

"The Fixer"

by
Mike Murphy

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

1 INT. LOOK AHEAD ENTERPRISES - MORNING

1

JEFF HEALY, white haired at 52, walks through sliding doors into a mostly glass building. He passes a sign reading "LOOK AHEAD ENTERPRISES - Cambridge, MA, Founded 2029, Elias Farrell President."

Many young people walk about hurriedly. Several are wearing long, white lab coats with stuffed pockets.

Healy walks toward the extra-large, sun-lit, book-lined office of ELIAS FARRELL.

FADE TO:

2 INT. FARRELL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

2

ELIAS FARRELL, 37 and dressed in a well-tailored, three-piece suit, is seated behind a large, half-moon desk heavy with papers and a very big computer. He stands and, grinning, walks to Healy.

FARRELL

Right on time.

He holds out his right hand, which Healy shakes vigorously.

FARRELL

Welcome to Look Ahead Enterprises,
Mr. Healy. I'm Elias Farrell.

HEALY

Pleased to meet you.

Farrell closes the office door, turns, and walks back to his desk. Healy follows him. Farrell gestures at one of the overstuffed chairs in front of the desk.

FARRELL

Have a seat?

HEALY

Thank you.

He does so. Farrell sits in the leather office chair behind his desk.

FARRELL

Would you like a drink?

HEALY

No thanks.

(CONTINUED)

Farrell puts both of his arms on the desk.

FARRELL

Let's get down to brass tacks
then. Your time is valuable.

(beat)

How may we help you?

HEALY

(nervous, at first)

I was referred to you by a . . . a
business associate of mine,
Charlie Kilpatrick.

Farrell leans forward, closer to Healy.

FARRELL

How's he doing?

HEALY

He's fine. He said you solved a
tough problem for him.

FARRELL

He's too kind. We merely showed
him the way.

HEALY

(eagerly)

How did you do that?

Farrell grins.

FARRELL

Surely, Mr. Healy, you know I
can't speak of specifics. Look
Ahead Enterprises places great
value on our clients'
confidentiality.

HEALY

Glad to hear it.

FARRELL

What problem brings you here
today?

HEALY

(uneasily)

I. . . uhm. . .

He looks down at the rug and his own shoes.

(CONTINUED)

FARRELL

Anything you say here will never leave this room. I need to know what your problem is to see if we can help you.

HEALY

(beat)

It's my son - Alex. He's fourteen.

FARRELL

That's quite an age: No longer a child, but not yet a man.

HEALY

He's starting to act. . . strangely.

FARRELL

How so?

HEALY

Don't get me wrong, Mr. Farrell. Alex is a good kid. My wife, Trish, and I raised him right - with love *and* discipline.

FARRELL

I don't doubt that for a minute.

HEALY

He seems to have fallen in with what some people used to call "a bad crowd." He's started skipping school and talking back to us. We've done everything we can think of, talked to *all kinds* of specialists, but we've reached our wits' end.

FARRELL

I can imagine.

HEALY

Charlie said you give DVDs to your clients.

(beat)

True?

FARRELL

Or a streaming file - their choice.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

I thought that, if I could show Alex proof of what he's going to become if he continues down this road, it *might* straighten him out.

FARRELL

(beat)

Have you looked over our fee schedule?

HEALY

I have. I've already filled out the paperwork.

(beat)

I think the One-Look package would be best.

Farrell nods.

FARRELL

From what you've told me, I agree.

FADE TO:

Farrell is behind his desk, and Healy is still seated in front of him.

FARRELL

Simply put, with the proper programming, our computers can momentarily subvert natural forces and the laws of physics to peek into the probable future of any person we choose.

Healy is very surprised.

HEALY

Probable?

FARRELL

Our best estimate is 89.6%.

HEALY

So what I'll see here today - what I'm *paying* for - isn't Alex's definite future?

(CONTINUED)

FARRELL

(longish beat)

Most likely it will be. Some factors beyond our control make it impossible to reach 100% certainty.

HEALY

(prompting him)

Such as?

FARRELL

Free will, for one.

HEALY

I don't get it.

FARRELL

A fictional example: Walking home tonight, I cross the street and get hit by a bus. DOA.

(beat)

If I delayed crossing that street by even a minute, the bus would pass me uneventfully, and I would live to see another day.

HEALY

Now I'm following you.

FARRELL

That percent is the absolute best we can provide. If it's not sufficient for you, I can cancel your contract right now.

HEALY

No! I'm going through with it.

FADE TO:

Healy sits in a two-person, private viewing room curtained off with large, noise-canceling drapes. A big-screen TV is before him. Farrell sits in the chair beside his client.

FARRELL

Ready for your One-Look?

Nervous, Healy squirms briefly in his seat.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

Sure am.

FARRELL

Here's what will happen: Our computers have selected what they consider to be the most important upcoming event in your life.

He motions at the television.

FARRELL

It will play on that screen.

HEALY

How long will it be?

FARRELL

It's tough to say. Some are less than a minute.

HEALY

(surprised)

That's all?

FARRELL

It's not easy to circumvent natural forces for long, Mr. Healy.

HEALY

And the DVD?

FARRELL

Recording will start as soon as the One-Look begins. The video will be date stamped, so we'll know how far into the future we've gone.

HEALY

Good.

FARRELL

Unfortunately, there will be no sound. My techies haven't been able to make that work yet.

(beat)

Ready?

Healy swallows hard.

HEALY

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Farrell reaches out and presses a large button beneath the monitor. The screen flickers to life.

He looks at the date stamp in one corner.

FARRELL

Only a few months into the future.
That's closer than we can usually
get.

On the screen: A young man in a grungy hoodie and an older woman in conservative business attire sit together.

HEALY

That's my living room.

FARRELL

Is that your son?

HEALY

Yes. And Trish.

The people begin talking animatedly about something very important to the young man.

Suddenly, the on-screen Alex pulls a gun from his hoodie's pocket and shoots his mother in the chest. She falls to the hardwood floor, and the One-Look ends.

The CD drive below the screen ejects the recording.

FADE TO:

INT. VIEWING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Absolute silence. Both men are still seated in their chairs.

Healy is slack jawed at what he has just seen.

FARRELL

I'm sorry, Mr. Healy.

HEALY

(urgently)
C-Can this be changed?

FARRELL

It's possible. Any actions you,
Alex, or your wife takes *might*
influence the future.

Healy points at the now-black screen.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

To the point where *that* won't happen?

FARRELL

Maybe.

Healy slaps one of his knees with the palm of his right hand.

HEALY

Then we'll do it!

FARRELL

(confused)

Do what?

HEALY

Whatever keeps Alex from shooting Trish.

FARRELL

We have no way of knowing what actions to take.

Healy is dumbfounded.

HEALY

You can't tell me how to set things right?

FARRELL

No, sir. The One-Look is just that - a *look*.

Healy grows red in the face.

HEALY

So I can *possibly* save her life, but I can't know how?

Farrell nods apologetically.

HEALY

So, by dumb luck, I might do something which will prevent this from happening, but I could also bring it about quicker?

FARRELL

That is the paradox of time.

Healy rubs his eyes briefly.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

Any advice?

FARRELL

(longish beat)

Well. . .

HEALY

(eagerly)

There *is* something?

FARRELL

It's very expensive.

HEALY

Damn the price.

(beat)

Tell me.

FARRELL

You must promise that what I am about to say will go no further than this building. If it were to become public knowledge, my future, indeed the future of this whole company -

HEALY

I promise.

FARRELL

(longish beat)

They do exist.

HEALY

Who?

FARRELL

Fixers.

FADE TO:

Healy and Farrell stand on the rug. Farrell closes the door and returns to his client.

FARRELL

It's more private here.

(beat)

Safer.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

Go on.

FARRELL

(beat)

His name is Tomlinson.

HEALY

What's his first name?

FARRELL

No one knows. He goes only by
"Tomlinson."

HEALY

He's a . . . a "fixer," whatever
that is?

Farrell nods.

FARRELL

For the most part, fixers are
outside the law. The Feds usually
turn a blind eye to them. . . but
not always to those who hire them.

(beat)

Our operations here are sanctioned
by the government. We are
answerable to the government.
Tomlinson and those like him are
not.

HEALY

What does he do?

FARRELL

Fixers have equipment beyond ours.
They're able somehow to analyze a
problem shown by a glimpse into
the future and prevent it from
occurring.

HEALY

Just what I want!

(eagerly)

He can stop what I saw on that
screen?

FARRELL

He's the best chance you have.

HEALY

How do you know about fixers?

(CONTINUED)

FARRELL

Well. . . let's just say you're not the first client whose One-Look was negative.

HEALY

(beat)

Tomlinson's good?

FARRELL

Very good.

HEALY

How do I contact him?

FARRELL

You don't. He'll contact you.

(beat)

A friend of mine knows how to reach him. I'll have to give her all your information, including a copy of the video record. She'll forward everything.

HEALY

Whatever he needs. I *definitely* want to hire him.

FARRELL

You don't hire him either.

HEALY

Huh?

FARRELL

He decides whether he'll accept you as a client. If so, he'll call you. If you don't hear anything within a week, his answer is no.

HEALY

A week! I don't want to let a week go by! You saw the video's date stamp!

FARRELL

I *might* be able to set you up with another fixer who may have more availability.

HEALY

No. I want him.

(CONTINUED)

FARRELL

Some other clients of mine have
used his services.

HEALY

(prompting him)

And?

FARRELL

No regrets.

HEALY

How long before he gets my
information?

FARRELL

I should be able to reach my
contact tonight. Tomlinson will
have your records within 24 hours.

(beat)

Do I have your permission to
continue?

HEALY

Yes.

FADE TO:

ACROSS THE SCREEN: A WEEK LATER.

A brightly lit master bedroom with colorful furnishings.
Healy is anxiously pacing the carpet when his cell rings.
He quickly answers it.

HEALY

Hello?

The screen splits to show the mysterious TOMLINSON's
right hand holding his phone. We see no more of him.

TOMLINSON

This is Tomlinson.

HEALY

(eagerly)

Yes?

TOMLINSON

I'll take your case.

Healy heaves a large sigh.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

You can prevent the shooting?

TOMLINSON

I believe so.

HEALY

(surprised)

You *believe*?

TOMLINSON

Even my methods are not foolproof.

(beat)

You're free to back out. Tell me now before I waste any more of my time.

HEALY

(quickly)

No, no. I. . . I *don't* want to back out.

TOMLINSON

Good.

HEALY

Mr. Farrell spoke very highly of you.

TOMLINSON

I'm the best.

(beat)

My fee is \$25,000, up front.

HEALY

(flummoxed)

Twenty-five. . .

TOMLINSON

Having second thoughts?

HEALY

I'm used to paying for services *rendered*. It's how I do business.

TOMLINSON

This is how *I* do business. Take it or leave it.

HEALY

(beat)

How do I get you the money?

(CONTINUED)

TOMLINSON

I'll let you know.

HEALY

How do you keep the shooting from happening?

TOMLINSON

Simple: We alter the timeline.

FADE TO:

INT. HEALY BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The split screen is still in effect.

HEALY

The *what*?

TOMLINSON

The order of time.

(beat)

Think of time as a long, straight highway. Everything's in order: Tuesday follows Monday, and Wednesday follows Tuesday. What I need to do is put an "exit ramp" on that highway.

HEALY

You realize there isn't much time before -

TOMLINSON

I know.

(beat)

Starting tomorrow morning, Healy, I'll need daily updates from you.

HEALY

(confused)

About what?

TOMLINSON

Everything you did the previous day - from what you had for breakfast to when you went to bed. The same goes for your wife and kid. The more information, the better.

(beat)

If you and Trish had pillow talk, I want to know about it.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

For what reason?

TOMLINSON

Time is strange. We don't know what might influence it. I need to cover every base. The slightest omission could cause trouble - lots of it.

HEALY

Gotcha.

TOMLINSON

You haven't shown your boy Elias's DVD, have you?

HEALY

No. I thought it best to wait and speak with you first.

TOMLINSON

Good thinking.

(beat)

Don't. It might give him ideas. Don't show it to anyone. Toss it in the fire.

HEALY

(beat)

How do I reach you?

TOMLINSON

I've downloaded an auto-dial app onto your phone while we've been talking. Every morning at 9:00, call me. Your words will be recorded for as long as it takes, and I'll expect a full accounting.

HEALY

You'll get it.

TOMLINSON

You'll notice that your caller ID is showing this as an unlisted number.

Healy glances at his cell's screen.

HEALY

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

TOMLINSON

Never call me beyond your daily updates.

HEALY

What if something important happens?

TOMLINSON

It can wait for the next update. Any extra calls increase the chance I'll be identified and caught before I can help you.

HEALY

I understand.

TOMLINSON

Have you told your wife about this?

HEALY

No.

TOMLINSON

Good. Leave it that way.

(beat)

During tomorrow's update, you'll learn how to transfer my fee.

HEALY

I'll have the money ready and waiting.

TOMLINSON

You may not hear from me for prolonged stretches of time. You might think the period of silence excessive. I assure you it's necessary.

(beat)

Finally, in order to save your wife, I may need to make "requests" of you.

HEALY

What kind of requests?

TOMLINSON

I may need you to do or say certain things - things you may not agree with.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

Can't we just keep Alex away from Trish?

TOMLINSON

Certainly not!

(beat)

Some major things *will* happen to you and your loved ones during this time. However, intentionally altering your family life will make our goal much more difficult to attain - perhaps impossible.

