

## Colorado Auto Rescue

The cell phone rang. "This is Anthony."

"Yeah, this is Rich, with Colorado Auto Rescue. You're at 300 Vinewood?"

"I'm in the library parking lot. I dropped a pin on the location."

"Can't see that. I'll find you. Be there in 'bout five minutes, and we'll get you taken care of."

Fifteen minutes later the car pulled up, and Anthony waved him in. Rich parked his Subaru Outback at an angle across two handicap spots and left it running. Anthony looked across the lot. It was empty, like most Thursdays; two spots next to his truck were free.

The maroon Outback looked pretentious. Recently polished, it had a lift and oversized black rims with stars in the middle. Rich got out of the car wearing a pair of black Oakley sunglasses and a brand new automotive jacket, black with green and silver reflective stripes across it. He walked straight up to Anthony and extended his hand. It wasn't a straight up-and-down handshake, the kind Anthony was used to at the University. Instead, Rich held his hand out palm-to-the-sky while he studied Anthony's truck.

Anthony shook the man's hand, "I should apologize ahead of time. The last time I did this, it took the guy twenty-five minutes to get it unlocked."

"Why's that?"

"I guess it was hard to get purchase on the knob," Anthony replied.

Rich leaned in and looked at the knob, "Was he some young, sub-contract moron?"

A few seconds later, "Probably," was the only thing Anthony could think to say. He remembered the last guy. He was about this man's age, mid-fifties, and drove a run-down, 90's black Honda Accord, one that looked like it had been through more than one hail storm. He thought the guy had a limp, but wasn't sure.

Rich pulled a set of clean mechanic gloves out of his back pocket and began putting them on, like a doctor prepping for surgery.

I made some pretty detailed marginal notes, so mostly I'll just direct your attention to those, but I do want to talk a little bit more about Rich's first appearance on the scene. First, did you intentionally conceal the fact that Rich is in his mid-fifties? You casually mention in the next-to-last paragraph that the last guy was mid-fifties, like this guy. I can imagine doing that on purpose, but if you were doing it on purpose, it doesn't work here. You really should have told

Jonathan Rogers 1/20/18 11:06 AM

**Comment:** You've got an antecedent problem here. Grammatically speaking, the only possible antecedent is "car," which isn't a "him."

Jonathan Rogers 1/20/18 11:09 AM

**Comment:** I know you've already told us that the guy's name is Rich, but I don't think Anthony (or the reader) is thinking of him as "Rich" here. He's the automotive rescue guy. Maybe he introduces himself again at the handshake, and after that you call him Rich?

Jonathan Rogers 1/20/18 11:11 AM

**Comment:** "Pretentious" is telling. That's the narrator interpreting, telling me what to think. The next sentence, on the other hand, is showing. You don't have to tell me it's pretentious if you show me all the other stuff (including the sunglasses and the reflective-striped jacket).

Jonathan Rogers 1/20/18 11:12 AM

**Comment:** Ok. This is an interesting detail that I wouldn't have thought of but makes perfect sense. Nice choice. (See my end-note for some thoughts on how you could have made it work a little better).

Jonathan Rogers 1/20/18 11:14 AM

**Comment:** Don't tell me it was a few seconds later. Make me *feel* those seconds. Show me Anthony standing there trying to think of something to say, Rich peering through the window, Rich scratching his goatee, and then, after an awkwardly long time, Anthony saying "Probably."

Jonathan Rogers 1/20/18 11:29 AM

**Comment:** You're getting way into Anthony's head here. I don't think that's necessary.

me up-front that Rich is in his 50s. The way you describe him, I assumed he was a young, cocky guy. The fact that he's an old, cocky guy makes him twice as funny. His age just feels like a key piece of information that I needed in order to envision this scene properly.

As I said in my marginal comment, I love the detail that Rich offers his hand palm-up for a handshake. You're always looking for the detail that your reader wouldn't have guessed, but that seems obvious once you've shown it. I think you could have gotten a little more goodie out of this one though. For one thing, I had to work a little too hard to envision what you were trying to show. At first I thought Rich was offering a high-five (I realize that your palm isn't facing the sky when you offer a high-five, but I guess the mention of "sky" made me think of a guy stretching his hand to the sky). Maybe you should describe a brief moment when Anthony doesn't know if Rich wants him to shake his hand or slap it. Also, you should probably mention the little shoulder-dip that always accompanies the palm-up proffering of a handshake...you know what I mean, don't you? Finally, you mention that Rich is looking at Anthony's truck while he offers his hand. Hit that a little harder; I almost missed it. Either put it in its own sentence, or specifically say something along the lines of "...he studied the truck, paying Anthony no mind."