

LOVE, AUNT JENNY
an original screenplay by
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INT. AL'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - EVENING

Tacky Christmas decorations hang on the walls of this modest apartment building's basement hallway.

Wearing a torn leather jacket and cowboy boots, AL (30s, very thin) approaches his apartment door and notices a box outside his door. It's a Christmas package from Aunt Jenny.

Al picks up the box and enters his apartment.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The apartment is furnished with the basics. Very little on the walls excepts for the poster of a half clad attractive woman on a motorcycle.

There are security bars on the windows throughout the apartment.

From outside, the faint sounds of kids playing.

Al sets the package on a small dining table. He removes his coat and tosses it onto an old futon couch.

He pulls a small knife out of his pocket and opens the box.

Inside the box, Al first sees and opens a card from Aunt Jenny. He pockets the money inside, then briefly scans the written text in the card.

AUNT JENNY (V.O.)

Dearest Alan, I hope this letter finds you well. I am sending a few treats that I think you'll enjoy. You certainly did when you were a boy. One of your-

Al tosses the card in the garbage.

Then comes the tin of home-baked cookies. Al eats one cookie and dumps the rest into the garbage. He sets the empty tin on the table.

Next, Al pulls out a homemade Christmas tea towel with bells attached to it. He jingles the bells a few times, then tosses the dish towel into the garbage.

Al looks into the box and sees another card there. He slowly picks it up. The card has his name on it and at the top left corner are the words "From Ron".

Al stares at the card and sits down. For several seconds, he just stares at the card in his hand.

He scratches his chin. He sets the card on the table, unopened.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, KITCHEN - LATER

Al drops a huge t-bone steak into a hot skillet on the stove. He grabs a bag of frozen french fries from the freezer and spreads fries over a baking sheet. He slides the sheet into the hot oven.

He turns around and spits into the sink. He washes his hands and looks for the roll of napkins. He finds it but there's only 1/2 a napkin left, and he can't rip it off. He notices Aunt Jenny's tea towel in the garbage can. He retrieves it and wipes his hands on it. He clips it onto the refrigerator door handle.

He checks on his steak and turns the heat down.

He opens the refrigerator door and gets the ketchup. The bells on aunt Jenny's tea towel jingle.

He heads into the dining room.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Al brings the ketchup to the table.

He sits down and stares at Ron's unopened letter.

He reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out a bag of weed. He pulls out a joint, then carefully stuffs the weed bag into Aunt Jenny's cookie tin.

He lights the joint and stares at Ron's letter. He takes a few drags then sets the joint down on an ashtray.

He gets up and heads into the kitchen.

The sound of the refrigerator door opening and Aunt Jenny's BELLS JINGLING.

Al returns to the table with a cold beer. He sits down and takes a few gulps.

He reaches over and picks up Ron's letter. He opens it and pulls out a cheesy Christmas card. Inside the card is the written message "Season's Greetings from Ron and Wendy". Also in the card is a folded hand written letter consisting of many pages. Al starts reading.

RON (V.O.)

Hey Al, Well I made it out. Boy that couldn't've happened soon enough.

(MORE)

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

1 year off for good behavior. I'll take it. But as ya know.. I never would have been in there at all if ya'd just waited. 5 more minutes is all we needed. Now I understand why ya did it, but it's the how that intrigues me. If ya remember, we made a pact. And last time I checked, it was signed in blood. How anyone can just walk away from somethin' like that is beyond me. But that's exactly what ya did when you drove off and left us in the dust. As ya know, the getaway car is a vital part of the operation. When ya lose that, it's like losing part o' ya' body. And nobody likes that.

Al rubs his chin and sets the letter down on the table. He takes a few sips of beer. He lets out a deep sigh and stares worriedly at all of the unread pages of the letter.

He gets up and heads into the kitchen.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Al flips the steak and checks on his fries in the oven. He grabs a metal spatula and flips the fries.

He picks up a few hot greasy fries. They're too hot and he drops them onto the floor. He picks up the fries and dumps them in the garbage.

He washes his hands at the sink and dries them on Aunt Jenny's tea towel- JINGLE BELLS.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Al sits down and takes a few sips of beer. He slides the ashtray over and lights the joint. He takes a few drags and sets the joint down. He picks up Ron's letter and resumes reading.

RON (V.O.)

And here's more news... I know about you and Wendy. Really, Al? My girl, too? How'd that get passed me? Or did the chemistry just suddenly appear when ya went to comfort her after I was inside? Boggles the mind, buddy.

(MORE)

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And if that wasn't enough, I found out from Wendy that ya actually took it upon yourself to have my dog put down.

A few children play outside. One of them knocks on Al's window. The children scream and run away.

Al gets up and closes the blinds of all the windows. He sits back down and continues to read.

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What gives with that? My dog was like a son to me. I never met a more loyal creature. Ya may not be an animal lover, but that don't give ya no right to decide the fate of another man's dog. I don't care how sick he was. There's always a way. That dog was only 7 years old. There was a way, buddy. You know it. And I know it.

Al sets the letter down on the table. He clears his throat and guzzles the rest of his beer. He heads into the kitchen.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Al checks on his steak. He sprinkles salt and pepper over it. He gets a large cutting knife out of a drawer, cuts a corner of the steak and pops it into his mouth. The steak is still very red. Al turns up the heat.

He reaches into the refrigerator for another beer. Aunt Jenny's tea towel plays JINGLE BELLS.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM

At the table, Al opens his new beer and picks up Ron's letter.

RON (V.O.)

And on top of all of that.. as I sit here today, I do so with the knowledge that, according to Wendy, it was you who broke my favorite coffee mug. No doubt after one of your all-night orgies here. I had that mug for over 10 years. A gift from an ol' buddy who crashed his bike into the side of a mountain. That cup didn't even have a chip on it. Now that one really hurts.

Children scream outside. They knock on Al's window. He ignores them.

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Now some might say I'm too emotional, but I think I have the right to be a little peeved here. What I would like are some answers. Not just yes and no answers, but real answers. Heartfelt. See, I really want to understand... 'cause without understanding, man is lost. And until I've found those answers, I won't rest. And buddy, I'm really tired. I am so tired I can't even begin to tell ya.

Al sets the letter down and guzzles more beer. He lights his joint and smokes the rest of it. His hand shakes as he picks up the letter.

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hey.. in all this catchin' up, I almost forgot to tell ya that I got ya a little somethin' for Christmas. I may be frugal but I ain't no grinch. Look inside Aunt Jenny's package there for a little red box. You'll find a little somethin' from me and Wendy in there. Go ahead and get it. I'll wait here. Go on now...

Al looks into Aunt Jenny's package. He rifles through crumpled up newspapers and finds a green box. He looks again and finds a red one. He sits back down and unwraps the red package. He tosses the wrapping paper onto the floor and hesitates to open the box. Slowly, he lifts the top of the box.

Inside the box is a bag with a draw string. Al dumps the contents of the bag onto the table. It is a pile of bloody human teeth. Al GRUNTS in shock and moves his chair back from the table. He picks up Ron's letter.

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's something, i'n't it? Wendy didn't need 'em anymore so I thought you'd want a souvenir. Bet ya can't find her top two front teeth in all o' that. They were my favorites. Anyway.. a little holiday project for ya...

A sweat bead rolls down Al's forehead

The smoke detector suddenly BLASTS. There's smoke everywhere. Al runs into the kitchen.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

He grabs the skillet handle and slides it onto another burner. The the steak is burnt. He turns the burner off.

He disconnects the smoke detector.

He retrieves the baking sheet from the oven and sets it down on top of the stove. The fries are just right, but Al leaves them there. He turns the oven off.

He gets another beer out of the refrigerator. JINGLE BELLS.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Al reaches through the bars and opens the windows to let the smoke out. He gets a pillow from the couch and waves it to disperse the smoke.

Al sits down, leans back against his chair and stares at Ron's letter on the table. Slowly, he reaches over and picks it up.

RON (V.O.)

Now, I have to tell ya I've become good friends with your Aunt Jenny. I told her we was ol' buddies and she gets quite a hoot out of my stories. We've become so close that I think she'd tell me just about anything I wanted to know. Now that's a real woman. No games. Just tells it like it is. Sweet old lady, always ready to help out. They don't make 'em like that anymore. And she's shown me some mementoes o' yours.

(pronounced "mementoes")

I can see she really has a soft spot for her nephew Al. That's for sure. I can bet ya never left her standing out in the dust.

Some children scream outside. Most of the smoke in the room has cleared. Al gets up and closes the windows. A few children run by and knock on his window. He returns to the letter.

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There's one more gift for ya in Aunt Jenny's package. The green box.

(MORE)

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Another little somethin' from me 'n
Wendy. Why don't ya get that one
and I'll wait here.

Al gets the small green box out of the package. His hand trembles as he unwraps it. He sets the unwrapped box on the table without opening it.

He stands up and stares at the little box. Suddenly, he dumps it into the garbage, unopened.

Al starts to clear the table. With a piece of wrapping paper, he gathers and slides Wendy's bloody teeth into a plastic bag. He rifles through the newspaper pieces in Aunt Jenny's box. Nothing else in there. He drops the plastic bag containing Wendy's teeth into Aunt Jenny's box. He throws the scraps of wrapping paper into the box.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Al sets Aunt Jenny's box down by the front door.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Al stabs a fork into the thick burnt steak in the skillet and drops it onto a plate.

He sticks the plate in the refrigerator. JINGLE BELLS.

He picks up the baking sheet and slides the french fries onto a plate.

He opens the refrigerator door and finds room for the plate. JINGLE BELLS.

He turns around and spits in the sink like he means it.

He leaves the room and returns shortly with the bottle of ketchup. In the refrigerator it goes. JINGLE BELLS.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, BATHROOM - LATER

Al brushes his teeth. As he completes brushing one side of his mouth, he slows down and suddenly stares at his teeth. He winces and puts the brush down. He walks out.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - LATER

In the living room area, Al opens his sofabed/futon frame and gets ready for bed. He pulls a wrinkly sheet over the lumpy mattress.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Middle of the night. Al tosses and turns in bed. He sits up and turns the light on. He eyes the garbage can containing the unopened box from Ron.

He gets up and retrieves the box. He sits down and very slowly opens it.

Inside the box is a human finger. Al JUMPS and throws the box up in the air. The finger lands on the carpet behind him.

He reaches across for Ron's letter, which is still on the table.

RON (V.O.)

If ya guessed middle finger, you're right buddy. And there ya have it. Wendy's final message to ya. She was a feisty one alright. But it's all in good spirit. We all know how women can be fickle. I imagine ya won't be able to attend the funeral being so far away 'n all. I totally understand, buddy. Who can afford those airline tickets these days. Things have sure changed out here in the real world since I been gone. And then there's Aunt Jenny's funeral. But that's a tad premature. Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Al gets up and gets another beer from the refrigerator. JINGLE BELLS. He resumes reading...

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Well buddy.. I've gotta wrap things up here. How's that for a pun. I'm sure glad I was able to catch up with ya today thanks to dear Aunt Jenny. I have the feeling you 'n me gonna have one of them heartfelt talks sooner than later. Until then, may the season's good cheer keep ya smilin'. Yours truly, your buddy Ron.

Al throws the letter onto the table. He gets up and paces the room. He gets the metal spatula from the kitchen and carefully picks up Wendy's middle finger off the carpet.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Al dumps Wendy's finger into Aunt Jenny's box by the door.

He unlocks/opens the door and looks out into the hallway. Not a creature is stirring. He closes the door and locks it.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Al approaches each window and raises the blinds. He makes sure all windows are locked, then checks to ensure the bars are securely in place. He lowers the blinds.

He sits on the edge of his bed. He turns the light out.

INT. AL'S BASEMENT APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM - LATER

Middle of the night. Al is sound asleep in bed. A nearby nightlight shines a soft glow on his face.

Someone knocks playfully on one of his windows. And again.

Al wakes up and hears the knocking.

AL

Yeah let's see you get through them bars.

More playful knocking on the window. Al yawns and closes his eyes. He cuddles the blanket.

Suddenly, the SOUND OF THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR CLOSING. JINGLE BELLS.

Al's left eye POPS WIDE OPEN.

In the dark room, someone playfully knocks against the INSIDE of a window.

THE END.

AS THE CREDITS ROLL, WE HEARS INTERMITTENT SCREAMS AND HOWLS IN THE DARK.

WE ALSO HEAR THE FOLLOWING VOICEOVER FROM AUNT JENNY.

AUNT JENNY (V.O.)

Dearest Alan, I hope this letter finds you well. I am sending a few treats that I think you'll enjoy. You certainly did when you were a boy. One of your old friends, Ron, has been keeping me company these days.

(MORE)

AUNT JENNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He's been telling me stories about the two of you. My.. you two have had your share of adventures. By the way, I have given Ron your address, as he seems very eager to get back in touch with you. That's what I call true friendship. I've invited Ron for dinner with a few of his friends. Seems we've developed a kind of kinship. I must say I don't mind, especially now with your uncle gone. Ron and his friends will be showing me a new game come January. I must say I'm curious about that. I've always been fond of games, especially board games. Well Alan, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the new year bring you joy, peace and good health. Love, Aunt Jenny

ONE FINAL LONG HOWLING SCREEEEEEAM...

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