

TENUOUS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT OUTDOOR SEATING AREA - NOON

Five tables with LARGE RED UMBRELLAS cut off from the sidewalk by a short fence.

CHUCK(25) Wears a HOMEMADE SPACESUIT (an oversized pink snowsuit, pink gloves and pink boots, an OXYGEN TANK strapped to his back, and a modified white motorcycle helmet with a closed visor) and sits alone at a table.

A SHAKING GLASS OF WATER is the only thing on the table as Chuck shakes his leg, stares down at the glass, and BREATHS HEAVILY.

THE WAITRESS(22) wears a white collard shirt and black pants, ENTERS next to Chuck. SFX: THE WAITRESS'S MUFFLED WORDS.

WAITRESS

Do you want to order or are you still waiting?

Chuck lifts his visor and looks up at the Waitress.

CHUCK

What?

WAITRESS

Are you still waiting or do you want to order something?

Chuck looks out at the street for the date that hasn't shown. A HOMELESS MAN(50) holds a THE END IS NEAR SIGN a hundred feet away.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

It's been like an hour.

Chuck continues to scan the street around him and avoid the waitress.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Maybe her spaceship got a flat.

CHUCK

That's not funny.

WAITRESS

Oh, so this is legit? You're one of those people? I see a couple of you a day. More this last week.

(MORE)

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Their costumes look way better than yours.

CHUCK

I'm working on it.

WAITRESS

And the pink? Think she saw you and bailed? Because of the pink?

CHUCK

It's all they had. I'd be lucky to survive fifteen minutes up there right now. But I've recently been told I need more human contact, so here I am trying something.

WAITRESS

Well, you wanna try to order something, Star-man?

A CAR pulls up near the restaurant. Within ear shot, Chuck can hear the radio and listens closely. SFX: NEWS BROADCASTER

BROADCASTER (O.S.)

Today marks three weeks since the first reports of mysterious vanishings across the country, and the government has still not taken...

CHUCK

Wait, be quiet a minute.

Chuck fully turns away from the Waitress and listens.

BROADCASTER (O.S.)

...Experts have come forward with a few theories, which we'll present after weather and traffic on the sixes.

Chuck turns back and the waitress is gone.

Chuck looks up and a human-sized-hole is torn in the large red umbrella.

Chuck stares in horror before closing his visor.

Chuck stands and EXITS the seating area.

Chuck passes the Homeless Man holding the SIGN and Chuck gives a gloved thumbs up. The Homeless Man salutes Chuck.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

An active city block.

Chuck continues away from the restaurant down the block. Chuck comes across another PERSON IN SPACESUIT(30) wears a dark blue jumpsuit, racing helmet, and LARGE BACK PACK. Chuck waves.

CHUCK

Probably like ten minutes.

EXT. BACK STREET - LATER

A more residential street, off the main strip.

Chuck comes across a SECOND PERSON IN SPACESUIT(20) wears a heavy jacket, heavy pants, and a modified football helmet along with a SMALL CANISTER on back. Chuck waves.

CHUCK

Yikes. Maybe two minutes. Good luck, fellow nut-job.

THREE TEENAGERS(17) in skater clothes pass Chuck and push Chuck while they laugh. Chuck flails and then continues forward.

INT. BAR - LATE AFTERNOON

A small dive bar as dirty as it is empty.

Chuck ENTERS and stands near the entrance. From behind the bar RON(33) wears an open Hawaiian shirt, baseball hat, and aviator sunglasses and welcomes Chuck.

RON

Chuck! Chaz, my man. How was the date?

CHUCK

Hey, Ron. Didn't happen. No Show.

RON

Oh, no! Shame. Think she saw the pink suit and bailed?

CHUCK
Starting to.

RON
Told you to wait for the Kelly
green.

CHUCK
Just saw a guy in it outside the
bar. Decent rig. Maybe thirty two
minutes of survival time. Waitress
got sucked up.

RON
Repeat that one for me?

INT. BAR BACKROOM - SOON AFTER

A messy room filled with a few KEGS and a WORKBENCH covered
in TOOLS.

Chuck and Ron sit at the corner of a long old table littered
with PAPERS, WIRES, and JUNK.

Ron works with a SCREWDRIVER on a CONTROL PANNEL for the
chest of Chuck's spacesuit. Next to Ron sits a BOTTLE OF
LIQUOR and a GLASS.

Chuck twirls an untouched DRINK and sits with the helmet's
visor up.

RON
So no, like, 1950's style aliens
with capture beams?

CHUCK
Nah, I guess that's one theory off
the board.

RON
My money's still on some kind of
malfunctioning weapon left over
from Reagan's Star Wars program.
That's why the government's quiet
as a dead church mouse about it.

CHUCK
I don't know, I'm starting to work
on something. What if, what if this
is all some kind of new disease,
but like of reality.

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Like people are losing their connection with gravity because reality itself is infected.

RON

Heavy.

Chuck and Ron share the silence.

RON (CONT'D)

I got something new. Wanted to wait a little until I told you.

CHUCK

What is it?

Ron finishes screwing and pours a drink.

RON

I called my guy at NASA to try and get a part to finish your DCM here and just double check that it will actually improve the life support system we got in place.

CHUCK

Ok. Think we'll get to thirty minutes or more?

RON

Beats me. We'll see. Anyway, so I'm talking to my guy and he said that a fully suited astronaut got sucked up during training. He kept radio communication for like five minutes after.

CHUCK

Seriously?

RON

That's what my guy said. Apparently they kept asking him questions, you know, describe his surroundings. The astronaut just kept repeating the words Spaghetti and Buckle over and over again.

CHUCK

Spaghetti Buckle?

RON

Spaghetti Buckle.

Chuck breaks out into LAUGHTER.

RON (CONT'D)

I laughed at first, but it ain't funny. According to my guy, Spaghetti Buckle is some kind of inter-dimensional being or, like, a god, or something.

CHUCK

A space god named Spaghetti Buckle?

RON

That's not it's name. I don't know if it has a name. Spaghetti Buckle is apparently the only words that people say after they're driven insane and consumed by it.

Chuck tries to contain laughter.

RON (CONT'D)

What, you don't believe me?

CHUCK

Ron, come on. Space gods? Spaghetti Buckle?

RON

So?

INT. FRONT OF BAR - PAST

A slow night at the small bar a few weeks prior.

Ron finishes a DRINK from behind the bar. Chuck sits in normal clothes with a BEER at the bar and no other customers.

RON

Try to keep the crowds at bay while I hit the head?

CHUCK

You got it.

Ron Leaves.

Chuck sits and sees Ron's WALLET on the bar. Chuck picks up the WALLET, takes out the I.D., and examines it.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Oh, bologna!

INT. BAR BACKROOM - PRESENT

CHUCK

Thirteen year olds don't fly black ops helicopters, man.

Ron becomes flustered.

RON

Oh. How long you been holding on to that one?

CHUCK

I haven't been holding onto anything, but it's hard to pretend you're not just making stuff up sometimes.

RON

Ok. I'm a liar, then. At least I'm not a coward.

CHUCK

You talking about me?

RON

No, the other guy in the homemade spacesuit. Funny.

CHUCK

Oh, yeah?

RON

Yeah, funny that you trust me with helping with your suit there, but not with anything else.

CHUCK

Maybe I shouldn't have. maybe you were lying when you said you just wanted to enjoy the ride, and you've just been messing with me this whole time.

RON

Not the space flight!

Both Chuck and Ron calm in silence.

RON (CONT'D)

I wasn't talking about enjoying being flung into space. I was talking about this.

Ron motions around the room.

CHUCK

The bar?

RON

No, dummy, life. You keep reaching for more seconds. We can't build a suit that'll survive for fifty years, Chuck. And that's why I set you up on that date. It'll never be enough time, just try to enjoy some of it.

CHUCK

Yeah, great time. Thanks, by the way.

Ron EXITS. Chuck sits alone.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Ron. Come on, man. I'm sorry.

Chuck continues to sit alone in silence.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Ron ENTERS and holds an OBJECT WRAPPED IN A BLANKET.

RON

Save it. Just not used to getting caught in my own web.

Ron places the WRAPPED OBJECT in front of Chuck.

CHUCK

What is it?

RON

I figured anybody encountering a space god could use some courage. And if anybody could use some courage...

Ron unwraps the OBJECT, a HOMEADE SPACE BLASTER constructed from a drill, a ring of D batteries, wires, and pink duct tape.

Chuck is mesmerized by the BLASTER.

Chuck removes the helmet and places it on the table. Chuck removes a glove and holds the BLASTER in the bare hand.

CHUCK
Spaghetti Buckle, huh?

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

A BENCH next to a SIGN that reads BUS STOP on a quiet, empty street.

Fully suited, Chuck walks confidently towards the bus stop as the BLASTER sways at Chuck's hip.

On the bench sits a STRANGER(24), wears a pink homemade spacesuit much like Chuck's but more petite, head lowered toward the ground. The Stranger's helmet's visor is down.

Chuck sits on the bench. Chuck HUFFS and extends his hand.

CHUCK
Hi, I'm Chuck.

STRANGER
(Deep, male accent)
Hello!

Chuck shakes his head, LAUGHS, and continues to converse with the Stranger.

END