

GUMBALL 3000 - TREATMENT

by

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A down on his luck conman has to raise a million pounds to pay back a gangster he conned, he joins the gumball 3000: seven nights racing through some of the richest countries, in the company of some of the richest people on the planet.

7 nights, 7 cons, one million pounds and one hell of a ride.

FADE IN:

Lights flick on. Two BUSINESSMEN survey an empty office, devoid of any furniture and vacated in a hurry. All that's left is EDDIE (28), stripped to his pants, bound and gagged in the middle of the floor. The businessmen remove his gag. Where the hell has the estate agents gone? Eddie explains it was all a scam, they've been conned, all three of them. The estate agents was never real, the deal was totally illegal. He caught the conmen in the act of tearing up the office and managed to call the police before they knocked him out.

The businessmen argue: one wants their ten grand back, the other wants to get out before someone sees them. A police siren sounds, faint but getting nearer. The men panic and run, deliberately leaving Eddie to face the cops.

Alone, Eddie slips easily out of his bindings, opens a cupboard and turn off a stereo, the source of the police siren. Joyfully, he checks the contents of a briefcase: ten thousand pounds.

On top of the world, Eddie struts through the streets of London. He stops by a tailor and buys a new suit. He stops at a jeweller's and buys an expensive watch. He drops into a casino and blows a load on blackjack. On his way out, he's grabbed by two HEAVIES. Mr Devere wants to see him, now.

At his East End HQ, RONNIE DEVERE (45) a mobster who recently discovered a love of Shakespeare, isn't very happy. Eddie conned him a while back, one million pounds, where is it? Eddie tries to make excuses, it was only £250,000. Ronnie's having none of it. Plus interest makes one million in one week or he's dead. Ronnie's boys beat Eddie up and take what's left of the ten grand as a down payment.

Thrown out of the house, Eddie picks himself up and dusts himself off. He hails a taxi, only to realise he has no money. In a foul mood, he walks home.

Ronnie instructs his boys to keep an eye on Eddie. If he tries to run, punish him. As soon as he's got the money, kill him.

Across town, a group of London GANGSTERS discuss the nefarious aspects of their business over dinner. The room is dimly lit, the blinds drawn against prying eyes. JASON (25) saunters out of the shadows and takes a seat at the table, much to the surprise of all those present. Who is he? A thug reaches for his gun; a 'wannabe Godfather' stops him. Jason tucks into the lavish spread. He politely declines a sarcastic offer of wine, never when he's working. Tempers boil over; who the fuck does this guy think he is? Jason's phone rings and he answers: Jason Harmon? Instantly, every man in the room has a fearful gun trained on the blasé Jason.

Jason chats briefly to Eddie on the phone. Eddie wants Jason to come and get him. Jason can't, he's working; a statement which draws a gasp of fear from the assembled wise guys. Never mind, Eddie's spotted an alternative: a car with the keys hanging from the lock. Eddie reaches out to take the keys but stops. He can see a harried mother of two trying to get into her house, searching for her keys. He has a change of heart and returns her keys to her. She thanks him profusely, not many people would be so honest. Eddie agrees with her, but his eyes light up as he sees the Ferrari 308 parked next door.

Jason apologises to the gangsters and puts his phone away. He knows it's rude to phone other people in company. The onlookers keep him covered with their guns. He's Jason Harmon? The

hitman? Who's he come for? They frisk him. Jason assures them it's not necessary, he doesn't carry a gun; he doesn't need one when he's already poisoned the wine. As one, the wise guys slump to the table: still conscious, but unable to move. Jason finishes his meal, delicious, grabs the gun arm of the nearest man, aims it at the guy directly opposite and uses the man's finger to pull the trigger.

Eddie and Jason meet in a pub. Eddie shows Jason his new possession, the red Ferrari. They talk about their respective days. Eddie neglects to tell Jason about Ronnie. Jason tells Eddie about being at a dinner where, tragically, all the diners shot each other. Eddie doesn't know how Jason can kill people for a living. Jason's argument is it's just business, it's not personal. Once you stop thinking of someone as a person, you can do anything. Eddie's had enough of penny-ante scams; he wants to make one big score and get out. He shows Jason a flyer he found in the Ferrari for the Gumball 3000 Rally: seven nights racing across some of the wealthiest countries of the world, in the company of some of the richest men on the planet - a conman's paradise. His plan? Seven cons in seven countries in seven nights. The haul? One million pounds. All he needs is someone to come along for the ride.

Jason thinks about it and declines. Eddie is astounded; this is their chance to achieve something truly great, this is the adventure of a lifetime. Jason isn't bothered; he enjoys his life and his work. He's no desire for any more adventure. The two men part.

Jason goes home. His neighbour fails to recognise him, despite having lived next door to each other for five years. His flat is tiny and almost completely empty. Jason sits on the only chair in the room and looks at the bare, unpainted walls. He calls Eddie, he's in.

Eddie and Jason plan their caper. They need seed money. Jason contacts his HANDLER and promises to do any job, regardless of who it is, for an advance. The handler is surprised, Jason is usually very picky about his clients; but he takes him up on his offer. They have the rally entry fee. They visit a forger who makes them fake number plates for the car and certain items they'll need en route. Eddie teaches Jason the basics of grifting, the art of running a good con. They phone ahead and arrange for the props they'll need to be waiting for them. As part of the preps, Eddie wants Jason to kill a particular cat. Jason refuses. Eddie doesn't want to do it either. While they're arguing, the cat is run over by a car. Satisfied, they scoop up the cat and pop it into a cooler.

Three days later, they're ready. Time to rock and roll.

A heavy explains to Ronnie how he's lost track of Eddie.

The start line for the rally. Jason and Eddie rock up in the Ferrari, the plates altered to match the ones from Magnum, the two boys dressed in Hawaiian shirts, permed wigs and false moustaches. Jason isn't too happy about his attire, Eddie assures him it's necessary. A crowd has gathered to see the race off. Ronnie DeVere almost catches Eddie, but he fails to recognise the disguised grifter. Eddie catches Jason admiring a shapely American - LULA MAY, a hillbilly racer. Jason thinks he recognises her, but can't place her. Eddie thinks it's wishful thinking. You don't forget a body like that. The rally begins, the contestants are off.

The first leg of the race is to Paris, where cargo planes transport them to Saudi Arabia. Eddie and Jason discuss aspects of their lives as they race along. It's fast driving and fast talking as the boys try to get ahead of the pack. They need to get to their destinations first to set the cons in motion. They talk about everything from religion to politics, old girlfriends to cartoons. There's a clear difference in their attitudes to life; Eddie is an out and out hedonist, Jason has little time for personal pleasure; both have issues with relying on other people.

In Saudi Arabia, they perpetrate their first con. Eddie allows himself to be 'accidentally' noticed by a TV mad SHEIKH, who has the world's largest collection of movie and TV cars. He recognises the Ferrari's number plate and insists on buying the famous Magnum car. Eddie refuses but the Sheikh insists. Eventually he relents and sells the car for £100,000 plus a Rolls Royce to finish the race. The deal almost falls through when the Sheikh spots the Ferrari's right hand drive; but Eddie convinces him that Hawaiian's drive on the left and they reversed the footage for American TV. The Sheikh believes him and the boys race off in the Rolls, £100,000 richer. It's going to work!

Eddie and Jason join the other Gumballers for a kicking party. Eddie runs small scale cons, mug's bets, on the assembled racers. It's all good natured, for small sums, but Eddie cleans up. Jason studies Lula May, the life and soul of the party. She traipses off with a racer, much to the chagrin of her male racing partner.

The next day, Jason drives, Eddie nurses a hangover. They've changed the licence plates on the rolls and sprayed it a different colour. Jason screeches to a halt: 60-0 in 2 seconds. Eddie thinks Jason is trying to kill him, but he's actually trying not to kill the beautiful AKELE (24, Turkish) lying prone in the middle of the road. What the hell is she playing at? Does she want to die? Yes, she does. Her life is over anyway. Eddie asks if they can fuck her first. She's offended. Ah, so she hasn't totally given up? Caught out, Akele offers herself to the boys. Jason tries to persuade her to move off the road, or at least throw herself in front of the next car. No dice, Akele is staying where she is. Now she's offended because nobody wants her body. Eddie manages to coax her off the road in return for a lift to the nearest big city. The trio bomb off, desperate to make up lost time. The boys fume silently at the delay.

The Sheikh sits in the parked Ferrari and watches an episode of Magnum on a 50" TV plonked in front of the car. He pauses on a freeze frame of the Ferrari's interior and compares the image to his own. It's different. Furious, the Sheikh flies into a rage.

Eddie and Jason drop Akele off at the train station and race to their next scam. They break into a mansion, swap their dead cat for the owner's live one, and leave. Jason wants to do this scam, Eddie is reluctant but he relents.

At the local vets, a RUSSIAN MAFIA BOSS rushes in with the dead cat. His daughter's coming home from school soon and she can't find the cat dead, she just can't. The VET takes the cat and examines it, while the Russian sits in the waiting room next to Jason. Jason has the cat in a carry basket. The Russian notices it's a dead ringer for his dead cat. The vet, examining the cat, realises it's been dead for ages and has been painted a different colour. How the hell does he break this news to the Russian without getting shot? The Russian, meanwhile, wants to buy the cat from Jason. Jason refuses, he wouldn't sell this cat for £200,000. The Russian offers £50,000 and the chance for Jason to keep all of his fingers. Jason tries to argue, but the Russian hefts a pair of bolt cutters. Jason agrees and the Russian leaves before the vet can face him. Jason returns to Eddie. Not as much as they hoped, but they're still in the money! Eddie is furious, Jason doesn't know why.

Eddie and Jason join an all night party. Eddie impresses people with his magic tricks, conning more money out of the racers. He seems desperate to make up the short fall, taking chances. Jason mulls over his friends anger. Lula May seems to be working her way through the other racers at an alarming rate. She sees what she wants and she just gets it; Jason likes that, her racing partner doesn't. Akele turns up at the party; she's decided to stay with the boys because she doesn't like the colour of the trains. Eddie and Jason don't want her along, but they reluctantly agree.

The next day, Eddie and Jason try to sneak off without Akele; but she's waiting for them in the car. Eddie tries ordering her out, but she bursts into crocodile tears. Annoyed the boys agree to take her to the next stop. Akele instantly brightens up and the trio roar out of town.

Back in London, Ronnie De Vere tries to stage a Shakespeare play with his heavies; but without much success. One of his heavies draws his attention to a story in the Sun about a Sheikh being conned into buying a Ferrari stolen from London. Ronnie realises it was Eddie disguised as Magnum at the Gumball start.

Jason drives, Akele nurses Eddie's hangover. Eddie gets to know Akele; she tells him of her childhood and her flight from a wicked stepfather. Eddie believes her tales of woe. Jason points out she's copied them from a novel. Akele confesses to the lie. Eddie thinks she's amazing for being able to fool him. Eddie tells Akele he and Jason are wealthy entrepreneurs.

That night, in Croatia, the boys introduce Akele to someone famous and slip off to their next con: a variation on the fiddle game which nets them £150,000. They stash the money in their room and join the party. Akele is very drunk and needs to lie down so Eddie gives her the key to their room. Jason gets talking to Lula May. Eddie realises the money is in the room, he panics and runs out. Akele is still there, she has all the money spread out on the bed. She's never seen so much before.

Eddie confesses he's a conman. Akele is so excited she grabs him and makes love to him on the money.

Ronnie scrutinises TV footage of the rally in Croatia. Furious, he rings the Sheikh and tells him where Eddie is. The Sheikh is outraged, he orders Eddie's death.

On the road, Jason can't believe Eddie told Akele. Eddie can't believe Jason never gets a hangover. They pass Lula May, stranded at the side of the road. Her partner kicked her out, she doesn't mind he was boring anyway; but she wants to carry on with the race. Jason offers her a ride and Lula May accepts. The trio are now a foursome.

The next con: selling a petrol substitute to a car manufacturer which nets them £200,000. Akele helps Eddie while Jason keeps Lula May out of the picture. Akele confesses the truth to Eddie, her life is really, really dull. She's from a small village, just looking for adventure. Jason and Lula May go to a fun fair. Jason is a crap shot; ironically, Lula May is much better. They find out they have a very similar upbringing. They want each other, but neither is prepared to get involved.

Racing the next day, the Sheikh's bodyguards knock their car off the road and start shooting. The gang race from the car in opposite directions. Eddie and Akele huddle together. Jason attacks the bodyguards. He kills one, the other is shot by an unseen sniper. Jason hides the bodies, grabs the others and they race off. Lula May wants to know what the hell just happened? Akele is shaken up, it's a bit more excitement than she wanted. Jason recognised the two bodyguards. When he tells Eddie, the conman relaxes. Jason finds this odd, who did he think it was?

The Sheikh is furious at the failure of his men. He phones Jason's handler and orders a professional hit on Eddie. The handler assures him the job will be done quickly; he already has an operative in that area.

On the road, Jason gets a phone call. He seems worried, but doesn't want to talk about it.

That night, Lula May goes to the party. Although she has a few offers from the male racers, she declines them all. Jason, Eddie and Akele run the next scam; another £150,000. When they get back to their car, Jason stops anyone approaching it. He tosses a stone at the car and it explodes. Eddie wonders how Jason knew? Jason confesses his handler told him he'd hired a hitman to kill Eddie. Jason wants to back out of the race, it's not safe. Anyone following them knows where they'll be, because of the rally. Eddie refuses, he has to finish the cons; but he won't explain why. Akele backs Eddie up. Reluctantly, Jason agrees to continue, they'd be dead in hours without him. They steal a new car and carry on.

At a rest stop, while Lula May and Jason have gone to the toilet, a sniper takes pot-shots at Eddie. Eddie and Akele take refuge in the shop. Jason makes his way to the roof, but the sniper has gone. They leap in the car and get the hell out of dodge.

At the hotel, Jason keeps Lula May occupied while Eddie and Akele do the con. Jason isn't happy, he doesn't want to let Eddie out of his sight, but Lula May is hanging around and Eddie assures him it'll be alright. The con makes £100,000; Eddie wanted more. Jason and Lula May make love. When Eddie and Akele arrive back, they celebrate with champagne. Eddie and Akele slump to the floor, drugged. Jason realises it's the champagne before he too succumbs. Lula May's a hit-woman who always picks up work at the Gumball, there's usually someone who wants another racer knocked off. She killed her original partner because he was a pain in the arse. She loves Jason, he's a kindred spirit, so she's not going to kill him; but she has to kill Eddie. She was the sniper, both times. It's nothing personal, it's just business. Jason kills Lula May, he didn't drink the champagne, he never drinks and was feigning being drugged. Eddie thanks Jason for saving them. Jason is distraught; he was falling for Lula May. Eddie almost tells Jason and Akele about Ronnie, but changes his mind. Jason goes outside; he rings his handler and tells him of Lula May's death. The handler transfers Eddie's contract to Jason. Jason tries to get out of it, but the handler reminds him of his promise to accept any contract, the advance he's already accepted and the consequences should he fail.

The next day: Eddie, Jason and Akele wake to find Ronnie and his boys waiting. It's been over a week; Ronnie wants his money, now. Eddie is forced to confess the money is for Ronnie, not for the two of them. Jason is livid, Eddie was conning him? Eddie apologises, Jason doesn't want to know.

Eddie promises they'll make more than the million on the last con. Ronnie agrees, on the condition he can be involved: his new found love of Shakespeare has inspired an acting career. Eddie argues against it, Ronnie threatens Akele. Eddie relents.

The race to the last town is solemn. Eddie and Jason are in their car; Akele, Ronnie and the heavies follow behind. Eddie and Jason are barely on speaking terms. Eddie apologises again to Jason, Jason doesn't want to hear it. This is just business to him from now on.

At a rest stop, away from Akele, Ronnie tells his heavies they're going to kill everyone anyway.

At the final destination: Monaco. We catch the tail end of Jason and Eddie explaining the con to Ronnie: "the mark sees you shoot us, with blanks; fake cops, conmen on our payroll, burst in and arrest you. The mark has lost his money, he's got no redress; it was an illegal casino and everyone involved seems to be dead." Ronnie agrees.

The con begins: Eddie befriends the mark and takes him to a fake casino. Akele, the croupier, flirts with the mark. Jason, the owner, gives her a bollocking for some infraction. Akele, in a fit of pique, pays out to the mark irrespective of whether he wins or not.

Later, at a bar, Eddie and the mark toast their good fortune. Akele accidentally bumps into them and joins them for a drink. Eddie tricks the mark into suggesting they continue to defraud the casino. Akele agrees to do it, but only in small amounts so she doesn't get caught. Ronnie, posing as a local gangster, assaults Akele and tells her he's going to shut down Jason's illegal operation and kill everyone involved unless he leaves town. Akele is terrified, she wants out. The mark suggests they do one big score, the mark offers to put up £500,000, Eddie offers the same. Akele will fix it so they win and they'll split the winnings. Everyone agrees, it's set for the following day.

Jason visits Ronnie and tells him Eddie is going to double cross him. He double crosses everyone; he's not going to change now. He tells Ronnie about the contract on Eddie, and how he has to kill him. He bargains his own life for Eddie's. Ronnie agrees. Jason proves the bullets in the gun Eddie gave Ronnie are blanks and swaps them for real ones. Jason doesn't like using guns, but he's no objection to using Ronnie to fulfil the contract. Make sure he aims for the face.

The day of the con: Ronnie test fires the gun: the bullet is real.

Eddie and the mark place the bet, £1,000,000. Jason is called over and he agrees to accept the huge sum. Ronnie bursts in and shoots up the place. He shoots Eddie in the face. Akele runs screaming, dragging the mark with her. Ronnie shoots Jason just before two fake cops arrive. The last thing the mark sees is the police arresting Ronnie as he gloats over the dead bodies of Jason and Eddie. The room floods with fake cops.

In the back of the police van, Ronnie is very pleased with himself. He boasts to the cops about having solved all his problems and being £1,000,000 richer. Something's wrong. Where are they going? Ronnie looks at the incredible detail of the police van, it's too realistic. Why did these two arrive before the rest of the fake cops? The penny drops: these are real police. Ronnie is going away for a very long time.

At the fake casino: Eddie and Jason are still alive, they peel blood spattered latex from their heads and dump the dead bodies of the Sheikh's bodyguards in the casino. Jason uses Ronnie's dropped gun to shoot the two men in the face, destroying enough to render them unrecognisable. Jason points out the ballistics won't match. Eddie points out it will still keep Ronnie occupied for a long time; and the important thing is he thinks they're dead. They pay off the extras, including the mark; there was no £500,000 from him. At the end of the day, Eddie, Jason and Akele have made just over £50,000 each. Not enough to retire on, barely enough for a decent holiday; but hey, there's always next year.

FADE OUT

THE END