

**EXTREME GRIDLOCK**

Written by

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**PLAYWRIGHT BIO:**

James C. Ferguson is an award-winning writer whose plays have been produced throughout the United States as well as in the UK and New Zealand. He has written two novels, numerous screenplays and a number of projects for television and the web. James is also the co-writer and director of the well-reviewed feature length independent motion picture *Happy Holidays*, available through numerous digital platforms and on DVD through TLA Video. For additional information go to his web site: [www.scalepluspoints.com](http://www.scalepluspoints.com). James is on a variety of social media platforms, including Instagram (@scalepluspoints) where he mostly posts pictures of his one-eyed cat. He's adorable (the cat, not the playwright). James also has two children (the playwright, not the cat) but they're not nearly as cute so you won't see as many pictures of them.

**SETTING:** A traffic jam.

**GENRE:** Drama

**CHARACTERS:**

**MADDOX**

**BROOKS**

**TIME:** A time in which enough cars exist to have traffic.

**DESCRIPTION:** A couple struggles to understand why they're stuck.

**# of PAGES:** 30

**PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS:** None

LIGHTS UP ON:

INT. CAR - LATE AFTERNOON / EARLY EVENING

Two people, sit in a car. A couple, in their 30's / 40's: BROOKS & MADDOX. Married. Dressed nicely.

The car isn't moving. The people look frustrated.

Maddox is driving. Brooks is stewing.

We aren't moving.

BROOKS

I know.

MADDOX

We *haven't* moved, in, like, how long?

BROOKS

I don't know.

MADDOX

Thirty minutes.

BROOKS  
(checking their phone)

Why - ?

MADDOX

We haven't *moved* in *thirty minutes*.

BROOKS

Why did you ask me - ?

MADDOX

Why - ?

BROOKS

Why did you ask me if you already knew the answer?

MADDOX

I didn't, when I asked you. I asked you, then I looked at my phone, then -

BROOKS

Okay.

MADDOX

Beat.

BROOKS  
Thirty-one minutes, now.

MADDOX  
What do you want me to do?

BROOKS  
I don't know. Something. Anything.

MADDOX  
I can't. I'm stuck. I can't do anything.

BROOKS  
(looking around, in all  
directions)  
No one is moving. I can't -

MADDOX  
It must be an accident.

BROOKS  
What else could it be?

MADDOX  
What does it say on the thingy?

BROOKS  
The what?

MADDOX  
The - Ugh - You know what I mean ...

BROOKS  
No.

MADDOX  
The - ugh - The traffic - thingy. The app. The -

BROOKS  
GPS?

MADDOX  
Yes. That. What does *it* say?

BROOKS  
About what?

MADDOX  
About -  
This! (motioning all around them)

I'm -

BROOKS

What?

MADDOX

I'm doing something else. Can't you - ?

BROOKS

*I'm driving.*

MADDOX

Beat.

BROOKS

Not really.

MADDOX  
(taking out their phone)

Fine. What are you doing, anyway?

BROOKS

I'm reading the small print.

MADDOX

On what?

BROOKS

Our tickets. I'm trying to see if I can get a refund.

MADDOX

Why are you trying to do that?

BROOKS

Because, we're not going to make it. Even if we started moving, right now, I don't see how - I don't - What does the thingy say?

MADDOX  
(looking at their phone)

The thingy - has a lot of red lines.

BROOKS

That's not good.

MADDOX

Like, a lot, a lot. Like, everywhere that isn't gray, or blue, is red.

BROOKS

Does it say - ?

MADDOX

No.

BROOKS  
It doesn't say - ?

MADDOX  
No. It's just a big - red - mess.

BROOKS  
It doesn't show you the cause - ?

MADDOX  
No.

BROOKS  
So, it's probably an accident ...

MADDOX  
I mean, I would assume so, but - It doesn't say - It's just -  
It doesn't show us -

BROOKS  
(reading)  
Shit.

MADDOX  
What?

BROOKS  
No refunds.

MADDOX  
Shit.

BROOKS  
No fucking refunds. Are you fucking kidding me? Don't they  
know -

MADDOX  
I'm going to roll down the window ...

They do, as:

BROOKS  
Don't they understand how difficult this was? Don't they have  
any empathy? Don't they realize it took us six months to plan  
this?

