

THE SMILE-MAN

Written by Anton Lanshakov

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1 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

We see a man sitting in front of the doctor's desk. This is WILLEM. Right now we see him only from his back. The DOCTOR - intelligent and kind man in his 50's, - explains the diagnosis to Willem.

DOCTOR

It's been a week since your accident and I studied your case carefully. So here's the good news: and you are alive and you can walk. Rarely accidents like yours leave people alive. But there is the bad news: you have the tiny fracture of your spine nerve. I strongly do *not* recommend an operation because there is a chance to make you completely immobile. So your spine cord fracture only paralyzes a few muscles on your face. Basically it means you will smile forever.

We now switch to Willem. For the first time we see his face. On his face Willem has the smile - the big, broadest, showing-all-his-32-teeth smile. He looks like the happiest idiot in the whole world.

The fact is that Willem isn't idiot at all. And in spite of his smile he isn't happy.

WILLEM

(keeps on smiling)

Fuck.

CUT TO:

FILM'S TITLE "THE SMILE-MAN" ON A BLACK BACKGROUND

CUT TO:

2 INT. HOSPITAL, RESTROOM - EVENING

As the opening credits roll in, we see Willem looking in the mirror in the restroom. He tries to lower the corners of his mouth with his hands. No success. The smile is still on Willem's face, no matter what he does. And it will remain on Willem's face throughout entire story.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. HOSPITAL, MAIN ENTRANCE – EVENING

Willem walks from the doors, smile on his face, as the middle-aged beautiful woman IRENE walks by. They both stop at taxi parking lot. The taxi pulls in, Irene opens the door – and then she looks at Willem's face.

IRENE

It's you...

WILLEM

Oh... Yes... Nice to meet you...

Willem tries to hide his smile – but it's too late.

IRENE

You! How could you even... You know that you ruined my life completely?

WILLEM

Look, that was the car accident, it wasn't my fault!

IRENE

It was your car! Oh God! How could you even smile right now!

Suddenly Irene starts to cry – tears run through her cheeks leaving traces of mascara. She puts her handbag on top of taxi to free hands for wiping the cheeks.

WILLEM

Oh, please, no... Listen...

He steps forward to calm Irene but she angrily sits into the taxi and slams the door.

The car drives away – and Irene's forgotten handbag falls on the ground.

WILLEM

Wait! Wait! Your bag!

Willem takes the handbag, rushes after the taxi but the car is faster.

Willem stops, then calls for another taxi. The new taxi immediately arrives and Willem jumps in.

CUT TO:

4 INT. TAXI - EVENING

Willem gets close to TAXI DRIVER and points to the taxi in which Irene just drove away.

WILLEM

Look, it's like in the movies - you follow that taxi!

Taxi Driver willingly turns his head to Willem. For a few seconds he just stares at Willem. Willem smiles - he always does. Taxi Driver smiles too - mirroring Willem's smile.

WILLEM

I'm serious! Follow that car!
Please!

TAXI DRIVER

Oh yeah, I got it! You're joking!

Taxi Driver starts to laugh.

WILLEM

No, I'm not joking! Listen, my face is paralyzed, this is not a smile.

TAXI DRIVER

Yeah, yeah! That's funny, oh, man...

Just one more glance at Willem's smile - and now Taxi Driver can't stop laughing.

TAXI DRIVER

I got it! I got it... Is it hidden camera show? Man, I got your tricks! That's hilarious.

WILLEM

Please stop laughing at me! How am I supposed to get her?

CUT TO:

5 EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Willem sits on the bench waiting for the bus to come. He brings Irene's ID from her handbag and examines it. There's an address written on her ID.

Next to Willem stands SHORTY - the hot-tempered lowlife thug. Willem tries hard to avoid Shorty's gaze. But that doesn't help.

SHORTY
Hey, what's so funny?

WILLEM
(muttering)
Oh come on...

SHORTY
Are you laughing at me? I said —
are you laughing at me?

WILLEM
No, I'm not.

SHORTY
Then what's so funny?

Shorty approaches Willem.

WILLEM
Oh Jesus, I'm so tired of that.
Listen, I'm not smiling. I got my
face paralyzed. Want to see how I
smile? That's how.

Nothing changes. Willem just keeps on smiling as usual.

WILLEM
And that's how I'm *not* smiling.

Again nothing changes on Willem's face — the same smile.

WILLEM
See? Now I smile. Now I don't. Now
I smile. Now I don't. Got it?

Yes, Shorty got it.

CUT TO:

6 INT. IRENE'S APPARTMENT — NIGHT

Knock, knock! — somebody is knocking at the front door.
Irene comes to answer to the guest.

IRENE
Yes, who is it?

WILLEM (V/O)
You lost your handbag.

Irene opens the door.

The door reveals Willem. He looks like he was beaten up – his hair is messed, clothes are torn. Willem stands still, smiles and shows to Irene her handbag.

Irene closes the door.

WILLEM (V/O)

Okay, I'll just leave it by your door and walk away.

Irene opens the door once again.

IRENE

Give it back.

Willem handles handbag to Irene.

WILLEM

I just want to apologize for the accident. I feel really...

IRENE

You have no idea.

Irene starts to cry – just like the first time.

WILLEM

Oh not again.

IRENE

I totally lost my career; I was that close to prime-time host and now I... I need a handkerchief.

WILLEM

Here, it's in your bag..

IRENE

Why? You even searched through my bag!

WILLEM

That's how I know your address. Please, calm down.

IRENE

I am calm! Stop that smile!

WILLEM

I can't!

IRENE

Get out! Please! Just leave me alone.

WILLEM

All right, all right, I'm leaving now, just...

IRENE

And stop smiling!

WILLEM

I can't - literally can't! I damaged that little nerve on my spine. Now I'll smile forever. I'm really sorry for your career. Seriously! Now I'm leaving. Please, don't cry.

IRENE

I'm not... Wait, what?

But Willem is already outside her apartment. Irene quickly crosses the room, opens the door and goes out.

The door behind her self-closes with loud click. Irene closes her eyes. Willem, who was half-way down the stairs, turns to Irene.

WILLEM

Looks like you forgot your keys inside?

IRENE

Yes.

WILLEM

I'll call the locksmith service.

IRENE

So you said you damaged your nerve?

CUT TO:

7 EXT. APARTMENT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Willem and Irene are seating on the stairs to apartment entrance. It is early morning and the sun is rising. Looks like Willem and Irene sat there for a whole night.

WILLEM

...So I got fired. Luckily I have my own business but now I can't show up there because of my smile.

IRENE

And what's your business about?

WILLEM

Undertaker.

IRENE

You mean you make coffins?

WILLEM

Yeah.

IRENE

That is pretty ironic.

WILLEM

Yeah, ironic.

All of a sudden Irene starts crying.

WILLEM

Oh please, don't cry..

IRENE

I'm not crying. That's from accident. I damaged nerve too – like you did. There's something with my lachrymal glands, you know, that stuff with tear-bags inside head. Now I start crying from every single emotion I have, whether it's sorrow or joy. And I was a news reporter..

Willem just looks at Irene. She is beautiful, the sun is rising, they're waiting for locksmith – life seems to get better and better.

IRENE

I wonder, how it feels, when you want to cry and the only thing you can do is to smile.

WILLEM

You wouldn't believe it, but right now I'm *actually* smiling.

THE END