

GIVE THEM EL

by

Aaron Ridenour

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Doctors and nurses rush toward the entrance as two EMTs push ELDIN (40's) and MARCY SUMMERS (40's) on stretchers.

Eldin's massive football player frame lays motionless on the stretcher. His bald head catches the gleam of the overhead lights as they cross the room. Blood stains his tattered suit and button shirt, his eyes locked on the ceiling.

EL (V.O.)
My name is Eldin Michael Summers.
My friends call me 'El.'

DOCTOR shines a small flashlight in El's eyes, runs beside the stretcher.

DOCTOR
What happened?

EMT
(pushing stretcher)
Car accident.

EL (V.O.)
My wife, Marcy, calls me a bunch of
different names.

Marcy is hoisted from the stretcher onto a nearby table.

EL (V.O.)
That's her across the room; the one
that looks like a 1980's vacuum
cleaner.

Several EMTs lift El from his stretcher onto a table. A nurse starts cutting his shirt.

EL (V.O.)
She was nagging me about something
18 minutes ago, but for the life of
me...no pun intended...I can't
remember about what.

A nurse places an oxygen mask over El's mouth.

EL (V.O.)
Now that I think about it, that's
how most of our conversations go.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

El and Marcy sit at the dinner table. El quietly eats his food as Marcy angrily points her knife at El.

MARCY
When you blah blah blah it makes me
feel blah blah blah.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

El and Marcy jog along a trail.

MARCY
And that is why blah blah blah
because you always...

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

El and Marcy lay in bed, El doesn't blink as he stares at the ceiling. Marcy is rolled onto her side, shakes her finger.

MARCY
(yelling)
...blah blah blah blah blah...

INT. CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

El rides in the passenger seat as Marcy drives, a pair of headlights rushing toward the side of the car.

MARCY
(yelling)
...blah blah blah blah blah...

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

El suddenly flat lines. The persistent HUM of his cardiac monitor echoes through the room.

The doctor uses a defibrillator on El. His body rises slightly.

EL (V.O.)
So here I am, slowly fading away as
some young kid yells in my face.

The doctor watches the unchanging cardiac monitor for several seconds. He places the paddles back on El's chest.

EL (V.O.)
Thinking back on my life, I really
only have one regret.

El's body rises from the table, current coursing through him.
The cardiac monitor gives a persistent HUM.

EL (V.O.)
I let my wife drive the car.

SUPER: "GIVE THEM EL."

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

El enters. White mist trails through the doorway behind him as he dusts off his suit and adjusts his tie, an annoyed expression stretched across his face. He glances around the long, windowless room. Several chairs outline the walls.

A few people sit here and there; all gaze awkwardly at El as he closes the door behind him.

El peers toward one end of the room. ANGEL (30's) stands at a small window on one side, dressed completely in white; her long blonde hair draped over her shoulders as she holds a small clipboard containing several documents.

El glances at the other end of the room. DICK (30's) stands at another window in an expensive suit; his hair slicked back with a fake smile etched on his face as he cradles a clipboard in his hands. He waves emphatically at El.

El looks back to Angel. A blank expression is etched on her face as she motions El toward her.

El quickly buttons his suit jacket and moves toward Angel.

Angel does not look up from her clipboard as she flips through several documents.

ANGEL
Name?

EL
Eldin Michael Summers...but please
call me 'El.' And your name is...

ANGEL
Angel.

EL
 (smiling to himself)
 What are the odds.

ANGEL
 (looking at El)
 Do you know why you're here, Mr. Summers?

EL
 Because I let my wife drive the car?

Angel glares at El as he briefly LAUGHS to himself. El abruptly stops. His face turns a deep shade of red.

EL
 Sorry.

Angel quietly examines documents on her clipboard while El rocks anxiously on his heels.

ANGEL
 (not looking at El)
 I'm not seeing your name on the list, Mr. Summers.

Beads of sweat form on El's forehead.

EL
 I meant Eldin-o Summer-ez.

Angel glances up from his clipboard.

ANGEL
 Are you Latino?

EL
 Are you allowed to ask me that question?

ANGEL
 Mr. Summers, in all honesty, do you feel you've earned the right to be here?

El pulls a handkerchief from his pocket, dabs his forehead.

EL
 (nodding)
 Oh, absolutely!

Angel glances back at her documents.

ANGEL
What about Spring Break of '97?

El's eyes widen briefly before a small smile pulls at the corner of his mouth.

EL
Well...if you'd been there, you would have had a great time, too.

ANGEL
(looking at her clipboard)
How many kids do you have?

EL
(confused)
None.

ANGEL
Two.

EL
Excuse me?

Angel reads from the documents on her clipboard. A line begins to form behind El.

ANGEL
And then there's the fact that you never called your mother.

EL
(nervously)
These seem like very small things that...

Angels eyes widen as she reads.

ANGEL
And I see that you're a self-proclaimed atheist?

Angel looks directly at El.

EL
That's actually self-proclaimed "athleticist."

A puzzled look crosses Angel's face.

ANGEL
That's not even a w--

EL
(interrupting)
But I definitely believe.

PERSON #1 shifts impatiently as he waits in line behind El.

PERSON #1
Is there anyway to speed this up?

El jerks his head toward Person #1.

EL
Hey, buddy, why don't you just
stand there quietly and wait your
turn! It's not like you have to be
somewhere!

El turns back to Angel.

EL
(under his breath)
What a--

ANGEL
Language!

EL
Sorry.

Angel analyzes the paperwork attached to her clipboard.

ANGEL
There appears to be a small
problem, Mr. Summers.

She glances at El, smiles.

ANGEL
Your good deeds and your sins are
tied.

A quizzical look crosses El's face.

EL
Meaning?

ANGEL
Meaning that the next few seconds
will determine where you will go.

EL
So I just need one more good deed
to get in?

ANGEL

Correct.

El pulls at his bottom lip as he thinks briefly. He quickly turns to Person #1 standing behind him.

EL

(motioning with his hand)
Why don't you go ahead of me.

PERSON #1

Thank you.

Person #1 steps toward Angel, who nonchalantly motions for him to keep moving. He passes through the door next to her. El steps toward Angel again.

ANGEL

Alright, you may go in, Mr. Summers.

El starts to step past Angel.

ANGEL

Your wife is waiting for you.

El freezes briefly, his eyes wide as he glances at Angel.

EL

My wife is already in there?

ANGEL

(smiling)
Yes.

El glances at the clipboard cradled in Angel's hands.

EL

And...did she already see my notes?

A brief LAUGH escapes Angel's lips.

ANGEL

Of course.

El suddenly slaps the clipboard from Angel's hands. Papers fly everywhere as it BANGS against the hard floor.

EL

Now you can't let me in, right?

ANGEL

(shaking her head)
True, but now you're tied again.

EL
So I just need one more sin?

Angel SIGHS.

ANGEL
Correct.

El quickly retrieves the clipboard from the floor, shakes it at Angel.

EL
So why don't you take your
clipboard and shove it up your...

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

El now stands in front of Dick's window, the faint sound of PEOPLE SCREAMING can be heard from somewhere behind him.

DICK
As I was saying...

EL
Look, Dick, you have to let me in.

Dick glances through the documents on his clipboard.

DICK
I'm not seeing you on the list. Did
you check with--

EL
Angel? Yes. Very charming.

Dick quickly glances at El.

DICK
How is she?

A quizzical look crosses El's face. He glances briefly over his shoulder toward Angel as she attempts to reorganize the papers on her own clipboard.

EL
(looking back at Dick)
Good, I guess...but, you see, my
wife got there before me and--

DICK
Did she see the notes?

El nods.

DICK
Spring Break?

EL
And then some.

Dick nods as he glances at his clipboard.

DICK
Yeah, let me work you in.

EL
Thank you.

Dick retrieves a form from his clipboard and hands it to El along with a pen.

DICK
I just need you to read over this form and sign the bottom.

El takes the form and pen in his hands.

EL
(reading form)
No problem.

Several SCREAMS can still be heard coming from behind Dick. El peers curiously behind him.

Dick waves his hand nonchalantly.

DICK
Don't mind the screaming. They're actually having a good time.

EL
So what's it like back there?

Dick shrugs.

DICK
Have you ever been to Detroit?

EL
Yes.

DICK
Then you'll be fine. It's kind of like that...only hotter...with a few less sirens...and a lot more white people.

EL
Gary, Indiana?

DICK
(nodding)
You get the idea.

EL
Is there a Starbucks?

DICK
Yeah, but the line is extremely
long...and the coffee is always
cold.

EL
So no changes there.

El reads over the document.

DICK
Actually it's really good that you
came. Your mother-in-law has been
causing all kinds of hell...forgive
the pun...down there.

El pauses as he is about to sign the form.

EL
What?

DICK
Your mother-in-law. She's here.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

El stands in front of Angel. She doesn't look at El as she
reads through several documents.

EL
I would just like to say that I am
EXTREMELY sorry for what happened
earlier. That was completely
uncalled for.

ANGEL
Do you know how long it initially
took me to organize those papers?

EL
No.

ANGEL
 (looking at El)
 Do you actually care?

EL
 (hesitatingly)
 No.

