

GUS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A street light shines in a doorway of a closed cafe.

An old homeless man, GUS (68), slight, bushy grey beard and long grey hair, sits on cardboard, wrapped in a large blanket, with a long black duffel bag by his side.

In front of him, a hand written sign attached to his trilby hat, half filled with coins, reads:

"I'M AN OLD MAN THAT'S IN PAIN"

PEOPLE walk on by with the odd one dropping a coin.

Gus, leans forward and grabs his hat. He empties the coins in his cupped hand before placing them in his pocket and puts his hat on.

In pain, he slowly climbs to his feet and drops the blanket over his duffel bag.

EXT. LANE WAY - NIGHT

In between dumpsters, Gus finishes urinating against a wall. He zips his fly up. Suddenly, we hear footsteps.

Gus freezes. He slowly reaches into his pocket and pulls out a Glock pistol.

The footsteps become louder and closer. Gus slowly turns around, ready for an ambush.

KENNY (30s), large, hair in a ponytail, brown apron, brown shirt, walks on by.

KENNY

Put it away, Gus. I don't wanna get wet.

GUS

You're hilarious, Kenny. How about a free coffee tomorrow morning?

Kenny walks down to a door under a light. He pulls out a key and unlocks the door.

KENNY

And good night to you too, Gus.

Kenny steps inside.

Gus puts the gun back in his pocket, straightens his jacket and walks out of the lane.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

With his head down, Gus shuffles back along the street.

He returns to his spot to find, ZED (41), shaved head, fully wrapped in Gus' blanket, sitting down, leaning against the door.

GUS  
And you are?

Zed looks up with a distressed look on his face.

ZED  
Zed. The name's Zed.

GUS  
Well, Zed. I'm afraid I'm all booked up. You'll have to find another hotel.

ZED  
I've got nowhere to go. Just give me ten minutes. That's all I ask for. Ten tiny minutes. Just cut me some slack. Please.

Gus stares into his eyes and begrudgingly concedes.

GUS  
Well, Zed. I'll give you your ten minutes -

Gus leans down and opens up his bag.

GUS (CONT'D)  
- But don't mess with me. Got it?

ZED  
Trust me. I'm cool.

Gus pulls out an old blanket. He wraps it around himself, before sitting down next to Zed.

Gus takes off his hat and places it in front of him. He leans over and grabs his sign, attaching it to his hat.

GUS  
I'll share my blankets but not my  
income. Understand?

ZED  
All good. And your name?

GUS  
I'm Gus. I don't normally have  
guests over. And as you can see I'm  
busy renovating.

Zed chuckles at the comment.

GUS (CONT'D)  
You must be new 'cause I ain't seen  
you in this neighborhood before.

ZED  
I'm not from here.

GUS  
So what brings you here? The wine?  
The women?

ZED  
It's a long story.

Gus notices his reluctance.

GUS  
How long have you been on the  
street?

ZED  
Five minutes.

GUS  
I see. A newcomer. How did you end  
up here?

ZED  
Fuck! What is this? An  
interrogation?

A passerby drops a coin in the hat. It closes the  
conversation.

Gus puts his head back against the door, staring into space.  
There's an awkward silence. Zed glances at Gus.

ZED (CONT'D)  
Look, Gus. I'm scared. That's all.

GUS  
Nothing to be ashamed about.

ZED  
The thing is, life didn't turn out  
the way I thought it would.

GUS  
I hear ya.

ZED  
Do you believe we're here for a  
reason?

GUS  
Not really. Look. I lost my job and  
wife in the same week, and now I'm  
here.

ZED  
She took you to the cleaners?

GUS  
No. She died.

ZED  
Sorry to hear that!

GUS  
Pfft! If it wasn't for me, she'd  
still be alive today. I should not  
have got behind that wheel that  
night.

Gus unzips his bag and pulls out a bottle of Jack Daniels. He  
takes a mouthful and hands it to Zed.

Zed takes a mouthful and hands it back.

GUS (CONT'D)  
Let me tell you something. We all  
go through life and make mistakes.  
Hell. I've made so many. But we  
also have a chance to rectify them.

Gus takes another mouthful of Jack Daniels.

GUS (CONT'D)  
Unfortunately, when I drove that  
car off the road and into a tree, I  
killed my one true love. All  
because I was drunk.

Gus takes another mouthful.

GUS (CONT'D)

So there's no chance of fixing my mistake, and that eats me up on a daily basis.

ZED

Do you have children?

GUS

A daughter. She never forgave me. I haven't spoken to her for twenty two years and five months.

ZED

Sorry to hear that.

GUS

Yeah. Don't feel sorry for me.