HEALY

I understand.

TOMLINSON

Good man.

(beat)

Remember: Your first update is tomorrow morning at 9:00.

FADE TO:

Pacing about his mid-sized office, Healy looks at the large wall clock. When it reads 9:00, he nervously punches Tomlinson's cell phone app. The line beeps.

HEALY

Well, I got a raise yesterday, so Trish and I went out for dinner at our favorite. . .

FADE TO:

Healy is on the phone. We note the passing of the days by the different suits he is wearing during each call to Tomlinson.

HEALY

I had to go to Alex's school. He got into some trouble with. . .

FADE TO:

11 INT. HEALY OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY 11

The clock reads 9:00.

HEALY
(into the phone)
Yesterday was our boy's fifteenth
birthday, so we all. . .

FADE TO:

12 INT. HEALY BEDROOM - ANOTHER DAY 12

Healy paces nervously.

HEALY
(into the phone)
It being Black Friday, Trish hit
the malls early. Alex and I stayed
home and watched some. . .

FADE TO:

13 INT. HEALY OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY 13

HEALY
(into the phone)
. . . and went to bed.
(beat; annoyed)
Tomlinson, are you getting these
updates? I haven't heard from you
in weeks. The day of the shooting
is coming up. Have you done
anything to prevent it?
(beat)
Tomlinson!

FADE TO:

14 INT. HEALY KITCHEN - MORNING 14

Healy and his wife, TRISH - short, 50-ish, and with some
gray streaks in her dark hair - sit at the circular
table. She is packing the day's necessities into her
valise. Healy stands, comes up behind her, and starts
lovingly rubbing her neck and shoulders. She stops what
she is doing and enjoys it.

Healy whispers into one of this wife's ears.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

(sotto voce)

How about the two of us play hooky
from work today?

TRISH

(amused)

What?

HEALY

We'll send Alex off to school and
call in sick. We could go out to
lunch, to a movie, to the museum.
Whatever you like.

He digs his fingers deeper into her neck and shoulder
muscles. She moans at the pressure.

HEALY

(flirtatiously)

We could even just. . . stay home.

Trish stands slowly, breaking off her husband's massage.
She turns to him and wraps her arms around his neck.

TRISH

That's a great idea, but I can't.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

HEALY

Why not?

TRISH

I'm showing the Cartwright place
to three different couples today,
and I'm told they're all eager to
buy.

(beat)

That would be a nice commission.

HEALY

Yeah, but -

TRISH

Maybe next week?

HEALY

(disappointed)

I suppose.

Trish looks at her watch.

(CONTINUED)

TRISH

We'd better get moving.

She breaks her hold on her husband.

TRISH

Could you please take out the trash? I've still got some papers to get together.

FADE TO:

Trish is getting the mentioned papers together. The living room is a replica of what was seen on the One-Look.

ALEX hurriedly enters the room from upstairs. He is dressed in torn jeans, a grungy hoodie, and once-white sneakers. Trish looks up.

TRISH

Hi, honey.
(beat)
Sleep well?

Alex is obviously bothered by something.

ALEX

Mom, I. . . I need some money.

TRISH

Sure.

With some effort, she zips up her stuffed valise.

TRISH

Would ten bucks do?

Alex shakes his head slowly, awkwardly pulls a gun from his hoodie's pocket, and aims it at her.

ALEX

I was thinking more of everything you got.

Trish is beyond shocked.

TRISH

Where'd. . . What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

How much money do you have in your purse?

TRISH

I'm not. . . not really sure.
About thirty dollars, I think.

ALEX

I want it!

Healy enters the living room, oblivious to the confrontation taking place.

HEALY

OK, the trash is out. It looks
like the raccoons -

Alex spins about quickly and points the gun at his dad.

ALEX

Sit, old man - beside her.

HEALY

Put that thing down!

ALEX

When I feel like it.
(beat)
Give me your money.

Healy sits.

He removes his wallet from his back pocket, takes out the bills, and holds them out to Alex. The boy takes the money and quickly counts it. He is not pleased.

ALEX

That's *it*?

HEALY

Every cent.

TRISH

How much do you need, Alex?

He waves the bills in the air.

ALEX

More than this!

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

Who do you owe money to?

(beat)

A bookie? A dealer?

Some tears start to slide down Trish's cheeks. Beads of sweat come to Alex's brow.

ALEX

Shut up!

(beat; nervously)

We're going to the bank. You're gonna get me *all* the money I need. You hear me?

TRISH

There's not much in the account. I paid the bills the other day.

