

"Time to Change"

by  
Mike Murphy

112 Lovering Street  
Medway, MA 02053-2326  
508-533-8310  
mikeandzachary@gmail.com  
WGA Registered

1

INT. MR. TUCKER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

1

TUCKER, a 50-plus man in a motorized wheelchair, sits behind his oversized desk in his plush corner office. City skyscrapers can be seen through the windows behind him. He looks old beyond his years, having lived a harsh life.

The office door is opened by MALLORY, a shy, thin scientist in his early 30s, who is wearing a shirt and tie. Tucker calls out to him.

TUCKER

Close the door, Mallory!

Mallory quickly closes the door and nervously takes a seat across from Tucker.

MALLORY

You wanted to see me?

TUCKER

I *certainly* did.

(beat)

What's the latest?

MALLORY

It's coming along well.

TUCKER

*When*, Mallory? How soon?

MALLORY

Another day. . . two on the outside.

TUCKER

Have you done your test runs?

MALLORY

Oh, yes - with a white mouse and a rabbit.

TUCKER

*And?*

MALLORY

They both returned with no ill effects.

TUCKER

Then you're ready for a *human* subject?

(CONTINUED)

MALLORY

Not *quite* yet, Mr. Tucker.

TUCKER

No?

MALLORY

We need to do a few more tests  
before we can entertain *that* idea.

TUCKER

But you said the mouse and the  
rabbit were fine.

MALLORY

A human being is very different  
from either of those animals - in  
size alone. We need to be certain  
that using the machine on a human  
won't constitute a death sentence.

Tucker angrily comes out from behind his desk.

TUCKER

You're dragging your feet!

MALLORY

Not at all, sir.

TUCKER

Need I remind you of the *millions*  
I've poured into this pet project  
of yours?

MALLORY

I'd hardly call it a pet -

TUCKER

*Need I?*

MALLORY

(beat)  
No, sir.

TUCKER

You had been turned down by  
*numerous* banks before I came  
along. A dozen, wasn't it?

MALLORY

(sotto voce)  
Something like that.

(CONTINUED)

TUCKER  
(sarcastically)  
Something. . . like. . . that.

MALLORY  
Just a few more tests to be  
*absolutely* safe.

TUCKER  
How long will that take?

MALLORY  
Like I said, a day, maybe two.

TUCKER  
Make it *one*.

MALLORY  
There are certain corners I simply  
*can't* cut.

TUCKER  
Do you anticipate the tests to  
show any potential problems for a  
human subject?

MALLORY  
No.

TUCKER  
And after you get those results,  
how long will it be until a human  
can make the trip?

MALLORY  
It should only be a matter of an  
hour or so to properly calibrate  
the machinery for his or her  
journey.

TUCKER  
*His*.

MALLORY  
Sir?

TUCKER  
I know *exactly* who the first  
subject should be.

MALLORY  
Who?

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

TUCKER

*You, Mallory. The honor will be  
yours.*

FADE OUT.

2 INT. MR. TUCKER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

2

MALLORY

*Me?*

TUCKER

*It's your project.*

MALLORY

*But -*

TUCKER

*I need you to do me a favor.*

MALLORY

*A favor?*

TUCKER

*(chuckles)*  
*You didn't think I poured all that  
money into your time shifter  
without something in mind, did  
you?*

MALLORY

*I never really thought about it.*

TUCKER

*That's why I'm in charge here, and  
you're not.*

*(beat)*  
*You do this favor for me, and I  
will give you every legal right to  
the shifter.*

MALLORY

*You will?*

TUCKER

*Free and clear. I'll sign the  
papers before you leave on your  
time hop. My attorney has already  
prepared them.*

MALLORY

*You were sure I'd accept?*

(CONTINUED)

TUCKER

I thought it would be an offer you couldn't refuse.

(beat)

I *could* make millions off your device. With the funds I've given you to construct and perfect it, I could easily argue before a court that your shifter belongs to me. However, this favor is worth *any* amount of money.

MALLORY

It's *that* important?

TUCKER

It *certainly* is.

MALLORY

Where would I be going?

TUCKER

The past: December 6, 1980, to be precise.

MALLORY

To do what?

Tucker tries to hide the emotions brewing inside of him from remembering.

TUCKER

To save a life.

MALLORY

I don't understand.

TUCKER

One very, very important life that ended far too soon.

MALLORY

Who?

TUCKER

(beat)

My wife, Anne.

MALLORY

I didn't know you were ever married.

(CONTINUED)

TUCKER

It wasn't for long.

(beat)

I want you to keep this under your hat.

MALLORY

Of course.

TUCKER

I was working for a small chemical company in Philly back then. Anne came into town to meet me for lunch. We had only been married for about three years.

(beat)

She was hit and killed by a truck in front of my building.

MALLORY

I'm so sorry.

TUCKER

Have you ever wondered why I'm in such poor health? Why I must depend on this blasted wheelchair to get around?

MALLORY

No, sir. I haven't.

TUCKER

I *earned* it.

(beat)

After Anne died, I wanted to forget everything - oh so *desperately* to forget! I tried *anything* to forget the pain. For more years than I care to remember, I was not my own man but a slave to many, *many* vices.

(beat)

Now, all those years of substance abuse have caught up with me. I would not wish my quality of life on my worst enemy.

(beat)

Saving Anne's life in 1980 will change all this.

MALLORY

It will?

(CONTINUED)

TUCKER

With her alive, I never would have slowly destroyed myself. When you save her life, I expect to undergo a transformation. I will be a healthy, happy, vibrant Frank Tucker!

(beat)

Maybe I'll even be a father.

MALLORY

Do we dare risk changing the past?

TUCKER

I don't see how it will do anything but good. It shouldn't affect anyone but Anne and me.

(beat)

Do we have a deal?

FADE OUT.

Mallory, in a white lab coat, stands by a large computer, taking notes. All around him, computer lights are flashing and his staff are milling about monitoring the equipment. He is surprised to hear Tucker's voice.

TUCKER

Are the test results in?

MALLORY

Mr. Tucker, I didn't hear you.

TUCKER

You had your eyes glued to that computer.

(beat)

Are the results in?

MALLORY

Coming in now, sir.

He looks at the screen again for several seconds.

MALLORY

*Hmmm.*

TUCKER

Something wrong?

(CONTINUED)



MALLORY

Nothing we can't work around.

TUCKER

Tell me.

MALLORY

Due to the greater size of a *human* subject, the traveler will only be able to spend a limited amount of time in the past before cellular degradation begins.

TUCKER

How long?

MALLORY

Forty-five minutes.

TUCKER

*More* than enough time.

MALLORY

I'll have to reprogram the shifter's data banks to automatically recall the subject at the 45-minute mark. He'll need to carry some kind of GPS device to allow the shifter to lock onto him and bounce him back here.

TUCKER

Can't you just do the job and return?

MALLORY

No. Forty-five minutes is the minimum *and* the maximum. The subject can stay for no more and no less.

(beat)

Also, the threat of cell damage will prevent anyone from taking a *second* time hop.

TUCKER

Then you'll have to get it right the first time.

(beat)

How long will this set you back?

(CONTINUED)

MALLORY

I should be able to complete the reprogramming and put together a GPS by tomorrow morning.

TUCKER

For *you*?

MALLORY

(beat)

I'll have my answer for you then.

TUCKER

(chuckles)

You're a tougher nut to crack than I thought, Mallory.

(beat)

Remember, this is a limited-time offer: Full ownership of the shifter for one successful time hop. If you turn me down, I'm sure *someone* on your staff will do it . . . for a price. Why, Cooper would *jump* at the chance! I'll keep my legal rights, and you will likely lose *millions*.

(beat)

Until tomorrow then.

Tucker turns and leaves in his motorized wheelchair.

FADE OUT.

Mallory is typing on a computer keyboard. As before, his staff is monitoring the equipment. Mallory finishes.

MALLORY

And *done*. The time shifter is now programmed for human travel.

TUCKER

And the GPS thing you mentioned?

MALLORY

Right here.

He picks up a blinking device that resembles a wristwatch.

(CONTINUED)

MALLORY

The traveler wears it like a wristwatch. After 45 minutes in 1980, the shifter will lock onto the watch's signal and bring the subject back to the present.

TUCKER

And?

MALLORY

(beat)  
Mr. Tucker, I -

TUCKER

For Heaven's sake, Mallory! I'm not asking you to go back in time and take a life. I'm asking you to save one!

(beat)  
I'd go myself, if my health wasn't so poor. I can't save Anne in this wheelchair!

MALLORY

I'll go.

Tucker is pleased.

TUCKER

You will?

MALLORY

Yes.  
(beat)  
I'll need very specific instructions and a map if I'm to save your wife from the accident. I can't risk a second hop.

TUCKER

Forty-five minutes will be *plenty* of time. All the information you'll need to know has been *burned* on my brain for years - right down to the blue dress Anne was wearing that day.

(beat)  
You'll probably even have time to stop for a bite at the diner down the street. "Mother's," I think it was called. *Good* cheeseburgers!

(CONTINUED)

MALLORY

Sounds like a great way to pass any extra time.

TUCKER

I doubt anyone would even notice, but I've secured some currency that was in circulation back then - ones and fives. Lunch is on me!

MALLORY

(chuckles)

Thanks.

TUCKER

Let's go to my office so I can sign those papers. My assistant is a notary. Everything will be legally binding.

(beat)

And, when you return to the present, your time shifter will be waiting to make you a very wealthy man.

FADE OUT.

It is a sunny but cool December day. Lots of cars zoom by on the street, and the sidewalks are crowded with pedestrians. Everything is from 1980.

Mallory, dressed in appropriate attire, steps out from behind a building. He speaks into his GPS watch.

MALLORY

Status.

The GPS VOICE responds.

GPS VOICE

Time shift successful. No indication of detection.

(beat)

Automatic recall will occur in 44 minutes.

MALLORY

Silence any further notifications.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

GPS VOICE

Acknowledged.

MALLORY

Now, *where* is Anne Tucker?

FADE OUT.

6 EXT. BUSY PHILADELPHIA STREET - LATER

6

On the busy street, Mallory spots ANNE TUCKER, a very pretty blonde in a tight blue dress, who is attempting to cross the dangerous street. He calls out her name as he runs to her. Several onlookers glare at him strangely.

MALLORY

Mrs. Tucker!

Anne looks up, confused.

MALLORY

*Look out!*

Mallory reaches Anne and grabs her by the shoulders. He pulls her to him just in time for her to avoid being hit by a large passing truck. The truck whizzes by at high speed, beeping its horn. Several onlookers gasp and shriek at what they just saw. Anne looks shocked at what might have been. Winded, Mallory speaks, holding Anne's shoulders.

MALLORY

Are. . . Are you alright?

A crowd starts to gather around them. Anne is trying to collect herself.

ANNE

Yes, I. . . I. . .

MALLORY

That was a *close* call.

ANNE

It certainly *was*!

(beat)

Thank you.

SELBY, a tough-looking, muscular guy in his mid 30s, approaches through the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

SELBY

What's going on?

ANNE

This nice man. . . Wh-What's your name?

MALLORY

Ted Mallory.

ANNE

He pulled me out of the way of a truck. I almost got hit! I'd be dead now!

SELBY

This street is getting more dangerous every day!

(beat)

Are you OK?

ANNE

I'm. . . I'm fine. Just scared. My heart's beating a mile a minute!

SELBY

Thank you, Mr. Mallory. Not everyone would have put himself in danger to save another person.

Mallory is humble.

MALLORY

Right place at the right time. I'm glad to have had the chance to help.

(beat)

Say, can you direct me to Mother's Diner?

SELBY

Up the street about three blocks - on the right. You can't miss the sign.

MALLORY

Good cheeseburgers, I've heard.

SELBY

Best in town.

Mallory turns to Anne.

(CONTINUED)

MALLORY

You're *sure* you're OK?

ANNE

Thanks to you, yes.

MALLORY

You two have a good day now. . .  
and be *careful*.

Mallory walks away, and the crowd starts to disperse.  
Selby pulls Anne close and speaks quietly.

SELBY

What's *wrong* with you?

Anne is insulted. She likewise speaks quietly.

ANNE

(beat)

Don't worry. I'm fine. *Geez!*

He pulls her to a less-crowded part of the sidewalk where  
they can talk.

SELBY

Don't lose your nerve.

ANNE

Who said anything about losing my  
nerve?

SELBY

That truck almost turned you into  
a pancake. What's wrong?

ANNE

I didn't *see* it! Don't you worry  
about *my* nerve, lover.

SELBY

So you're still in?

ANNE

Of course. It'll be *easy*.

SELBY

Just a couple of bullets. Short  
and sweet.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

(chuckles)

And, after a brief stint as the  
grieving widow, I'll collect the  
insurance money.

SELBY

Then you and I can take off to  
Acapulco. Oh, it will be *great*!

(beat)

You still have that yellow bikini?

ANNE

(seductively)

You just wait and see.

SELBY

(chuckles slightly)

ANNE

What's so funny?

SELBY

I was just thinking about the guy  
who saved you.

ANNE

Mr. Mallory?

SELBY

He's gonna be an accessory to  
murder, and he doesn't even know  
it.

ANNE

Good one! I. . . Hey, wait a  
second.

SELBY

What?

ANNE

He called me by name.

SELBY

Mallory did?

ANNE

Yeah.

(beat)

How did he know my name?

(CONTINUED)



SELBY

Are you sure?

ANNE

Absolutely. He yelled out, "Mrs. Tucker!" That's why I looked up.

SELBY

You don't know him?

ANNE

Never saw him before in my life.

SELBY

Is he a friend of your old man? A co-worker?

ANNE

No. Frank hardly has *any* friends, and I've met all of them. There are only two guys he works with in the lab, and Mallory isn't one of them.

(beat)

Trouble?

SELBY

Could be.

(beat)

I'd better. . . take care of him.

ANNE

Do you *have* to?

SELBY

Are you going soft on me?

ANNE

He *did* save my life.

SELBY

Can you explain how he knows your name?

ANNE

No, but -

SELBY

If he knows that, he could know *more*. It's a loose end, and I *hate* loose ends. He *could* be trouble.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SELBY (CONT'D)

I don't want to be lying on the beach in Acapulco and have some cop slap the cuffs on me.

ANNE

I guess you're right. He could spoil things.

SELBY

I'll head down to Mother's and pay your savior a little visit.

(beat)

You know what you have to do?

ANNE

You can count on me. Frank's co-workers will be out to lunch - maybe even at Mother's. Killing him will be a *cinch*.

FADE OUT.

A jukebox is playing in this polished white, 50s-style diner. Mallory sits alone at the counter, the kitchen beyond. About a dozen other customers are seated at the tables, eating their lunches.

Selby walks in and sits beside Mallory. Mallory looks up, surprised.

MALLORY

Hey, we meet again!

SELBY

Yeah.

(beat)

Did you order yet?

MALLORY

I did. One Super Deluxe Cheeseburger with fries coming up!

SELBY

Cancel it.

MALLORY

Why?

SELBY

Because we said so.

(CONTINUED)

MALLORY

*We?*

SELBY

Me and. . .

He secretively shows Mallory his gun.

SELBY

. . . him.

MALLORY

What's the big idea?

SELBY

Cancel your order. . . *now*.

Mallory nervously calls out to the cook, CHUCK.

MALLORY

Uhm. . . Excuse me!

SELBY

His name's "Chuck."

MALLORY

Excuse me! Chuck!

Chuck, an older man in a white hat and greasy apron, approaches.

CHUCK

What can I do for you, mister?

MALLORY

I need to cancel my order.

CHUCK

You do?

MALLORY

I'm afraid so. My. . . friend here just reminded me that we have business to attend to. Lunch will have to wait.

SELBY

That's right.

CHUCK

But I've already got the burger on the grill!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

It'll be done in just a few minutes. Are you in *that* much of a rush?

MALLORY

I'm afraid so.

CHUCK

I could make it a "to go" order.

SELBY

He doesn't have the time.

MALLORY

Why don't you eat it?

CHUCK

Well, I. . .

SELBY

Pay the man, Mallory.

MALLORY

Y-Yeah. Sure.

Mallory takes his wallet from his back pocket and pays Chuck.

CHUCK

But you didn't eat anything!

SELBY

For your trouble. He *insists*.

Chuck is confused.

CHUCK

OK. Thanks, mister.

MALLORY

You're welcome.

SELBY

Aren't you forgetting something?

MALLORY

(beat)  
What?

SELBY

A tip. Give the man a tip.

FADE OUT.

8

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

8

In a dirty, garbage-strewn, out-of-the-way alley, Selby is holding Mallory at gunpoint.

SELBY

This should do nicely.

MALLORY

For *what*?

SELBY

Whaddya think?

(beat)

How did you know her name?

MALLORY

What are you talking about?

SELBY

Anne. You called her "Mrs. Tucker."

MALLORY

Did I?

SELBY

Don't play dumb with me!

(beat)

How much do you know?

MALLORY

About what?

SELBY

Are you trying to cut in on our deal? Are you angling for a piece of the life insurance money? You *ain't* gonna get it!

MALLORY

Whose life insurance?

SELBY

Who do you think? Old Man Tucker.

MALLORY

You're going to. . .

SELBY

Not *me*. His sweet little wife is taking care of that. She ought to be about done.

(CONTINUED)

MALLORY

She's killing her husband?

SELBY

So you *do* know about it?

MALLORY

You just told me!

SELBY

You could make trouble. I can't have that.

MALLORY

I won't say a word. I swear!

SELBY

Nah. Can't take the chance.

(beat)

Where do you want it? In the belly?

MALLORY

Wait!

SELBY

Why should I?

MALLORY

If you just give me. . .

He looks at his wristwatch GPS.

MALLORY

. . . four minutes, I'll be gone for good. Four *lousy* minutes! You'll never hear from me again!

SELBY

Say, that's a nice watch! One of those new digital jobs.

(beat)

Hand it over.

MALLORY

I. . . I can't.

SELBY

It's not smart to argue with an armed man.

MALLORY

But I'll be gone for good in. . .

(CONTINUED)

He looks again.

MALLORY

. . . *three* minutes.

SELBY

Then you can go *without* the watch.  
Now hand it over!

Mallory nervously hands Selby the watch.

MALLORY

(sotto voce)  
Now what am I gonna do?

SELBY

I know what *I'm* gonna do.

Selby pulls back the hammer on his revolver.

MALLORY

But the automatic callback -

SELBY

The *what*?

MALLORY

Never mind.  
(beat)  
Are you going to put that watch  
on?

SELBY

Maybe. What's it to you?

MALLORY

Just curious.

SELBY

I'll probably hock it.

MALLORY

I'll pay you for it.

SELBY

You're *nuts*!

He looks at the watch's face.

SELBY

It's a stopwatch too, huh? It's  
doing a countdown. Should get a  
nice wad for this.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8

CONTINUED: (3)

8

SELBY (CONT'D)

A little extra cash to take to  
Acapulco.

(beat)

Say your prayers, Mallory.

He pulls the trigger.

FADE OUT.

9

EXT. NOWHERE - MOMENTS LATER

9

Everything is suddenly white - no signs or sounds of the  
city. Mallory is alone, Selby having vanished.

He looks about, worried and confused. His voice echoes as  
he speaks.

MALLORY

What the. . . Where'd he go?

Where'd *everything* go?

(long beat)

She *must* have done it! Anne *killed*  
him. And, since Mr. Tucker died in  
1980, he wasn't alive to. . . to  
fund. . .

(beat)

The time shifter never existed!  
I'm in nothingness. . . limbo.

He starts walking about nervously.

MALLORY

Help me! Anyone! *Please!* I can't  
stay here forever!

FADE TO BLACK.