

PAUL

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

He sits on a milk crate, playing a guitar. It's beat up, but it's in tune. Kinda like it's player.

His name is PAUL. He's in his mid-forties, and he's clearly seen better days.

A guitar case sits open at his feet. A few dollar bills, a five, and various coins inside.

Paul closes his eyes as he strums, lets the morning sun wash over his face.

Two guys in their teens take an interest and stop.

TEEN 1

Hey, boomer. Boomer. I'm talkin' to ya. He's not deaf, is he?

TEEN 2

Might as well be.

Paul keeps strumming like he doesn't hear a word.

Teen 1 leans in close.

TEEN 1

Hey, boomer. You hear me? Play some Hendrix.

Teen 2 laughs like Hendrix is funny or something.

Paul abruptly stops playing.

Teen 1 recoils.

TEEN 2

He's gonna vomit on ya.

But Paul says nothing as he launches into Purple Haze.

The two jerks lose interest. They laugh as they leave.

TEEN 1 (O.S.)

Boomer don't even know Hendrix.

TEEN 2 (O.S.)

I don't know. I think that was Hendrix.

LATER

Same street corner. The shadows have grown longer.

A man in jeans and a sport coat ambles past. His name is RORY, and he's 35.

He stops for a moment to listen to Paul, and smiles. He enjoys the music, drops a dollar in the case.

Paul nods, but doesn't break stride. Keeps playing.

Rory stays a moment longer, but that's all he has time for.

RORY

Good job, my man.

He strides off, takes a quick look back at the guitarist -- still strumming. Earning his keep.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Paul packs his guitar away. He stuffs the day's wages into his pocket.

Sits there for a moment, listening to the evening traffic. Finally, he closes the case.

Click. SIGH.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Obscured by trees, illuminated by the orange glow of the street light.

Paul stands at the door with his guitar and his milk crate.

The door opens. A PRIEST appears.

PRIEST

Paul. Didn't know if you were gonna make it tonight. Come on in.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

Paul kneels in a pew, the Priest beside him. Paul makes the sign of the cross.

PRIEST

Amen.

BASEMENT - LATER

Dark, save for a night light across the room.

Paul settles into a cot, pulls the blanket up and sinks his head into the pillow.

There's a dozen or so cots there, just like his.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Same corner, same guy, same beat up guitar.

People come and go. Some throw money in his case, some don't. Some scoff at him. It's a normal day.

Paul looks up to find Rory standing over him.

Rory squats next to Paul, and throws a dollar in the case. Then he throws a five. He watches Paul's face. No expression.

Pulls out a ten. Then a twenty. Drops them in the case.

Rory looks intently at Paul.

After a moment, he slides his arm around Paul's shoulders, and gives a squeeze. Paul stops playing, lowers his head.

When he finally looks up, there are tears in his eyes. He gazes at Rory's smiling face.

The two men embrace tightly. They hold it for a moment.

RORY

I'll listen. I mean, if you want me to. If you need someone to talk to. I-- I'll listen.

Rory offers his hand. Paul takes it.

RORY

I'm Rory.

PAUL

Paul.

FADE OUT.