MADDOX  
I'm going to unbuckle ...

They do.

BROOKS  
I bought the tickets *in January*.

MADDOX

I'm going to turn the engine off ...

BROOKS

I booked the babysitter *in March*.

MADDOX

Do you want to roll down your window? It's actually pretty nice outside. Considering. I would have thought - With all the cars - and trucks - I would have thought - Do you want me to do it for you?

They do.

BROOKS

I've been saving this outfit - I took the top to the dry cleaner *weeks ago*!

MADDOX

You can't see much that way, because of the truck. But, if you look that way, you can see the ocean ...

BROOKS

It is so fucking difficult to get out of our fucking house.

MADDOX

And - expensive ...

Beat.

BROOKS

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Beat.

BROOKS

Why are the windows open?

MADDOX

I didn't know you were going to - Um - Do you want me to close them?

Brooks looks around, embarrassed,  
as:

BROOKS

I don't know what the point of that would be, *now*.  
(looking out their side, the ocean side, forcing a smile, to whomever is driving the car next to them)

Hi.

Brooks waves.

BROOKS  
He's waving.

Maddox also waves.

MADDOX  
There's certainly worse things he could be doing with his hands.

BROOKS  
Yeah, but, I just - He probably thinks I'm a -

MADDOX  
He's smiling!

BROOKS  
That isn't a real smile. That's a socially awkward smile. That's the face you make when the person next to you does something crazy.

MADDOX  
How do you know that? You can't possibly know that. These are extreme circumstances.

Beat.

MADDOX  
Can we stop waving now?

BROOKS  
We should probably wait until he stops.

MADDOX  
Okay.

Beat.

MADDOX  
Okay, he stopped ...

BROOKS  
(overlapping)  
Okay ...

They both immediately stop.

BROOKS  
Fuck this.

Brooks unbuckles.

BROOKS  
You know, if we're not moving, you can probably - Oh. You already did.

Yeah.

MADDOX

Beat.

BROOKS  
(listening)

Did you turn the engine off?

MADDOX

Yeah.

BROOKS

Smart.

Beat.

BROOKS

I was just - you know - I was looking forward to this, *so much*. I was looking froward to getting out of the house. I was looking forward to doing something with you ...

MADDOX

I know.

BROOKS

We *never* get to do anything!

MADDOX

I blame our children. ... I'm kidding! ... I love our children!

BROOKS

Most of the time. No, no, no, that's not true. Even when I want to string them up by their toenails, I love them. They're just -

MADDOX

A lot.

BROOKS

They - are - a lot.

MADDOX

Yeah.

Beat.

MADDOX

Did you at least cancel the dinner reservation?

BROOKS

I tired.

They both sink.

MADDOX

If the stupid train was ever working ... If we lived in Europe ... Do you know how many trains they have in Europe?

BROOKS

If it makes you feel any better, I checked the web site for the train, earlier, and the one we would have had to take in is currently a doorstep.

MADDOX

Really?

BROOKS

A big - steel - multi-million dollar doorstep. Something - fell off, apparently. I don't know the details.

MADDOX

Something fell off?

BROOKS

Something - yeah.

MADDOX

Off the train?

BROOKS

Yeah. My point is - if we had tried to *take* the train -

MADDOX

We'd be in -

BROOKS

Yeah.

MADDOX

Well ...

Beat.

MADDOX

Do you want to call the kids?

BROOKS

(quickly)

No.

(realizing)

I mean - I don't need to - They're in good hands. Dakota's great. She doesn't need us - None of them want us - "Let sleeping dogs sleep."

MADDOX

I don't think that's -

BROOKS

She probably has them - What did have them do last time?

MADDOX

I don't remember.

BROOKS

She had them - Oh, what was it ...

MADDOX

It was a while ago ...

BROOKS

Oh, I remember! She had them make that origami zoo. That was it.

MADDOX

I don't -

BROOKS

AND she had them asleep by 9 o'clock. That's - I mean - That's unheard of! The last thing I want to do is - mess up her - mojo.

MADDOX

Okay.

Beat.

Maddox plays with his phone.  
(He's texting someone. Brooks doesn't notice.)

MADDOX

So, what do you want to do?

BROOKS

I don't know. What's everybody else doing?

Maddox looks around, checking all four compass points.

MADDOX

Uh - Well - The people in front of us are just - sitting there - ... Staring ...

BROOKS

Are they dead?

MADDOX

I don't think so ... Uh - The guy on your side - The one you waved to -

BROOKS  
We waved to.

MADDOX  
He's reading. ...

BROOKS  
What's he reading?

MADDOX  
(without thinking)  
A book.

BROOKS  
I know that. For the love of - What book?

MADDOX  
I don't know. I can't see the title. Can you? He's on your side.

BROOKS  
I don't want to make eye contact.

MADDOX  
Okay.

BROOKS  
If I look, he's going to think -

MADDOX  
He's not going to think anything. He's going to think -

BROOKS  
Why is that crazy person looking at me? Again. Are they going to scream at me? Are they going to wave at me? This whole thing is already awkward enough. I don't want to make it worse. What about the person on your side, in the truck?

MADDOX  
They're - uh - I can't see what they're doing.

BROOKS  
What do you think they're hauling?

MADDOX  
What?

BROOKS  
In the truck. What do you think they have in there?

MADDOX  
I have no idea.

BROOKS  
You're no fun.

MADDOX  
Fine. Um - Ping pong balls.

BROOKS  
Ping pong balls.

MADDOX  
What? You asked me to guess, so I guessed.

BROOKS  
Yeah, but, ping pong balls?

MADDOX  
What's wrong with ping pong balls?

BROOKS  
Nothing's wrong with ping pong balls. I just - I thought you were going to say shawarma or something.

MADDOX  
Shawarma?

BROOKS  
Wouldn't it be amazing if that entire truck was filled with shawarma?

MADDOX  
I don't really like shawarma, so -

BROOKS  
You don't like shawarma?

MADDOX  
Not really, no. It's too - shawarma-y.

BROOKS  
Shawarma-y?

MADDOX  
Yeah.

BROOKS  
Okay. What about the people behind us? What are they doing?

Maddox turns around awkwardly.

MADDOX  
The people behind us are -  
(suddenly embarrassed)  
Oh my god.

Maddox snaps back around.

MADDOX

Don't look.

BROOKS

Why?

MADDOX

Because. They - Um - I think -  
(soft, motioning to the rear  
view mirror)  
She had her head in his lap.

Brooks immediately turns around.

BROOKS

What?!

MADDOX

Oh my god.

BROOKS

She does not!

MADDOX

Well, not *now*, no.

Brooks turns back around.

BROOKS

Maybe she was tired. ... And don't get any ideas!

MADDOX

I didn't even say anything!

BROOKS

You didn't have to. Don't those people realize that *everyone*  
can see them? At least wait until the sun goes down!

MADDOX

When is the sun going to go down?

BROOKS

Why are you asking?

MADDOX

I'm just curious!

BROOKS

(looking at their phone)  
Soon. Ish. ... I'm going to put on some music.

Brooks reaches for the car radio  
but:

BROOKS  
(starting to panic)  
Did you know the car isn't on?

MADDOX  
I turned the engine off.

BROOKS  
You did?

MADDOX  
Yeah.

BROOKS  
When?

MADDOX  
Not too long ago.

BROOKS  
I was wondering why it's so quiet ... Wait, listen ...

Silence.

BROOKS  
Did everybody turn their engines off?

MADDOX  
(listens, then)  
I think so.

BROOKS  
Do you think they know something that we don't know?

MADDOX  
I think it's the opposite. I think everyone sees that knot of red lines on their phones, and they look around, and no one's going anywhere, so they're making the most of it.

BROOKS  
Like the people behind us.

MADDOX  
Hrmm.

Beat.

BROOKS  
I'm going for a walk.

Immediately, Brooks opens the door and gets out of the car, stretching, before Maddox can say anything.

MADDOX

What if we start moving?

BROOKS

We'll have plenty of time. It's not like this is the Indianapolis 500. Are you going to join me, or what?

MADDOX

Oh ... Uh ...

Maddox gets out of the car as well, much slower and more awkwardly than Brooks.

BROOKS

Doesn't it feel good to get out of that thing?

MADDOX

Well, yes, but ...

BROOKS

I can't *believe* we're not going to see the show tonight. I'm so -

MADDOX

I know. Me, too.

BROOKS

Really? Because, you don't sound it.

MADDOX

Sound what?

BROOKS

Mad. You don't sound mad. Aren't you mad?

MADDOX

Of course, but, I'm also, you know - I was driving. I didn't want to -

BROOKS

You're not driving now.

MADDOX

Well, no, but -

BROOKS

Do you realize this is the *third* time we've tried to do something?

MADDOX

Is it?

BROOKS

We tried to go to Tanglewood last summer, remember, but the show was on a Friday, and I had to work late, and, because it's a two hour drive -

MADDOX

That probably wasn't a realistic thing for us to try and do.

BROOKS

And then, remember, we were going to try to visit your friend Don in New Hampshire and everyone got sick.

MADDOX

That wasn't anybody's fault. People get sick. What are you going to do?

BROOKS

I know that. Rationally, I know that. But even so, it doesn't make me any less - I spend my entire life at work, or at home, in our house, and I just - I want to be able to - I feel so trapped. All the time. I can't do anything. Ever. I'm so tired! Mentally, physically ... I can't - We can't - I feel like I'm slowly going insane!

Beat.

BROOKS

Well?

MADDOX

Well what?

BROOKS

Aren't you going to say anything?

MADDOX

What do you want me to say?

BROOKS

I don't want you to say anything. I want you to say what you want to say.

MADDOX

(stammering)

Uhhh ...

BROOKS

Oh, for fuck's sake. Are you serious? What are you feeling, Maddox?

MADDOX  
(looking around)

Embarrassed?

Brooks sighs.

MADDOX  
I didn't really, uh -

BROOKS  
What?

MADDOX  
Nothing.

BROOKS  
Don't do that. I hate that. You know I hate that. What were you going to say?

Beat.

MADDOX  
Missing the show tonight - I mean - I'm not - completely - brokenhearted that ... uh ...

BROOKS  
What are you saying?

MADDOX  
I'm saying - Uh - I know you really wanted to go to the show, but - I - uh ...

BROOKS  
(hurt)  
You didn't want to go?

MADDOX  
It's not at the - top of my list ...

BROOKS  
Are you fucking kidding me?

MADDOX  
Brooks -

BROOKS  
Are you fucking kidding me??

MADDOX  
(embarrassed, looking around)  
That car has children in it.

BROOKS  
Why the fuck are we here, Maddox?!

MADDOX  
I don't know why we're *here*, but -

BROOKS  
You know - what I mean!

MADDOX  
It could be an accident, but, I haven't heard any sirens.  
Have you?

BROOKS  
Why did we go through all this trouble to do a thing if you  
don't want to do the thing?

MADDOX  
I didn't say I *don't*, necessarily ... I said - ... I'm  
ambivalent.

BROOKS  
You're - *ambivalent*? What are you, fucking Switzerland?

MADDOX  
Again -  
(pointing)  
Children.

BROOKS  
The logistics - The money - It's -

MADDOX  
I know.

BROOKS  
Why didn't you *say* something?

MADDOX  
Because, I wasn't *opposed* to it, exactly -

BROOKS  
Oh my god.

MADDOX  
(re: the man in the car on  
Brooks' side, hushed)  
The man who's trying to read is making the  
(miming the motion)  
"keep your voices down" motion.

BROOKS  
(to Brooks, and the man)  
We're in the middle of the *highway*. *Sir*.

MADDOX

Yes, but -

BROOKS

"Keep your voices down." Has everyone gone insane?

MADDOX

We're not, you know - It's actually quite peaceful. Serene, even.

BROOKS

"Serene."

MADDOX

Beautiful. The sky is clear ...  
(motioning in Brooks'  
direction)

You can see the ocean ...

BROOKS

Hrrm.

MADDOX

The sun's setting ...

From this point forward, the sun  
slowly begins to set, giving  
everything a nice warm glow.

MADDOX

I can certainly think of worse ways to spend my time.

Brooks stews.

MADDOX

It's not that I didn't want to do something, at all. I want  
to get out of the house as much as you do. I want to do  
things ... other things ... different things ... Yes, it's  
feel like, sometimes - ... Oh, what's the name of the guy ...

BROOKS

"The guy".

MADDOX

Who did the thing ...

BROOKS

(guessing randomly)

Dwight D. Eisenhower!

MADDOX

Sisyphus!

BROOKS  
I was close ...

MADDOX  
I know it always feels like, you know - we're always pushing that boulder, up the hill, never getting anywhere ... It's -

BROOKS  
Exhausting ...

MADDOX  
Frustrating ...

BROOKS  
All the ings.

MADDOX  
But - some people - they don't even have the opportunity to do this.

BROOKS  
I know that! Although, I can't believe that *this* is a thing that any of us had on our bingo card.

MADDOX  
Of course it isn't. The point is -

BROOKS  
I *am* grateful, Maddox. I'm not a - At the same time, however, I am also allowed to be frustrated. Both things can be true at the same time.

MADDOX  
I just wanted to spend some time with you. I don't necessarily care about - *That* isn't the thing that matters. *This* is.

Beat.

MADDOX  
I love you.

BROOKS  
I love you, too.

MADDOX  
How exciting is it to have a conversation that doesn't involve any of the minutia of our day to day lives?

BROOKS  
I suppose ... That show was *supposed* to be amazing, though.

MADDOX  
I'm sure it was.

BROOKS

Great reviews.

MADDOX

Maybe we can try to see it on a different night.

BROOKS

Were you not here when I was ranting about *scheduling*?

MADDOX

You're right. I know. ...

(looking at his phone)

Dakota says the kids are fine.

BROOKS

I thought we agreed we weren't going to call her!

MADDOX

I didn't call her. I texted her.

(looking at his phone)

They made a soufflé.

BROOKS

Of course they did.

MADDOX

In the shape of St. Paul's Cathedral.

BROOKS

What? No.

MADDOX

Yes.

BROOKS

Did she send a picture?

Maddox hands Brooks their phone.

BROOKS

(looking at Brooks' phone)

Oh my god. How?

Brooks turns around to show the picture on Brooks' phone to the people behind them.

BROOKS

Did you see this? This is what our babysitter is doing with our kids. It's a soufflé, in the shape of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Beat.

Brooks stares back at the people behind them for a moment, flatly, until, eventually:

BROOKS

AGAIN?!?!?

As Brooks turns back around:

MADDOX

What?

BROOKS

Don't look.

Brooks gives Maddox back his phone.

BROOKS

I couldn't do that ...

MADDOX

(unsure)

What are we talking about - ?

BROOKS

(overlapping, re: the phone)

*That.* That's what I'm talking about, Maddox. I couldn't do *that*.

MADDOX

Well - No ... But - Neither could I! That's why you hire someone like Dakota in the first place. That's why you outsource -

BROOKS

"Outsource"?

MADDOX

I -

BROOKS

That makes our children sound like a - commodity.

MADDOX

I didn't -

BROOKS

They're human beings. Little human beings, but - Still - They're not - soybeans.

MADDOX

Soybeans?

BROOKS  
Or - corn. Corn is a commodity. Isn't it?

MADDOX  
Uh ...

Maddox looks something up on his  
phone.

MADDOX  
(reading)  
Hogs, eggs, wheat, hay, soybeans, corn ...

BROOKS  
Hah! I thought so. I know my commodities. Dad would be so  
proud.

MADDOX  
We - do - a lot.

BROOKS  
A lot of what?

MADDOX  
A lot - for the children.

BROOKS  
Oh! Right. Them.

MADDOX  
We can't do *everything*.

BROOKS  
*This is so weird.*

MADDOX  
Are we still talking about the children?

BROOKS  
I feel like we're at a concert, or a game. I feel like we  
should be tailgating!

MADDOX  
I have an idea.

Maddox moves off.

MADDOX  
I'll be right back!

Maddox exits.

BROOKS  
Wait. Where are you going? Maddox!

MADDOX (O.S.)

I'll be right back!

Brooks sits there for a minute,  
until she gets bored, and,  
turning to the man to her right,  
the man who was reading ...

BROOKS

What are you reading? ... Hi. I was just - ... Oh ... No, I haven't ... Is it good? ... I see ... No, I didn't ... Um-humm ... Um-humm ... Ohhh ... Oh, uh, I actually listen to a lot of audiobooks at the moment, because I'm in the car a lot for work ... Biographies, mostly ... Penelope Fitzgerald ... She wrote *The Beginning of Spring* ... Oh, okay ... Sorry ... I'm only about halfway through but - ... So far ... Henry? ... Hi, Henry. I'm Brooks. ... Yes, it does almost sound like "books". ... Nice to meet you as well ... I have no idea. Do you? ... We were going to go to a show ... It's our first night out together in, I don't know how long ... Oh, I'm sorry to hear that ... I see ... Okay ... Um ... Enjoy your book!

Brooks tries to see if they can see Maddox. They can't so they turn their attention to the truck to their left. They have to strain to see up into the truck because it's so huge.

BROOKS

Hello?

No response so they knock on the side of the truck.

KNOCK KNOCK

BROOKS

Hello. ... I was just, uh - I was just making sure no one was having any kind of a - medical emergency. Considering the circumstances, that would be - ... Oh, uh ... No, uh - No hablo español. ... I'm sorry. ... Lo, uh - ... lamento. Yes. Si! ... Okay, well, I guess I do speak a *little* Spanish. Español. ... Um-humm ... Esperanza? ... Am I pronouncing that - ? ... Yes. Si! ... Is that your name, or - Because I think it also means "hope". Doesn't it? ... Nombre. Name. ... yes. Si! ... You know what's funny? My daughter just taking Spanish in school and she hates it. I think, if she could be here now ... Never mind. No importa. ... Brooks. ... Yes, it does sound like "buscar" ... What does that mean? ... Uh ... Qué significa eso? ... Buscar ... Yes, um ... So, buscar means buscar? ... To search (for) ... I see ... Yes ... Thank you ... I like your earrings, by the way. ... Um ...

No collar ... Yes. Si. ... Gracias. ... Oh, um, by the way - What's your cargo? ... What's in the, um - ... Ping pong balls? ... Really? That's - Really ... Okay, well - That's just going to be our little secret, okay?

Brooks takes a moment, then turns around behind them, waving politely.

BROOKS

Hi ... So, um - Where were you two going? ... "Back to her place." ... Sure. Why not. Okay. ... Did you go somewhere first, or - ? ... Your cousin's bat mitzvah. Sure. Why not. Whatever - uh - I'm sure it was. ... Actually, do you mind if I have a - ? ...

Brooks takes a joint (or equivalent) from the people behind her (who we never see) and takes a long drag before realizing, with disgust, where everyone's lips have been and -

BROOKS

Is this yours, or did she - ? ... She did. ... Okay. ... No, that's fine. It was worth it. Gracias. I mean, um, thank you.

Brooks returns the marijuana to its owners.

Lastly, Brooks turns to the car in front of them: the couple that wasn't talking.

BROOKS

Hello. ... Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to - You looked like you were just sitting there so - ... Is this a bad time? ... I see. ... The car behind me has pot if you're looking for something to help take the edge off. ... I see. ... No, that's true. It is a bad idea to do that while you're driving. ... Except ... At the moment, nobody's, you know ... He's got a book and she's got ping pong balls if those are more your - ... Sure. Of course. I was just trying to make conversation.

Brooks sits in silence for a moment, the sky slowly getting darker and darker as the stars and moon come out, until, eventually, Maddox returns, holding a bag.

MADDOX

You're not going to believe what I - ...

What? BROOKS

MADDOX  
(hushed)  
Somebody's ... you know ...

What? BROOKS

Maddox mimes smoking a joint.

I don't smell anything. MADDOX

Maddox smells Brooks.

Are you sure? MADDOX  
(suspicious)

Um hummm. BROOKS

Did you - ? MADDOX

BROOKS  
(overlapping, laughing)  
The car behind us has some and it's really good.

Did you save some for me? MADDOX

You're driving. Eventually. What's in the bag? BROOKS

MADDOX  
Oh, right, so - Up there - There's a food truck and - They're just doing what they do, like this is normal. There's quite a line. That's why it took me so long ...

Shawarma? BROOKS

No. Unfortunately. Sorry. MADDOX

BROOKS  
That's okay. It doesn't matter. It smells delicious. I am really hungry.

I bet. MADDOX

Maddox takes a single carton of food and two sets of chopsticks out of the bag.

Thai. MADDOX

Oooo! BROOKS

They dig in. Maddox is a little more voracious than Brooks.

MADDOX  
Do you want me to separate this or -

BROOKS  
(their mouth already full)  
We can share. ... Hey, you know what I learned, while you were gone?

MADDOX  
What?

BROOKS  
You what to know what that truck's carrying? ... Pajamas \*.

\* (This can be anything, as long as it isn't ping pong balls.)

MADDOX  
Really?

BROOKS  
Yup. ... All different shapes, and sizes, and colors ...

Brooks turns towards the man who was reading.

After a beat:

MADDOX  
(re: the man who is reading)  
He says it's full of ping pong balls.  
(to the man who is reading)  
Wait, really??

Brooks sinks.

MADDOX  
That's what I said!

BROOKS  
I know.  
(under their breath)  
Spoil sport.

MADDOX  
Why did you say - ?

BROOKS  
Because - How crazy is that - You guess a thing, randomly,  
and that's the thing? That's - ...

MADDOX  
Well - The logo on the truck does seem to indicate it's a  
sporting goods company ...

BROOKS  
(eating)  
Ummm ...

MADDOX  
And, it does kind of look like two people playing ping pong,  
so ...

Brooks looks up at the logo,  
seeing it (apparently) for the  
first time.

BROOKS  
(eating)  
Oh. Yeah. I guess it does. ... I didn't - ...  
(re: the Thai food)  
This is delicious! This is the best - umm - Is this Pad Thai?

MADDOX  
Yeah.

BROOKS  
(eating)  
I love Pad Thai. ... Ummm ... Ummm ... Thank you!

MADDOX  
You're welcome.

Beat.

BROOKS  
Maddox?

MADDOX  
What?

BROOKS  
Do you think we're dead?

What?  
MADDOX

BROOKS  
Do, um - Do you think, like - Skylab fell to earth and -

MADDOX  
Skylab?

BROOKS  
Okay, well, not Skylab, specifically ...

MADDOX  
That happened in 1979.

BROOKS  
Okay, well - as I said - Do you think something - ?

MADDOX  
And, if I remember correctly, didn't most of it land in the Indian Ocean?

BROOKS  
I'm just saying - Do you think something happened, and -

MADDOX  
Something, like, an earthquake?

BROOKS  
Yeah.

MADDOX  
Or a meteor.

BROOKS  
Something that wiped out this entire area. All of it. As far as the eye can see. In all directions.

MADDOX  
Huh.

Beat.

MADDOX  
No.

BROOKS  
No, you don't think we're dead?

MADDOX  
No, I don't think we're dead.

BROOKS  
Why?

MADDOX

Well, for one thing, if we were dead, we wouldn't be asking if we were dead. We'd be, you know, just dead. We wouldn't be anything.

BROOKS

Not if we were ghosts.

MADDOX

I don't believe in ghosts.

BROOKS

What if this is, I don't know, the next step? What if this is - the waiting room, the room - or place - where you wait before you, uh -

MADDOX

Die?

BROOKS

No no no, you're already dead. What if this is where you go before you move on?

MADDOX

To where?

BROOKS

To - wherever. I don't know. To - wherever people go, after they -

MADDOX

But, what if we don't go anywhere? What if you live your life and then you die and - that's that.

BROOKS

That's that?

MADDOX

Yeah.

BROOKS

Well, that's - I don't know if I believe that. I don't know if I *can* believe that. That's - ...

MADDOX

We're not dead.

BROOKS

Says you.

MADDOX

If we were - Look, it doesn't matter, does it? ... Really?

BROOKS  
No, but - How the hell else can you explain this?!

MADDOX  
I don't know. Sometimes - Weird shit happens.

BROOKS  
"Weird shit happens." *That's* your explanation?

MADDOX  
Why do you need an explanation? Why can't you just enjoy the ride?

BROOKS  
Hrmmm.

Beat.

MADDOX  
You know what I *do* know?

BROOKS  
What?

MADDOX  
(re: the now empty food container)  
I want more.

BROOKS  
Me, too!

Brooks and Maddox move off together, towards the food truck  
As they do:

MADDOX  
(to the other cars, calling out)  
Does anybody else want any?? It's delicious!!!

They move off as:

LIGHTS FADE.