

Somebody Help Philip!

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Flat on his back in the wet grass, arms flailing, his raincoat streaked with mud, PHILIP WATSON (70s) cries out.

PHILIP
Help! I need help!

The entire neighborhood sleeps. Not a single light shines from any window. No night owls or insomniacs around here.

PHILIP
I can't get up!

Philip absurdly clutches a plastic bag full of semi-runny dog poop, but there's no pet nearby.

He tries to roll, but he's like an overturned turtle, helpless, stuck, topsy-turvy.

PHILIP
Please!

Drizzle makes its way down Philip's nostrils. Harsh coughs.

A lamp snaps on from a nearby house. Somebody heard Philip.

Moments later, disheveled JEFF LOOPER (30s) trudges out of his front door and over to Philip.

JEFF
Whoa, buddy. You hurt?

PHILIP
I fell. Thank God you came.

Jeff wears flip flops, cargo shorts, and an unzipped hooded sweatshirt that exposes his soft belly. He's got bed-head: tufts of his hair point towards the dark sky.

JEFF
You need an ambulance?

He reaches into his pocket for his phone, but it isn't there.

JEFF
Shoot. I'll have to go back inside.

PHILIP
Just help me up. I'm okay.

Jeff carefully pulls Philip to a seated position.

PHILIP

I was picking up after my damn dog
and I fell over. I dropped the
leash.

JEFF

Oh, crap. You lost your dog?

He scans the block for the wayward pet.

PHILIP

She ran home. She knows the way.

Jeff frowns with doubt. Philip points to the block's end.

PHILIP

I live over there. Not far.

JEFF

Is there someone I can call?

PHILIP

No. Just help me to my feet. I can
walk home myself. My wife is there.

JEFF

Listen, I'll go with you.

Jeff squats behind Philip, gets under his armpits, and lifts.
Philip stands, but wobbles, his legs like Jell-O.

PHILIP

Sorry. My knees...

JEFF

Just take it slow, buddy. Hold onto
me. My name's Jeff.

Jeff takes the poop bag from Philip, drops it on the grass.

JEFF

Forget about the dog crap, buddy.
Fuck that shit, right?

Jeff keeps his arms under Philip's armpits. Their progress is
agonizingly slow, but eventually they get to the end of the
block. Confusion spreads over Philip's face.

PHILIP

Wait. This isn't my house.

He blinks rapidly. His wet lips tremble.

PHILIP

I thought...uh...This isn't my block. I got turned around.

Alarm spreads over Jeff's face. The old guy is lost.

PHILIP

I thought...Oh, no...Which way?

JEFF

Okay, Let's go back to my place. I left my cell phone there, but I can call your wife or the police.

PHILIP

But I'm just one block over. I remember now.

Jeff shakes his head.

JEFF

Do you have an address? A street?

Lots of processing time for Philip.

PHILIP

Hamlin Avenue. Forty-two sixteen.

Jeff searches.

JEFF

Sorry, I don't know where that's at. I just moved in a month ago.

PHILIP

It's just one block over...I think. Maybe two.

Jeff winces. He rubs his belly as he considers the options.

JEFF

Okay. You lead the way. We can always circle back if we need to.

EXT. WARREN AVENUE PARKWAY - NIGHT

Jeff supports Philip as they shuffle down a different block. Philip looks confused. None of this seems right.

JEFF

We should keep an eye out for your dog, right? It might be out here?

PHILIP

No, she made it home, I'm sure. Her name's Sadie. She knows the way.

JEFF

Great. Perfect. I'm sorry, man. I didn't catch your name.

PHILIP

Philip Watson.

JEFF

Cool. Cool. Philip, you don't happen to have a cell phone to call your wife?

PHILIP

I have a landline. That's it. I don't talk to people anymore.

Philip grunts, squirms.

PHILIP

My damn pants are falling down. They're soaked.

JEFF

Okay. We'll stop for a minute. Hike them up.

Philip tugs at his belt loops.

PHILIP

Getting old is exhausting.

Jeff nods.

PHILIP

I used to be a philosophy professor. Can you believe that?

He adjusts his pants some more.

PHILIP

Now look at me. Got mud in my ass and I'm lost.

JEFF

Philosophy? Awesome. That's top-notch.

Jeff slows the pace

JEFF

Maybe we should take a break for a second and get our bearings. Lay a little philosophy on me, Philip.

PHILIP

Now? Here? Why?

JEFF

Maybe your surroundings will become a little more familiar if you take a moment to settle.

Philip sighs.

PHILIP

Well, there's Immanuel Kant and his Critique of Practical Reason, of course. And Epicurus had a lot to say about happiness, mainly that it can be more easily achieved in a society of like-minded individuals.

He frowns.

PHILIP

But here's the best advice of all: If your dog shits on a slippery lawn in the middle of the night, don't bend over to pick it up. That is, if you're an old fart like me.

Jeff nods in agreement.

