

SPRINGTIME IN ALASKA

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. STARRY SKY - NIGHT

An Aurora Borealis drapes, bends, and changes form as it stretches down and across the night sky. A twenty-two year old woman, CAROL, wearing a fur coat, appears in front of the aurora.

CAROL
I'm Carol and I ask - can this ever
be true? - Could it ever really
happen this way?
(she points down)
Let's find out from down there.

Her image disappears as the aurora dances in the night sky.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - DAWN

That Aurora Borealis dances above this small snow covered town next to a pair of railroad tracks by a frozen river.

An inch of fresh snow sits upon a wooden sign post that welcomes you to Nenana, Alaska.

EXT. TOWN BAR - DAWN

A moose walks by the place.

INT. TOWN BAR - DAWN

The century old rustic place is empty except for a dog asleep in the corner.

Whiskey bottles stand neatly on the shelf behind the bar. A calendar hangs on the wall behind the bottles; the first five days of the month of May are "X-ed" out.

EXT. RIVER - DAWN

300 feet from shore on the ice covered river sits a 26 foot tall tripod made of black and white striped wooden poles.

A rope with many attached color triangular flags runs from the tripod to the onshore three-story tall green wooden watchtower that has "NENANA ICE CLASSIC" painted on it.

LOUD CRACKING SOUNDS fill the air. A crack ZIPS through the ice covered river. The tripod begins to move with the ice. The rope loses its slack.

EXT. WATCHTOWER - DAWN

The rope leads down the tower into a green utility shack. Inside, the rope pulls a lever that stops the large clock at 04:37. A LOUD WAVERING SIREN starts to BLARE as if there was an imminent air raid.

EXT. NENANA - DAWN

Residential lights come on one by one.

At a house, on main street, there is a wooden sign in the front yard stating: "NO TRESPASSING - SAYS ME - BIG SAM."

The door flies open. Big mean looking BIG SAM, 55, beer gut, sleepy, and in his long-johns, holds a ticket in his right hand as he checks the time on his wristwatch. His mouth exhales cloudy puffs in the cold air.

Big Sam runs in his untied boots on the snow covered street toward the watchtower utility shed.

Big Sam holds his ticket near the utility shed door window in view of the large clock that is secured inside.

His shaking index finger, points to the date and time on the ticket then points to the time on that large clock. The time of 04:37 match exactly.

His joyous expression forms a new crack in his face as he does his happy dance.

BIG SAM
(yells)
Yippee! Right to the exact minute.

Big Sam excitedly runs around the watchtower. His YELLING competes with the wavering LOUD SIREN.

BIG SAM
Yahoo! Yahoo! I won! I won!

He turns again and runs down the street towards his house.

BIG SAM
Yahoo! I won! Yahoo! I won!

EXT. FAIRBANKS - SUNRISE

Aerial view of this snow covered Alaskan city.

EXT. TV STATION - SUNRISE

Frost covers the roof antennas and microwave disc.

CAROL (O.S.)
We interrupt this broadcast for
breaking news.

INT. BIG SAM'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

Big Sam enters and holds his ticket before the large flat-screen TV that is mounted near some hung wild game trophies.

On the TV, Carol the Aurora gal, is now the Anchor woman that cheerfully announces the BREAKING NEWS.

CAROL (ON TV)
Alaskan Spring time has un-officially
begun this morning May 6 at precisely
04:37.

Snow falls from Big Sam's boots as he does his happy dance.

CAROL (ON TV)
Unofficially, because the real Spring
begins everywhere on March 21 every
year. But it's when the ice breaks
that proves that Spring has really
begun in Alaska. Me, I'll be
celebrating immediately after work.

Big Sam puts on his britches and all. He grabs a jacket on the way back out the door.

INT. NENANA POLICE OFFICE - SUNRISE

With the siren still BLARING, the young DEPUTY tears up his ticket and throws it at the wall mounted TV.

CAROL (ON TV)
The prize pool this year is reported
to be \$327,478.00. To win the Ice
Classic, you must guess exactly the
Month, Day, Hour, and Minute that the
ice breaks in Nenana. That marks the
beginning of Spring Time in Alaska.
(MORE)

CAROL (ON TV) (cont'd)
 (looks at her ticket)
 I missed it by more than three hours.
 Well, maybe next year.

She tosses the ticket over her shoulder.

EXT. WATCHTOWER UTILITY SHED - SUNRISE

Big Sam runs back to the utility shed, again. He looks at the large clock. He then twirls with his arms held wide. The ticket is held between his fingers.

Now he does his happy dance, again.

BIG SAM
 (Yells)
 Thank You, Yahoo!

He runs the short distance to the river bank. He looks at the tripod toppled over on the broken ice. He drops to his knees.

BIG SAM
 Yahoo! Thank you!

A breeze blows the ticket from his fingers.

The ticket flies in the breeze then falls onto the flowing river.

The ticket floats down the river.

The Deputy arrives and turns the electric power switch off on the watchtower. The siren WHINES down to a peaceful quietness. He turns and sees Big Sam, at the riverbank, crying.

EXT. RIVER COVE - DAY

Farther down the river, a moose stands in a cove. Its snout pulls and eats the grass from the water bottom.

The ticket floats into that cove.

Again, the moose raises its snout from the water and chews more grass. Stuck upon its snout is the ticket. The moose steps from the water and heads to the treeline. The ticket falls off its snout.

Near the treeline an OLD HUNTER in camouflage that matches the surroundings picks the ticket up from the ground.

At some distance away a YOUNGER HUNTER, maybe 25, in a TAN JACKET, wearing very thick glasses, and headphones aims his rifle at the moose.

The old hunter examines the ticket and turns. Then BANG, and he GRUNTS as his gut takes the bullet.

The Younger Hunter runs to the shot hunter and sees his big mistake. He then notices the ticket and pulls it from the old hunter's cold dead fingers.

He pockets the ticket then rolls the dead old hunter into the fast flowing river.

EXT. WATCHTOWER - DAY

Standing near a Fairbanks TV Van is a 24 year old reporter ELI, in a neatly pressed suit, tie, and a brand new jacket. Every hair on his head is perfectly in place. The 22 year old CAMERAWOMAN is well dressed for the cold.

The camerawoman has the camera aimed, through the utility shack window, at the large clock.

ELI
(points to his face)
The camera should be pointed at me!

CAMERAWOMAN
Hold your damn ego!

INT. TOWN BAR - DAY

The rowdy PATRONS in the bar down drinks and celebrate.

On the wall-mounted TV the NEWS is announced.

The clock is seen on the TV screen.

ELI (O.S.)
There it is folks. The un-official
time that Springtime in Alaska began
this morning at precisely 04:37.

JENNY, the middle-aged bartender, quickly fills the drink orders.

EXT. NENANA FRONT STREET - DAY

Eli and his camerawoman walk the short distance from the watchtower to a position between the railroad tracks and the street.

The camerawoman aims the camera at Eli with the watchtower in the background.

The tan jacket young hunter walks by Eli. The hunter stares closely at the ticket as he continues onto the street.

ELI sees a snow-machine speeding up the street. He shouts at the young hunter.

ELI

Watch out!

The camerawoman swings the camera around at the snow-machine as it runs over that young hunter and keeps on going.

Eli rushes to the young hunter and sees that his chest is flattened down to street level. Eli then notices the ticket and takes it from the hunter's cold dead fingers.

Eli looks at the ticket and his eyes are about to pop out.

The Deputy arrives and Eli hides the ticket behind his back.

INT. TOWN BAR - DAY

Bar patrons CHEER and exchange cash as they take turns to throw their Bowie knife at a thick board target that hangs on the entrance door.

Empty beer bottles and shot glasses are on the bar by Big Sam who drowns his sorrows in alcohol.

THUMP is the sound of another Bowie knife that hits the target.

A large electric bell above the door RINGS very LOUD.

The knife throwing contest instantly stops.

Jenny shouts from the bar.

JENNY

Hold the knives fellows, someone is
comin' in.

A 90 year old MINER enters and makes his way to a table.

The knife contest resumes. THUMP a knife hits the target! Jenny fills a beer mug. She walks from the bar then stops to let a knife go by, THUMP, then she proceeds. She delivers the beer mug to the old Miner.

Jenny turns and stops again to let another knife go by, THUMP, then continues to the bar.

The knife throwers pay and collect cash among themselves.

Then a patron throws his knife. THUMP, hits the bulls-eye.

CHEERS fill the room and he collects his cash winnings.

On the wall-mounted TV more NEWS is announced.

CAROL (ON TV)

It is now Springtime in Alaska -
Yahoo! I'm sure celebrations are
happening now everywhere in Alaska!
We are still awaiting on who won the
\$327,478.00 from the ice break this
morning. Back to you Eli.

ELI (ON TV)

That is correct, Carol. I'm about to
do some celebrating myself.

THUMP then CHEERS as another Bowie knife hits the target.

Jenny fills one of Big Sam's shot glasses.

JENNY

(to Big Sam)

Springtime in Alaska, bull! - You
know, Big Sam, Alaska has only three
seasons. -- Winter, June, and July! -
I wonder who that winner could be?

Drunken Big Sam looks at Jenny with his sadden face.

THUMP, another knife STRIKES the wood target.

EXT. NENANA MAIN STREET - DAY

As the Deputy watches, medical personnel put the dead tan jacket Young Hunter into the back of an ambulance. Eli, turns to his camerawoman.

ELI
 (points to his face)
 For now on, I want you to keep the
 camera pointed at my face.
 (points to her)
 You pack the van. I'm gonna grab a
 beer.

Eli walks away from her as she shouts back.

CAMERAWOMAN
 Damn egotistical prima-donna.

EXT. TOWN BAR - DAY

A DRUNK exits the bar and somehow is able to wobble walk
 pass Eli. Eli walks to the bar with the ticket held between
 his fingers. He reaches for the door handle then he sees a
 sign on the door: "PLEASE RING DOORBELL BEFORE ENTERING"

ELI
 (to himself)
 What the hell for? The place is
 already open!

He grabs the door handle.

INT. TOWN BAR - DAY

Eli opens the door just in time to see a patron release a
 Bowie knife at him.

With the Bowie knife stuck deep in Eli's forehead, he falls
 to the floor like a tree.

The bar room dog takes the ticket from the Eli's cold dead
 fingers.

The dog moves to and sits by Big Sam's bar stool then sighs
 and whines some moan SOUNDS.

Big Sam looks down and takes the ticket from the dog's
 teeth. He looks at the ticket and begins his happy dance.

The camerawoman enters and points the TV camera close to
 Eli's face.

FADE OUT: