

QUALITY TIME Time

INT. HEBREW HOME HOSPICE - DAY

A woman--STELLA MAGIKOWSKI, 70--lies near death, a morphine drip in her arm, a tube down her throat to let her breathe.

CHRIS "MAGIK" MAGIKOWSKI, 72, doesn't look happy as he and DOCTOR BENDER, 44, talk quietly outside Stella's room.

Magik looks back at his wife, the tube in her throat.

DOCTOR BENDER  
I'm sorry, Mr. Magikowski.

MAGIK  
That tube. There's no getting around that tube?

DOCTOR BENDER  
The morphine helps with the discomfort...

MAGIK  
Forty-eight years of marriage, not once. But two weeks with you and suddenly she's Linda Lovelace.

Magik cracks a smile, then quickly the sorrow grips him.

DOCTOR BENDER  
It's your decision. Take a few days. Think it over. Talk to the family. If you want to, tell me on Monday.

MAGIK  
I'll think about it. Yeah.

Doctor Bender nods, cuffs Magik's shoulder and walks away.

Magik walks in, stares at his wife sleeping, breathing heavily through the respirator.

He looks behind the respirator machine, sees the plug.

His eyes move back and forth between her face and the plug.

INT. HEBREW HOME HOSPICE - LOBBY

On his way out Magik notices a striking woman--HELEN FRYE, 74--entering the building. A stylish scarf around her head. A brown tobacco pipe in her hand.

Magik keeps her in view, pushing through the revolving door.

EXT. DINING HALL - HERITAGE VILLAGE RETIREMENT HOME - EVENING

Magik and his friend IRV ZUCKER, 85, a fast-talking New Yorker, enter the dining hall. Irv wears a Yankees cap and DiMaggio shirt.

IRV

And I says, Bonds should have an asterisk if he breaks Aaron's record. And he says, then they should throw his ass in jail. And I says, Benny, that Alzheimer's must be goin' around. You're out of your mind, jail.

MAGIK

What'd he say?

INT. DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

IRV

He says, hey it's against the law. Then I says, Look around, plenty of stuff's against the law, but we let it slide. Why? Cause it's the right thing to do. Steroids is the only reason people been watching the games since the strike. Sosa and McGuire, both those guys were juiced and we--hey, you listening?

Magik's gaze has followed Helen, the same woman he noticed in the Hebrew Home lobby. She exits the dining room.

MAGIK

What? Yeah, uh, then what'd he say?

IRV

Well, then he says...

EXT. GOLF COURSE - HERITAGE VILLAGE RETIREMENT HOME - MORNING

Magik pulls his golf cart up to the green, joining Irv, MAX, and SWEDE, total combined age approaching a millennium.

MAX

You find it?

Magik holds up the ball he'd been hunting for.

SWEDE

Your shot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Magik tees up.

IRV

They show college baseball on ESPN,  
I can't watch it. I can't stand the  
sound the ball makes when they hit  
it. Not to mention it travels too  
goddam far.

WHACK! Magik's ball comes off the tee hard but hooks left off  
the fairway.

SWEDE

Not feeling it today, huh Madge?

Magik shrugs.

IRV

Doctor gave him till Monday to  
decide--does he want her off the  
respirator or not.

Swede and Max look uncomfortably at one another, then at  
Magik. Irv tees up without hesitation.

IRV (CONT'D)

It's one of those decisions--like  
Steinbrenner trading Bernie in the  
off-season, he knows he should--for  
the good of the team--but he can't  
seem to pull the trigger on the  
deal. Whattayagonnado.

Irv takes a crack at it, divits.

INT. MAGIK'S BUNGALOW - AFTERNOON

Magik takes a TV dinner out of the oven.

ON TV: PBS Bill Moyers special, "The Light at the End".  
MOYERS talks with a NEW AGE EUTHANASIA EXPERT, CHARLES  
TURNBULL.

MOYERS

How is your practice different from  
an assisted suicide?

Magik sits in front of the TV, intrigued.

TURNBULL

My technique, called "Walking into  
the Light", is the only one that  
allows a person to go on their own.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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TURNBULL (CONT'D)

There's no physical participation  
on the part of the guide. I simply  
talk them through it.

Magik enraptured by it, his Salisbury steak in his lap.

The TV screen cuts to a hospital room where Turnbull chants  
loudly, zenlike, then holds the hand of an old woman  
(Mildred).

TURNBULL (CONT'D)

Close your eyes, Mildred, close  
them. That's it. Just relax.  
Relax... Up ahead you'll start to  
see a light. Do you see the light?  
Walk toward the light, Mildred.  
Walk into the light...

PHONE RINGS, Magik nearly dropping his Salisbury steak.

MAGIK

(to phone)

Hello? Oh, Doctor Bender. I--what?

A pained expression crosses his face.

INT. HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Magik looks at his dead wife. The tube now removed from her  
throat, the beeping of the heart monitor no longer present.

He takes a long look at her pale, still, face.

He leans over, and kisses her dry lips for the last time.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE OVER BLACK -- "ONE MONTH LATER"

INT. BUNGALOW - HERITAGE VILLAGE RETIREMENT HOME - AFTERNOON

Helen, another fashionable scarf covering her hair, sits in  
the same chair she does every day.

Same chair, different book.

A KNOCK.

HELEN

It's open.

She closes the book, a finger inside holding the page.

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CONTINUED:

Magik, steps through the screen door in the same outfit he'd been golfing in all morning.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You didn't have to get dressed up on my account.

He smiles, caught offguard.

MAGIK

I was right.  
(offering his hand)  
I'm Chris Magikowski.

HELEN

Pleasure. You were saying you were right. About what?

MAGIK

I've found someone I can talk to.

HELEN

What do you want to talk about?

MAGIK

Anything, except sports. I play, but don't talk about it. And I certainly don't watch it on TV. PBS mostly.

HELEN

You're in luck. I don't like sports.

MAGIK

I know you don't. Books and movies, I asked around.

(beat)

I can't believe we've never run into each other.

HELEN

It's a big place--when I moved here three years ago you could still get a window seat at the cafeteria. Now, what, six thousand?

MAGIK

More. Funny how a place like this, the population goes up every year.

HELEN

It is funny. You married?

(CONTINUED)

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MAGIK

What kind of a guy would I be--here--  
- if I were married?

HELEN

Like every guy I've ever known.

MAGIK

Not me. On my own now, recently,  
first time in forty-eight years.

She lays the book on the table.

HELEN

Okay, so...you're what, dating?

MAGIK

That's why I stopped in. If you're  
interested, Jerry Vale's coming  
next week.

Now it's her turn to be taken off-guard.

HELEN

I'm not sure what my calendar looks  
like next week.

Magik sees her calendar on the wall near the kitchen--  
nothing's pencilled in for the whole month.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You don't waste a lot of time do  
you?

MAGIK

You never know how much you've got.

He inspects Helen's wedding picture on the mantle.

MAGIK (CONT'D)

He looked like somebody, didn't he?

HELEN

Tyrone Power--he used to get that  
all the time.

Magik looks harder at the photo, shrugs.

MAGIK

Zorro, huh? Not a lot of women can  
say they married Zorro.

(MORE)

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