

Duke Barkin, Suncoast Transporter: Hot Houndette

By

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Panel	Description	Dialog
1.1	<p>Interior view of an old 1985 Suburban. Duke, a very large (but not fat) 10-year old tricolor basset hound is sitting on the front passenger seat looking bored. Duke has a white head and red ears, with a heavy scar on one ear. Out the windows (which are open) the view is of the parking lot of a Cracker Barrel restaurant. Two people are talking, but we can only see them below the face. (Artist's note: we never see humans' faces unless they are so far in the distance that they are unrecognizable. Their characteristic shoes help us tell them apart.)</p>	<p>Caption: Duke has been waiting forever for The Man to finish whatever business he had in this parking lot. He had promised a drive, and that's what Duke liked: wind in his ears, the feel of the engine roaring under his belly and the road flashing by in streaks, too fast for him to get more than a quick look into the other cars--cars with hounds, cars without hounds. He preferred the kind with.</p> <p>THE MAN (off panel) HA, HA, HA! Slowing down a bit, you know, hasn't broken a door in years, but he's still full of drool and vinegar.</p> <p>DUKE The Man is clearly insane.</p>
1.2	<p>The Man is walking around the side of the Suburban. Duke is watching him with a little bit of hope in his face.</p>	<p>DUKE Finally!</p>
1.3	<p>The loading door of the suburban is visible, now, and we are seeing it from Duke's pov. A large crate is being loaded, but we can't see what's inside. We can see that Duke's ears, which were low before, are perked up. The Man is visible, tucking the crate in.</p>	<p>DUKE What's this? We're not at the box store.</p> <p>THE MAN Sorry, you'll have to stay in there for the duration. Duke's not really a sharing kinda guy.</p> <p>DUKE No, I am not. Why should I be?</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
1.4	The Man has come around and opened the passenger door. We see Duke from his pov. Duke looks flabbergasted.	<p>Caption: Duke has a rule: do not get out of the vehicle until the trip is over. The Man knows the rule.</p> <p>THE MAN (Off Panel) Come on, old man, just once, come on out. You'll want to take a look at this!</p>
1.5	Duke is climbing out of the Suburban reluctantly. We can see The Man's shoes, which are a pair of fine, old wingtips. The polish is covered with dust, which is the way they usually look.	<p>DUKE I doubt it very much.</p> <p>THE MAN (Voice fading at the end) It's our first transport, Duke. Don't you want to see?</p>
1.6	The Man is holding out his arm toward the crate, through which we can vaguely see a small, black houndette. She is beautiful, but her attitude is tired and scared.	<p>Caption: So this was the package.</p> <p>THE MAN Want me to open the crate, Duke? You can take a better look!</p>
1.7	The whole character of the art changes here. Now it should be sleek, high-contrast, hyperreal. The Man is wearing a dark, mechanic's jumpsuit, but the same shoes. The Suburban is now a BMW X5 SUV. Duke is now young, fit and sleek, but still has the scar on his ear. He is wearing Prada Tom Ford James Bond 007 sunglasses. He is on his hind legs with one foot on the BMW. He is looking at the "camera."	<p>Caption: Duke Barkin, Suncoast Transporter.</p> <p>DUKE I have a rule: never open the package!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
2.1	<p>Duke is at the wheel of his BMW, two paws on the wheel at 10 and 2. He is out on I4 now, and the road ahead is like looking through a tunnel--sides are blurry with speed. We see over his right shoulder. In his rearview mirror hang a pair of old-fashioned driving goggles. We will learn eventually that they belonged to Bud, the first dog to cross the US in an automobile.</p>	<p>Caption: Package safely stowed, the Suncoast Transporter races away from Orlando at speeds just under suspicion; I4 near downtown is not the place to attract unwelcome police attention.</p>
2.2	<p>We now see Duke from the front, and we can see something sticking up over the backseat--the crate is now a large, softsider duffel bag, same color. Duke's eyes are shifted sharply and narrowly to the right, looking at the package in the rearview mirror. We can see his eyes either through or over his sunglasses.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI (Tearful Bubble) Please, please, mister, let me out!</p> <p>(Broken Bubble) Sob!</p> <p>DUKE I'm sorry, sister, but you'll just have to wait until we get there. I'm on the clock, here.</p>
2.3	<p>Duke is once again facing front, and we can't see his eyes. Sobbing continues to come from the back.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI (Tearful Bubble) Whimper! Sob! Sniff.</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
2.4	One of Duke's paws is now on the seat beside him, demonstrating his distraction.	<p>DUKE Quiet down, back there, sister! You're going to strain my hospitality with that whining.</p> <p>MAI DAISI (Tearful Bubble) Whine! WAIL!</p> <p>(Broken Bubble) I don't know why you're calling this hospitality, you, you... beast! I have to get out, NOW!</p> <p>DUKE (Quiet Bubble) Never open the package. Never...</p>
2.5	The duffel bag is now hovering over the backseat. We can see Duke's eyes getting big with concern.	<p>MAI DAISI (Sweet Voice Bubble) This is your own car, isn't it, Mister? And it's new, I can smell it.</p> <p>DUKE (Quiet Bubble) Never op...</p> <p>MAI DAISI Well, if you don't let me out, and I mean right NOW, it won't smell like a new car EVER AGAIN!</p>
2.6	Close up on Duke's eyes, which we can see perfectly through the sunglasses. His eyebrows are raised, and he has an expression of abject fear in his eyes.	

Panel	Description	Dialog
3.1	<p>Duke is outside at the rest area. He has opened the back of the BMW and opened also the duffel bag. We can just see Mai Daisi's sleek black head and brown-rimmed, exotic eyes peering over the top. Duke is holding out one paw toward her in a stopping motion.</p>	<p>Caption: I4 rest stop near the Lake Mary exit, headed toward Daytona.</p> <p>DUKE Don't be slow, sister. We have a schedule to keep.</p>
3.2	<p>Mai Daisi slips out of the duffel, and we can see that she is a beautiful young houndette, all black except for her brown-rimmed exotically-shaped eyes.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI You have a schedule to keep, not me. And my name is Mai Daisi, not sister. What's yours?</p> <p>DUKE None of your business. Put on a move on it, or I'll come in and get you.</p> <p>MAI DAISI OK, all right, I'm going!</p>
3.3	<p>POV is far back, now. We can see the rest area bathrooms and through a hallway, the trucker's driveway on the other side. Humans are in view, but we can't see their faces--bent over cars, turned the other way, covered with a hat, or invisible inside their cars. Duke stands near the entrance while Mai Daisi passes him. A good-looking Doberman checks out Mai Daisi.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI Coming with me, big boy?</p> <p>DUKE Not if you hurry, MAI sister!</p> <p>MAI DAISI It's Mai DAISI, you moron.</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
3.4	<p>Duke is leaning against the building, waiting impatiently. We can see his eyebrows frowning over his sunglasses. We can see trucks in the distance, coming off the interstate. (SFX: Beeeeeee-beeep! Honk! Screech!)</p>	<p>MAI DAISI (Off panel, musical bubble) Woo-woo, woo-aroo!</p> <p>DUKE Stop singing in there and hurry it up, sister!</p> <p>MAI DAISI I'm going as fast as I can, Mr. Kidnapper! I'm a girl, if that means anything to you. And it's MAI DAISI.</p>