ALEX

When *will* there be money in it?

HEALY

Friday. We both get paid on Friday.

ALEX

He won't wait until Friday!

TRISH

He?

The doorbell rings.

ALEX

Who's that?

HEALY

How am I supposed to know? I can't see through doors.

ALEX

It could be. . . him.

The doorbell rings again.

Alex trains the gun on his father.

ALEX

You're gonna take care of whoever that is, and make it fast.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

Alex walks to the couch where both of his parents are sitting. He holds the gun against his crying mother's temple.

ALEX

Understand?

FADE TO:

16 INT. HEALY LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

16

Healy slowly opens the door to the outside world. Behind it, Alex holds his gun on the crying Trish - who is doing all she can to *not* make a sound.

The man on the stoop is about 45, short, balding, and a little chubby. He is wearing a tan suitcoat and black slacks.

He speaks, and Healy recognizes his voice immediately.

TOMLINSON

Good morning, sir. My name is Tomlinson, and I'm with the Your Opinion Matters Research Company.

HEALY

I'm afraid now isn't a good time.

TOMLINSON

I only have a couple of questions to ask. Won't take but a minute.

HEALY

Well. . .

TOMLINSON

Answering them will qualify you for some valuable prizes, including a fabulous cruise to Alaska.

Alex speaks from behind the door.

ALEX

(quietly; through
gritted teeth)

Answer the frigging questions and get rid of him.

Healy looks at Tomlinson.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

OK.

(beat)

Whenever you're ready.

TOMLINSON

Thank you, sir.

(beat)

With all of the crime in today's society, do you own. . . a gun?

HEALY

I do not.

TOMLINSON

If you were to purchase a weapon, would you have any preference as to the type? Say, a revolver?

HEALY

A revolver would be good to have.

TOMLINSON

Thank you, sir.

He removes a bulky, unsealed manila envelope from his jacket pocket and hands it to Healy. The two men exchange understanding glances.

TOMLINSON

Here are your chances on the cruise.

(beat)

Good luck.

Healy feels the envelope.

HEALY

Thank you.

Tomlinson turns and walks off. Healey closes the door, holding the envelope in his right hand.

Alex looks relieved, but Trish is shaking.

ALEX

Good.

(beat)

Let's get -

(CONTINUED)

Healy fires the revolver through the envelope. Alex drops to the hardwood, a bullet in his leg. His gun skitters along the floor. Trish rushes to retrieve it.

FADE TO:

As expected, a large, sterile room with lots of seats and a TV playing silently up in one corner.

Healy is sitting on his own when his phone rings. He answers it.

HEALY

Jeff Healy.

The screen splits to show Tomlinson, talking into his phone, on the other side.

TOMLINSON

Your case is closed.

HEALY

(beat)

Didn't you cut that rather *fine*?

TOMLINSON

Not intentionally.

(beat)

Working with the timeline, I realized there was no way to prevent the shooting aside from visiting your home and getting you a weapon.

HEALY

I've never shot *anyone* before, certainly not my own son.

TOMLINSON

It was necessary.

HEALY

Another minute or two and -

TOMLINSON

My attempts to prevent the problem must've jostled it to a slightly earlier time. It should not have been happening when I arrived. It should not have begun for another eleven minutes.

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

Eleven minutes?

TOMLINSON

Exactly.

HEALY

(beat)

Tomlinson, I -

TOMLINSON

Your account is paid in full.

(beat)

Best of luck in your. . . future.

Tomlinson's half of the screen vanishes.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

Trish has joined her husband. She looks relieved.

TRISH

The doctors say he'll be fine.

Healy sighs.

HEALY

That's good.

TRISH

He could have killed us, honey.

(beat)

Our own son could have *killed* us.

HEALY

I know.

TRISH

What do you think he needs the money for?

HEALY

Damned if I know, but I'm going to find out. Alex is getting his act together starting *now*.

TRISH

(longish beat)

Where did you get. . . get that gun?

(CONTINUED)

HEALY

Tomlinson gave it to me.

TRISH

The man at the door?

Healy nods.

TRISH

He just *happened* to show up with a gun right when we needed it?

HEALY

It's a long story.

FADE TO:

It is late at night. The moon can be seen in the sky through a window. Healey is having a drink at the kitchen table. He looks at his phone and notices something.

HEALY

(surprised)

It's still there - Tomlinson's app.

He presses it and hears this over his phone's speaker.

FEMALE VOICE

The number you have called has been disconnected. No further information is available. . . The number you have called has been disconnected. No further information is available. . . The number you have called has been disconnected. No further information is. . .

FADE TO BLACK.