

God's Honest Truth

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - DAY

DR. DEBRA GREEN, late 30's, holding a freshly dry cleaned labcoat, waits at a crosswalk for the street lights. Her eyes drift aimlessly.

PHIL (O.S.)  
The God's honest truth! Get it here,  
for only one dollah! The God's  
honest truth! Just a dollah.

Debra turns, and grins at the spectacle. PHIL, an elderly man dressed in a dingy pope costume. In front stands a sign, "The GOD'S HONEST TRUTH: \$1"

The light changes and people start crossing. As the crowd clears, Debra remains alone. She pulls her foot away from the street, then pivots and instead approaches Phil.

DEBRA  
I've seen you here a lot, haven't I?

PHIL  
Why yes, umm... my child. Happy to  
meet you. Hey, you're a doctor at  
that hospital, aintcha?

Debra's glances to the crosswalk, then back to Phil. Her mouth opens to speak, then shuts again, hidden behind her fingers.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
That sharp mind of yours is all  
twisted. Ya know, talkin's just the  
same as walkin' across that  
crosswalk. Ya gotta get past the  
silence if you want the god's honest  
truth.

DEBRA  
I don't think... I don't think I can  
avoid anything anyway.

Debra crosses her arms, with a new thought.

DEBRA (CONT'D)  
Hey, don't you think some people  
might get offended at your costume?

A child laughs behind him and Phil's expression sobers, his eyes meeting Debra's.

PHIL  
Ironically, I'm not the religious  
type anymore.

Phil turns away to watch the boy jogging past.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
We wear down, get injured as we grow  
old. It ain't easy, but we still  
gotta cross streets.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
While ya still can.

Phil collects himself and turns back to see Debra nodding in agreement.

DEBRA  
That is good advice. I guess I  
should be going then, but I think  
you definitely helped.

Debra's dollar glides into a silver pail as she hurries to cross the street in time.

PHIL  
Come back any time, Doc! The, umm,  
church can use the spendin' money.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

MICHAEL, a formally dressed, slick-haired man lifts his attaché on the table and opens it. Next to him is EILEEN, an older stern-faced woman in a wheelchair. Settling down on the other side of the table is SAMUEL, a stocky man in a suit one size too small, and Debra.

MICHAEL  
My client will be unable to work for  
at least a year, being unable to  
stand. She demands compensation for  
the constant fatigue and dizziness  
she suffers as a result of Dr. Debra  
Green's reckless malpractice...

Michael smug grin widens as he stares Debra down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
...and frankly, gross incompetence.

Debra's head pivots to Samuel, who only takes notes, then to Eileen, and then back to Michael.

DEBRA

I performed the testing by the book. Migraines for what I prescribed are unheard of, even if she mixed up the dosage. And until this lawsuit, Eileen had claimed to have been responding very well.

Debra stares at Samuel in disbelief, then leans in to whisper with him.

DEBRA (CONT'D)

C'mon Sam, this is fraud.

SAMUEL

Don't worry. We'll talk later.

Debra finally meets the eyes of Eileen, who quickly looks away, suffering under her enduring glare, as Michael starts laying evidence on the table.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

At the end of a hallway outside the conference room, Samuel tries to reassure Debra, her arms crossed tight, on the defensive.

DEBRA

You shouldn't just settle. It's not right.

SAMUEL

The hospital will handle everything, don't worry.

Samuel reenters the conference room while Debra hears Eileen at the far end of the hallway. Eileen paces along a window, standing well clear of her wheelchair, while on her phone. Debra fumes and strides in behind her, pursing her lips.

EILEEN

Can you keep the kids for a bit longer? Please?

Debra's resolve starts to crack.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

I know. I know. I just need this job interview.

Debra's face softens, then she steps away, leaving Eileen in peace.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

FRANK, 60, and RHIANNE, 40's, formally dressed, sit across from a pale-faced David.

FRANK

Your...

(clears throat)

Your belongings will be sent home to your address, and you'll be escorted to your car by our security.

DAVID

But, why? I thought I was doing such great work here.

Frank remains silent, meeting eyes with Rhianne. Rhianne replies.

RHIANNE

David, we've had issues with your performance since day one.

David's face goes pale.

DAVID

How... wait... then what was the big raise this year for? I've been working my ass off. I've worked through weekends!

Rhianne just observes stoically. Frank catches himself nodding, then exhales and slumps in his chair.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Frank? I'm still pretty new to the industry. Can I at least use you as a reference?

Frank lowers his eyes. David stares in disbelief between him and Rhianne.

INT. MILLIE'S CAFE - DAY

Debra and David recline across from each other in a café, unwinding over a pair of sandwiches.

DEBRA

What jerks. How could they do that to you?

DAVID

From what you told me, I'm not sure whose day has been worse.

DEBRA

I don't know. It's easy to demonize someone, but when you get past that wall of silence, it's rarely that simple.

Debra notices David suddenly busy with his phone, distracted.

DEBRA (CONT'D)

Speaking of silence... Okay. Let's try to get through the rest of the day, shall we?

DAVID

(eyes still down)

Ya know... I'm glad I got to know you. I'm going to miss these lunches.

DEBRA

Aww, likewise.

David spots a 7pm time slot available for a restaurant.

DAVID

Why don't we meet up later to commiserate then?

DEBRA

You mean you want to do lunch again tomorrow?

DAVID

Oh, I meant... ummm...

Debra tilts her head as David debates his words.

DEBRA

What is it?

David finally opens his mouth to respond as BRAD, 30's, with blue eyes and stunning hair, leans into Debra's field of view.

BRAD

Debra, how you holding up? You know I got your back if you need it.

Debra smiles, her cheeks reddening.

DEBRA

I know you do, Brad, but I'm sure  
it'll work out.

David drops some cash on the table.

DAVID

Worked... Hey, nice to meet you  
Brad.

(to Debra)

Meet ya here tomorrow then, I guess.

David makes a quick exit. Debra fixates on the closing door  
as Brad settles into the vacated seat.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

Debra, in lab coat and stethoscope, sits next to the bed  
occupied by her patient, holding a clipboard with a paper  
entitled "Blood Work Result". AMANDA, early 20's, with a  
tired, sickly face and bald scalp, tries to stay awake.

AMANDA

Would you believe I've been studying  
archaeology for this long and I  
haven't seen the pyramids in Egypt  
yet? Have you been there?

Debra grimaces, fighting emotions.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

When I was little, I used to  
fantasize about what it would be  
like inside one.

As Debra's eyes moisten, she swivels away to collect herself.  
She stows the clipboard at her feet, then manages a weakly  
forced smile and turns back.

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - TWILIGHT

Thoughts linger in David's eyes as he stares through a red  
crosswalk light.

PHIL (O.S.)

The God's honest truth! Get it here,  
for only one dollah!

David smirks at Phil's latest getup. Phil prances about  
dressed as a rabbi, complete with a yarmulkah, fake beard,  
and tasseled shawl. David approaches, his eyes challenging.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Hey now, you seem upset. Maybe the God's honest truth can cheer you up?

DAVID

It's been a pretty crappy day. My manager fired me for no reason. I thought he liked me.

PHIL

Oy vey! He wouldn't tell you why?

DAVID

Well, I guess the VP told him to.

PHIL

And why'd the VP told him to?

DAVID

I don't know. She only looks at the money.

PHIL

Couldn't be helped then!

DAVID

Well, I guess I could have made myself more indispensable. I just focused on my work and not really my career.

PHIL

And that sounds like the God's honest truth! Don't need no priest nor rabbi to tell you that!

David grimaces. Another dollar glides into the silver pail.

PHIL (CONT'D)

So what's next?

David looks at his phone.

DAVID

I have a dinner reservation in an hour, actually.

PHIL

Mazel tov! Goin' with someone ya like?

DAVID

Well, I was going to ask her out, but I think I screwed it up.



PHIL  
Ya screwed it up how?

DAVID  
I tried, but she misunderstood, and  
then this other guy showed up...

PHIL  
So you just went silent, huh? My boy  
would've been about your age. No way  
I'd have let him off like that. You  
ain't gettin' younger, son.

David goes still, considering. His phone rings.

EXT. WALKWAY NEAR HOSPITAL - TWILIGHT

Debra holds her phone, but stays silent, wiping a tear.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Debra?

Debra consciously breathes.

DEBRA  
You meant dinner, didn't you?

FADE OUT.