

TRENDSETTER

by

James McClung

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A wailing ambulance speeds down a crowded city street.

INT. AMBULANCE

An OLD MAN, 70s, lies unconscious in the center of the ambulance. His shirt is opened to reveal his chest, which is connected to a heart monitor.

AL, 50s, crouches beside the old man. Al is heavyset with graying brown hair and mustache. He wears paramedic garb.

Al holds paddles over the old man's chest. JEFF, 20s, crouches behind Al, beside the heart monitor and a defibrillator connected to the paddles. Jeff is lean with short black hair. He also wears paramedic garb.

AL

Clear!

Al slams the paddles onto the old man's chest. He jolts upright as electricity tears through his unconscious body.

AL

Again! Clear!

Al presses the paddles against the chest a second time.

The heart monitor releases a consistent tone as the green spikes on the computer screen cease.

AL

Again!

JEFF

Al-

AL

Again!

JEFF

Al-

AL  
What?!

JEFF  
It's over.

AL  
No, it's not. Again!

JEFF  
I'm sorry, Al. He's gone.

AL  
No.

Al slumps backwards, his eyes welling up with tears.

AL  
Not like this. Not like this.

The paramedic places his hand on Al's shoulder.

JEFF  
You can't be a hero all the time, Al.  
You taught me that.

AL  
I know. I just didn't want to go out  
like this. I didn't want the last thing  
I remember to be-

The heart monitor goes silent before producing a series of steady beeps. Spikes reappear on the computer screen.

JEFF  
Wait a minute.

The paramedic turns to the monitor.

JEFF  
He's coming back. He's coming back!

Al looks at the old man. His eyes flutter slowly open.

AL  
Welcome back, friend.

INT. HOSPITAL - BEDROOM

The old man lies in a hospital bed, docile but alert. A MOTHER and FATHER, 40s, and a LITTLE GIRL, 6, stand beside his bed. The little girl holds his hand.

Al stands in the doorway, watching them. A hand appears on his shoulder. He turns.

INT. HALLWAY

BOB, 50s, stands beside Al. He is muscular with short white hair. He wears a white shirt with a black tie.

BOB

What do you say we leave them alone,  
Al?

Al places his own hand over Bob's.

AL

Good to see you, Bob.

The two men proceed down the hallway.

BOB

You did good today, Al. You're a real asset to the force. You don't just save lives, you save families. That's why it's going to be hard to watch you go after all these years.

AL

I hear you, Bob. Every time I save someone's life, I feel my heart swell inside my chest. But every time I lose someone, it feels like I've lost a piece of my soul and the truth is miracles don't happen everyday. After thirty years, I'm tired. I've had enough. I got to leave, Bob.

BOB

You do what you got to do, Al. Just know it's been an honor and a privilege working with you.

AL  
Thanks Bob.

A RECEPTIONIST, 20s, appears behind the two men.

RECEPTIONIST  
Sir, there's been a shooting at the Southeast docks. A man shot in the chest. Still alive.

BOB  
Al, you take this one.

AL  
Oh, I don't know—

BOB  
Come on, Al. I know you still got one more in you.

AL  
Bob, I—

BOB  
Come on. I'll send Jeff with you. He looks up to you, you know.

AL  
Alright. I'll do it. But this is the last one.

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jeff hops into the back of an ambulance. Al steps into the driver's seat.

Bob stands beside the ambulance next to the driver's seat window.

BOB  
Stick around when you get back. We're not letting you leave here without saying goodbye the right way. Hell, I'll buy you a beer afterwards.

AL

Wouldn't miss it for the world, Bob.  
You guys are like a second family to  
me.

BOB

Take care.

Bob walks away.

INT. AMBULANCE

AL

You all set back there, Jeff?

JEFF (O.S.)

Lets rock and roll, big guy.

Al starts up the ambulance, turns on its siren, and pulls out of the parking lot.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The ambulance speeds down another busy city street.

EXT. DOCKS ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The ambulance drives through the open gates of a rusty chain link fence.

EXT. DOCKS

The docks lie at the end of a secluded parking lot. A collection of dingy warehouses lines its perimeter.

The ambulance pulls up in front of one warehouse with its ill lit interior exposed.

Al and Jeff emerge from the ambulance and are approached by two men.

One man is thin with short blonde hair and covered in various tattoos and body piercing. He wears baggy cargo shorts, ratty sneakers, and no shirt. This is TRAVIS, 20s.

The other man is covered from head to toe in thick plastic wrap. Work goggles conceal his face. Bits of stringy blonde

hair protrude from the plastic encasing his head. This is WILLIE, 40s.

WILLIE  
How's it going, guys?

JEFF  
What's with the getup?

AL  
Where is he?

WILLIE  
Who?

AL  
The man with the bullet wound in his chest. Who else?

WILLIE  
Oh him.

AL  
Come on now. You made the call.

WILLIE  
Yes sir.

AL  
Then you must be his friend. I'm know you don't want to see him pass tonight. We're here to help. Where is he?

WILLIE  
Well, you see... the thing about that is... well... there isn't anyone here who fits that description.

AL  
I don't understand.

JEFF  
Are you trying to tell us there's no one here with a bullet wound in his chest?

WILLIE  
Pretty much, yeah.

JEFF  
You got to be fucking kidding me.

AL  
Let me get this straight. There was no shooting?

WILLIE  
Nope.

AL  
There was no one else here before you two?

WILLIE  
Negative. Just me and my buddy, Travis, here. My name's Willie.

AL  
Willie, do you understand that reporting false emergencies is a serious offense.

WILLIE  
Now just hold your horses--

AL  
You know how many people's lives could be at stake right now because of you? Give me one good reason why I shouldn't report this right now.

WILLIE  
Take it easy, chief. What I said was there's no one here with a bullet wound in his chest. What I didn't say was there will be in just a few minutes.

Willie removes one hand from behind his back. It holds a pistol. Al and Jeff instinctually recoil.

AL  
Now you listen to me. You take me. I'll do whatever you want. Just let the kid

go.

Willie turns to Travis.

TRAVIS

Whatever. We really only need one of them.

AL

Get out of here, Jeff.

JEFF

Al, I-

AL

Get out of here!

Jeff prepares to leave but his eyes remain fixated on Al.

AL

What are you waiting for? Run!

Jeff takes off towards the entrance of the docks.

AL

Alright. What do you want? You want to kill me? You're sick. How the fuck do you get off killing paramedics, huh?!

TRAVIS

What the fuck are you talking about?

AL

Huh?

WILLIE

No one's dying here tonight.

AL

What? But you said... The gun.

WILLIE

The gun? Oh. Oh! Oh, you thought... Oh, I gotcha. Sorry about that. We really weren't sure how to present ourselves.

AL

Present yourselves?! I don't... What?!  
What the hell is going on here?! No  
one's shot, no one's getting shot...  
But you said... You say this isn't...  
What the hell am I thinking? This is a  
prank! I'm calling this in right now.

Al turns to the ambulance.

WILLIE

Wait... Hold on... Could you just hang  
on a minute, sir-

AL

It's all fun and games until someone  
gets hurt, isn't it-

WILLIE

This isn't a prank!

Al whirls around, his face swollen and purple.

AL

Then what the hell am I doing here,  
huh?! I should be out there helping  
people in need! Why the hell did you  
make that call?!

WILLIE

You want to take this one, Travis?

TRAVIS

Alright, here's the deal. I'm all about  
self-expression, see? Every tattoo,  
every piercing, everything I've done to  
my body, it means something, you know?  
Right now, I'm ready to take things to  
the next level.

WILLIE

Here's where you come in.

TRAVIS

All my life, I've been a victim of  
circumstance, you know what I mean?  
Every time I turn around, the world's

trying to stab me in the back. It attacks me, see? I'm being attacked every second of every minute of every hour of every day. I think it's about time I capture that on my body. The only way I can do that is with a bullet.

WILLIE

What I'm going to do is I'm going to shoot Travis, with this gun, right here...

Willie presses the gun against Travis' upper pectoral muscle.

WILLIE

At this range, the bullet will go straight through and out the other side so you won't have to worry about digging it out of him. All we're asking you to do is take my buddy here to the hospital and get him fixed up...

Al looks utterly dumbfounded.

WILLIE

Well, that's the plan in a nutshell. Sorry about all the confusion and what not. So how about it, chief? You in?

AL

(laughs)

I see why you guys called me over here. You guys both got screws loose in your head. Well, I'm afraid I can't help you with that. There's a mechanic down the road. Maybe he can help you out.

WILLIE

So—

AL

You can count me out.

WILLIE

But—

AL

The answer is no and you can forget about your little fashion statement too. No one's shooting anyone without a paramedic standing by.

WILLIE

Well, I do have a first aid kit in the back.

AL

You don't say.

WILLIE

Well, not really. Just some gauze and I think there's some duct tape lying around somewhere.

AL

Gauze... Duct tape...

WILLIE

Yes sir.

AL

This can't be a prank. No way could you two pull off something like this. You two are just downright nutty.

TRAVIS

Hey! I'm trying to express myself here.

AL

Well, what do you say you express yourself some other way. I don't know. Why don't you, you know, pierce that thing instead. People are getting pierced places I didn't even know existed nowadays.

TRAVIS

See, man, that's not me right now. Piercings and shit, you know, that's the past. Not in style anymore, you know?

AL

Style? I thought you said you're trying to express yourself. What are you worrying about trends for?

TRAVIS

Hey man. I don't follow trends. I'm a trendsetter, see? Everything I do's in style. That's the way it is. That's the way it's got to be.

AL

What about another tattoo?

TRAVIS

See, man, you just don't get it. The world's attacking me. The mark that gets left on me has got to be an attack.

AL

An attack? You're asking this guy to shoot you. Asking him! Hell, you're probably paying him to do it!

WILLIE

Five bucks.

AL

I wouldn't exactly call that an attack.

TRAVIS

Have you ever looked up "attack" in the dictionary?

AL

Goddamn it!

(sighs)

Lets just get this thing over with. I've been here too long to leave without someone's life in my hands.

TRAVIS

Lets do this!

WILLIE

Gentlemen, step into my office.

The three men enter the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE

The warehouse interior is lit by flickering fluorescent lighting suspended from the ceiling. The walls are concealed by metal shelves stacked with various objects collecting dust.

In the center of the room is a discarded dentist's chair, with a towel draped over it, propped on top of a large plastic sheet.

WILLIE

Right this way, my good sir.

Willie gestures to the chair. Travis slumps down into it.

Al turns his back on both of them.

WILLIE

What are you doing?

AL

I don't want to watch.

TRAVIS

Come on! You know you want to.

AL

I don't.

WILLIE

What's wrong? Can't stomach a little blood? You're a paramedic. You should be used to this.

AL

I just can't stomach this kind of stupidity.

TRAVIS

Whatever. Lets do this!

Willie turns to Travis.

WILLIE

Well, I'm not going to lie to you,  
Travis. You might lose a little  
mobility right around here.

Willie gestures to Travis' triceps.

WILLIE

What am I saying? You're going to lose  
a lot of mobility.

AL

Can't expect to kiss it and make it all  
better.

Willie presses the gun against Travis' upper pectoral  
muscle.

WILLIE

Alright, on the count of three. You  
ready?

TRAVIS

I'm ready.

WILLIE

Okay. One.

Blood splatters on Willie, the plastic sheet, and the black  
leather of the chair as the bullet tears through Travis'  
flesh. He falls sideways out of the chair yowling in pain.

Al turns around.

TRAVIS

Jesus fucking Christ! You shot me!

WILLIE

Of course I shot you.

TRAVIS

Fucking eh! Didn't even hesitate a  
little!

WILLIE

You said you were ready.

TRAVIS  
You said on the count of three.

WILLIE  
I thought you'd want to get it over  
with quick like.

TRAVIS  
But I wasn't ready!

WILLIE  
You said you were!

TRAVIS  
I was going to be ready at three! You  
didn't fucking count right! Jesus  
Christ! You shot me! You fucking shot  
me!

Willie gets Travis to his feet and throws the towel over  
his wound. Travis holds it in place.

WILLIE  
Lets get this guy to the hospital,  
shall we?

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

Al and Willie load Travis into the back of the ambulance on  
a stretcher.

Once inside, Willie dives at Travis, shoving his hands in  
his cargo short pockets. He removes a five-dollar bill and  
kisses it.

INT. AMBULANCE

Al hops into the driver's seat and starts up the ambulance.

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

The ambulance pulls out of the docks parking lot.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The ambulance is racing down the city street once again.

INT. AMBULANCE

Al steers the ambulance through traffic.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

You know what, man? I'm kind of thinking about modeling. You know, with the scar and all, I think I could get a career. Who knows? I could be famous someday.

AL

Not like this. Not like this.

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The ambulance pulls into the hospital parking lot.

Al hops out of the ambulance and opens the back.

JEFF (O.S.)

Need a hand there, big guy?

Al turns around to see Jeff wheeling a gurney behind the ambulance.

AL

Only if it's yours, friend.

Al and Jeff load Travis onto the gurney and wheel him towards the hospital.

AL

Jesus Christ. What a night. What's next?

Jeff runs in front of Al and opens a set of double doors.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY

Al enters the hospital lobby and is instantly bombarded with an explosion of balloons and confetti.

Bob along with numerous paramedics, doctors, nurses, patients, etc. have congregated in the lobby. In front of the information desk is a table draped in white cloth. A

cake, several bottles of champagne, glasses, and eating utensils have been propped on top of it.

ALL  
Surprise!

All clap enthusiastically.

BOB  
I told you we wouldn't let you leave without saying goodbye the right way!

Jeff pats Al on the back.

JEFF  
Going to miss you, big guy.

Al stands dumbfounded as everyone in the room applauds his presence.

Travis raises his head from the gurney.

TRAVIS  
(disoriented)  
Whoa! Fucking party!

FADE OUT.

THE END