

DAYS OF THUNDER

story by Robert Towne and Tom Cruise

written by Robert Towne

directed by Tony Scott

Opening at track. Daytona. Intro apparent bad guy, Rowdy. Richard Petty spins out, and Rowdy grins.

Harry's farm. Race on radio. Tim (the owner) talks to Harry (crew chief) who's farming. Tim asks him to build a car. Harry says he can't afford it and no one will race with him. Tim says, "If you build a car, I'll get a driver." "What kind of driver can you get after the season's started? Some old boy who's washed up?" Tim has somebody, he wants Harry to look at. Harry says he quit racing, but Tim says he didn't quit, he was avoiding the investigation after the crash at Daytona. Harry wasn't avoiding an investigation.

Track. Tim says the guy can really drive... Harry doesn't know him... but he's from California. He's won some Outlaw sprint races.

Rowdy gets out of the car. Says the car is ready to run. He's letting them use his car. "Who is this driver?" Cole shows up, looking gorgeous on a motorcycle. He's seen stock car racing on TV... Rowdy says not to bend the car up or he'll tear his balls off. Harry says he can't race the car. He doesn't look like a driver... conflict! "Let me drive. I won't make a fool out of you." Harry tells him to take it easy.

Car whizzing by on track. Harry tells him to slow down. He doesn't.

Pits. He's under Rowdy's time. Good enough to take the pole in the last race. Buck likes him. Rowdy says he ran good. Harry asks why he wasn't racing. He doesn't have to worry about the car, he only has to worry about the other drivers. "You build me a car, I'll win Daytona for you next year."

Farm. Harry describes the fabulous car he's going to build. Buck and Harry work on car. Putting engine in. Making car montage. Car is ready.

Phoenix. Rowdy bumps him. "Rubbing, son, is racing." Racing montage. Small crash as Cole comes into pits. Harry gives him advice.

Bristol. More bumping between Rowdy and Cole. Cole spins out. Loses it. They take him out of car. Harry is pissed.

Dover. (all this is to "Gimme Some Loving") He crashes into pits.

Rockingham. Rowdy bumps him again. They're eating ice cream and Cole stops the car and gets in a fight with his own crew.

Garage. Tim says they fucked up in front of his hoped for sponsors. Tells everyone to leave except Cole and Harry. The engines are blowing. Harry shafts him for his driving. Big argument and Cole leaves. Harry can't talk to that son of a bitch! Harry admits that he can drive. "If we don't get us a sponsor in the next couple of races, my ass is fried. I'm liable to be out of the car business altogether." "If the guy in the car doesn't trust you, we're never gonna win a damn race."

Bar. Harry and Cole talk. Harry asks him how he wants the car set up. Cole doesn't know how to set up a car. He doesn't know much about cars. "I'm an idiot. I don't have the vocabulary." Harry says not to worry about it.

Empty track. Learning about the car and the vocabulary. Racing.

Stands. Harry teaches Cole about tires. Do 50 laps the way he wants to... and 50 they way Harry says.

Track. Cole races. Then Harry explains about tires and widths. He drives off.

Tim shows up. Harry's way was faster.

Garage. Something's wrong... Rowdy got the pole and Cole is a second off the pace. Worry. Cole tells him the car's perfect.

Darlington. Race. Cole's 12th with 30 laps to go. Racing... Harry tells him how to run... he's gaining on the leader by not falling off in speed, like the others are. Harry talks to him the whole time. Cole is 2nd, behind Rowdy. Cole smacks Rowdy who slides away, then recovers. Caution, and Cole doesn't want to pit. Airgun jams... Slow pit... Back in the race, Cole is cursing. Now he's telling him to go outside on turn 4... he's got special tires on it... (earlier he'd said never to go outside on turn 4.) Great danger in doing it that way. Much smashing between Cole and Rowdy. Cole wins.

Winner's Circle. Cole learns there were no special tires. Tim yells that they got a sponsor. They agree to win Daytona.

Hauler. We learn how Cole lost his ride... the guy was a con man who went to jail, and Cole lost his ride. The low life piece of trash was his father... Hard for him to trust... "You lied to me today. I oughta punch you out." "Give it a try." Small tussle. "I knew you could do it. I knew it in my heart." Buck says that Cole's a kamikaze driver, like his pappy. Buddy Bremington who died at Daytona last year... Massive heart attack and he hit the wall.

Hauler. Cops pull them over and arrest them. For moonshine. Lady cop grabs his cock... opens her jacket to reveal nice bra... they kiss. "Harry and the boys thought you might like me."

Daytona. Firecracker 400. Cole's won 5 out of 6 races. Racing. Harry and Cole are yelling at each other. Bumping Rowdy. Rowdy waves him on, then smashes him and Cole spins and recovers... Passes lots of cars. Big crash in turn 4. Rowdy slides and Cole Tbones him, and wipes out. Huge crash.

Chopper takes him out. Hospital. Cole can't see. Rowdy chats up the lady doc. She asks for a CAT scan.

He has a concussion. She asks about the helmet. Cracked... Harry is there. Cole asks for someone to talk to him. He misses having Harry to talk to.

Hospital room. Harry sleeps in chair. Cole wakes up, can see. Rowdy spun and the rule is you go straight for 'em. But another car hit him and knocked him into Rowdy... Cole had never taken his foot off the gas. It's one of those things that shouldn't have happened. Buck and chums come in, cutting up.

Harry brings in the doc. She's gorgeous. Cole thinks she's another joke... Cole takes her hand, lays it on his cock. "Isn't this what you're really looking for?" "Sorry Mr. Trickle, it's not my specialty..." They all laugh at him.

Hallway. Rowdy and Cole are rolled out in wheelchairs. They start to race. Big race down hall. They almost run into the Doctor.

Conference room. Doctor says they're in good health. She's not inclined to give them clearance. A reevaluation in a week or two... She leaves... Big John (head of NASCAR) tells them not to kill themselves on his track. Never swap paint again, and now we're going out to dinner together. And they have to drive together.

Harry apologizes to the doctor about what happened. Harry tells about the cop trick they play on him. He's telling her this because "I don't want you to hold a bad opinion of Cole. I believe it scares him. He needs reassurance from you that he's okay."

Parking lot. Cole waits around. She comes out to her car. He thanks her. They shake hands, she wishes him luck. He asks her out. She refuses. "It won't get you on the track any faster." "That's not what I meant." rowdy waves keys.

They decide to rent cars to go to dinner. They race.

Restaurant. Everyone waits. Cut to them racing... Big John suggests Tim stick to something he can control... They're smashing up the rental cars. They arrive. They kinda smile at each other.

Track. Cole is looking for someone at Daytona General, who's a race fan. Harry introduced Russ Wheeler, a young driver. He's going to drive the car until Cole gets his medical clearance. Cole's looking for Doc's address. Harry chuckles at him.

Doc gets out of the car at her high rise. He's on the phone to her and her apartment is filled with flowers. He asks her to go to a race. She refuses. While he's talking, a mechanic comes to the door and Cole takes his cup and fills it with coffee. He asks her about a day in the country, and how tall she is.

Jeep on highway. They chat. She stares at him.

Track. Medical center. Someone's not shown up. Doc says they should get started.

Hospital room. He's in a gown, she's in her doc garb. She examines him. He leans up to kiss her, and she leans back. She scratches his foot and he grabs her. As she stands he kisses her. She lets him, but it's brief. She says he's cleared to race.

Hall. He apologizes. Says he went nuts in there. She grabs him and they kiss. "I wasn't ignoring you. I gave you a very thorough physical." More kissing.

Her bed. After sex. He shows her what drafting is by using sugar packages on her leg. How you can draft, pass and win. She asks if there is anything he wants to do besides racing. He tells her what he doesn't want to be. A fraud. He says she's thinking why she's in bed with him. They start to have sex and she asks what he likes about racing. "The speed and knowing I can control something that's out of control." Music up.

Ride together on his bike. Go to Rowdy's farm. Meet his wife. On a boat. All he wants to do is be a farmer and build his house with his wife. He feels seasick.

His living room. Doc gives him physical. Rowdy says no one in his family sees a doc unless they're dying. He fails. Falls over. He needs to see her boss, the neurosurgeon. Cole goes off to puke. Comes back. Everyone stares at everyone.

Garage. Cole and Harry watch TV. Russ Wheeler is going to drive for Tim. Harry thinks it's horseshit. Russ says he'll wave to Cole every time he laps him.

Atlanta. Race. Cole says the car's set up all wrong. Wheeler is passing. Wheeler bumps him from behind. Cole gets angry, revvs too high and blew the engine. Harry checks the tach and sees he over revved it.

Garage / Hospital. Doc tells Cole that Rowdy needs to be seen by the doctor. Tim comes to talk to Cole and Harry says that two race teams is ruining things. "Ever since that Daytona crash, Russ thinks he can bump Cole all he wants." Tim's not seeing that Tim says that Cole's not running good. And has sponsor trouble.

Wilkesboro. Doc asks Harry why Cole hasn't talked to Rowdy. The drivers are afraid of seeing what can happen to them. "You get a driver to go to a funeral before he's actually dead, you've made history."

Race. Coming into pits, Russ bumps Cole, then pulls into pits ahead of him, blocking him. Cole gets done early, but can't get out. Back to racing, side by side. Russ bumps him and Cole hits the wall. Russ wins race. Harry tells Tim that Russ was racing shit ass racing. Cole asks for them to change his tires. He gets back on track, chases Russ, doing victory lap. They crash. Tim is furious, fires everyone.

Hotel. Cole takes Doc to get her bags to take her to airport. They stop by door. She asks if he wants her to come with him. Cabbie behind honks and then bumps him. Cole backs up smashes the guy's car. Wild chase as she's demanding to be let out of the car. She almost dives out. She tells him he shouldn't be driving. "You're selfish, you're crazy and you're scared." She says that he and Rowdy are both scared and will probably get killed. "Control is an illusion, you infantile egomaniac. Nobody knows what's going to happen next." She leaves him standing there.

Dirt track. He watches race.

Rowdy's farm. Cole comes in. Wife asks why he's here. Rowdy says he heard Cole's out of a job. Cole sees headache pills. He's here to take him to hospital. Rowdy blames it on her being a woman doctor. Cole yells at him.

Hospital. Doc says Rowdy's okay. But will never drive again. He's got to have brain surgery. Rowdy asks Cole to drive his car for him. At Daytona. He needs his sponsor, and needs the car to run good at Daytona. He needs a top five finish so his sponsor will pick up the tab for the year. Cole agrees.

Hallway. He walks past Doc.

Harry's barn. Harry says he won't do it. No talk about racing.

Harry's house. They're drunk. Buck leaves. Harry tells him that voices are telling Cole to get out of the car... Harry says he's not going back. Cole can't race at Daytona without him.

Barn. Cole says that Buddy didn't really die of a heart attack, did he. Cole says that Harry set the car up wrong, used thin wall tubing and the exhaust broke through the tubing, knocking Buddy out. The wrecked car is in the barn, under a cloth. Harry says that buddy was talking the whole time. Cole --Why didn't you let them investigate? --I never should have let him drive in the first place. He thought he knew about cars. But he could do things in a car that were unbelievable. "Before Buddy hit the wall, how was he actually doing in that race?" Harry is furious, starts to fight. "You get back in that car, you'll die." Big face off about why he wants to get in Rowdy's car. Cole says Harry is scared. Cole says he needs this, he hasn't got anything else. Neither of them know how it's going to turn out.

Daytona garage. Harry tells the car that Cole has changed. Tells car to take care of Cole. We see oil dripping out. "this is not the kind of answer I'm looking for from you."

Daytona. Driver montage, talking about Cole. Russ says he'll put him in the wall.

Cole is suiting up. Doc comes in. Rowdy's getting better every day. He finally tells her, "I'm more afraid of being nothing than I am of being hurt."

Cole got a sponsor. Walks by Tim, barely says hello.

Cole's car. New engine, because there was metal in the oil filter. "Where'd you get the engine." "Well, we stole it." Cut to Tim. Harry tells Doc to put him in the car, get him on the track.

Cars start for race. 56 laps... Russ is leading. Cole is last. 100 laps. Crash. Harry tells Cole about it, and oil at bottom of track. Harry tells him to go high. Cole keeps being silent when Harry asks if he's all right. Smoke in front of him. Cole nearly puts on the brake, but doesn't. He makes it through the wreck. Cole's happy, has moved up to 9th. Cole nearly passes Russ, who bumps the guy next to him, and he spins out. Cole passes on the outside. 23 laps to go, Cole is leading. Russ bumps him from behind. Cole's accelerator sticks down. He can't slow down. Harry says to let the engine blow, it's over. Russ bumps him, Cole spins out... the accelerator's fixed, but the transmission is shot. He comes in and they have to get him out before the pace car comes around... they give him the high gear only. Tim yells to his guys to help push him out in time. He gets on just ahead of the pace car. Tim tells official that he gave them the engine. Running 9th, 8 laps to go. Gets behind Russ, drafts him. Russ shoves him in the wall... Cole says he's setting him up. More bashing the wall. Harry tells him to stop. Cole fakes Russ out, going low instead of high, and wins.

Cole asks Doc that she said she wasn't going to watch. "I lied." They kiss. Cole talks to Harry... They race to Victory Lane and it freeze frames.