

Expiration Date

By

Michael Liebenson

847-404-6670
mclieben@syr.edu

BLACK SCREEN

We hear the distant sound of a high pitched, ear-piercing ALARM CLOCK. It slowly gets louder and louder until we cut to...

INT. KYLE'S BEDROOM- MORNING

We see KYLE, 18, laying in his queen size bed that almost consumes him. His blankets seem to have ended up at the bottom of his legs, but he does not seem to notice. His eyes are open, yet they look empty.

He distantly stares off, seeming like his mind is on something else. It then clicks to him that his alarm clock is going off, and he reaches over to stop it. The sound stops.

He gets out of bed slowly, as we examine the sporadic contents of his messy room. Somehow the camera gets to a calendar, revealing that today is his birthday with the date, "April 21st, 2014" circled. Ideally, it's a Saturday.

INT. KITCHEN- MORNING

DAVID, 52, is cooking breakfast near the stove and is making sure the pancakes are not burning. He is in his favorite pair of pajama pants, and wears some sort of pop culture T-shirt.

He smiles and hums to himself while cooking. His wife PAULA, 48, sits at the table reading a digital pamphlet with the title "EXPIRATION SERVICES PROTOCOL" on a tablet. She is simply in a robe, with her hair pulled back.

She looks concernedly at what she is reading, desperately tapping her leg up and down. She looks up.

PAULA
(sighs to herself)
Has the mail come yet?

DAVID
Honey, you need to stop stressing about this morning. It is Kyle's day, not yours.

PAULA
I know it is his day, but can you blame me for being a little anxious? This is a big birthday
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAULA (cont'd)
for him, and if he gets a
letter...I just-

Paula doesn't seem to know how to continue. David crosses over to Paula and puts his arms around her.

DAVID
If he gets a letter he gets a
letter. It is then his decision to
decide what he wants to do. It'd
be an honor for him to even be
chosen for this program. You know
the Jacobson's daughter Emelia got
chosen, and she went through with
it-

PAULA
She also went into a state of deep
depressing. I would imagine
knowing your own death would do
that to you.

DAVID
Look, Kyle might not even get a
letter. This is an all what if at
this point.

He kisses her

DAVID
(contd singing)
Now take a deep breath so I can get
back to the pancakes.

Paula laughs, they see Kyle enter the room.

PAULA
(frantic)
Hi honey! Happy 18th
birthday. This is a BIG day.

She jolts over to hug him. He doesn't really hug back.

KYLE
Thanks Mom...uh, is the mail here-

DAVID
Nope! Not yet champ.

He walks over to Kyle, gives him a big ol' hug.

KYLE

Well, OK then. When is breakfast going to be ready?

PAULA

Soon enough! Your father is just finishing up the pancakes now, and I just wanted to talk about-

DAVID

(Trying to change the subject)
So, uh. You want to open your gifts now or...

He looks over at Paula, she looks at him.

KYLE

Guys, it's fine. you both need to take a chill pill with this whole thing.

(Under his breath)
God, I hate birthdays.

PAULA

Look I'm sorry I didn't mean to-

Paula is interrupted by the doorbell, they all stop and look up in the direction of the door. They stand there in silence for a second.

DAVID

Kyle, do, uh, you want to get it?

KYLE

Um, sure.

Kyle starts to walk towards the door. Paul stops him, and hugs him. Cut to-

INT. HALLWAY- MORNING

Kyle goes over to the slit in the door and picks up the pile of mail. He frantically sifts through the pile until we see him look in shock at one letter he sees.

INT. KITCHEN- MORNING

Kyle walks back into the kitchen, holding the letter in one hand and the rest in the other. Paula notices it, and walks over to Kyle.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA

Honey, we still don't know what's inside. It could be a rejection for all we know. There is no reason to freak out yet.

DAVID

Honey, I don't think he is freaking out, I just think he needs to open the letter.

Kyle slowly opens the letter. He reads it. The letter is very brief. Camera cuts to the letter itself.

"Kyle Fredricks, Congratulations. You have been selected among the few to participate in the The US Department of Expiration Services selected trial program. You have 24 hours to come in and receive your own expiration date if you so choose. Our office is listed below. Best of luck and Happy Birthday."

Kyle looks up. He goes to sit at the table. David joins him, not making eye contact because he doesn't want to let Kyle to know his own stance.

DAVID

Well...Um, congratulations son. At least you have the option now if you want to go in. Whether I or your mother approve or not doesn't matter. Right honey? Right-

Paula looks down, trying to conceal her own feelings.

PAULA

Y-yes. We love you regardless. but please, please, consider the gravity of this choice. You are messing with knowledge more powerful than you could understand-

KYLE

I...I...

Silence as they wait for an answer.

KYLE

(contd)

I, I...I need some time to weigh my options. But I think I want to go.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

...Okay. Well we can drive you there if that's what you want-

PAULA

I don't think I am feeling too hot. I might, uh need to lay upstairs. Have your Dad take you, hon. If that's what you decide.

She goes over to hug him, extremely tight. Like it is the last time she is going to see him. She pulls away and looks at his face, then breaks away before she starts to cry.

KYLE

Alright, then. Let's eat.

INT/EXT. CAR- DAY

Kyle and David drive in silence in their modest car. David is driving, and Kyle is giving him directions through his phone. David tries to break the silence.

DAVID

So...how's Benny and Tiffany doing? Are they still together?

KYLE

Um, yea they are good. I guess.

DAVID

Cool...cool. (Beat after long pause) Look, I know this is a really daunting thing you are about to do. It's pretty brave I'd say. I don't know what I would choose to do if I was given the opportunity. It's like playing God almost.

KYLE

Dad, I'd just prefer not to talk about it if that's okay. I'm doing this for me. No one else.

EXT. OMINOUS BUILDING- DAY

They arrive, and the car stops in front of this ominous looking professional building. Kyle, unbuckles his his seatbelt and starts to get out. David tries to get out too, but Kyle motions him to stop.

(CONTINUED)

KYLE

That's okay. I got it from here
but thank you.

DAVID

Alright, while please be
careful. I love you bud.

KYLE

I love you too. See you soon.

Kyle starts to walk inside. He stops to take a deep breath, but then continues to walk. Cut back to David watching him go inside, with a concerned look on his face.

INT. DIMLY LIT HALLWAY- DAY

Kyle walks slowly through this long a narrow hallway, where his footsteps echoes. He looks around, trying to see if there is anyone there to help him. He sees an open door, and enters.

INT. WAITING ROOM- DAY

The room he enters is reminiscent of a doctor's waiting room, music and magazines and all. A very bland "Happy Birthday!" poster is hanging on a wall. There is one other REMMY in the room sitting. Kyle walks over and sits in the seat next to him.

REMMY

...Happy birthday, man. You got
chosen?

KYLE

Yup. I-I don't really know what to
expect to be honest. This place
kind've creeps me out...How long
have you been waiting?

REMMY

Oh, uh. Only about 10 minutes. I
need to get in soon so I don't miss
my bus, haha. I'm assuming your
parents were freaking out too?

KYLE

Um, I mean. I guess. My dad
seemed pretty cool with it. But I
don't know. It's my decision and I
need to feel confident that I am

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KYLE (cont'd)
making it myself. What makes you
want to know?

REMMY
Don't know. Seemed like too much
of an exciting thing to pass up
on. I mean we were chosen for a
reason man. Feels pretty
special. Plus, I feel like knowing
my own death will give me some sort
of clarity on the rest of my life.

KYLE
Yea, but aren't you worried that,
like, it'll fuck you up. Knowing
all this?

REMMY
If it does, it does. I can't
control how I react to this
information. I just get to control
if I want to know it.

KYLE
Good point-

A voice comes on over an intercom

VOICE
Next participant please step
forward to the following door A and
present your finger print.

REMMY
Well, that's me. Nice meeting you
man. and I didn't catch your
name.

KYLE
It's Kyle. See ya on the flip
side.

REMMY
(Jokingly)
If I make it. Peace.

Remmy goes up to the door, and places his fingertip on the
door. The door buzzes, and he enters. Kyle just sits
there, he takes out his phone but there is no service.

(CONTINUED)

He just sits there in silence, and we are forced to just watch him mentally prepare himself with the lame music. There should be about 30 seconds of watching him. Remmy then eventually comes out.

He walks out slowly holding a slip that almost looks like a receipt, and walks up to Kyle.

REMMY

December 13, 2069 6:53

AM. December 13, 2069 6:53 AM. I-

I...

Remmy can't continue to talk, he just breaks away from the conversation and puts his hand on Kyle's shoulder. Then walks out. The room around Kyle starts to blur, and he completely starts to have a panic attack.

VOICE

Next participant please step forward to the following door A and present your finger print.

Kyle runs out of the room, running back through the hallway and runs outside.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING- DAY

Kyle breathes in, breathes out. Pacing around the outside of the building. He takes his jacket off feeling over-heated. He leans up against the outside of the building and exhales.

He then sees his Dad, parked relatively close. He runs over to him.

DAVID

How did it-

KYLE

I can't do it.

DAVID

Kyle, you are already here bud. I think you can. You just are afraid to.

KYLE

Of course I am afraid, this could change the course of my life!

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Alright then get in the car!

KYLE

(Stunned)

...What?

DAVID

Look, you think I want to know that my son knows when he is going to die? This was never easy for me either, but I am here because I love you and I support you.

KYLE

I just- I just don't know what to do.

DAVID

All I can tell you is that sometimes the things that seem the most risky in life, end up paying off with the biggest payoff. Even if I don't think this is the best thing for you to do, I support you. This is for you.

KYLE

Thanks, Dad. I, I love you.

DAVID

I love you too, champ.

Kyle walks back towards the building.

INT. DIMLY LIT HALLWAY- DAY

Kyle walks with purpose through the long narrow hallway.

INT. WAITING ROOM- DAY

He enters the empty room, and goes right up to the door. He puts his finger on the door knob, and the door buzzes. He walks through.

He walks through the door, and once again the camera stays on the door for about 20 seconds, until Kyle comes through the door holding his receipt. He seems content.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE CAR- DAY

Kyle walks up to the car, and gets in.

INT/EXT. CAR- DAY

They just sit there.

DAVID

So...

KYLE

I didn't open it yet, Dad.

DAVID

(Relieved)

Oh, ok. Well, uh. good. I am,
I'm proud of you. Let's go home
and eat some cake.

KYLE

Yea, I'd like that. As long as
it's chocolate.

DAVID

Tell your mother we are on our way
home.

INT. HALLWAY- DAY

Paula is sitting on the stairs waiting for them to come
in. Kyle and David enter, and Paula stands, trying to hold
back tears. She opens her mouth to speak.

DAVID

Before you say anything, just know
he hasn't looked at the slip yet.

KYLE

I, uh, I wanted to be home with you
guys when I looked at it. Just to
be in a safer environment.

PAULA

Well, we love you whether you
decide to open it or not. But,
please for my sake just don't tell
me what it says.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
(Jokingly)
For her sake too, don't tell me
either.

KYLE
Alright, well, I am going to go up
to my room then to open it.

DAVID
Well, we will be down here waiting
whenever you are ready.

They both hug him affectionately. Kyle walks up the
stairs.

INT. KYLE'S BEDROOM- DAY

Kyle goes over to his bed and sits down. He sighs, and
looks at the slip. In a quick burst of energy, he throws it
onto his desk and it lands near his calender. He decides to
go downstairs.

The camera pans over to the slip with the date facing
up. The slip says "April 21st 2:01 PM." the clock says
2:00 PM. It cuts to black.