

**NEGATIVE NED**

Written by

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First Draft

**INT. COZY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

PETER, 40s, glasses, suit and tie, sits in an armchair by the fireplace. He's reading a book. A glass of tea sits on a table beside him.

He couldn't look more comfortable.

Peter looks up, directly at us, and smiles. Closes his book.

PETER

Hello. My name is Peter Francis Peterson, and I'd like to tell you a story. Have any of you ever heard of the term "Negative Ned"?

Peter pauses to nod in silence. Like one of those adult characters from a children's show.

PETER

Good. I thought so. Have any of you ever wondered where it came from?

Peter nods again, continuing to smile like total weirdo.

PETER

Great. Well, you see, there once was a man named Ned Loomis...

**INT. NED'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING**

The ALARM on the night stands hits 6:00 AM and goes off.

A hand extends from the tangle of blankets and knocks it to the floor.

From within the mess of sheets emerges NED, mid 40s, clean-cut, his hair a mess. He looks like his face would crack if he smiled. Not a single laugh line present.

PETER (V.O.)

See, kids, Negative Ned was a real sour puss. Hence, the term. He had no friends, never smiled, and was a real pain for anyone to be around.

For a long moment, Ned lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. He lets out a deep sigh.

**INT. NED'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - MORNING**

Ned showers. Or, rather, he just stands under the water, letting it hit him in the face.

**INT. NED'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Ned shaves, still in his towel. He cuts his necks. Frowns, shaking his head.

Ned grabs a piece of toilet paper, sticks it to his neck, then continues shaving.

**INT. NED'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - MORNING**

Ned pours coffee into a thermos. Still incredibly solemn looking.

Ned takes a seat at the table. An egg and cheese biscuit sits on small plate.

PETER (V.O.)

Ned's never had a girlfriend. He's never even kissed a girl. He has no contact with his family... even they won't have anything to do with him.

(beat)

Remember, kids, no one wants to be a Negative Ned.

**INT. CITY BUS - MORNING**

Ned sits beside a YOUNG WOMAN, 20s, on his morning commute. He stares at the window, watching the buildings pass as they drive by.

The Young Woman leans in to Ned --

YOUNG WOMAN

Nice day, isn't it?

Ned rounds on her. He looks almost surprised someone even spoke to him.

For a long, awkward beat, Ned just stares at her.

The Young Woman starts to get uncomfortable. Tries to save the situation --

YOUNG WOMAN

Um... How are you doing this morning?

NED

Not too good, actually. It's about ten degrees more than I personally prefer. The humidity is way too high. On top of that, all the smog and allergens in the air are messing with my asthma.

**INT. WARNER'S CABLE, OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING**

A tightly congested area. Messy cubicles everywhere. Overworked, underpaid EMPLOYEES slaving away.

Nestled in the back corner is Ned, at his computer, wearing a headset.

PETER (V.O.)

Ned worked customer support for a cable company. The epitome of soulless nine-to-five labor. But you gotta pay the bills somehow. Most people deal with it just fine...

(beat)

... and then there's Ned...

Ned braces his arms on his desk, rubbing his forehead vigorously.

NED

Well, sir, if unplugging it didn't work, then I'll do my best to get someone out to your residence as soon as possible. The best I can do is next Tuesday between noon and four. Does that work for you?

Ned pauses, listening to customer.

We can't quite make out what they're saying, but they don't sound happy.

NED

I'm sorry you're displeased, sir.

(beat)

No... No... I am trying my best to help you. That's what I'm here for.

Throughout the whole ordeal, Ned's face never once shifts expressions. Not even anger. Just the same neutral, stone faced stare.

NED

If that's the way you feel, then go ahead and report me. I'd like to see you try.

**INT. WARNER'S CABLE, CARL'S OFFICE - DAY**

Ned sits across the desk from his boss, CARL, 50, grey hair, expensive suit. He doesn't look happy.

PETER (V.O.)

Then one day, ol' Ned pissed off the wrong customer. Most people aren't in the best of moods when they have to call customer support, so it's not a good idea to agitate them.

Carl looks at Ned. Matter of fact --

CARL

I'm sorry, Ned. You're fired.

Even now, Ned's face still shows no emotion.

NED

Why?

Carl raises his eyebrows at Ned. A look that says, "Is this guy serious?"

CARL

You know why, Ned. I've had several complaints from other workers over the last few months.

(beat)

To be honest, I was gonna to try and get rid of you sooner, but this company has a three write up requirement for termination.

Ned shrugs. Acting like the situation doesn't bother him. It's hard to tell exactly how he feels.

NED

Figures. This might as well happen. That'd be the cherry on top of my wonderful life.

CARL

See, there you go, Ned. You're just too negative. You're a drag to be around.

(beat)

I'm sorry. I don't think this job is a good fit for you.

**INT. WARNER'S CABLE, OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING**

Ned slowly loads his belongings into a box.

Behind him, most of the WORKERS peer over their cubicle walls to get a better look.

Ned gets the feeling he's being watched and turns.

The workers quickly look away, acting like they weren't just watching.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY**

Ned walks home, carrying his box.

**INT. NED'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

Ned lies on the couch, his box sitting beside him. He flips through the channels. Can't find anything good.

PETER (V.O.)

So now Ned was jobless, friendless. No girlfriend, no family. Not even a damn cat. Ned tried to get a cat once... it ran away.

Ned gives up on trying to find anything to watch. Tosses the remote onto the coffee table.

**INT. NED'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Ned sits in bed, filling out job applications. A stack of completed ones lie beside him.

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - MORNING**

Ned walks down the sidewalk, head down, hands in his pockets. He looks like the loneliest man on earth.

PETER (V.O.)

Then one day, things looked like they might turn around for Ned after all...

Ned passes a LITTLE GIRL, pigtails, maybe 8 or 9, sitting behind a LEMONADE STAND. A handwritten sign reads: LEMONADE! \$1.00.

LITTLE GIRL

Excuse me, sir. Would like a nice cold glass of lemonade. It's only a dollar.

Ned stops. Looks at the girl. At her kind, innocent face.

NED

Thanks anyway, kid. But I don't see the point. Why bother... life's pointless anyway.

The Little Girl stares Ned down. A seriousness on her face far beyond her years.

LITTLE GIRL

Everything has a purpose.

Ned stares at the little girl.

NED

You really think so?

LITTLE GIRL

Of course. The world's full of lots of bad stuff. Sometimes it might seem like only bad things happen. That's why it's so important to find joy and happiness in everything. No matter how big or how small. Everyone's important. Maybe it's not about how far we go in live, just how we get there that matters.

For the first time in who knows how long, Ned ACTUALLY SMILES. The look of genuine joy.

Ned takes out his wallet. Pulls out a five dollar bill.

NED

You know what? You're right. You're absolutely right. I've wasted too much of my life being negative and it stops today. Thanks, kid.

Ned SLAMS the five dollars on the table.

NED  
One lemonade, please.

The little girl smiles. Hands Ned a lemonade.

Ned takes it, sips it slowly, savoring every drop.

The little girl starts to hand Ned back his change.

Ned hold up his hand to stop her.

NED  
Keep the change.

LITTLE GIRL  
Are you sure?

NED  
Yeah. You've earned it.

They share a smile.

Lemonade in hand, Ned turns, steps off the curb --

AND IS IMMEDIATELY RUN OVER BY A BUS!

**INT. COZY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Peter removes his glasses, trying to look serious. Yet he still has a chipper look to him.

PETER  
And that's how Negative Ned died.  
The moral of the story, kids, is  
don't be negative all the time.  
Otherwise, you might get run over  
by a bus.  
(beat)  
Good night and God bless.

Peter puts on his glasses. Opens his book, and continues reading as if not bothered at all.

Off Peter, cozy and content, we --

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.