

# ***Grace Period***

*by*

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Cast of Characters

RALPHY:

26

BURT:

30

Place

Brooklyn

Time

11:00 PM

2.

Setting: A rundown two bedroom apartment with 1970's style décor.

At Rise: Burt sits in front of his computer stressed out as Ralphy comes walking into the livingroom wearing an open robe.

RALPHY: Yo, you look like you're on your death bed, you sick?

BURT: Don't ask me insulting questions when I'm already in a mood and want to kill someone.

RALPHY: Just checking in.

(BURT points to his editing screen)

BURT: This thing's got me fucked; there's no work and the only editing job I can get is for some shit film that makes absolutely no intelligent sense; there's no script, no synopsis, no treatment, no director notes, just footage, footage handed over to me on a drive that I'm supposed to magically piece together.

RALPHY: Can I watch it?

BURT: No.

RALPHY: Come on.

BURT: You will only piss me off more---

RALPHY: Burt, it might not hurt to have another brain on this thing---

BURT: My brain is good enough---

RALPHY: Let me see it---

BURT: I said, NO.

RALPHY: How long have you been working on this thing?

BURT: This past week. The director sounds like some quack. I can't make heads or tails out of whatever it is he's saying because his broken english sounds like a slaughterhouse.

RALPHY: Your thumb is in your ass.

BURT: Deep! Deep!

RALPHY: Send the project back. Fuck 'em.

BURT: I can't, I need the money.

RALPHY: How much you gettin'?

BURT: Two-grand.

RALPHY: They low-balling you?

BURT: Of course they are, with the state of this pandemic and all the shit going on in the world, they're taking advantage of us by lowering prices. It's disgusting.

RALPHY: What a disgrace?

BURT: Normally, I'd get something like ten grand for this crap and I wouldn't feel so bad, at least I'd make scratch. Believe me, this is the only film work I can get and it buys me two months, maybe three depending on how much I scrape.

RALPHY: I'm hurtin' too. Been waiting on a check for three weeks. Bastards are trying to skip on me and I'm pissed. I'd a gone to their offices if we were allowed out, not that they're there anyway but still, under normal conditions I'd crack some heads.

BURT: Under normal conditons you'd get paid.

RALPHY: True, true. That check will sort me out. Without it, I'm just as fucked as you. I don't have the rent.

BURT: You don't have the rent?

RALPY: Nah, man.

BURT: Dude, you make so much more money than I do, how can you not have a stash?

RALPHY: I like to spend my money, what can I say?

BURT: Bro, if you can't make rent, I can't cover for you...I barely have enough on my end.

RALPHY: Still got three days.

BART: We're supposed to pay rent tomorrow.

RALPHY: We have a five day grace period.

BART: Fuck the grace period Ralph!

RALPHY: What are ya shoutin' for?

BART: I'm killing myself doing this stupid project to pay bills, just to survive and you're walking around like it's no big deal we can't make rent.

RALPHY: We're fine. You know, people are dying out there every single day, okay? If we happen to be a few days late, so what? How can nobody understand?

BURT: Our landlord hates us. They've warned us multiple times because we've been late in the past multiple times. They're gonna throw us out.

RALPHY: Let 'em.

BURT: I have nowhere else to go!

RALPHY: Your mother has that gorgeous house in Canada, what are you talking about?

BURT: We are in quarantine!

RALPHY: Will you stop shouting? I think you're getting out of control. You're not thinking things through effectively, you gotta be effective and right now you sound like a panicked lunatic waving your arms around in the street with a red towel. Breathe. Just breathe, alright? Numb your nuts there numbnuts. I'll get my check, believe me, I'll get my check. If I have to go out incognito and locate the bastards I will and believe me, I'll get my check. Boom! Paid! Good for the rest of the year! Ain't nobody gonna take my money and listen, if you're down and out, I got you, I'll hook you up bro, you gotta chill, you're always too hot and bothered, learn to be more calm when under pressure. I was built for this kind of thing. Look at me...relaxed, calm, thoughtful...you, you're out of control, you're lettin' the edge get to ya and I'm saying, NO...NO...and if our landlords wanna throw us out, let 'em throw us out and watch what I do to this hotbox anyway...I'll blow the whole thing up...got my buddy Frank, he's got grenades, alright, he'll give me one a them and off we go, BA DA BOOM! Goodbye! Adios! Sayonara! We're out. We'll go to your mother's house until we find a new place. That's all.

BURT (sarcastic) Oh, is that all Ralph?

RALPHY: Yeah, it's not complicated at all.

BURT: What makes you think I would want to go to my mother's house with you?

RALPHY: Why wouldn't you, should be the obvious question.

BURT: Because she's nintey-five years old and one day with you and she'll die!

RALPHY: That's terrible the way you say that to me.

BURT: Cause you're too much too handle Ralph. Listen, just go, go away, let me work on this stupid ass movie---

RALPHY: Why don't you take a break?

BURT: I can't break, there's deadlines I have to meet.

(PHONE RINGS)

Oh, look who it is...Leopold. I'll put it on speaker so you can see what I'm dealing with...

(BURT puts on speaker)

BURT: Hello?

LEOPOLD (voice): Yesssss, hiya, hiya. How's going there?

(BURT gives Ralph a "see what I mean" face)

BURT: It's going good, very good.

LEOPOLD (voice): We finish.

BURT: No, no we, there's still about a good two weeks of work left, Leopold.

LEOPOLD (voice): We finish.

BURT: ...No, I'm only just getting started here---

LEOPOLD (voice): We finish, we finish.

BURT: ...What do you mean?

LEOPOLD (voice): Close.

BURT: Close?

LEOPOLD (voice): We finish, yeah, we close.

BURT: Do you mean the movie is finished?

LEOPOLD (voice): Ah, YES, yes.

BURT: We have a contract.

LEOPOLD (voice): No.

BURT: I still...what happens now?

LEOPOLD (voice): Uhhh, uhhh---

BURT: Am I getting paid?

LEOPOLD (voice): Oh...(he laughs) Money, money, money. (clears throat) No.

BURT: What?

LEOPOLD (voice): Money, no, money, no. Finish.

(LEOPOLD hangs up)

BURT: Hello? Hello? (to RALPHY) You believe this shit? This asshole!

RALPHY: Calm down.

BURT: I'm gonna go fucking crazy Ralphy, I'm gonna go crazy!

RALPHY: Fuck that guy.

BURT: That guy was my survival.

RALPHY: Who needs him and his assinine movie anyway?

BURT: I need him, I do. ME!

RALPHY: You'll be alright.

BURT (imitating Leopold): Money, money, money. Asshole! I have no money now Ralph.

RALPHY: Like I said, I have some coin to cover meals and I'll get my check and split it with you...we'll get through this man, only a few months, maybe sooner and we'll be fine, things will go back to normal again. Patience.

BURT: I need a drink.

RALPHY: Yeah, have some whiskey.

BURT: Can you pour me a glass?

RALPHY: Sure thing.

(RALPHY grabs Jack Daniels and pours  
Burt a glass)

You're fine bud.

(RALPHY hands him a glass. He too has  
his own whiskey glass)

Here's to ending things badly.



BURT: To ending things badly.

(THEY clink glasses and drink)

END OF PLAY