

70 Minutes
By
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FADE IN ON:

BLACK VOID:

The sound of LABORED BREATHING. A caption glows.

SUPER: On November 22, 1963, philosopher, social critic and novelist Aldous Huxley succumbed to laryngeal cancer. Assisted by his wife Laura, Huxley spent his last few hours under the influence of injected LSD.

And when he finally departed this Brave New World, it could be claimed Huxley was not alone...

INT. BEDROOM - POV DYING MAN

Half blind, Huxley gazes up at a grief stricken female face (LAURA, 52 years old).

Half of his view is... missing. The other side: surreally distorted, quite blurred.

Laura leans forward with a handkerchief, dabs his brow.

LAURA
Darling, are you with us still?

ALDOUS
(dry, pained)
Is my speaking any proof?

LAURA
Would you like more? Are you in pain?

ALDOUS
Maybe? Dear, I can't quite tell.

His vision dims. The woman sobs.

LAURA
Aldous!

But it's too late; he's gone. Black out.

INT. WHITE ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

As Kubrick as it gets. White nothingness. A large CLOCK ticks the time: 5:20 PM.

Consciousness returns with a jolt.

A shocked ALDOUS HUXLEY (angular, early 30s) finds himself on his feet. Looks around.

Racing to one wall, he feels everywhere for a door.

His WEDDING RING clinks against hard surface. After a moment of fumbling, his hand droops.

There's no discernible exit. It's seamlessly smooth.

ALDOUS

But I must have entered somehow. Odd.

A THROBBING sound compels him to whip around.

The opposite wall distorts like a pool. Colorful patterns dance across the mirrored surface.

Aldous walks towards it, intrigued.

He extends a hand. Reluctant to touch, he yells towards the ceiling instead.

ALDOUS

Laura, am I dreaming? Can you hear me?

No response. Aldous cocks his head, eyes the wall.

Slowly, he removes his wedding ring. Rolling it between two fingers, he examines it from all angles... a question forming in his mind.

ALDOUS

Darling, please forgive me. I *need* to test this theory. If this is just an illusion in my mind, then it didn't even happen. In which case, no harm, no foul!

He CHUCKS the ring at the pulsing wall.

It phases through, disappears! Trailed by SIZZLING and a blinding flare. Aldous shields his eyes, recoils.

ALDOUS

Hmmm. One fears what that could do to flesh.

The clock TICKS behind him. Footsteps TAP.

Aldous swings 180, finds himself face to face with...

A round, pleasant MAN (CLIVE, 30s), approaches from behind. Shorter than Aldous, he wears a wool suit. A quizzical expression, too.

It's a Mexican stare-down. Aldous stammers, speaks first.

ALDOUS

Who are you?!?

CLIVE

Well, that's a reasonable question. My friends like to call me... Jack.

Aldous raises an eyebrow. The answer's too enigmatic for his taste.

ALDOUS

My friends used to call me "Ogie". But forgive me if I conclude that here, nicknames are not enough.

The man smiles - so warmly, it seems to light the room.

CLIVE

More formally? They call me Clive Lewis.

(beat)

C.S. for short.

ALDOUS

C.S. Lewis? The Christian apologist?

CLIVE

(chuckles)

I've been known to dabble in books, too.

Thirty of them, to be precise.

(off Aldous' stare)

Does the Chronicles of Narnia ring a bell? The Screw-tape Letters, perhaps?

He inches closer to Aldous, who backpedals. Huxley takes pains to avoid touching the wall.

CLIVE

And what are you known for, Mr...

ALDOUS

Aldous. Aldous Huxley.

CLIVE

Ah, a familiar name.

ALDOUS

I'm known for books, too. Fifty of them.

(sarcastic)

So in that aspect, I have you beat?

The clock TICKS louder. Lewis turns to it, reads.

CLIVE
Time of death - 5:30. Hmmm.

Aldous stares at Lewis.

ALDOUS
Whose death: yours or mine?

CLIVE
Both. At least, I surmise that's the case.

ALDOUS
But how can we... I mean, you, be sure?

Lewis thinks it over, shrugs.

CLIVE
A preponderance of indirect evidence leads to that conclusion. I haven't been faring too well recently. Kidney problems. Blood poisoning - the doctors at an utter loss. A few moments ago, there I was - warm and well-off in my bedroom. Until the world began to spin.

ALDOUS
What happened next?

CLIVE
Well, now I'm here with you. Occam's Razor stipulates it was simply my time to go. With such medical woes, that's to be expected. I'm no longer a young man in his prime.

Aldous grabs Clive. Swinging him around, he points out their reflections in the mirrored, pulsing wall.

ALDOUS
You're young now. Look!

CLIVE
(blinks)
You as well. Odd. So either I've lapsed into another coma and am dreaming, or...

Lewis' eyes scan the white room.

LEWIS
This isn't quite how I envisioned heaven. But it'll do.

He reaches out to touch the wall. Aldous grabs his wrist.

ALDOUS

Don't!

LEWIS

Hesitate though you will, the gateway to eternal bliss must be walked through voluntarily, my new friend.

Lewis laughs. Aldous gulps, shakes his head "no".

ALDOUS

Don't jump to conclusions. I tested your "gateway" minutes ago.

LEWIS

"Tested it"? Or did it test you?

ALDOUS

I tossed a ring through it.

LEWIS

And it responded - how?

ALDOUS

From what I could tell, the metal dissolved.

Lewis's face falls.

LEWIS

Oh. Then it leads to that "other" place?

ALDOUS

Not that I think such a place exists. But if you don't mind, I'd rather not risk that now.

Time passes in a bizarre blur.

LATER

Both men continue to stand before the wall. The clock TICKS insistently. Aldous squints.

ALDOUS

Six PM already? Time seems to run... different here.

LEWIS

Thanks to Einstein's theory of relativity? Or God himself... working *outside* time? In either case, what's this?

Lewis rolls his eyes, waves a hand in front of the wall.

LEWIS

You still dismiss this as a psychedelic hallucination?

ALDOUS

Or the delusions of my poor dying brain.

LEWIS

You view *me* as a mere figment, too?

Aldous cracks a sarcastic grin.

ALDOUS

No offense. But while we're on the topic: You claim this is a portal, like that closet in Narnia you cherish so very much? Where in "Mere" Christianity is such a phenomena foretold?

LEWIS

(shrugs, quotes)

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Huxley, than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

ALDOUS

That's not me. It's Shakespeare.

LEWIS

Nonetheless. Immortal words, which may apply here.

Lewis traces a finger along the wall.

LEWIS

Beyond this could be the threshold of a Brave New World. Who knows what wonders lie beyond?

ALDOUS

Your lion Aslan? Or worse horrors, with more fearsome teeth? Perhaps the Orcs of Middle Earth... Too bad your friend Tolkien's not here to speculate.

LEWIS

Or "Savages", like you conjured forth? Unlike us, J.R.'s hale and hearty. And a fellow writer. Let him be!

Aldous inches towards the portal.

ALDOUS

Such colors. Even more vivid than
mescaline.

He smiles at Lewis, despite his fear.

ALDOUS

Do you care to gaze upon eternity first?
Or shall I take the lead?

Behind him, the TICKING increases. Impossible to ignore
now. Footsteps TAP - someone new's approaching!

Lewis and Aldous whirl around, to see:

A TALL MAN. His back is turned, faint spatters of blood
on his jacket. His identity... unsure.

Aldous and Lewis see his face, gasp.

LEWIS

It can't be!

ALDOUS

Pres-

The tall, unidentified man clears his throat. A Boston
accent tinges his words.

TALL MAN

Gentlemen - you can call me Jack.
(looks around)
I have to say, this meeting is
unexpected.

Aldous glances at the clock: 2PM. Then up at the ceiling.
He whispers, shocked.

ALDOUS

Laura? Please be there. This *can't* be
real.

The wall FLARES, erasing everything in its white light.

SUPER:

On November 22, 1963 at 2PM CST (6:30 London time) US
President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Seventy fateful minutes which lost three names to
history. Did they meet in other realms? Beyond the Doors
of Perception, who can tell?

FINAL FADE OUT: