

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK - DAY

Boots press into fresh snow on a sunny day.

FREDERICK, 55, stops to catch his breath. He looks ahead:
There's a break in the trees. He pushes on.

Reaching the break, Frederick surveys the scene. Mountains
and valleys stretch out for miles in every direction.

He smiles, plops onto a nearby rock.

Frederick reaches into his coat pocket, pulls out a small
plastic bag, sets it to the side.

JOHN (O.S.)

Far out, man.

Frederick spins to see: JOHN DENVER, 53, in the flesh.

John sits next to Frederick, looks out over the mountains.

JOHN

I can see why you picked this spot.
But, you mind if I ask why you
picked *me*?

FREDERICK

It was either you, or George Burns.

John laughs...

JOHN

An "Oh, God!" joke. That's--wow.
You know only like three people are
going to get it, right?

Frederick nods.

FREDERICK

This one's for me.

JOHN

Tough year?

FREDERICK

Tough couple of years. Dad's not
doing well. Mom's already gone.

JOHN

And, that's why you chose me?

FREDERICK

"Death is not an ending, but a symbol of movement along the path upon which we are all traveling. As it may be painful to lose contact with the physical aspect of one, we love, the Spirit can never be lost. We have been and always will be a part of each other."

JOHN

That's beautiful.

FREDERICK

It's yours.

JOHN

I said that? Far out.

FREDERICK

She loved you. Taught me to love you. What eight-year-old has a "John Denver" wall in their room?

JOHN

Wish I could have seen that.

FREDERICK

You literally sang me to sleep every night for several years.

John eyes the plastic bag.

JOHN

So, why today?

FREDERICK

Not feeling particularly thankful. And, I couldn't eat any more turkey. I thought--we're in Colorado...It's legal now, you know?

JOHN

I had other means of escape.

FREDERICK

I'm sorry.

JOHN

We all have our demons.

FREDERICK

Did you do it on purpose? The airplane?

JOHN

It would be a personal moment, if I did.

FREDERICK

I shouldn't have asked. It's just-- I knew you when I was a kid--there was an innocence...

JOHN

You get it now, though?

FREDERICK

I do.

Frederick shifts, ready for a subject change.

FREDERICK

We saw you in concert.

JOHN

Yeah?

FREDERICK

St. Louis. 1976 or so, I'm guessing. Third row.

JOHN

Far out, man.

FREDERICK

You say that a lot.

JOHN

World's a crazy place.

FREDERICK

I never thought much about it. The concert. I mean...it was amazing. Even as a kid--when you take everything for granted. But, now...how in the hell did my dad get third row tickets? We could barely afford a box of mac and cheese.

JOHN

So, you are feeling thankful.

FREDERICK
I guess I am.

JOHN
Why am I here?

FREDERICK
Can I go back?

JOHN
You know you can't.

FREDERICK
You didn't happen to bring your
guitar?

John snaps his fingers. He's holding a guitar.

FREDERICK
Didn't George Burns do something
similar in--

JOHN
--You've really gotta stop with the
"Oh, God!" references.

FREDERICK
It impacted me. Sue me.

JOHN
What do you want to hear?

FREDERICK
She loved them all. Heck, I'd
settle for "Saturday Night In
Toledo, Ohio."

JOHN
That was a fun one.

John ponders. Plays.

JOHN
*He was born in the summer of his
27th year...*

Frederick cries as John continues with *Rocky Mountain High*.

John finishes, sets the guitar aside.

JOHN
Feel any better?

FREDERICK

No. But, also, yes. Thank you.

John looks over the range.

JOHN

These mountains. They've been here millions of years. Me? I lasted fifty-three. Your mom?

FREDERICK

Seventy-eight. I think. I was always a kid around her. Kids don't think of their parent's birthdays. Certainly don't think about their death.

John stands.

JOHN

Time for me to go.

He motions to the plastic bag.

JOHN

First time getting high?

FREDERICK

Oh, I'm not high.

JOHN

I just assumed--since I'm here.

FREDERICK

I've never been high before. Or drunk. Do you think I'm doing it wrong?

JOHN

You're doing it the only way you know how. Same as everybody else.

FREDERICK

I suppose.

JOHN

You happy?

Frederick mulls the thought. Decides...

FREDERICK

I am.

JOHN

I remember you, by the way. St.
Louis. 1976.

FREDERICK

Not a chance.

JOHN

No. Your little wire-rimmed
glasses. Your bowl cut. The smile
on your face as you sang every
single word to every song I played.

FREDERICK

It was a good night.

JOHN

It was.

John turns to walk away...slowly fades into nothing.

Frederick picks up the plastic bag. Looks at the joints
inside. He stuffs the bag back into his coat pocket.

FREDERICK

Maybe next year.

He starts down the trail, back to the woods.

He sings...

FREDERICK

*But the string's already broken and
he doesn't really care. It keeps
changin' fast and it don't last for
long. But the Colorado Rocky
Mountain High...I've seen it
rainin' fire in the sky...*

FADE OUT.