

Problem Solved

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

ALEX, friendly looking, mid/late 20's, is walking down the street carrying a bag. When he notices the camera he greets it like a person. He addresses the camera most of the time.

ALEX

Hey, how ya doing? Yeah? Me too.
Life's kind of been a drag lately.
But it's not just me. Everyone's
been in a shit storm. It's like
whatever forces of nature smack you
around are swilling around us now.
What? Swirling? What did I say?
Swilling?

Alex chuckles.

ALEX (CONT'D)

That's kind of apropos too. I mean,
just when you think you're looking
over the top of the wall all you
see are a thousand more walls. It
fucking gets to you after awhile,
I've got to tell you.

Alex laughs.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Yeah, this shit gets to even me.
Mr. Together. The Answer Man. Fuck
that shit. I'm probably more
screwed up than all of my friends.
Oh yeah, you haven't met most of
these people. A real crew, let me
tell you. I mean, here they are
coming to me with their problems
and I'm supposed to listen and then
come up with a solution. Hey, these
people are fucked. If they only
knew that I'm lucky if I can figure
out what cereal to have in the
morning. It's pitiful. What makes
them think I can help their sorry
asses?

(Pause)

Yeah, yeah, don't give me that the
grass is always greener shit. By
the way, do you have any? Fuck.
This isn't a drought this is the
Sahara. Whatever.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

What was I saying?

(Pause)

Oh yeah. I've got to say that they may have a point. I may have just got canned but. . .

(Pause)

. . . yeah, thanks. It was a shit job anyway. Can you believe it? The fucking manager accused me of stealing from the cash register. Can you fucking believe that? So we got into a beef this morning and he fired me.

(Pause)

Of course I was stealing but there's no way he could have found out. He was such a dick that he must have had a small one. That was my one of my philosophies for the longest time. That the bigger the dick the guy was the smaller his really was. But then I saw this asshole in the gym and he had a dick the size of a small child. I guess I'll have to rethink that one now that I've got the time. And now that I have some time I figured that I could help out my friends. I mean, I may be a mess but fuck it, I can still find some brain power to help out my friends. Hey, we're here. Do you want to come in for a few drinks?

Alex reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wad of cash.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I cleaned out all the registers before I left. Fuck him. This is my severance pay. Come on.

Alex opens the bar door and the sound of music booms into the street.

INT. BAR - SAME TIME

Alex walks through the half full bar. It takes a few seconds for him to be able to see but when he does he quickly finds his friends, a group of semi-hip 20+ year olds, BRENDENA, HENRY, PAUL, and KIM, drinking and talking.

ALEX

Look at those fucks. It's sad, but this is the only time of the day that belongs to them. They come here, have a few beers, blow off all the shit and then climb back on the truck in the morning. This is depressing, man, it really is.

Alex addresses his friends.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey, assholes. They all turn around and wave.

Alex waves back and walks towards them. Once he reaches them he kisses the girls and shakes hands and pats everyone else on the back. He continues to walk a few feet away from everyone and puts down his bag.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What's happening? You look like you could use another round. Barkeep, another round here.

Alex pulls out some money and waves it at the bartender who sets up another round. Alex turns his attention to the camera.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Come on, let me show you what I mean by fucked up lives. I think that's one reason I hang with them. It makes my life look like something out of some fucking magazine. I mean, it's probably Mad magazine, but at least I get a few laughs before the spy guy blows my ass up.

Alex puts his hand on Brendena's shoulder and she turns around and starts talking.

BRENDENA

Hey babe.

ALEX

Hi Brendena.

BRENDENA

Where'd you get the cash? I thought your girlfriend made you turn it over?

ALEX

The only thing I ever turn over is her ass.

BRENDENA

You disgust me.

ALEX

And you haven't seen me naked.

BRENDENA

Thank god for small miracles.

ALEX

Hey? How did you know the pet name for my penis?

BRENDENA

You're an asshole.

ALEX

Speaking of assholes. . .

BRENDENA

. . .Don't start. But last night was it. I'm leaving him this time I promise. Last night was the worst time ever. I get home from work and he's in the middle of his little jerk fest and, I've got to tell you, there was come everywhere. He must of got off half a dozen times. Who knows how long he was at it. It was fucking disgusting. He sees me and rushes over and grabs my tits and starts squeezing and screaming at me to give him some milk.

Brendena faces the camera to explain.

BRENDENA (CONT'D)

He's into lactating women. I don't know. I guess he wasn't breast fed as a child.

Brendena talks to Alex.

BRENDENA (CONT'D)

So anyway, I try pushing him away and he goes nuts and bites a tit so hard he broke the skin through my shirt. So I spent last night at the hospital – again – getting a tetanus shot or whatever they give you when some lunatic bites your tit. I've got to get out of there before he kills me. That's it, this time it's over.

ALEX

We'll see. I've got to talk to Henry for a minute, I'll be right back.

Alex addresses the camera.

ALEX (CONT'D)

See what I mean? She's just trying to make her life a little happier and share it with someone and look at the shit she has to put up with. I know her boyfriend and, man, I've got to tell you, I always knew he was a tit man, but in my wildest dreams did I think he took it that far.

Alex grabs Henry.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey, pinhead. How's life in the mutant pool?

HENRY

I've progressed to the deep end.

ALEX

Henry, man, you look like someone who just found out his dog has the clap.

HENRY

At least he'd be getting some. I've got to get a new job.

ALEX

Join the club.

HENRY

You got fired again?

ALEX

What a pedestrian way of looking at it. I like to think of it as another step up the ladder and out of the rut.

HENRY

At least you got out alive. I swear to you that my boss is trying to kill me. Today, right, he put through a transfer to not only get me put on the third shift but also move me to the fucking Westboro office. Do you know where fucking Westboro is?

ALEX

I don't even know what Westboro is.

HENRY

It's an hour and a half from here. Do you know what that means? Three more hours to my fucking work day. And, on top of that, I get the honor of starting at midnight. It just keeps getting better and fucking better, doesn't it?

ALEX

I think I have a solution to everyone's problem.

HENRY

Special Jonestown flavored kool-aid?

ALEX

Something even more special.

HENRY

Just as long as you remember that I'm allergic to grape.

ALEX

Duly noted.

Alex and Henry laugh and then Alex addresses the camera.

ALEX (CONT'D)

See what I mean? Here's a great, hard working guy. He's been at the same company since high school and because someone over him likes to play a little power trip he gets screwed. Is this what we were learning in school? Is this the great American dream that we were promised? Umm, well, I don't think that our generation was promised that. But I vaguely remember my father mentioning something about that when I was younger.

Paul grabs the camera and addresses it.

PAUL

Don't believe a single word he says. He's been delusional since the day we met. You wouldn't believe it. He actually thinks that people care about his opinion.

Alex pulls the camera back towards him and addresses it.

ALEX

Don't listen to him. He's a noted pedal-file.

PAUL

A pedal-file? What the fuck are you talking about?

ALEX

You can only get it up on a bicycle.

PAUL

Yeah, and all I get dates with are unicycles.

ALEX

Whoa. You are the luckiest man in the world.

PAUL

Or so the rumor goes.

Paul addresses camera.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Hey, Alex, can I speak to you alone for a minute.

Alex addresses camera.

ALEX
You don't mind, do you?

The camera pulls back and pans the bar.

ALEX (CONT'D)
So, what's up, Paul? You get
another Flintstone chewable lodged
up your nostril again?

PAUL
No, and anyway it was a Batman
vitamin. I've got to tell you
something and I don't want you to
tell anyone else.

ALEX
Oh, I'm crushed that you even
insinuated that I would pass what
is told to me in the sanctity of
the confessional to others.

PAUL
Yeah, like the last time I asked
you this and you told everyone that
I got my dick stuck in a padlock.

ALEX
Well, the sanctity of the
confessional doesn't extend to
things that are just to funny for
words.

PAUL
What church were you ordained by?
The First Jocularinity of George
Burns?

ALEX
He is older than god, you know.

PAUL
All right, I'll give you that one,
it was pretty funny. But this time
please don't tell anyone. I'll tell
them all when the time comes.

ALEX
Okay.

PAUL
Promise me.

ALEX

Okay.

Paul snaps at Alex.

PAUL

I said promise me.

ALEX

All right, I promise. Now back the fuck off. What could be so important that you don't want to tell your confidants, your amigos, your best friends on the day you get paid?

PAUL

I'm dying.

ALEX

Well, Paul, we all are.

PAUL

Probably not as fast as I am. The doctor told me that I have cancer and it's inoperable. I'll be lucky to last the month.

ALEX

What are you talking about? You haven't been sick. You don't look sick.

PAUL

At least I get to go with a good looking corpse.

ALEX

Fuck you. This is just another one of your morbid jokes.

PAUL

The last one.

ALEX

You're not kidding, are you?

Paul nods no.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What the fuck? When did this happen?

PAUL

The doctor told me yesterday. He says that it's just there. That it could have laid dormant for years and then over a period of time it started growing.

ALEX

Like a chia pet?

Paul laughs.

PAUL

Yeah, exactly like a chia pet. So, umm, I just wanted you to know first. You've been a great friend for a long time and thought that it was only fair.

ALEX

You sure have a warped sense of fairness.

PAUL

And it fits perfectly with you. So, I'm planning to tell everyone tomorrow. So, you know what I'm going to ask you?

ALEX

Bring the body bag?

PAUL

Yeah, that's it. But before that, don't say anything.

ALEX

I promise my son and I absolve you of all your shins.

PAUL

Cool. I won't be needing them much anyway.

Alex and Paul hug and the camera pans back to them. When Alex starts walking he addresses the camera.

ALEX

Man, did you hear that? Shit. That was a new one. Why does it have to be him? Why can't it be that fuck across the bar who's fallen off his bar stool so many times they should make him wear a crash helmet?

KIM

Alex, I need you.

ALEX

I know. But I've told you, Kim. I'm saving myself for my true love, Chelsea Clinton.

KIM

Yeah, and this is my original hair color.

ALEX

That's not even your original hair color this week.

KIM

Stop picking on my hair. It is horrible, isn't it?

ALEX

I don't know. It looks pretty good. Yeah, it's shapely, full bodied, roomy. It looks like a pretty expensive rat condo.

KIM

Thank you very fucking much. I'll have you know that Michelle, the only person in the world who can do my hair properly, moved to another shop and I can't find out where.

ALEX

Do you think that maybe she escaped under the cover of darkness because she kept getting bit by the rats in your hair?

KIM

Fuck you. You've got to help me find her. This is serious. I have a date with this guy from the office tomorrow and I don't want him to get a bad impression from my hair.

ALEX

Then don't press it against him.

KIM

I don't know why I even talk to you. You are such an asshole. Kim takes a drink and

Alex shrugs his shoulders and addresses the camera.

ALEX

I guess you can't win them all.

KIM

Alex, you've got to help me.

ALEX

Oh, come on, Kim. It's just your hair. And it truly looks great. Like a movie star. Well, maybe a Z grade movie star.

KIM

You're. . .

ALEX

. . .I know, an asshole. But you know what they say.

KIM

What?

ALEX

You are what you eat.

KIM

Eww, thank you very fucking much for that little visual.

ALEX

I'm just trying to help.

KIM

You just don't get it, do you? You don't understand the symbiosis between the client and hairdresser, do you? The trust and bond that has to be there.

ALEX

Kim, don't you think you're stretching this just a bit?

KIM

No, I'm not stretching this at all. Why don't you get away from me if you're not going to help.

ALEX

Okay, but if I go away I won't be able to tell you where she is after I call her tonight.

KIM

Call her? You know where she is?

ALEX

Kim, have you no memory? Have all these years of hair abuse have finally started to eat away what's left of your receding brain line?

KIM

Stop talking like an idiot and tell me how you know her.

ALEX

We went to school together. I'll call her tonight and you can stop taking your prozac until the next emergency.

Kim jumps up and hugs Alex.

KIM

You're the best. I'm serious. No one on earth is better than you.

ALEX

Kim, would you let go of me. I have to pee really bad and this isn't helping me any.

Kim lets go of Alex.

KIM

Thank you, thank you, thank you. This is going to be the best date of my life. I'm going to look so hot. But then, what if he turns out to be a jerk that Juilianna at work said he was. Oh shit, he's going to be a jerk. I just know it.

Alex addresses the camera and starts walking towards the men's room.

ALEX

Let's get out of here while she has her breakdown. Do you see what I have to put up with? Every day, especially with Kim, there's another disaster. The problem with her is that they're always these little nuisance things that aren't even problems to a normal person.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong, I like helping my friends out but there never seems to be an end to it.

Alex reaches the urinal. He pauses for a few seconds.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It's kind of gets me down, you know? Because I can do a few things for them, like get Kim in touch with Michelle, but I feel so helpless with the real problems in life.

Alex finishes and walks over to wash his hands.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Like Paul. What the fuck can be done about that? It's shit like that; shit that hits you from nowhere; that makes just getting out of bed every morning too much fucking work. Do you know what I mean?

Alex finishes washing his hands and wipes them on his pants and walks out of the men's room.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Life, even the pieces of shit that my friends and I have, shouldn't be this much work before your first bowl of Rice Krispies. I'll have to write that one down. I kind of liked that one. I've got to say, sometimes I come up with a good one.

Alex pauses as he walks through the crowd and sits next to his bag which he places on the floor.

ALEX (CONT'D)

But, you know, I think that I can help all of my friends tonight. And I've got to tell you, my friend, that this is a first. For the first time in my friend helping career I, Alex the Answer Man, can solve everyone's problem. Alex pauses and takes a drink. I love them, you know? I always thought that it was bullshit when I heard that, because of the breakup of the nuclear family, your friends become the closest thing to a family you'll ever have. You know, I truly believe that now. See those people over there, each one of them is great in their own way.

Alex pauses and takes a drink.

ALEX (CONT'D)

We've had a lot of good times together and it hurts me to see them hurt. But after tonight, everyone's problems are solved.

Alex stand up and addresses his friends.

ALEX (CONT'D)

My friends.

Alex pauses until he has everyone's attention.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Life sucks.

PAUL

Tell us something we don't know.

ALEX

Okay, I will. After tonight all of our problems are behind us.

BRENDENA

What did you do? Hit the lottery and are taking us to the Bahamas?

ALEX

Think bigger, Brendena. Think of the one thing that could solve all your problems.

HENRY

You'd shut the fuck up and buy us another round.

ALEX

Funny, Henry. But I can tell by your limited train of thought that I'm going to have to unveil the solution to all your problems to you.

Alex leans over and fumbles in his bag. He stands up with a rifle and starts firing after the first sentence.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The best solution to a problem that I've ever come up with.

Alex shoots all of his friends.

EXT. BAR - LATER

The blue lights of police cars disorient the night. Police and EMT's are working as a crowd watches. A police sergeant talks to one of his officers.

SERGEANT

This guy, what was his name?

OFFICER

Alex Mullen.

SERGEANT

Mullen, that's right, had quite a busy day for himself. He killed his boss this morning and now this. We talked to the only person we could find that knew him, his landlady, and she said he was polite and always paid his rent on time.

OFFICER

That seems to be a classic M.O. of a nut case, doesn't it, Sarge?

SERGEANT

Maybe we should just haul in anyone who pays their rent on time. It'd save us a lot of paperwork.

EMT's put Alex's body in an ambulance.

OFFICER

You've got to wonder what makes a
guy like this snap.

SERGEANT

More than that, you've got to
wonder what made him do this to his
friends. What the hell was he
thinking?

The ambulance pulls away.

FADE OUT.