An annoyed expression crosses Angel's face.

ANGEL
 Thank you for the apology...and the honesty, I suppose...Mr. Summers, but as it currently stands...you're tied again.

EL
 (nodding)
 Right. See I was just speaking with Dick and--

ANGEL
 How is he?

El stares at Angel briefly in silence. He glances over his shoulder toward Dick, who grins at him.

EL
 (looking back at Angel)
 He's fine, but a...

El glances around, leans in close to Angel. Angel curiously leans toward him.

EL
 (whispering)
 Is there a third option by any chance?

Angel SIGHS.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

El sits in one of the chairs outlining the room. His head rests in his hands. Dick slowly approaches El, unbuttons his suit jacket as he sits in the chair next to him.

DICK
 Soooo...have you made a decision of where you'd like to go?

El doesn't look at Dick.

EL
I'd rather just tell you to go to--

Angel approaches.

ANGEL
Hell-o, Richard.

EL
But you're already there.

Dick glances at Angel.

DICK
You don't know the half of it.

Angel sits on the chair next to El.

DICK
(nodding)
Angel.

EL
I just thought--

ANGEL
There'd be more options?

EL
For a dude who's been around for thousands of years, I would think there'd be more than two options! I mean, when I go to McDonald's I have several different options.

DICK
(smiling)
We have a McDonald's.

Angel glares at Dick.

ANGEL
Sometimes we don't always get what we want.

Dick LAUGHS to himself.

ANGEL
(annoyed)
Is there a problem...Dick?

DICK
(shaking his head)
That's just rich coming from you.

A puzzled expression crosses El's face.

ANGEL

Is there something you'd like to say?

DICK

No, not really...aside from the fact that you tried to control everything.

Angel's face goes bright red.

ANGEL

I did NOT try to control everything!

Dick sits forward, rubs his face with his hands.

DICK

Here we go again.

Angel sits forward, points her finger at Dick.

ANGEL

If you had just been honest with me, we wouldn't have had any problems!

DICK

It's kind of hard to be honest with someone who just wants to bite your head off every chance she gets!

Angel sits back in her chair. Her shoulders drop.

ANGEL

You are such a--

EL

Language!

Dick motions toward El.

DICK

Thank you!

Angel throws her hands in the air.

ANGEL

Oh, so you're siding with him now?

EL

I'm not siding with--

DICK
 Maybe he is, Ang! Maybe you need to
 hear someone else's perspective so
 you--

El sits back in his chair, rests his head against the wall.

EL
 As I was saying, I'm not siding--

ANGEL AND DICK
 Stay out of this!

EL
 I'm trying to!

Angel and Dick lean forward in their chairs.

ANGEL
 (pointing at Dick)
 You drank too much!

DICK
 (pointing at Angel)
 You didn't drink enough!

ANGEL
 (pointing at Dick)
 You always put work before me!

DICK
 (pointing at Angel)
 Dealing with you was work!

El gazes at the ceiling, a blank expression on his face.

EL
 The customer service around here
 really--

Angel sits back in her chair.

ANGEL
 Grow up, Richard!

Dick sits back in his chair.

DICK
 I'll get right on it...Mom.

El suddenly stands, turns to face Angel and Dick.

EL
 Would you two just stop!

Both Angel and Dick cross their arms as they turn away from each other.

EL
How long has this been going on?!

ANGEL
Almost 200 years.

El glances back and forth between Angel and Dick.

EL
Get over it! We're all stuck together for an eternity! I used to think that all my relationship problems would go away once I was dead, so it wouldn't matter anyway! Now I'm standing here having a pointless conversation with the two of you!

Angel and Dick remain motionless.

EL
You might as well work out your differences now, so we can all move on! You don't want this to go on for another 200 years, do you?!

Both Angel and Dick sit in silence for several seconds before Dick slowly turns, looks at Angel. He clears his throat.

DICK
(muttering)
I'm sorry.

ANGEL
(looking at Dick)
What did you say?

DICK
I'm sorry...for everything I said and did.

Angel reaches over, her hand rests on Dick's.

ANGEL
I think that's the first time I've ever heard you say that. I'm sorry, too.

DICK
(smiling)
Do you forgive me?

A small smile pulls at the corner of Angel's mouth.

ANGEL
Of course I forgive you.

Angel and Dick hug each other. El throws his hands in the air.

EL
See?! Now was that so hard to do?!

His eyebrows suddenly crease together as he thinks to himself.

EL
In fact...that's what I need to do
with Marcy...and my mother-in-
law...and everyone else.

He glances at both Angel and Dick as they finish their embrace.

EL
(smiling)
Alright. I think I'm ready to make
things right.

