's backpack, gently loping along.

The beginnings of a smile have begun to appear on Andrew's face as despite himself he has almost begun to enjoy the day.

Andrew glances back up ahead and from his POV we see that suddenly Ben has disappeared amongst the undergrowth.

Andrew's face quickly fills with panic and he breaks into a half trot, racing along the path to try and catch Ben.

Suddenly Andrew emerges into a clearing to once again find Ben in a familiar position, sitting on a rock, Andrew's pack beside him.

BEN

Boo!

Andrew tries to smile. He looks around the clearing.

From his POV we see the clearing opens to a panoramic view on one side, of the inviting valley below and neighbouring hill tops.

BEN

Now this is a scheduled stop. And if you'll hand me the provisions we'll break out the energy bars.

Andrew hands Ben the pack. Ben quickly unzips and produces two silver wrapped energy bars.

BEN

Cherry flavoured. My favourite. Hope you don't mind.

Andrew just half nods again and takes the energy bar.

BEN

Now park your bum and enjoy the view.

Andrew follows Ben's instructions. He sits on the dirt against a tree, gazing down into the tranquil valley. We can hear the gentle sound of water flowing swiftly over rocks below.

BEN

So, how long you in the valley for?

ANDREW

Few days.

BEN

Mid-month break?

ANDREW

(nods)

It's been hectic.

BEN

I wouldn't know.

Beat.

ANDREW

And what about you ... Greg?

Ben looks up.

ANDREW

How long have you been - in the valley?

BEN

A bit.

ANDREW

And how long have you been providing these - "Guided Bushwalks"?

BEN

Awhile.

ANDREW

You get many clients?

BEN

Keeps me out of trouble.

ANDREW

Man of Mystery?

BEN

(a teasing smile) That's how I like it.

Beat.

BEN

Listen, if you do survive this trek - there is a surprisingly cool bar in town.

Andrew looks at Ben.

BEN

Wanna go for a drink later?

ANDREW

Don't think I'll be up to anything except a nice warm bath.

BEN

Maybe tomorrow night then ? If you haven't left.

Beat.

ANDREW

That's very - direct.

BEN

Need to be 'round these parts. Don't get many - new faces. Nice faces.

Beat.

ANDREW

I'm flattered.

BEN

And ... ?

ANDREW

I'll consider it. If ...

Yes?

ANDREW

You promise not to kill me first.

Beat.

BEN

Sounds like a good deal. (standing)

Ready to resume?

ANDREW

Just one more thing.

Andrew reaches into his top pocket and takes out the cigar case. He opens it.

Ben can't hide his displeasure.

Andrew looks at the cigars. Suddenly he closes the box.

ANDREW

You know, I suddenly don't feel like one.

BEN

It's working.

Ben lifts Andrew's pack. Andrew gets to his feet.

BEN

It's get a bit steeper now till we reach the falls.

ANDREW

I'm ready.

BEN

Then let's go.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY.

An explosion of sound hits us as we see a close up of the falls, falling a hundred feet or so to a crystal clear rock pool below. A sight well worth the trek.

On a clearing to the side of the top of the waterfall we see Ben appear, closely followed by Andrew.

We hear Andrew's whoops for joy, echoing through the rock pool.

We go in to see a close up of Andrew. He is exhausted but elated.

ANDREW

We made it! We made it!

Ben appears nearby.

BEN

Correction. You made it. I've been here before.

Andrew walks over to the edge of the clearing. We see his POV as he leans over the edge to watch the water cascading into the rockpool.

BEN

Worth the spend?

ANDREW

Every cent. It's perfect, absolutely perfect.

Ben places down Andrew's pack.

BEN

Enjoy it. We made up a little time so you've got about ninety minutes. Even go for a swim - if you're game.

Andrew places down Ben's backpack.

BEN

So you want lunch first or you just want to get into it?

Andrew looks at Ben, his face momentarily blank.

BEN

The photos? Guess you got a lot of gear to set up.

ANDREW

You're not wrong.

(beat)

How's this for a plan? Why don't you set up the lunch and I'll set up my equipment? Then we'll eat and I'll get busy.

Your wish ...

Ben picks up his pack and carries it over to a nearby rock.

Andrew hunches down over his pack. He makes some small talk as he opens up the same pouch as earlier.

ANDREW

Thanks for carrying this for me. Made a big difference.

Andrew undoes the zip inside the pouch, revealing the shiny silver object which we now see is a revolver.

We hear Ben's voice, closer than it should be.

BEN (O.S.)

I knew that it would.

Andrew turns towards the voice.

From Andrew's POV we see a rock appear suddenly and smash him in the face.

The screen goes black. Silence.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

In black we hear the clinking of a zippo lighter opening, lit and then closed. Opening, lit and then closed again.

Andrew's POV as his eyes blink slowly open. He looks up at the hazy background of rainforest and the blurry figure of Ben sitting in the foreground.

BEN

Sorry about that.

From Andrew's POV he blinks and slowly his eyes start to focus. Ben comes clearer into view.

BEN

Think I broke your nose.

We see Andrew's face now with the nose smashed and bloodied, indeed it is probably broken. There is dried blood on his cheeks and chin.

Andrew suddenly feels around desperately for his back pack.

BEN (O.S.)

Looking for this.

Andrew swings around to see Ben holding up the shiny silver revolver, the backpack beside him.

Ben pulls out a hacksaw from the pack.

BEN

And what may I ask is this for collecting a few cuttings?
(putting the saw to his arm
then leg)
Or maybe an arm - or leg?
(putting down saw)

And these?

Ben pulls out a heavy hammer and an iron spike. He taps his teeth.

BEN

No wonder the baby elephant was so heavy.

Andrew drops his head.

BEN

And who is "R R"? He sure is going to be pissed when he discovers you nicked his solid silver lighter.

Ben holds up the zippo lighter in his other hand. He indicates the engraving to Andrew, two elaborate capital letters: "R.R."

BEN

So, before I push you off this cliff you want to tell me who the hell you are?

Andrew looks up at Ben, the steely determination returning in his eyes.

ANDREW

Look at the gun. Doesn't ring any bells

Ben looks down at the gun. His face is blank for a moment then his eyes are lit up with sudden recognition.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY

In slow motion we see the shot from "The Gift of the Gun" where a younger Ben dressed in red cut off T-shirt and yellow pants has just lifted up the red pyramid to reveal the same shiny silver revolver.

Ben's horrified face.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY

Ben looks at Andrew, his worse nightmare's coming true.

ANDREW My name is Richard Ryan. William Ryan was my father.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

Again in slow motion we see the shot from "The Gift of the Gun" of WILLIAM, after he has just lifted the box revealing the stack of crisp \$50 dollar notes on the table.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

Ben looks at Richard, only the sound of falling water.

BEN

How did you ...

RICHARD

Track you down - Ben? Cost me a couple of hundred thousand in private investigators.

BEN

Not the police?

RICHARD

No. Suicide - they said.

BEN

Just like he wanted.

Beat.

RICHARD

Yes.

But not you?

RICHARD

It just seemed too elaborate, too well planned, too neat. There had to be a missing piece ... you. Then I found his journal.

Ben looks at Richard.

RICHARD

It's in the pouch, where the gun was ... hidden.

Ben pulls out the small black journal.

RICHARD

It's all there. The whole sordid plan. Unusual of my father to leave that lying around actually. Very - sloppy.

Ben starts to flick through the journal, reading.

Richard takes a handkerchief from his pocket. He looks over towards Ben's water bottle.

RICHARD

Do you mind?

Ben follows Richard's eyes to the water bottle. He throws the bottle to Richard who catches it. Richard pours some water onto his hankie and dabs it on his nose wiping off the blood.

BEN

(pointing)

There's some on your chin.

Richard wipes his chin.

RICHARD

Thank you.

(indicating nose)

Don't care to re-set it for me?

Ben does not respond. Instead he holds up the book.

BEN

But how did you find me? I'm not mentioned in here by name just my ...

RICHARD

Function?

(beat)

For the first year the company I hired drew a blank, but finally they came up with this semi-alcoholic local security guard who remembered seeing a "pretty boy" getting out of a "fancy car". This eventually led them to Terio. He wouldn't say anything at first but once additional funds were made available he opened up.

(beat)

Terio sends his love by the way.

BEN

And returned.

Beat. Ben looks at Richard.

BEN

I always wondered about you.

RICHARD

How so?

BEN

I mean if there was a you. If he had a family. Wife, children, grandchildren.

RICHARD

My mother passed away nine years ago. I am an only child and as you may have guessed - I'm not the marrying kind. Questions answered.

Beat. Ben finds a new urgency.

BEN

When I left that room, your father was alive.

RICHARD

Well he wasn't when I found him.

Ben looks at Richard.

RICHARD

My father had everything planned. Nothing left to chance. (MORE) RICHARD (cont'd)

My own particular function was to discover the body.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

Again in slow motion we flashback to the room in the warehouse.

Looking up from the floor, with William's up turned feet in the foreground, we see the door to the room open and a younger well dressed Richard enter.

He halts at the door, face frozen in horror.

Over this Richard's voice has continued.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I was summoned to the location later that day via automated email.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

RICHARD

Who else was going to organise the dignified but poorly attended funeral and make sure everything was nicely hushed up? After all I had my own as well as my father's reputation to protect. He knew I couldn't afford any nasty rumours.

Beat.

BEN

Why did he do it?

RICHARD

I was hoping you could tell me.

Ben is silent. Richard stands abruptly. He begins to dust himself off.

BEN

What are you doing?

RICHARD

What does it look like?

BEN

Sit down.

RICHARD

I'll stand thanks and if you don't mind - I'd prefer if you handed over the gun.

Richard takes a step towards Ben. Ben scrambles to his feet.

BEN

Stay where you are.

RICHARD

Give me the gun.

BEN

What makes you think I'm going to do that?

RICHARD

For two reasons.

Richard takes another step towards Ben. Ben takes a hurried step backwards. The two men begin to circle around the clearing.

RICHARD

Firstly if you didn't pull the trigger that day then no doubt you similarly won't pull the trigger today. Hence you will give me the gun.

BEN

William wasn't threatening to kill me.

RICHARD

Secondly if you did pull the trigger that day then you will again pull the trigger today meaning that I will have found the "angel" who murdered my father.

BEN

You'll also be dead.

RICHARD

Everything has its price. Just like every man.

Richard lunges for the gun. Ben just manages to evade him.

Ben is terrified now, sweat on his forehead. Hands clammy, just like that day at the warehouse.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

Suddenly we are back in the warehouse room that day in a scene we did not see in "The Gift of the Gun" - maybe what happened afterwards.

Ben holds the gun in exactly the same position he holds it in present day on top of the waterfall.

Across the room William stands in exactly the same position as Richard now stands in the clearing, hands raised, moving slowly towards him.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

Richard, hands raised like his father, inches slowly towards Ben.

BEN

I didn't kill him.

RICHARD

Then give me the gun.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

William is now very close to Ben, he reaches out his hand towards him. What for - the gun, Ben?

In close up we see Ben's mouth move but we hear the voice of the older Ben.

BEN (O.S.)

Stay back or I swear -

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

In present day we see Ben complete the sentence.

BEN

I will kill you.

From Ben's POV we see Richard extremely close now, his hand almost touching the gun.

RICHARD

(half smiling)

Just like you did to dear old Dad.

Ben's hand is shaking wildly now. Behind him we see they have circled around and the edge of the cliff is now directly behind Ben.

Richard's fingers are now inches from the gun.

BEN

He wanted me to give him a gift.

RICHARD

And you gave it to him.

BEN

(convincing himself)
I didn't kill him.

RICHARD

But if you didn't kill him, then who took the money?

The question takes Ben off guard.

Richards grabs the opportunity and in slow motion we see Richard lunge once more for the gun.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

Still in slow motion, William too lunges for the gun.

In close up we see his hand wrapping around the gun in Ben's hands.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

Still in slow motion but back in present day we see Ben evade Richard's lunge again.

We see Ben's face as Richard overbalances and topples towards the edge of the cliff. He spins back to face Ben.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

Continuing in slow motion we see Ben's face in close up as we hear the distorted boom of the gun going off.

We then see Ben's POV of William reeling back across the warehouse room, from the force of the gun. He stumbles against the chair and tumbles backwards towards the floor.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

Back in present day and still in slow motion we watch as Richard tumbles backwards, disappearing over the cliff, eyes never leaving Ben's for a moment, mirroring exactly his father's fall of two years earlier.

We hear Richard's distorted cry booming like the gun as he falls to the rocks below.

Cutting back to normal motion Ben is alone in the clearing. Again just the sound of falling water and his gasping for breath.

Slowly Ben inches to the side of the cliff and peers over. From his POV we see Richard's shattered body, lying on the rocks below at the side of the rockpool.

Ben pulls back from the edge. He tries to control his breathing, desperately trying to work out what to do.

Suddenly he makes a decision, as he did several years before.

He quickly grabs the small backpack and stuffs it into the larger backpack.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

Back in the warehouse we see Ben stuffing the money into his small red backpack.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

Ben moves quickly around the clearing, checking for any signs of him being there. He uses his boots to kick some dust over a few footprints.

INT. FLASHBACK: WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY.

Ben is at the door. He scans once more before placing the key in the lock and opening the door.

He exits quickly, slamming the door behind him.

EXT. CLEARING ABOVE THE FALLS - DAY.

Back in the present day Ben takes one final look at the clearing. He pulls Richard's backpack on to his shoulders and quickly disappears into the rainforest.

We watch for a moment the empty space where Ben was seconds before.

Then we pull back slowly through the clearing. We go down closer to the ground as we pass over a rock and then down further still to ground level.

There the camera stops and nestled behind the rock, out of Ben's line of sight, is Richard's silver zippo lighter.

The clearly engraved letters "R.R." glint brightly in the afternoon sunlight.

Freeze frame. Fade to black.

End film.