

ALIVE AND WELL

FADE IN:

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The doors SLAM shut and we are off as a young man, ERIC GARDNER, 19, is being rushed to the hospital. His friend, MIKE, 20, holds his hand as an EMT shouts the orders.

EMT  
Keep him talking. Say anything,  
just keep him awake.

MIKE  
Ah... you're gonna be OK. All  
right? You're gonna be fine.

ERIC  
(out of it)  
It's time to go...

MIKE  
No, it isn't! Just hang on,  
please!

ERIC  
What's happening, Mike?

MIKE  
We're helping you, we are gonna get  
you better. Everything's gonna be  
OK. All right?

EMT  
Keep talking, kid, we could lose  
him!

MIKE  
Everything's gonna be-

EMT  
Use his name! Keep him alert.

MIKE  
Everything's gonna be fine, OK,  
Eric? Things will be just... fine.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM WAITING AREA - NIGHT

Chaos. ERIC is blasted through the doors on a stretcher with MIKE in tow. The EMTS are shouting at ORDERLIES and they are shouting at NURSES and DOCTORS.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly someone stops Mike.

EMT  
Family only, kid.

MIKE  
But there's no one else here.

EMT  
Sorry.

MIKE  
Well, what am I supposed to do now?

EMT  
Hey, you did good, kid. We'll take  
it from here.

INT. SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

A DOCTOR is leaning over ERIC, who is pretty much the King of La La Land now.

DOCTOR  
Eric, we need to give you a shot.  
Do you understand me, son?

ERIC  
Go for it, my main man!

DOCTOR  
This is going to hurt for about ten  
seconds. Do you understand me,  
Eric?

ERIC  
Hey, hey we're the Monkees!

The needle goes in. For a second or so... nothing. But then, ERIC stiffens and SCREAMS aloud. It takes TWO ORDERLIES, the DOCTOR and a NURSE to hold him down. And, as promised, ten seconds later, his eyelids flutter and his head flops lazily to one side.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

ERIC is babbling but it makes little sense. His mouth has a plastic restraint in it and the DOCTOR is forcing a tube down his throat. Eric GAGS, loud.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR  
Easy now, Eric, just swallow it...  
that's it now.

ERIC  
I want to go bye.

DOCTOR  
Stay with us, kid. Just a little  
more. Don't you leave us.

ERIC  
Don't you...

DOCTOR  
Easy, now.

ERIC  
Don't you tell Christine!

DOCTOR  
I won't, I promise we won't.

ERIC  
Goodbye.

The Doctor YELLS.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ERIC'S eyes snap open and it's five years later. He's 24 now, drenched in sweat and breathing from his vivid nightmare. The clock displays 3:44 AM.

ERIC  
What a friggan' life.

He flops back on his pillow.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Quiet music and low lighting. ERIC is leaning over a beer and keeps checking the clock.

There is a CRASH of broken glass as the BARTENDER drops a mug.

BARTENDER  
Damn!

(CONTINUED)

She looks up to see if anyone saw it and, yep, Eric saw the whole thing.

ERIC

It happens.

BARTENDER

It happens to me all the time.

ERIC

Everybody makes mistakes.

BARTENDER

How come I'm always the one screwing up?

ERIC

Hey, I screw up all the time.

BARTENDER

Me, too.

ERIC

I've been screwing up since I was born.

BARTENDER

How is that possible?

ERIC

Well, to be fair to myself, I have to admit that the first few weren't really my fault.

BARTENDER

Oh?

ERIC

Yeah, see, when I was born I was supposed to be named Thomas A. Gardner the Forth. Instead, I'm just plain old Eric Gardner.

BARTENDER

That's not your fault.

ERIC

Exactly. Now, the second thing I did wrong at birth was this.

He runs his hand through his red hair.

(CONTINUED)

BARTENDER

I don't get it.

ERIC

Well, it's supposed to be brown. All Gardners have brown hair, then they go gray and finally bald. It's been a family tradition for eons.

BARTENDER

It's not your fault you were born with a different hair color.

ERIC

Don't I know this? However, the Gardners have also traditionally been engineers. Highly educated bunch.

BARTENDER

You sound smart to me.

ERIC

I thank you for that compliment, however, I am not an engineer. Therefore, I am not smart by my family's standards. But I digress, we were only talking about the mistakes that weren't my fault.

BARTENDER

Seeing as how you didn't seem to make any Earth shattering mistakes and further seeing how you didn't bust my chops about the broken mug, how about I give you one on the house?

ERIC

I'm not sure if I have enough time.

BARTENDER

Why, you have somewhere to go?

ERIC

As a matter of fact, I'm meeting two beautiful women here at any moment.

BARTENDER

At any moment, huh? Two beautiful women sounds like a mistake to me. One is usually more than enough.

ERIC

If I was after sex, I suppose.

BARTENDER

All men are after sex.

ERIC

That is not my intention. However, I have been known to make mistakes.

As he says this, two pretty young ladies enter. One is AMY, 23, and the other is CATHY WHITE, 24.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Hello, Amy. Hi, Cathy.

Eric winks at the bartender and escorts the two girls to the restaurant area.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

ERIC and CATHY are pretty relaxed but AMY has her legs crossed and the top one is bouncing like crazy.

AMY

Are our drinks ever going to come?

CATHY

We just ordered them a few minutes ago, give her time.

AMY

We ordered them, like, an hour ago.

ERIC

So, Amy, how's the new job?

AMY

I hate it.

ERIC

Oh. Well, hear you. I'm not too crazy about mine, either.

CATHY

Wow. That's new. It's about time you hated that job.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC

It's mostly the owner's friend.  
This piece of crap named Bert.  
Anyway, he irritates everybody in  
there. Especially me. So, I'm  
thinking of quitting.

CATHY

Shut up! You are not!

ERIC

I'm not kidding, Cath.

CATHY

What'll your father say?

ERIC

I don't know. I guess he'll be  
upset. Who knows?

AMY

Work sucks. Let's talk about  
something else. Like, are you  
still living with that retard?

ERIC

Yeah. Well, sort of. I mean I  
sleep there and pay my half of the  
rent, you know?

CATHY

Morton is such a dork.

AMY

He is, I can't stand him. Remember  
last time when you brought him out  
with us?

ERIC

Yeah.

AMY

Never do that to us again.

CATHY

Yeah, he kept talking about how  
difficult it is to live in a free  
house while taking three classes a  
semester to get his master's. I  
was gonna puke if he said 'I am so  
stressed' just one more time.

ERIC  
He thinks girls are turned on by  
scholars.

AMY  
I would never!

ERIC  
He's only taking two classes this  
fall. Morton's trying to "reduce  
his stressful lifestyle."

CATHY  
That must be killing him.

ERIC  
I can't really afford to live  
anywhere else right now.

CATHY  
Yeah, because you're paying all the  
bills in a house his Mom and Dad  
own.

ERIC  
It's cheaper than regular rent.

CATHY  
I would rather bang my head against  
a brick wall, but, hey, to each his  
own.

ERIC  
At least I've got you two.

AMY  
Not if Morton is anywhere near us.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

They've finished their meal and are waiting on the last  
round.

AMY  
Oh, my God. I am so stuffed.

She tosses a twenty on the table.

AMY (CONT'D)  
I've gotta go, I have to go to  
stupid work at, like, five AM. Bye  
you guys.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC  
See you, Amy. I'll tell Morton you  
were asking about him.

AMY  
I'll freakin' kill you.

They laugh. AMY leaves.

ERIC  
Same old Amy.

CATHY  
I think somewhere deep down inside,  
she means well.

ERIC  
Yeah, I guess she does.

CATHY  
So, just you and me.

ERIC  
Once again.

CATHY  
I meant to ask you, how'd your date  
go?

ERIC  
Same as every date goes.

CATHY  
That bad, huh?

ERIC  
You know how I get, remember? I  
get all nervous and can't think of  
anything cool to say. I'm sitting  
there going, 'So, how's your side  
of the table? Mine's... good.'  
Duh, duh, duh.

CATHY  
Screw her. Wasn't meant to be.

ERIC  
Guess not. She seemed so nice,  
though. I can never get them to  
come back for that second chance.  
This is, like, the fourth in a row  
where I get the one chance and then  
nothing.

CATHY  
Including me?

ERIC  
No, I didn't include you. Thanks  
for reminding me, though.

CATHY  
How come you never asked me out for  
a second date?

ERIC  
Would you have gone?

CATHY  
(laughs)  
Probably not. You'll find your  
princess, Eric. Just stop looking  
so hard. They can be right under  
your nose, you know.

ERIC  
Well, since you happen to be  
sitting under my nose, I need a  
date to my cousin's wedding. If I  
don't bring a date to stuff like  
that, they think I'm gay. When I  
went stag to the senior prom, we  
had really awkward conversations  
for the next couple Thanksgivings  
and Christmases.

CATHY  
I thought your cousin already got  
married.

ERIC  
He did she didn't.

CATHY  
Fine. But I'm not losing weight.

ERIC  
Like you really need to.

INT. BAR - LATER

ERIC is finishing up by himself.

BARTENDER  
Last call, amigo.

(CONTINUED)

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