

YOU'RE A GOOD GUY, ELI

Written by Neil Murphy

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - DAY

A sparsely furnished apartment with many partially unpacked boxes scattered around.

The front door opens and ANDREW (30s) a lanky handsome man enters carrying a stack of boxes.

Behind him follows ELI (30s) shorter and plain in appearance with two large plastic bags of clothing.

ANDREW

So this is it! Isn't it great?

Eli looks around at the small barren apartment which contains a fold out table and inflatable couch.

ELI

(mustering enthusiasm)

Yeah!

ANDREW

(sighs)

God! I should have done this years ago. Laura and I haven't been working for a long time.

The pair set down the boxes and bags.

ELI

You always seemed happy.

ANDREW

Eli -- I had died in that marriage. The person you've known all this time -- was a dead man. And it took meeting Amanda to show me that. Don't I seem different?

Eli stares at Andrew for a moment.

ELI

You do seem invigorated.

ANDREW

Exactly -- this is a personal renaissance.

Andrew INHALES deeply.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I can't wait for you to meet Amanda. She's so beautiful.

Andrew begins to unpack items wrapped in newspaper from one of the boxes.

ELI
(perplexed)
This is all happening so fast.

ANDREW
Don't get me wrong. I mean Laura was great and part of me will always love her. But Amanda makes me think I can do anything. She believes in me!

ELI
Wow.

ANDREW
For instance, I quit my job!

ELI
(shocked)
What?

ANDREW
I'm done selling insurance. There's no passion in selling insurance. Amanda is encouraging me to go full time with my music. See Laura didn't think I had the talent -- she never supported my dreams.

ELI
But what about money?

Andrew turns and looks down at the shorter Eli.

ANDREW
Eli -- I hope you understand this one day. When you are with someone who loves you. That's all you really need.

Andrew goes over to a plastic bag full of clothing and rummages through.

ELI
Well, I'm happy for you. It's just -
- I'm friends with both of you. And I hate to see Laura get hurt.

ANDREW
I'm sure she'll find someone new.

ELI
 (joking)
 Maybe I'll ask her out.

ANDREW
 (laughs dismissively)
 Yeah -- right!

Andrew stops looking through the clothes.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
 My leather jacket isn't here. Did you see it when we were packing the last of my stuff?

ELI
 No.

ANDREW
 Man -- I don't want to go back there to look for it.

ELI
 I could swing by tonight. Ask Laura if I could take a look around.

ANDREW
 Could you? That be so great. That place is a bit of a combat zone right now. She is not taking this well.

The intercom next to the front door BUZZES and Andrew goes over.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
 This should be Amanda.

Andrew presses the Talk button on the intercom.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
 (into intercom)
 Hey!

AMANDA (V.O.)
 (over intercom)
 Hey it's me.

ANDREW
 (into intercom)
 Come on up, Babe.

Andrew releases the Talk button and presses another to buzz open the front door. He then turns back to Eli.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

She comes over everyday when her shift at the hospital ends. Did I tell you she's a nurse in the children's cancer center?

Eli hides his exasperation.

ELI

I think you mentioned it.

Andrew shakes his head as he marvels.

ANDREW

She's so inspiring.

ELI

Yeah -- seems like it.

There is a KNOCK at the front door and Andrew opens it. AMANDA (20s) a gorgeous brunette walks inside, she wears hospital scrubs and carries a paper bag.

Andrew and Amanda embrace and kiss passionately as Eli awkwardly stands to the side.

Amanda holds the paper bag out to Andrew, it is full of croissants.

AMANDA

I brought croissants.

Andrew takes a croissant from the bag.

ANDREW

They're still warm!

Andrew gestures towards Eli.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Amanda I want you to meet my friend Eli. We've lived across the hall from each other for years -- at my old apartment.

Amanda extends her hand and Eli takes it.

AMANDA

It's great to meet you.

ELI

Likewise. Andrew can't stop talking about you.

AMANDA

Oh really?

Amanda smiles at Andrew who kisses her deeply again.

Eli looks uncomfortable at the display of affection.

ELI

Well I should probably get going.

Andrew and Amanda move towards the couch and sit down.

ANDREW

Oh come on, stay. Have a croissant.

Andrew picks up a guitar off a stack of boxes.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

We were just about to have a little jam session. I'd love your input.

ELI

Sorry, I need to run. But I'll let you know about the jacket.

ANDREW

Thanks man.

Eli heads for the door as Andrew begins playing the guitar.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(singing)

*DEEP DOWN INSIDE/WHERE I CAN'T SEE
THE LIGHT/GIRL -- YOU ARE THE
KEY/OUT OF THE DUNGEON OF MY SOUL.*

Eli pauses at the door for a moment and listens with a slight grimace at Andrew's singing, then he leaves.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT/FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Eli comes into the hallway, he's spruced himself up a bit with a nice collared shirt and product in his hair. He stops in front of a mirror. He looks at himself as he nervously smooths his hair on the sides and tousles it on top.

Eli leans against the wall and looks towards the mirror as he practices his greeting. He EXHALES deeply then looks up.

ELI

Hey Laura, how you holding up?

Eli clears his throat.

ELI (CONT'D)
 (more consoling)
 Hey Laura, how you holding up?
 (more neutral)
 Hey, how are you?

Eli EXHALES again and moves towards the front door. He looks out the peep hole and sees the door to Apartment 7 across the hall. Eli opens the door and exits.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eli crosses the hallway and KNOCKS on the door of Apartment 7. He carefully positions himself, leaning against the door frame in a cool confident pose.

Eli waits for a moment and Laura (30s) a angelic blonde opens the door.

ELI
 (nervous)
 Hey.

Laura looks disheveled and puffy eyed, she brightens a little seeing Eli.

LAURA
 Hey Eli.

ELI
 How are you?

Laura breaks eye contact with Eli, she forces a small laugh.

LAURA
 I've been better.

Eli nods understandingly.

ELI
 Sure. I'm here if you need someone to talk to.

LAURA
 Thanks.

There is an awkward pause.

ELI
 Listen -- Andrew was too scared to come back but he thinks he left his leather jacket around here?

Laura looks at the floor.

LAURA
Yeah, why don't you come in.

She holds the door open and Eli enters the apartment.

INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The apartment has three large trash bags in the front hall. Two of them are open - they seem to be stuffed with mementos of Laura and Andrew's relationship. Photographs in frames, cards, gifts, etc.

Laura reaches into one of the open trash bags and drags out a leather jacket which she hands to Eli.

LAURA
He left it under the bed. Looks like you're just in time.

Eli takes the jacket.

ELI
Thanks.

He gestures towards the trash bags.

ELI (CONT'D)
Are you throwing all this out?

Laura nods as she stares at the bags.

LAURA
Yeah. Why? Do you think I'm making a mistake?

ELI
No, I think you are doing the right thing. Andrew has moved on - you should too. It's healthy.

LAURA
I guess... Sometimes I hate him but the rest of the time -- I just want him to come back.

Laura rubs her eyes.

Eli consolingly puts his hand on her shoulder.

ELI
Hey -- why don't you let me take
you out tomorrow night?

Eli holds up his hand innocently.

ELI (CONT'D)
Just as friends. But it'd be good
for you to get out and take your
mind off things.

Laura gives Eli a small smile.

LAURA
Sure, why not.

ELI
Great, how about I come by at 6?

LAURA
Okay.

Eli smiles back.

ELI
Okay then. Well I'll see you later.

Eli opens the front door and moves into the hallway.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Laura stands in the doorway looking after Eli.

LAURA
(warmly)
You're a good guy, Eli.

Eli sheepishly shrugs.

ELI
I try.

Eli waves and goes back into his apartment.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eli enters the bedroom as he admires Andrew's leather jacket
in his hands. He takes the jacket and puts it on as he looks
at himself in the mirror.

AMANDA (O.C.)
Looks good on you.

Eli turns and sees "Amanda" who is actually Kristi, an escort girl, lying on the bed. She looks completely different now in a sleek sexy evening dress with makeup and expensive jewelry.

ELI
Hey Kristi!

Amanda's demeanor and personality are different as well -- she is now sultry and seductive.

AMANDA
Your door was unlocked. So I let myself in.

ELI
Sure, I've been expecting you. You're doing a great job with Andrew.

Eli reaches into his pants' pocket and takes out two large stacks of bills which he hands to her.

ELI (CONT'D)
Here -- for this week and next.

Amanda collects the money and puts it into her purse.

AMANDA
Thanks.

Eli holds up several more bills and waves them.

ELI
You want to stick around? I could take you somewhere - make a night of it?

AMANDA
I'd like to -- but I'm meeting a client. Businessman from Tokyo, he doesn't like to be kept waiting.

Amanda stands up and moves towards Eli.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
So how much longer do you want me to be "Amanda"?

ELI
A few more weeks at least. Things are going to take a while with Laura.

Amanda strokes the back of Eli's head.

AMANDA

You'll be fine. Just use what I've
taught you.

Amanda leans in and deeply kisses Eli. She moves behind him
and hugs Eli's shoulders as they both gaze into the mirror at
how he looks wearing the jacket.

Amanda whispers into Eli's ear.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

She'll love you.

Amanda turns and leaves the room.

Eli watches her go then turns back to the mirror.

He slowly ZIPS up the leather jacket and stares at himself as
he practices again.

ELI

Hey Laura, you ready to go?

Eli smiles at himself.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END.