Gus stares out into space. There's silence. It drags a response out of Zed.

ZED

How long have you been on the street?

GUS

On and off for twenty years.

Zed's stunned by the answer.

ZED

You need help.

GUS

I'm here 'cause I want to be here. And I guess I have a drinking problem, but--

ZED

--You're beating yourself up. Why don't you contact your daughter? Who knows? She might have forgiven you?

The comment triggers Gus with emotions.

GUS

Do you know why I choose this spot?

ZED

No.

GUS

Most of the customers that walk into this cafe are office workers. You know, lawyers, bankers, businessmen - you name it. They grab their coffee before they go into their big companies and sit at their large desks.

Gus takes another mouthful of Jack Daniels.

GUS (CONT'D)

My daughter steps into this cafe every Monday. She doesn't even know she's walking past her old man.

ZED

That's sad.

GUS

Maybe? But at least I know she's okay. And I guess, that's all I've got.

Gus sits back and sighs at the thought of his daughter.

Zed looks around at the street-scape.

ZED

You ever been mugged?

GUS

Of course. The owner of this cafe, Kenny, lets me sleep here. He must have felt sorry for me because he gave me this...

Gus pulls out his pistol, hiding it inside the blanket, as he shows Zed.

ZED

Wow! You ever shot anyone?

GUS

Nah! Look closely. It's fake. It's a water pistol.

Both men laugh.

ZED

Can I hold it?

GUS

Sure.

Gus slides it under the blanket for Zed to grab. Zed holds it inside the blanket.

ZED

It feels so realistic.

GUS

I know. It's got me out of a lot of trouble.

ZED

I haven't held a gun for fifteen years.

GUS

Really?

Zed senses Gus wants more information.

ZED

It's hard for me to talk about this.

GUS

About what?

Zed tightens the blanket around him, as he stares into the distance.

ZED

You talked about your daughter and how she doesn't speak to you anymore. I'm the same with my wife. We haven't spoken for fifteen years.

GUS

Why?

ZED

Because I shot her dead.

GUS

Sorry? Did you say--

ZED

--I shot her dead. I was high on drugs, had an argument and I just shot her. Bang!

Gus sits there in amazement.

GUS

I see.

ZED

You're absolutely right. There are some mistakes you just can't fix.

GUS

Well. You're young enough. You still have a chance to do something with your life.

ZED

Nah! My life's over and I only have myself to blame.

GUS

What are you talking about? You've done your time. The world is now your oyster.

Zed starts chuckling.

ZED

I'll be lucky to make sunrise.

Gus starts chuckling.

GUS

Hey! I know it's your first night but you'll be okay. Trust me.

Suddenly the sounds of police sirens cut through the night, before the screeching stop of police cars.

We stay on the two men as the flashing red and blue lights, light up their faces.

GUS (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

There's no more passerbys and the two men have an uninterrupted view.

GUS (CONT'D)

What's going on?

POLICE OFFICER (O.S)

Larry Zedman. You are completely surrounded. Slowly put your hands above your head and lay on the ground. Do you understand?

Zed peels the blanket off him, revealing a bright orange prison uniform and handcuffs.

ZED

I was being transferred to another prison and managed to escape.

Gus looks down at the gun.

GUS

Oh shit! Don't do anything stupid.

ZED

You listen up. Promise me you'll clean yourself up and try and get back with your daughter.

GUS

What?

ZED

Promise me.

GUS

Yes. Yes. I promise. I promise. Look, Zed. Don't do anything stupid.

ZED

It's over. Forget about me. I'm not going back.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Larry Zedman. You have nowhere to go. You are completely surrounded...

GUS

Zed. Come on. Look! How far are you off parole?

Zed starts laughing.

ZED

Only another fifteen years.

GUS

What's fifteen Easters?

ZED

This is all my fault. Thanks for the chat and a mouthful of Jack.

GUS

Just put the gun down and surrender quietly. I promise I'll come and visit you.

ZED

Not a chance. When I get up, you hit the floor. See you on the other side.

GUS

No! No!

Zed jumps up and points the fake gun at the police.

Gus quickly rolls his body down off the door, ending with his cheek on the pavement.

BLACK SCREEN

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Zed falls against the door and slides down dead, leaving a trail of blood from his bullet-ridden body.

Gus slowly lifts his head up, shocked by the ordeal. He looks at Zed and notices Zed's dead eyes looking at him.

BLACK SCREEN

INT. CAFE - DAY

Kenny carries two brewed coffees and places them on a table, where Gus, clean shaven and short hair, sits with his DAUGHTER (44), blonde, wearing corporate attire.

There's smiles all around.

FADE OUT