JEFF

And carry a cell phone if you leave the house.

PHILIP

I'll ponder that.

JEFF

Let's keep moving. Hamlin Avenue has to be around here somewhere.

They continue their slow progress, arm in arm. Philip yanks at his pants every three or four steps.

Lights. A car approaches. Muffled techno music from inside.

The driver slows down, pulls over alongside Philip and Jeff.

Stepping out of the car: GORAN WISE (30s). He wears a tank top. Blue highlights in his hair. Around his neck is a glowing neon necklace. He looks like he came from a rave.

Techno music thumps from his sound system.

GORAN

What's goin' on, friends?

JEFF

Oh, man. You came just in time. We need some help.

GORAN

You've been partying tonight?

JEFF

No. We're lost. We're looking for Hamlin Avenue.

Mischievousness shines in Goran's eyes.

GORAN

Yeah. I can take you there. And maybe we'll have a little party-- just the three of us.

Jeff approaches Goran and whispers.

JEFF

Listen, this guy fell and got a little disoriented. I think he lost his dog. We need to get him home.

A sly smile from Goran. His techno music thumps in the night.

GORAN

Aw, hell. I just saw a dog on the other street. You guys get in the car. I'll bring you there.

Jeff frowns.

JEFF

No thanks. We don't need a ride. Just point us in the right direction. That's all. Or maybe I can borrow your cell phone for two seconds to call his wife.

GORAN

My condo ain't far from here. We could hang there. Get a little shitfaced.

JEFF

No. You've got the wrong idea...

GORAN

That old man don't wanna go home.
He wanna get freaky.

JEFF

What?

Goran calls out to Philip.

GORAN

Hey there, friend. I saw your dog.
Get in the car. Let me take you.

Philip's eyes widen.

PHILIP

Sadie? She didn't make it home?

GORAN

C'mon. Let me show you. Get in the
car.

JEFF

Don't listen to him, Philip! Don't
trust this guy.

GORAN

(to Philip)
Get in, brother! I can help!

Jeff gets nose to nose with Goran.

JEFF

You need to fuck off.

GORAN

You don't want no help? I thought
that's what you wanted?

While Jeff and Goran confront each other, Philip wobbles to
Goran's car and gets in the driver's seat.

It takes them a minute to realize where Philip has gone.

GORAN

Hey, brother. I'm driving, not you.

Too late. Philip slams the door and puts the car in drive. It
lurches halfway down the street. Both Goran and Jeff chase
after it.

Goran catches up, opens up the driver's side door, and tries to pull Philip out.

GORAN
Get out my fuckin' car, old man!

Philip exclaims.

JEFF
Let him go!

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Philip removes a small container of mace from his jacket pocket and sprays it into Goran's face.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Goran collapses in pain. Jeff tumbles over him. His flip-flops fall off, but he grabs them and rushes to the car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Philip trembles with shock as Jeff flings himself into the passenger's side seat.

JEFF
Drive, Philip!

PHILIP
What?

JEFF
Drive!

Philip puts the car into gear and speeds off, leaving agonizing Goran behind. Techno music still pumps absurdly.

Philip is unsteady behind the wheel and nearly sideswipes some parked cars. He approaches an intersection.

JEFF
Turn!

Cutting the wheel hard, Philip zooms onto another street. He turns once again.

JEFF
Stop, okay! Let me drive!

Philip keeps going. Pedal to the metal.

JEFF

Philip!

A sudden hard stop. Philip and Jeff lurch forward.

JEFF

Jesus Christ. Okay, let me drive.

Philip shakes his head.

PHILIP

No.

JEFF

You're not listening...

PHILIP

But I'm home!

He points.

PHILIP

That's my wife!

EXT. PHILIP'S FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Sure enough, ELIZABETH WATSON (70s) stands in front of her house with a worried look. She holds a dog leash. Sadie tugs at it. The dog made it home independently, as Philip claimed.

Philip pulls himself slowly out of the car.

ELIZABETH

Philip! Oh my god, I was so scared!
Where were you?

She hugs him. Sadie jumps on his leg.

Jeff gets out of the car, but nobody pays any attention to him. Elizabeth guides Philip and the dog inside the house and shuts the door. She doesn't even notice Jeff or thank him.

Jeff waits sheepishly outside until it becomes clear that nobody cares that he's out there. He walks toward the porch, but stops. Better to just go home.

He whispers in the direction of Philip's door.

JEFF

Good night, Philip. Nice meeting
you.

Jeff turns off the ignition to Goran's car, drops the keys in the grass, and walks off.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Jeff wearily approaches his home. He trudges through the grass and...squish.

He looks down. Philip's bag of dog crap is underfoot.

He wipes his flip-flop on the grass and mutters.

JEFF

Unbelievable. Totally unbelievable.

He kicks off his flipflops on the lawn and leaves them on the grass alongside the poop bag.

JEFF

Happy to help out, Philip.

He steps through the door and turns out the light.

FADE OUT: