

STILL LIFE

by

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FADE IN

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Decor is mid-1970's: Shag carpet, faux wood paneling, and colonial style furniture. A large family portrait of smiling parents with arms around a teenage son and daughter hangs above the fireplace.

Evidence of hoarding with stacks of newspapers and magazines stacked along the walls. A lot of empty Chef Boyardee and Campbell's Pork and Bean cans strewn about the room.

An OLD MAN (70) in a dirty bathrobe enters from the kitchen. His long white beard and, what remains of his hair, is unkempt.

He carries a bowl of SpaghettiOs and a can of Budweiser to a TV tray by the sofa, sets it down, and continues to a shelf of VHS tapes.

He trails an index finger along the aged and faded VHS boxes.

OLD MAN

Seen it. Seen it. Hated it. Seen it...

His arthritic knuckled finger stops on and taps a box with a handwritten title: Albert's Big Day.

OLD MAN

Hmmm...haven't watched this in a long while.

He pulls the tape out and sidles over to a large console television. Atop the TV is a first generation VHS player. He inserts the tape, turns on the TV, and shuffles shuffles over to the couch.

The tape player whirs and the TV emits a WHOOSH of static.

TELEVISION/VHS

An image of a NEWSMAN 'on location' appears. He stands amongst a crowd of onlookers at a large celebration.

NEWSMAN

Good afternoon everyone. I'm reporting live from downtown at the award ceremony for Albert Madison. The Mayor and Fire Chief are here to recognize young Mister Madison for his heroic actions of June 10th, 1975. Let's go to the tape, Studio.

The image stutters and the scene changes to the same Newsman interviewing a Battalion FIRE CHIEF while an apartment

building burns in the background.

NEWSMAN

Chief, what's the status of the fire?

FIRE CHIEF

It's a total loss. The building is evacuated and all we can do is hope that the fire doesn't spread. We-

A scream from the top floor of the building pierces the night and both Newsman and Fire Chief turn to look.

FIRE CHIEF

Oh my God. No.

Before he can yell his next command, a young teenage boy (ALBERT) sprints from a crowd of onlookers into the building.

OLD MAN (OS)

Dumb shit Kid...

The scene is chaotic. Firemen and Policemen run every which way. Two firemen try to enter the building but are turned around by the flames.

NEWSMAN

You're seeing this live, folks.
Cross your fingers and pray that-

Albert, carrying a young child wrapped in a blanket, runs from the building's front door just as the roof collapses.

OLD MAN (OS)

That's one lucky turd.

Firemen and Paramedics surround Albert and child.

NEWSMAN

(to his cameraman)
Holy shit, did you get that? Oh, sorry folks-

OLD MAN (OS)

Heh, heh, you kiss your mother with that mouth?

The images cuts back to the award ceremony and our Newsman.

NEWSMAN

That's right, only here on-

BACK TO THE OLD MAN

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Old Man uses the remote to fast forward past the Newsman's gloating.

OLD MAN

Yeah, yeah, you pompous prick.

Images speed by until he stops on a close up of the podium.

OLD MAN

Alright, here we go.

BACK TO
TELEVISION/VHS

PODIUM

Albert stands between the MAYOR and FIRE CHIEF. The crowd cheers until the Mayor waves his arms and settles them down.

MAYOR

Welcome one and all! We're gathered here today-

OLD MAN (OS)

For votes.

MAYOR

-to recognize Albert Madison for his bravery and sacrifice-

OLD MAN (OS)

Yeah, no.

The image fast forwards through the Mayor's speech and stops on what appears to be a flash of light. The play resumes...

Next to Albert stands a giant of a man dressed in a Greek toga, gold adornments, and an olive laurel on his head. Yes, a God-like image of someone from Olympus.

GREEK GOD

Master Madison, saviour of youth and model citizen of man, the Gods of Olympus wish to bestow upon you a power of your choice.

ALBERT

No way, really? Um, anything?

OLD MAN (OS)

(mimics Albert)

'No way, really?' Surprised you didn't say 'Gee Willickers!' you little creep.

GREEK GOD

Yes, a super power of your liking...strength? The ability to fly? Speed, perhaps? What is it that you could best wield in times of peril?

Albert thinks and ponders, but quickly makes a decision.

ALBERT

Time! I'd like to have the ability to stop time. I could stop bullets, or trains, or anything to get people out of harms way!

The God looks skyward, strokes his chin, and thinks.

GREEK GOD

Hmmm...yes, time.

The God places a very large hand atop Albert's head and raises a hand to the heavens.

GREEK GOD

The Gods of Olympus bestow upon you the right to stop time!

Lightning flashes, Albert falls back into the Mayor, and the God vanishes.

A bowl hits the TV and SpaghettiO's slide down the screen.

BACK TO THE OLD MAN

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Old Man scowls at the still image, finishes off the beer, and throws the can at the TV.

OLD MAN

Time. You could have picked anything and you chose time.

He stands and arches his back with hands on his hip until it POPS.

OLD MAN

Time. Time sucks.

He crosses the room to the family portrait on the wall and leans in for a close look.

The boy in the portrait is Albert and is about the same age as the news footage. His sister is a year or two younger. Mom and Dad look proud.

OLD MAN

So what do you think of your little
hero's choice now?

He shuffles into the kitchen and disappears around a corner. The door to the refrigerator opens and closes, and he reappears with most of a Budweiser six-pack in his hands.

OLD MAN

Time to check on the family.

He opens the front door and steps outside.

EXT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

The Old Man walks onto the front lawn to reveal the MOTHER, FATHER, and teenage GIRL from the portrait. The parents each have an arm up towards the sky with the other around the girl between them.

They are as still and motionless as statues.

All around the neighborhood are similar scenes of people, dogs, and cars frozen in time.

The Old Man sits on the lawn in front of the family.

OLD MAN

Hi Mom. Hi Dad.

He pulls a can from the six-pack and pops the top.

OLD MAN

Here's to time.

He lifts the beer to his parents in a toast, then turns to face the sky.

OLD MAN

And here's to you.

A planet killer meteor is suspended in the sky less than a mile away. Fire and flames streak to the heavens.

He finishes his beer and throws it to the gutter where it lands amongst hundreds of other beer cans.

He stands and puts a hand on his father's shoulder.

OLD MAN

Don't worry, I haven't given up
yet. I'll think of something.

(chuckles)

I got plenty of time.

He walks back towards the house, stops on the front stoop, and turns around. He looks up at the meteor once more.

OLD MAN

Ah, screw it.

He drops the beer, raises his hands towards the sky, and shouts.

OLD MAN

Time's up!

FADE OUT TO A FLASH
OF LIGHT