3.5	<p>Duke has begun pacing. He is turning with his back to the restroom door, which is open. We can see Mai Daisi sneaking out, heading in the direction of the trucker's area. We can see the door of the ladies room. It has a stylized picture of grass. Next to it, the men's room has a stylized picture of a tree.</p>	
3.6	<p>Duke is opening the door to the houndette's room. He looks angry.</p>	<p>DUKE I'm coming in!</p>
3.7	<p>Duke is coming back out of the houndette's room. His glasses are slightly askew.</p>	<p>DUKE Where is that little houndette? This is what I get for breaking the rule!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
4.1	<p>Mai Daisi is running along a row of trucks. In one, two dogs are looking out. One is a Chihuahua and one is a Bull Terrier. The Chihuahua is in the driver's seat and the terrier is barely visible on the passenger side. The truck is a race car hauler. Fancy lettering on the side declares that this is the car of the famous racing legend Sandy, "The Flash."</p>	<p>Caption: Every trucker loves a pretty hitchhiker and Mai Daisi was the finest houndette Paco had seen in miles.</p> <p>PACO Hey, lady, you need a ride somewhere? We're headed to the New Smyrna Speedway.</p> <p>MAI DAISI You guys are the best! And hey, don't I recognize you from TV or something?</p>
4.2	<p>Mai Daisi is standing against the passenger running board and Paco is opening the door.</p>	<p>PACO Oh, that was years ago. They decided I wasn't PC or AC or DC, or something. But I'm glad you noticed!</p> <p>SWEET POTATO Hey, at least you weren't thrown out without a case of beer to your name!</p> <p>MAI DAISI Well, I think they were CRAZY to let you guys go!</p>
4.3	<p>A close-up of a big, brown paw against the door of the truck. Duke is slamming the door that Paco has just begun to open.</p>	<p>DUKE (Off-panel Bubble) Not so fast, Gidget.</p>
4.4	<p>We are still close, but farther back. We can see Duke, Paco, and Mai Daisi. Mai Daisi looks angry. Duke is looking at Paco over his sunglasses. Paco looks nervous.</p>	<p>DUKE She's on her way to court-ordered rehab. You don't want to get in the way.</p> <p>MAI DAISI No, I'm not!</p> <p>PACO I was her stunt-double, man--don't call me Gidget!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
4.5	Focus on Sweet Potato. Sweet Potato now looks feminine, with a pink collar and long eyelashes.	SWEET POTATO You got something against girls, Paco? PACO (off-panel Bubble) No, no, Sweet Potato, Honey, just against BEING one!

Panel	Description	Dialog
5.1	Duke and Mai Daisi are walking away, Duke with a paw on Mai Daisi's back. In the background, we can see Paco and Sweet Potato/Honey arguing with tiny talk bubbles.	<p>Caption: Relationships have their ups and downs, whether between washed up TV stars or driver and package.</p> <p>DUKE You're ruining my schedule, sister!</p> <p>MAI DAISI Well, you're ruining my LIFE!</p> <p>SWEET POTATO (tiny bubble) Taco!</p> <p>PACO (tiny bubble) Beerhaus wench!</p>
5.2	Back at the BMW. Duke is opening the hatch, but Mai Daisi has gone to the passenger door.	
5.3	Duke is glaring at Mai Daisi. Mai Daisi is staring back.	
5.4	Duke opens the back seat passenger door. His expression is sour. Mai Daisi is triumphantly marching around him.	
5.5	Inside the car, now. Duke is once again at the wheel, and we can see his irritation. Mai Daisi is leaning over the front seat. Her eyes are bright and she is smiling.	<p>DUKE What are you so pleased about?</p> <p>MAI DAISI I can see where we're going!</p> <p>DUKE You're still going where I take you.</p> <p>MAI DAISI That's what you think!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
6.1	Mai Daisi has settled in, looking very fetching draped over the front seat. (Must check how seats are arranged in BMW) Duke is concentrating carefully, paws at 10 and 2.	Caption: Duke's rule wasn't holding up very well, but at least the package was in the car. Then, just as things seems to be going better...
6.2	Duke's sunglasses fly up in the air and Mai Daisi falls into a heap on the back seat. Over her, through the rearview mirror, we can see the grill of a massive medium-duty truck. The grill looks like the teeth of a giant Florida reptile. (SFX: Cruuuuunch!)	<p>MAI DAISI Yelp!</p> <p>DUKE I hate tail-gators!</p>
6.3	The truck is now coming up along-side the BMW. It is painted like an alligator and has a big sign on it that says "Big Slim's Gator Show and Puppy Park."	<p>MAI DAISI Oh, no! They found me! Mister, you've got to get away from them and take me where I tell you!</p> <p>DUKE Getting away is no problem, Sister. But you're going my way.</p>
6.4	The BMW surges ahead of the gator truck, and we see this from the passenger side of Duke's car.	<p>MAI DAISI No!</p> <p>DUKE Yes.</p>
6.5	The car swerves and Duke looks in pain. The back window is broken out and Duke has been shot. We can see a gun sticking out of the gator truck. Mai can't see that Duke has been shot, and neither can we.	<p>MAI DAISI Did they just shoot at us?</p> <p>DUKE That would be a yes!</p>
6.6	Duke looks dizzy, the car is slowing down, and the gator truck is pulling even, again. The gun is pointed at Mai Daisi.	<p>MAI DAISI Uh-oh!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
7.1	<p>We now see the BMW from the opposite side. Duke is grimly gripping the wheel and leaning forward. Blood is gushing from his shoulder. Mai Daisi is climbing into the front seat. Through the passenger window, we can see a low-slung, orange 1969 Dodge Charger R/T marked with a double zero "00." The driver is very low in the seat, so we can only see a 10-gallon hat. (SFX: Doo-dah doot doot doo-dah doo-dah doot doot doo-doo!)</p>	<p>Caption: A surprise visitor. Things are sounding better!</p>
7.2	<p>Sandy --AKA, The Flash-- looks out of the car with a very laid back expression. Sandy is an older, tricolor houndette. Her nails are painted Ruby Red. Think The Gals of NRA. Paco speaks to her over the radio.</p>	<p>SANDY Hit the brakes, fellas, and catch a ride with us!</p> <p>PACO (radio bubble) Ready, Boss!</p>
7.3	<p>Our pov is far back. Both cars have hit the brakes, throwing up a cloud of rubber and brake dust. The truck is now far ahead. The talk bubbles come from inside the BMW and Flash's car.</p>	<p>DUKE I hope the lady knows what she's doing!</p> <p>MAI DAISI There's another truck coming!</p> <p>SANDY Woo-Aroooooooooo!</p>
7.4	<p>A view of the race car hauler from earlier passing the BMW.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI Look! It's Paco and Sweet Potato!</p>
7.5	<p>Now we see through the front window of the BMW. The car hauler has dropped a ramp and opened up the back of the truck, which is empty. The ramp is throwing up sparks.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI Can you make it?</p> <p>DUKE In my sleep!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
7.6	A wide shot of Duke gunning the BMW into the car hauler, burning rubber.	

Panel	Description	Dialog
8.1	<p>Parking lot of Mel's Family Diner in Sanford. The hounds are sitting in back of the car hauler. Someone is wrapping Duke's wound. They have plates heaped with food and steaming cups of coffee. We see initially from a distance, perhaps above. The parking lot is about full. There are half a dozen large motorcycles. We can also see Flash's car.</p>	<p>Caption: A stop at Mel's to fill up and fill in the gaps.</p> <p>DUKE So why is the Gator Show and Puppy Park after you, Daisi?</p> <p>MAI DAISI It's Mai-- oh, nevermind. They're after me because I know too much about their business.</p> <p>SANDY What kind of business is that?</p>
8.2	<p>Close up on Mai Daisi, who is lounging on a blanket.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI Puppy peddling!</p>
8.3	<p>A view of all the hounds, looking shocked.</p>	<p>PACO SANDY SWEET POTATO (Group bubble) Gasp!</p>
8.4	<p>Close up on Sweet Potato.</p>	<p>SWEET POTATO We've got to save them!</p> <p>PACO SANDY I'm in!</p>
8.5	<p>Focus on Duke, who did not speak. All the other hounds are looking at him. He looks sour, but resigned.</p>	<p>DUKE This is really gonna foul up my schedule.</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
9.1	<p>Duke and Mai Daisi are entering a palatial bachelor's pad, filled with art and books. In the foyer, they are passing a long, narrow lap pool with a long slope going in. It is dark outside, which we can see through the door behind them. This is a half page width panel.</p>	<p>Caption: Duke Barkin and the package he should have never opened needed a rest. Or did they?</p> <p>DUKE You can have the guest room. There's a bath and towels in there, and then you can get some sleep.</p>
9.2	<p>At the other end of the pool, we see another long slope and a couple pool loungers. The pool is only two feet deep. This is a matching panel for the first, showing the panorama of the house. The two dogs are standing on their hind feet, close together.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI Thanks, but maybe I could come out here and take swim?</p> <p>DUKE Your choice, sister.</p>
9.3	<p>Duke is in the pool, now, relaxing in the lounge. He looks sparkly and glistening, in light that comes from outside, through wall-windows. He has a clean bandage on, but the wound is apparently smaller and of little account. He is holding out one paw toward Mai Daisi. Mai Daisi is standing in the shallows, a special glow around her. She looks gorgeous and glittering. A towel is discarded near her. Two drinks are poolside. All very romantic and elegant. This panel is one quarter of the page, page width. The water glitters.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI What's your name, mister?</p> <p>DUKE Come closer, and I'll tell you.</p>
9.4	<p>Focusing on Mai Dais's paw near the drink. This panel is one eighth of the page, half page width.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI (Off panel bubble) Ha-ha! No wonder you don't tell anybody!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
9.5	The drinks alone. This panel is one eighth of the page, half page width.	DUKE You're going to regret that, Mai Daisi! (SFX: Smooch!)

Panel	Description	Dialog
10.1	A sunny, clean, bright room with a massive white bed. Duke is asleep on one side, sprawled in a manly fashion, and Mai Daisi is curled up on the other, looking very young and beautiful. This panel is 1/4 of the page, page width. (SFX: Ratta-tat-tat-tat!)	Caption: It never fails: you don't get to sleep in after a long day.
10.2	The same scene, only Duke has sprung out of bed and is turning toward the door, off panel. Mai Daisi is bolt upright in bed. The window glass is shattering in a million pieces.	<p>DUKE Get down and come on, sister! It's time to move!</p> <p>MAI DAISI Is your life always like this?</p> <p>DUKE Only when I break the rules!</p>
10.3	The two dogs escape by a door into the circular that winds around the back. We see their backs. Bullets are whizzing around them (SFX: Plink! plink!)	
10.4	The BMW has slashed tires. Mai stops and stares while Duke opens the driver door and leans in.	<p>MAI DAISI Now what do we do?</p> <p>DUKE (From inside the car) Always have a backup.</p> <p>MAI DAISI What are you doing?</p>
10.5	Duke and Mai Daisi are now standing in a garage, a pedestrian door closing behind them. An exact copy of the BMW is there, only white.	<p>DUKE Get in! We're going to be a little early.</p>
10.6	A view of the BMW racing at high speed out into an alley, up on two wheels. The garage door faces another street.	

Panel	Description	Dialog
11.1	<p>Inside the BMW. Mai is in the front seat, now. Duke is hanging the goggles over the rearview mirror.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI You went back for some old glasses? What are they for, luck?</p> <p>DUKE Bud the Bulldog, first dog across the States in an automobile, wore those goggles, Mai. The only thing I own I would regret losing.</p>
11.2	<p>A view of the BMW crossing the Intracoastal Waterway at New Smyrna, heading inland. The day is clear and sunny. Duke and Mai Daisi look like a sporty couple out for a drive. Both have sunglasses and Mai Daisi is wearing a chiffon scarf.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI You think we lost them?</p> <p>DUKE Right up until we drive into the Gator Show and Puppy Park!</p> <p>MAI DAISI So we have time to stop for breakfast at Mel's?</p>
11.3	<p>The car hauler is parked on a dusty side road near Wekiva Springs and Rock Creek Park. Paco, Sweet Potato and Sandy stand to one side and Mai Daisi and Duke are on the other. Duke's sunglasses are back on.</p>	<p>DUKE So, do we have plan, or are we just going to get ourselves killed?</p> <p>SWEET POTATO We're going to sneak in there, grab all the puppies, and get out! Simple!</p> <p>PACO I've got disguises!</p>
11.4	<p>Close up on Duke. His expression is hidden by his sunglasses.</p>	<p>DUKE We need a distraction.</p>
11.5	<p>Close up on Mai. Her eyes are narrowed.</p>	<p>MAI DAISI We need to close them down--permanently.</p>
11.6	<p>Close up on Sandy.</p>	<p>SANDY You leave that to me.</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
12.1	<p>In back of the Gator Show and Puppy Park. We can see crowds milling about, a circus style tent, and a cheap sign for the place. Paco is dressed as a clown. He's holding a large tambourine, Sweet Potato has on a large pink ruff and looks angry. Mai Daisi is wearing a sparkly mask and cape, like a trapeze artist. Duke is wearing a very crisp white shirt, black tie and black jacket with tails, dressed as a ringmaster. He is holding the top hat.</p>	<p>Caption: The Gator Show and Puppy Park was full of tourists, taking a cheap day off from the downtown attractions. They were ripe for the plucking--and buying puppies cheap.</p> <p>DUKE You've got to be kidding, Paco!</p> <p>PACO We go in, do a little song and dance, slip through to the kennels, and then we're outta here.</p>
12.2	<p>Our heros slip into the tent. We can see an empty ring.</p>	
12.3	<p>Paco goes out first. He dances and plays his tamborine, looking intentionally awkward. We see the feet of the front row of the crowd. In the background, Duke is walking quiet toward the ringmaster's stool.</p>	<p>CROWD Awwwww!</p>
12.4	<p>Sweet Potato comes out next. She just stands in one spot, looking like a deer in the headlights in a large, pink, ruff. In the background, Duke is stepping up onto the ringmaster's stool. Paco is anxiously whispering to Sweet Potato.</p>	<p>CROWD Ha-hah-ha!</p> <p>PACO (whisper bubble) Honey! Come on!</p>
12.5	<p>Sweet Potato raises her head and begins to sing, an unearthly howl. In the background, Duke is standing on the ringmaster's stool, facing the crowd confidently.</p>	<p>SWEET POTATO Oww--oooooooooooo-oooo!</p> <p>CROWD Ooooooooo!</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
12.6	<p>Mai Daisi swings out over the others on a trapeze swing. In the background, Duke is facing away, toward a large opening in the tent. We can see a fence and a sign, on which we can just make out the words, "Big Bad Bob."</p>	<p>PACO (whisper bubble) Hey, stay focused! What are you looking at?</p> <p>CROWD Ahhhhh!</p>
12.7	<p>Now we are seeing from Duke's point of view. The fence is for the gator part of the park, and the sign reads, "Big Bad Bob, The Greater Gator, and his Many Friends." A part of the fence is falling down, gators are escaping, and people are just beginning to run. They are too far away for us to see faces, even if they are visible.</p>	

Panel	Description	Dialog
13.1	Same scene of the gators, but now the rest of the dogs see what's happening. Paco and Sweet Potato are frozen, expressions of horror on their faces. Duke and Mai Daisi are starting toward the door.	Caption: Bob, the Greater Gator, was hungry, more so than usual. Where was that delicious smell coming from? DUKE We've got ourselves a problem. MAI DAISI Follow me--I know where the kennels are.