Angel and Dick exchange nervous glances.

DICK
(looking at his watch)
Well, you see, now you've taken too
long to decide.

El's smile fades. His face turns red.

EL
What?

Both Angel and Dick glance through the paperwork attached to their clipboards.

ANGEL
Yes. Regulation 51003-9 clearly
states that all decisions must be
finalized within one hour of--

EL
Fine, so where do I go now?

DICK
(hesitantly)
Limbo.

EL
So there is a third option?

DICK
(nervously)
Sure.

El shrugs his shoulders.

EL
So what do I do in Limbo?

INT. LIMBO - NIGHT

El stands in a large, dimly lit library. CAIN sits at a desk in front of him. His massive frame bulges over the tiny desk.

EL
(frustrated)
I have to do what?!

Cain SIGHS.

CAIN
(pointing)
You're going to take all of these books here, catalog them, and put them back on the shelves.

El peers at the big tower of books piled on the floor.

He glances behind him at the seemingly endless rows of shelves. He turns back to Cain.

EL
No, I don't think so. I've helped merge multi-million dollar companies. I make six figures a year and I drive a Bentley. I'm not a librarian. Do you know who I am?

Cain slowly stands, leans forward as he rests his massive hands on the small desk. He towers over El.

CAIN
Do you know who I am?

EL
The man with no neck?

Cain taps his name tag attached to his shirt.

EL
 (jokingly)
 At least I'm not your brother.

Cain quickly reaches over the small desk, grabs El by the shirt collar and pulls him close to his face.

CAIN
 Listen you little--

EL
 Language!

CAIN
 I've been here for thousands of years and do you know what I've learned?

EL
 (sarcastically)
 That you should find a toothbrush?

CAIN
 That anyone who comes down here is stuck here for a VERY long time, so you and I better learn to get along with each other...but if you make one more smart aleck comment...

EL
 (smiling)
 You'll kill me?

CAIN
 That's it!

Cain grips El by the shirt with both hands, yanks him over the tiny desk.

Dick and Angel suddenly appear. Cain freezes with El in his hands as he peers at them. Cain quickly returns El to the floor, tries to smooth the wrinkles of his shirt.

CAIN
 And that is why I'm so glad you're here.

Cain glances at Angel and Dick as he places his massive arm around El.

CAIN
 We were just introducing ourselves to each other, weren't we, El?

EL
 You should be introduced to
 deodorant.

Cain LAUGHS awkwardly as he squeezes El.

CAIN
 Can we help you with something?

ANGEL
 We have some good news, Mr.
 Summers.

EL
 (sarcastically)
 There's a fourth, equally great
 option?

DICK
 No, but because of what you did for
 Angel and I, you don't have to stay
 in Limbo.

CAIN AND EL
 Oh, thank you.

Angel flips through papers attached to her clipboard.

ANGEL
 According to Regulation 51026-7
 Addendum 14A...

She stops on one paper.

ANGEL
 (reading)
 Should the patron's allotted time
 for decision-making lapse due to
 unforeseen circumstances, during
 which the patron selflessly acts in
 the best interest of other
 individuals, the patron shall be
 granted one final resolution in
 conjunction with one accommodation
 relative to said resolution.

A quizzical look crosses El's face.

EL
 So what does that all mean?

DICK

It means you still get to
choose...and you get one
accommodation with that choice.

ANGEL

(smiling)

So now you can make things right
between you and Marcy...the same
way you did for Richard and I.

El thinks to himself briefly.

EL

Any accommodation?

DICK

That's right.

El smiles.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

El sits on a beach chair. The sun bathes his body as he sips
lemonade from a glass cup. He wears sunglasses and a bathing
suit as he gazes at the massive ocean in front of him.

Angel suddenly appears, a smile etched on her face.

ANGEL

Are you enjoying yourself?

EL

(smiling)

Yes.

A puzzled look crosses Angel's face as she glances around.

ANGEL

Mr. Summers...where's your wife?

El smiles to himself as he raises his lemonade glass in the
air.

INT. LIMBO - NIGHT

Cain sits at his small desk, his huge arms folded across his
chest as he unblinkingly stares ahead. El's wife, Marcy, sits
in a chair next to him. Her finger jabs the air at Cain.

MARCY

And that is why the categorical system around here is so atrocious! Do you hear me, sir?! You need to take care of this right away, because I'm not going to put up with this kind of behavior! Do you understand what I'm saying to you?! Sir?!

CAIN

(not looking at Marcy)
Mrs. Summers, may I tell you something?

Marcy throws her hands in the air.

MARCY

Spit it out already!

Cain continues to stare ahead.

CAIN

Go to...

THE END