

LESS THAN A DOLLAR...

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SIDEWALK OF A BUSY ROAD IN MUMBAI, INDIA - DAY

MIKE ADAMS , middle aged man dressed in a business suit, sitting on a bench. His back facing the screen as we slowly MOVE IN.

MIKE (V.O)

My name is Mike Adams . I am a Filmmaker. I tell stories. Everybody has one. Stories that make you laugh, stories that fascinate you, thrill you, stories that mean something to you, stories...that change your entire life; and this.. is my story , the one I am yet to find a Title for...

We continue to MOVE IN from above the right shoulder of Mike when we first see him typing the SYNOPSIS of a film on his laptop.

ECU of the word TITLE on the laptop screen. The cursor keeps flashing near the word TITLE, as we DISSOLVE into a--

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. SAME LOCATION- DAY

Mike is arguing on the mobile phone. From his body language it's pretty clear he is fighting a losing battle.

MIKE (V.O)

December 24, just another regular day , just another argument with my wife CHRISTY over not being there on Christmas.. yet again. For me, it's just another routine every year... but what happened next was certainly not a routine...

FOCUS PULL to reveal a 9 year old girl REVA and her 6 yr old brother MANU in the background trying to sell colorful balloons to the people walking by. They seem to be poor and homeless by their appearance.

CLOSE in on REVA thanking and taking money from a MAN she sold balloons to. She quickly counts all the money she has while her brother comes to her.

MANU

(In anticipation with a bit of
restlessness)

Can we now have our burger ? I am damn hungry . I've been waiting for hours now..

REVA

(looking worried)

Well we are still short of money. I have an idea. I will bring one Burger for you now and I'll have mine later ok?

MANU

No. I know you are hungry too and you love it more than I do, so either we have it together or we won't..

Reva looks up at the balloons , calculates something in her mind and walks up to the man nearby none other than Mike who is still on the phone.

REVA

Sir please have these balloons . All of them at 50% discount ..

Mike starts walking ignoring her offer. Reva keeps pace with him as we PULL BACK.

REVA

It's only 50 Rupees, less than a dollar, for all of them..

Mike holds his call.

MIKE

What am I gonna do with all those balloons? They are useless to me...

Reva pauses a little and pleads..

REVA

Sir, I really need 50 Rs , it's very important for me..

Mike tells his wife to hold on and bends a little coming closer to Reva, his hands tied behind his back.

MIKE

Really? if it's so important to you, then give me one good reason why I should buy these balloons?

Reva is caught off guard. Tries to re assemble herself;

REVA

(stammers)

Umm....., well ... It..will bring Good luck to you Sir....

Mike looks up at the balloons and reads the words GOOD LUCK written on few balloons.

MIKE

(smiling with a grin)

Yeah..Yeah... I can "see" that... Nice try young lady..

Mike starts walking off while Reva stays still, looking at the balloons once again in dismal, wondering how ridiculous her answer might have sounded.

Mikes resumes his phone call.

MIKE

Hello..Sorry where was I?

CHRISTY (O.S)

I can't believe you just did that Mike.
It was so rude. Now since when a
millionaire like you started thinking
a dollar?

MIKE

(sounds frustrated)

You don't know these locals Christy.
The moment they see a foreign guy they
find a hundreds of reasons to rip him
off. They'll do anything for money..

CHRISTY (O.S)

(nervously)

Just like you...

Mike is surprised by her response.

MIKE

Now what do you mean by that?

CHRISTY (O.S)

You will do anything for money
too...right? Even if it means
forgetting your own wife!

MIKE

Now please don't start it again
Christy. I do that for you...
our ..dreams, our future !!

Mike tries to correct himself while saying that, trying not to sound as if he is doing some kind of favor for Christy. But his bodily gestures suggest he knows he failed in that attempt.

CHRISTY (O.S)

(sadly with a hint of anger)

What's the use of all that money if you
are not there with me.

MIKE

(trying to control the tempo of his voice)

Look honey I've explained this many times to you. In today's world you cannot survive without good money. You can live without love but you cannot live without money...

Mike hangs up the phone trying to avoid an outburst of his anger as he watches Reva crossing the road towards MCDONALDS.

MIKE

(Watches in surprise)

Oh so that's why you were so desperate for a dollar huh ! so much for ruining my day. I am gonna show you now Christy how the world really is.

Mike rushes towards Reva while we--

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE, NEW YORK- DAY

Christy is holding the phone tightly with both hands trying to control her tears. She opens her eyes and dials.

CHRISTY

(with a very heavy voice)

Mom, you were right. He's not coming for this Christmas too!

MOM

(worried)

What happened my dear?

CHRISTY

He's never gonna change Mom.

She hangs up the phone and lets go off her tears she had been holding for quite a while.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE MCDONALDS- DAY

Mike opens the door of the McDonalds and enters in to see Reva standing in a queue behind 2 college girls as they give their order to the girl on the counter TANYA.

One of them looks at Reva with some disgust and frowns.

GIRL NO. 1

I wonder if a place like this is losing its standards or beggars have raised theirs.

They giggle with a hint of disdain while Tanya notices giving a disapproving look.

TANYA

(with a friendly smile)

Hey..hey.. look who's here... 2 cheese burgers right?

Reva puts up a smile pile of coins and few notes of lower denomination on the table.

REVA

I am 50 Rs short today. I promise I'll return them tomorrow.

TANYA

Oh that's no problem dear, we are having a Christmas discount today.

As she speaks Tanya takes out a 50 Rupee note out of her pocket and puts it in the counter without letting Reva see it, but is obviously noticed by Mike.

TANYA

Here are your burgers. Wish Manu a very happy birthday on my behalf.

REVA

Sure I will. Thank you.

Reva takes the burgers and proceeds towards the far end counter in the corner to take the ketchup.

MIKE

(surprised)

Now why did you do that? I know there is no discount of any sort today.

TANYA

For Reva, her little brother is all that she has. She celebrates his birthday by having his favorite burger like this every year. She brought all her day's earnings today which fell short. I guess, she probably didn't eat the whole day to save them. If she can do so much for the love of her brother, what I did was absolutely nothing...

Mike couldn't help notice the feeling of satisfaction and empathy in her smile as she broke the silence--

TANYA

Your order, Sir?

MIKE

(breaking out of a deep thought as he watched Reva leave the premise)

Err... ya..could you wait for a moment please, I'll be back.

EXT. ON THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE MCDONALDS - DAY

Mike follows Reva out of the building as they stand near the road crossing along with few other people waiting for the WALK signal to turn green.

Reva watches a WOMAN and her LITTLE GIRL (4 years) sitting on the sidewalks nearby selling some handmade crafts and toys. The little girl keeps staring at the burgers in Reva's hands. Reva feels a bit uneasy. The woman notices that and distracts the girl by giving her some candies. But the little girl stares back at Reva and her burgers.

Reva grows restless. She walks straight up to the Girl and offers one burger. The woman immediately denies it.

REVA

Please have it, anyway I got this free as they are having a special Christmas offer today. Besides I cannot eat more than one.

Reva hands over one burger to the little girl. She pauses and takes out the WRAPPER which has some melted cheese on it. She smiles and leaves.

The little girl and woman's sparkling eyes express enough gratitude.

Mike seems to have rendered clueless by this act of Reva. He continues to follow her in some kind of trance.

We FOLLOW Reva to the other side of the road where she pauses. Mike stops at a distance watching her. She makes sure her brother is not watching her and picks some cheese off the wrapper and DABS it around her lips and walks towards Manu.

REVA

Tadaa...!! Here you are ...

She hands a wrapped Burger to Manu.

MANU

Yayyy... ! But.. where's yours?

REVA

Oh sorry I had to eat it before you. The cheese was leaking all over the place and what good is a cheese burger without the cheese right?

She throws away the other wrapper and licks the cheese around her lips with fingers acting as if she savored it greatly.

Manu hesitates a little as he is still in disbelief while Reva opens up the wrapper. Mike witnesses all that and sits on the BENCH as if he lost his energy, trying to recollect all that just happened.

INSERT: FLASHBACK MONTAGE ##BLACK WHITE

A SERIES of events right from the moment Reva asks Mike desperately for money through to the scene with Tanya and the little girl on the road up to the current moment FLASH CUTS before the eyes of Mike.

BACK TO THE SCENE: @COLOR

Mike immediately removes the cell phone out and calls Christy.

OUT. MIKES' S HOUSE, NY- DAY

Christy is locking the door preparing to leave the house. She has two big suitcases. Her cell phone rings.

CHRISTY

(with a heavy voice)

Mike... I ..I have something to tell you...

INTERCUT BETWEEN MIKE AND CHRISTY

MIKE

I was wrong Christy... Money is not everything !

CHRISTY

(Surprised)

What? I hope you are serious Mike, I am really not in a position to...

MIKE

I wasn't serious earlier. I m really very sorry for that. But I am very serious now. And I guess I have to make a some corrections. Speaking of which... could you hold on a second...

Mike walks towards Reva

MIKE

Do you still want to sell all those balloons?

REVA

(startled)

Uhhh...ya!?

MIKE

You know you are right little girl. It surely is my luck day. Here's a dollar for the balloons and here's one more. I would like to have the same cheese burger you just had. Could you bring it for me?

REVA

(Smiling)

Oh sure, Sir. Thank you.

She hands over all the balloons and heads towards the McDonalds. Mike takes the balloons and walks off on the sidewalk.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MIKE AND CHRISTY

MIKE

One correction down... one to go.

CHRISTY

(Still in disbelief)

Mike could you tell me what's going On?

MIKE

Sure. I'll tell you everything on the flight to Tahiti islands where you always wanted to go. Pack your bags honey because I am gonna be there in a flash.

Christy looks at the bags she already packed.

CHRISTY

Ummm... well ya, I ..guess I am
already done packing.

MIKE

And you know what I just bought you
one of the best gifts ever.

CHRISTY

(Bit worried)

Ya..? what is it? How much for?

Looking up at the colorful balloons and smiling.

MIKE

In a dollar... In... Less than a
Dollar.. !!

Christy is almost in tears with apparent shockingly good
change in Mike.

Mike continues to walk along the sidewalk as we watch him
slowly BLUR OUT and then FREEZE FRAME.

SPLITSCREEN (1/3rd of the screen) of--

Reva coming in running with a burger asking Manu where Mike
is. Manu points in the direction Mike walked off as Reva
watches in that direction and then towards the burger as we
FREEZE FRAME --

SPLITSCREEN no 3 of--

Christy sitting on one of the bags in tears of joy and
disbelief as the screen FREEZES.

SPLITSCREEN FRAME FREEZES.

While the above happens--

MIKE (V.O)

They say experience is your best
teacher. And life has its own ways
(more)

MIKE (V.O CONT'D)
of teaching them. I learned many
things in those few minutes ... and
the best one, I learned in...

BACK TO PRESENT

ECU of the word TITLE while Mike starts TYPING the words--

LESS THAN A DOLLAR...

FADE OUT: