

Community Service
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INT. OLD PEOPLE'S HOME - DAY

JAMES sits in-between two seated OLD PEOPLE. A MAN (30) with a hand held camera stands in front of the three and films them. Behind him is a door and an OAP playing piano. A small group of seated ELDERLY people next to the PERFORMER listen and tap their feet. JAMES taps his fingers and looks around nervously. It's seen that behind him is a window view of a large garden. In the garden is a shed.

CAMERA MAN

There really is no need to be nervous, James. Just do your community service and we can put this whole arson business behind us.

JAMES

What do you want me to do??

CAMERA MAN

Just be nice. At least be nice as I film you...

JAMES

And why do you have to film me, again?

CAMERA MAN

Proof. Because no one would believe you'd ever be nice!

JAMES

I see. I have some change in my pocket...

OAP 1

I'll have it!

JAMES hands the neighbouring OLD MAN the cash.

JAMES

No problem! Can I go now?

CAMERA MAN

Giving an old person a few coins just isn't going to cut it, James.

JAMES

Of course. Do you want my shoes?

CAMERA MAN

I don't think they'll fit them...

JAMES

They can sell them. Take my shoes.

JAMES takes his shoes off and hands them to the same OAP.
The latter accepts them, smiling.

JAMES
Now can I go?

CAMERA MAN
Not yet, no.

JAMES
Come on! I can't walk outside and
have no money for the bus home!
Haven't I suffered enough?

CAMERA MAN
No! And why is being kind so
stressful for you??

JAMES
I'm taking my socks off! Please let
things end there!

JAMES does so and places them on the same MAN'S legs.

CAMERA MAN
(sympathetically)
Did anyone ever say taking their
socks off was an act of kindness to
you, James?

JAMES
I worked it out for myself, Mr...
What IS your name, anyway?

CAMERA MAN
Daniel.

JAMES goes white.

JAMES
(nervously)
Daniel, eh? Nice name.

CAMERA MAN
Thank you. Anxiety is contagious, you
know? You're starting to make ME
anxious. Look, I'll take a break and
stop filming.

The CAMERA MAN takes a lighter and cigarette from his pocket
and lights it up. JAMES fidgets, clearly very stressed.

CAMERA MAN
Are you ok?

JAMES

It's... ok. I just have a thing about people called Dan and starting fires, obviously. Never mind. I'll be fine.

CAMERA MAN

Do you want a cig?

JAMES

Isn't it illegal to smoke in these places?

CAMERA MAN

(laughing)

Don't worry. I won't film it.

The CAMERA MAN hands JAMES a lighter and cigarette.

JAMES

No thanks. I don't smoke.

JAMES tries to hand the items back but gets rejected.

CAMERA MAN

Keep them. Maybe you'll change your mind later.

JAMES

Ok...

OAP 1

I hate to interrupt, but my son should be visiting me soon. He works at the local petrol station, you know? He likes to bring me all sorts of wacky and crazy presents to really take me by surprise! He's been hinting that he'll be bringing me a bottle filled with petrol! He's such a character!

JAMES

I have to get out of here now. Please. Give me my shoes and socks back.

OAP 2

That's not very nice. And to think I was going to give you a World War 2 flamethrower I've had ever since my army days!

JAMES

I don't want it!!!

CAMERA MAN

Now, now, James. This isn't the kind of behaviour you need to be showing.

JAMES

I don't care, I have to get out of here!

A MAN carrying a clear bottle with a black liquid in enters the room. Everyone looks to him and cheers. The MAN cheerfully opens the container and throws the liquid all over the place.

OAP 1

Hahaha! Such a character!

JAMES

I don't understand what's going on...

OAP 2

No one does, but it's wacky!

MAN WITH PETROL

Who's that sour-faced man with no sense of humour?

JAMES

I'm called James...

MAN WITH PETROL

Next things you'll be saying you don't want my bottled chlorine trifluoride!

The CAMERA MAN chuckles.

CAMERA MAN

He doesn't want my cigarette or lighter, either! What's your name out of curiosity?

MAN WITH PETROL

I'm called Daniel...

CAMERA MAN

Ha! That's such a coincidence! Mine too!

JAMES grinds his teeth, looking like he's having a panic attack.

JAMES

What's chlorine tri-whatever anyway?

MAN WITH PETROL

It's one of the most flammable gases known to man!

JAMES

How did you get it??

MAN WITH PETROL

I may spend a lot of time working at the local petrol station, but it's a cover. I'm a spy who has access to a wide range of illegal substances, and I know how to get away with crimes. I can teach you.

JAMES

What do you mean?

MAN WITH PETROL

I'm just saying in the bizarre hypothetical situation where you were a crazed arsonist who wanted to set fire to the shed in the garden, I could help you.

JAMES

Please let me go, I can't take it any more!

MAN WITH PETROL

You're leaving without knowing what's in the shed? It's very interesting!

JAMES

Sorry, I don't care!

MAN WITH PETROL

You don't care? My friend Dan who built the shed would be very hurt if he could hear you.

JAMES

He's Dan too???

CAMERA MAN

Wow. What are the odds?

JAMES

I'm sorry, this situation is too stressful for me. I'm going to faint.

JAMES falls off his chair, unconscious.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

JAMES wakes up on a blue bed with a sleeping PATIENT on both his sides. All wear masks that are connected to beeping medical equipment. Everything is sight is bare and super clean. A FEMALE NURSE is in front of him.

NURSE

Ah, you're finally awake, James!

JAMES

(muffled)

Who are you?

NURSE

I'm a nurse! My name's Danielle!

JAMES

AAARGH!