

CANNON KNOWLEDGE

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INT. CLASSROOM - CATHOLIC, ALL BOYS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

ALLEN CANNON, a large, burly man sits at his desk holding his head as his students chant his first name. The students are in uniforms with maroon sweaters with crosses over their hearts. The classroom is full of Americana decorations like American Flags, "Uncle Sam" Posters and a large picture of Richard Nixon. ROGERS, a lanky, red-haired, obnoxious know-it-all, gets up and riles the crowd more.

ROGERS

Come on, Mr. Cannon, tell us. You know you wanna tell us. What's the big deal? You told us about your daughter getting porked at Notre...

ALLEN

Knock it off, Rogers! I told you to watch your mouth when you're talking about my daughter.

ROGERS

I was kidding, Allen. Now come on, tell us about all the slopes you killed in Vietnam.

ALLEN

Fellas, since the semester is almost over, I'll tell ya a great story.

The class cheers in appreciation.

ALLEN

Hey, hey, calm down, would ya?
You want Father Mulligan in here again? So where was I? Oh, yeah.
So, I'm walking down a road along
A rice field with some gooks
working all over the place, but
they were on our side.

Allen gets up out of his desk and walks over to the window where a flagpole with the American flags hangs.

ALLEN(cont.)

Now this one fella, I could just

tell, he'd piss on ol' red, white and blue in a second. Ya see, men, them slanty-eyed bastards don't give a rat's ass about America, especially them VC's.

ROGERS

VD? You got VD in the war, Mr. Cannon? Ouch! Was she hot?

ALLEN

That's not funny, Rogers.

The class laughs obnoxiously at Allen's statement as Allen rubs his balding head.

ALLEN

Nobody messes with my country.

ROGERS

You mean Mother Russia?

Allen puts his hands on Rogers' desk and leans into him.

ALLEN

Rogers, you're sick, ya know that?

The class laughs hysterically. Rogers stares into Allen's eyes and shakes and wiggles violently in his chair as if he were having convulsions. Allen shakes his head in disgust.

ALLEN(cont.)

Baaah. Enough of you. So there I was walking down this rice path when I see this VC..

Allen looks over at Rogers.

ALLEN(cont.)

Viet Cong bastard walking up the path towards me with a wheelbarrow full of cokes that he was selling to the gooks. So, I get closer, I take out my .45, walk up to him and take him out.

The class cheers.

ALLEN(cont.)
That ain't all fellas!

ROGERS
Did you slice off his head and
put it on a pole and dance
around it?

ALLEN
I'm gonna ignore that one,
Rogers. Well, I went up to him
to make sure he was gone. And I
turned over his wheelbarrow and
yelled out to everyone, "Cokes
are free, fellas."

The class cheers wildly as the bell rings and the class storms out of the room. Allen watches them leave and grins smugly. After picking his ear with his pinky finger, he takes his glasses off, folds his arms, and bites the arm of his glasses.

Allen walks out into the hall, stops at the water fountain and finally reaches his tiny office, tosses his books down and grabs his coat.

EXT. MCGEE'S PUB - DAY

Allen comes out of a taxi irate. He is in front of McGee's Pub that has old style architecture to it with a sign above the entrance that reads "Established in 1878."

ALLEN
Son of a bitch. Why the hell don't
you morons go back home, you're
pissing the hell out of me
everywhere I go.

Allen slams the cab door.

ALLEN(cont.)
And what the fuck is that goddamn
dot for? If ya can't see out of it,
then why the hell do ya's have it?

The cab speeds away. Allen looks at the pub and smiles.

ALLEN
(relieved)
All right.

Allen rubs his hands together and walks toward the door.

INT. MCGEE'S PUB - DAY

Allen walks into the pub and is greeted merrily by STEVE, the bartender and his good buddies, RALPH and GEORGE, who have been there since noon. Steve is a proper gentleman, dressed as if he had an office job. Ralph is a short, pudgy man and always covered in unmatching flannel. George is a medium-sized man, with a military haircut. Ralph and George are at a table for three, singing Christmas carols out of tune while they swing mugs of beer back and forth.

GEORGE
Come on and sit over here, Al my
boy, saved a seat for ya, ya
silly bastard.

RALPH
Yeah, and we didn't puke on it yet
either this time.

STEVE
For a change.

The bar erupts in drunken, over sarcastic laughter.

STEVE(cont.)
Scotch and coke, Mr. Cannon?

ALLEN
Don't you know, it, Steve.

Allen puts his coat on the rack and walks over to Steve, sits at the bar, scratches his nose and grabs his drink.

ALLEN(cont.)
Thanks a million. Well, another

semester is almost done.

RALPH

So how many's that now? Have you hit a thousand yet or what?

ALLEN

Yeah, that's right, Ralph. I have been teaching for five hundred years, how did you ever guess? You are such a genius.

Allen slams down his drink and slams the glass down on the bar. Steve fills it immediately. Allen downs it again and slams the glass down. Steve puts an oversized mug of beer on the bar and Allen grabs it and walks over to the table.

Ralph and George are balancing straws on their noses.

ALLEN

Maybe if you try it like this.

Allen grabs the straw and turns it lengthwise and puts it back on Ralph's nose.

RALPH

No shit. That's why you're the teacher, Al.

Allen laughs and nods.

ALLEN

Yeah, I guess you're right. You guys are always right.

INT. MCGEE'S PUB - POOL ROOM - NIGHT

Allen, Ralph and George are in a musty, smoky room, shooting pool and downing pitchers of beer.

GEORGE

So, then I said, get fucked, you stupid jackass. What do I look like, some wop that was born yesterday?

RALPH

Well, you are a wop, George, I mean Baldini is an Eye-talian name, isn't it?

The three laugh and shoot some more pool.

ALLEN

Well, you know what I always say fellas...

GEORGE & RALPH

Does a bear shit in the woods?

George and Ralph laugh.

ALLEN

Yeah, that's right.

GEORGE

What in hell does that mean again? You always say it, but I don't think you ever told us what it meant.

ALLEN

Ya know, it's sorta one of those expressions I picked up over in 'Nam. Kinda like when people say that phrase, "Que sera, sera?" Like that.

RALPH

(unbelievably)

Oh yeah, that's right. And how many gooks did you kill while you were there? A few thousand?

ALLEN

Ha ha. Very funny. Both of you's know that I'm a killing machine and I can't be stopped!

GEROGE

Right, Al, just fucking shoot pool, would ya?

ALLEN

Baaah. You's guys...

INT. MCGEE'S PUB - DART ROOM - NIGHT

Allen, George and Ralph are throwing darts with a lot less velocity and accuracy now. The room is smokier than before. Empty beer pitchers are aligned along the windowsill. The clock on the wall reads 2:36 AM.

GEORGE

Well, one more game, guys? It's only about 9:30 isn't it?

The three slosh out into the main bar area.

RALPH

Yeah, my Rosalie is gonna be worried if I don't get my ass home soon.

Allen walks out to the coat rack and Steve hands the coats out to his drunken buddies. Steve starts to put his coat on.

ALLEN

Ha! She's already fast asleep relaxing after her long night with Jimmy, your next door neighbor's son.

George smacks Allen on the arm.

GEORGE

Ssh. You know that's why he's in therapy, asshole.

Allen laughs.

ALLEN(cont.)

Alright, assholes, I'm getting outta here ya honkies. See you tomorrow.

GEORGE

Take care, Allen. Oh, wait, you

know they're doing construction on the Blue Line, right? No trains until 6 AM, how you gonna get home?

ALLEN

Yeah, sure, George, nice try. Is this like the time you told me that McGee's was on fire and moved over to Broad Street and I went there and it was a convent?

George and Steve laugh.

ALLEN(cont.)

Or like that time you told me I had to transfer to the Green Line at Maplewood Station to get to your house? Shit, I ended up in the goddamn ghetto. Fucking spooks everywhere. You know you're full of shit sometimes, and this is one of them.

STEVE

No, Mr. Cannon, he's right, the last train left at 2:30AM and another isn't running until 6 in the morning.

ALLEN

And how do you know this, Mr. have my mommy pick me up from work?

George and Ralph laugh.

STEVE

I took it the other day when my mom was sick. There is a huge poster up and the gates are locked up.

ALLEN

You's are full of shit. I am leaving before the sun comes up. Good night to you all, ya

jokers.

RALPH
Bye, big Al.

STEVE
'Night, Mr. Cannon. See you
later on, eh?

ALLEN
(to himself)
Yeah, I guess so, ya fruit.

Allen shuffles his feet slowly towards the door as he puts on his coat with Steve's help.

STEVE
Be sure to keep this on, it's
a nippy one out there tonight.

ALLEN
Gee, thanks, Mom, ya whore.

STEVE
Alright, alright, get home
safely and remember what we
said about the Blue Line.

ALLEN
Oh, give it a rest, already.

Allen stumbles to the door and leans against it for a few seconds to gain his balance.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Allen walks down the block to the subway station. As he does he bumps into a newspaper machine, a street light pole, a metal-wired trash can and trips over an uneven portion of the sidewalk.

As he gets closer to the subway, the cold, morning air starts to wake him up and make him a bit more aware of his surroundings; but not much. Allen comes upon the subway station and walks down the steps.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Allen walks up to a large poster and reads it aloud.

ALLEN

What's this? "Due to construction, the Blue Line will NOT run from 2AM to 6AM starting on December 18th and going until January 4th. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause." Jesus Christ, those little shits are going all out on this one. Putting up a sign to trick me. I bet they even got this here gate to be locked somehow, too.

Allen walks over to the gate and sees it is half open.

ALLEN

Well, they did a half-assed job on this one, there's a big space between the floor and the gate.

Allen lays down, slides under the gap and proceeds through the turnstiles.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT

Allen walks down the steps cautiously. Noises are heard from afar that are being made by LUTHOR, a dark skinned, black, homeless person with tattered clothes and a distinct stench who is rummaging the dumpsters looking for scraps to eat.

ALLEN

Damn it all. And there's no one around? Come on...

Allen looks around for a person to talk to. In the process, the warm air in the subway station has made him sleepy and he begins to trip over his own feet as he tries to walk.

ALLEN(cont.)

Excuse me, sir, but can you...

Allen taps a dark blue pillar near the subway track and realizes that it is not a person.

ALLEN(cont.)
(confused)
Okay, Fine.

Allen hears noises at the far end of the tracks and starts to stumble over to them. After a few steps he bumps into a metal bench and sits down.

ALLEN
Well, I might as well rest
up before the train comes.

Allen maneuvers his body along the sticky bench and lies down. As he lies on his back he hears the noise begin to grow and get closer.

ALLEN
Maybe I won't have to move
at all. I hear that sound
coming down the track. Woo
Woo - Chuga Chuga.

LUTHOR
What the hell is you doin'
you crazy white boy. Didn't yo
momma ever tell you that
when you reach a certain age
ya'll's suppose to stop actin'
like a goddamn train. Shit.

Allen opens his eyes wide and sits up immediately to look at Luthor.

ALLEN
Jesus Christ, you scared the
shit outta me.
(to himself)
Good thing you're teeth are
white or else I'd never a
seen ya.

LUTHOR

Oh, I see what we got here.
Yep. I may be blind in my
left eye, but I can see clearly.
Didn't take me long, neither, I
can spots one a mile away.

ALLEN

(to himself)
Spot what? A rib joint? A KFC?

Luthor laughs and sits down next to Allen on the bench.

LUTHOR

Never mind that, boy, why
don't ya'll tell me why you
down here. You don't look
like you ain't got no home
withs your fancy coat and nice
pants.

Luthor starts to rub Allen's coat in admiration. Allen
slides down the bench away from Luthor quickly.

ALLEN

What are you doing, freak?

LUTHOR

Damn, boy, you sure is
temperamental, ain't ya?
Shit, I was just feelin'
yo fancy coat. You got
something against being
admired? I thought all white
peoples loved to be admired.

ALLEN

(nervously and mockingly)
Now, that's certainly a racist
thing to say, don't you think?
Especially since we don't even
know each other.

Luthor laughs heartily and it echoes throughout the vacant
subway tracks.

ALLEN(cont.)

Anyways, I'm waiting for the train, why the hell else would I be here, ya moron?

LUTHOR

Moron? Boy, I think you the moron. Are you illiterate or something?

ALLEN

Illiterate? Hardly. Unlike your lazy self, I'm a school teacher and I can read real good.

LUTHOR

Well, did you read that sign atop them stairs *good*? Obviously not.

Luthor points up the steps. Allen chuckles heartily.

ALLEN

How much are they paying you?

LUTHOR

Paying? Who's paying? Money? What you talkin' 'bout?

ALLEN

George and Ralphie, how much are they paying you for this little stunt? Since you're only a bum, probably a couple of smokes and a bottle of Jim Beam.

LUTHOR

I don't know what you talkin' 'bout. Shit, I live down here, man. You know how long it took me to figure out how to open that gate? Shit, boy, that was real work! Goddamn construction makes it a lil' tougher on me, but I makes the best of things out of it, ya know?

Allen sits, thinks and looks around.

ALLEN

So you no one has put you up to
this? Not a George or a Ralph.

LUTHOR

My dear brother, why on God's
earth would I lie to ya'll?

Allen takes off his glasses, bites the end of the arm of
them and crosses his arms. Luthor is down on the tracks
picking up things. Unbeknownst to Allen, noises are heard
of keys jingling and a person shuffling his feet.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

A black TRANSIT WORKER, with a huge ring of keys and
smoking a cigarette who locked the gate back up. She is
pushing a garbage can on wheels with a broom and a mop
sticking out of the top of her cart.

ALLEN(o/s)

(quietly to himself)

Well, if the trains are out
of service, then it'll be about
three hours until they start.

Allen gets up to leave and walks up the steps to the gate
that has now been closed and locked.

ALLEN

Hey, you, ma'am, let me
out, would ya? I need to catch
a cab to get home, please hurry.

TRANSIT WORKER

Ha! You crazy. How the hell'd
you git in there in the first
place, honey?

ALLEN

It's a long story, just let me
out, please.

Allen pulls out his wallet and hangs a bill to her.

ALLEN(cont.)

(desperately)

Here, look, I'll give you five bucks, just unlock the door. How fucking hard is that? Come on!

The transit worker walks over to Allen and grabs the five-dollar bill. She holds it to the light and puts it in her pocket. Incidentally, she catches a whiff of the alcohol.

TRANSIT WORKER

Whew, boy, you been drinkin'?
'Cause you sure smells like it.
How did a wino like you get a five-dollar bill? You musta hit the good side of town, huh?

ALLEN

What? I'm not a bum, I'm a school teacher, I just went to the bar after work...

TRANSIT WORKER

Child, let me tell you, you smell and look like a wino so that can only mean one thing. You is a mother fuckin' wino. Now I don't know how the hell ya'll got down here, but you is staying, ya hear? Cause I know that as soon as I let you out, you'll take advantage of my womanhood and I'll be front page news in the Globe tomorrow. I'd rather get in trouble with work than have some crazy white boy all up in me. Just the thought gives me the heeby geeby's.

She shivers violently.

ALLEN

Please? I am begging you. You already have five dollars, what

more do you want? Look at all
those keys you have and you
can't unlock me?

The transit worker begins to walk away.

ALLEN(cont.)

Wait. I need to get out of here.
I can't be stuck down here with
that freak for three hours. He
touched me and I'm afraid he'll
do it again. Please? Please?

The transit worker nods her head no.

TRANSIT WORKER

You're lucky that's all he's
done to ya. Listen, all these
keys are just for show. The man
don't trust me with the real
ones so he just give me these to
make me feel like I'm something.
Now you just sit tight, the
train'll be up in a few hours.

She laughs devilishly and walks away. Allen grabs the gate
and shakes it a little. The weight of it and his waning
strength make it complicated. He leans his head against the
gate to hold himself up. He sighs loudly.

INT. SUBWAY STATION PLATFORM - NIGHT

Luthor is lying on his back on the bench asleep as Allen
walks down the steps disgusted.

ALLEN

Oh, no, no way, get your ass
up, I need to get to sleep,
ya bum.

LUTHOR

(unmoved)
Hey, shut up, I am slee-ping.

ALLEN

Listen to me, if I have to

sleep down here, I am sleeping
on the bench. You can lay on the
ground; you're used to that.

Luthor sits up slowly and peers into Allen's eyes deeply.

LUTHOR

Boy, think about what you just
said. Does it make any sense at
all?

ALLEN

(mockingly)

Of course it did, are you having
a hard time understanding? Need
me to speak in Ebonics, brother?
Is that it? You be on my bench,
now, ya'll best be gettin' off
before I be whoopin yo ass, bitch.

LUTHOR

Please! I understood what you
said, just think about it for
a minute. No, you too stupid, I'm
gonna tells ya what it means.

ALLEN

(to himself)

This should be good.

Luthor sits up and motions Allen to sit down next to him by
patting the empty space next to him.

LUTHOR

What's your name?

ALLEN

Allen.

LUTHOR

Alrighty, Allen. Allen, I
want to talk to you man to
man.

Luthor pulls Allen close by putting an arm around him.
Allen is a bit apprehensive and looks uneasy with this
closeness.

LUTHOR(cont.)

Now what you said is that I am used to sleeping on the ground. Well, boy, that is wrong. I am used to sleeping on the hard, cold, disgusting, pissed on ground. What kind of bed are you used to sleeping in?

ALLEN

Well, I have...

LUTHOR

No, wait, let me guess. You got a nice, big queen size bed with four pillows. Two for you and two for your wife. It's got all these blue frills on the sides 'cause that's what your wife likes. Am I right, Allen?

ALLEN

Actually it's a king size bed. My wife likes the extra room because sometimes I put my knees in her back and she...

LUTHOR

Right, right, I understand. But do you see my point, brother?

ALLEN

In a way. Since you don't have a good life and are *less fortunate*, I'm supposed to pity you, is that the point?

LUTHOR

Good Lord. Not only is you a bigot, you is cold hearted and judgmental, too. Goddamn boy, you one of the whitest crackers I ever seen.

Luthor chuckles.

ALLEN

Bigot? What are you talking about? Who is the one doing all the name calling? Huh?

LUTHOR

Forget that, just listen. Do you have any idea why I'm homeless? Don't answer, just listen. You ever heard of Vietnam, Allen? I'm not talkin' 'bout the country, but the war?

ALLEN

Please, what do you know about 'Nam? I spent four years over there defending this country.

LUTHOR

Oh yeah, what division and rank were you?

ALLEN

Oh, I was all over. Did some time as a captain, a general, among others.

LUTHOR

Do you tell everyone that or just me cause you think I'm some dumb nigger?

ALLEN

Why would I lie about defending my country? Of course, all of my family and friends know about my ass kicking overseas. I ripped a lot of Charlies new assholes...

LUTHOR

Shit, you gots to have a dumb ass family and friends, cause you are so full of horseshit, boy.

Luthor laughs heartily.

ALLEN

Oh, please, in my time spent
in Vietnam, I did more than
you'll ever do in your life,
you bum!

LUTHOR

(angrily)

Shit, you are a dumb bastard.
Look at me. I'm gonna tell you
something. You never spent any
time over in Vietnam, you piece
of shit. No pansy ass like
yourself would survive. You'd get
shot by your own men before the
enemy could. I was in Vietnam.
I was there; I saw what happened.
I lost sight in my eye. I never
killed no one cause I was too
chicken shit, like you. Only, I
had a good reason. I had bullets
flying at my goddamn head.

(beat)

All you had to do was make sure
coffee was hot and sharpen all
the pencils. Am I right, Allen?

ALLEN

Well, actually..

LUTHOR

No "actually's", yes or no,
Allen?

Allen takes off his glasses and rubs his face and stares
forward.

LUTHOR(cont.)

That's what I thought. You know
why I am homeless?

Allen nods.

LUTHOR(cont.)

It ain't 'cause I'm lazy or
don't know how to do nothing.

Shit, boy, spending time over
 in that place made my mind AFU.
 All Fucked Up. Ain't no place
 in the world that's gonna hire
 a crazy nigger to work for them,
 is there? Hell no. Sons a bitches
 like you got it made. Not just
 'cause you got a steady mind, but
 'cause you is white. Only family I
 had when I left was my momma. They
 told her I died in the war. When I
 did come home, I found her in a
 hospital, dying of cancer.
 (beat)
 I had nothing. No one. See what I'm
 saying?

Luthor storms off the bench and walks over to the far end
 of the platform. Allen looks over at him with pity in his
 eyes and nods his head compassionately.

ALLEN
 (to himself)
 Yeah, I *do* see what you're saying.

INT. SUBWAY STATION PLATFORM - NIGHT

Allen is still sitting on the bench pondering the story
 Luthor told him. Luthor is heard speaking aloud to himself
 from afar.

LUTHOR(o/s)
 (ecstatic)
 Alright, a pack of cards.
 (beat)
 forty-nine, fifty, fifty-one,
 fifty-two. Hot damn, they all
 here. Shit!

Luthor walks towards the bench where Allen sits.

LUTHOR(cont.)
 Yeah, cards. Last time I played
 cards was back when I was in the
 hospital with momma. I'd play
 solitaire to pass the time. I

played to keep my mind off my
mom dying.
(beat)
I played solitaire for three
weeks straight. It was good
though, 'cause I got to eat the
food they gave my momma.

Luthor chuckles somberly.

ALLEN
Do you play poker...

Allen stumbles because he doesn't know Luthor's name.

LUTHOR
Luthor. Luthor Williams.

ALLEN
Luthor?

LUTHOR
Shit, I haven't played poker
since I was overseas in 'Nam.

Luthor shuffles the cards to break an uncomfortable
silence.

ALLEN
So, how'd you know I never
went to Vietnam?

Luthor laughs heartily.

LUTHOR
Let's just say, I can tell.
When ya gots white skin,
you're easier to see through.

Luthor laughs. Allen follows with a sincere chuckle.

ALLEN
Yeah, I guess so. On the
other hand, you people are
pretty tough to read, unless
you got white writing on ya.

Allen chuckles. Luthor gives a mean look to Allen. Allen stops laughing instantly and fear sets in his eyes. After a pause, Luthor punches Allen jokingly in the arm and laughs loudly. Allen catches on and laughs.

ALLEN

So, yeah, I stayed in the United States. South Carolina to be exact.

LUTHOR

Paris Island?

ALLEN

Yeah, yeah, that's it.

LUTHOR

Shit, I went through boot camp there. Toughest eight weeks of my life. Goddamn Sparks. I'll never forget him.

ALLEN

Yeah, Sparks, what a son of a bitch, huh?

LUTHOR

Yeah, I always remember that every time we tried to play poker, Sparky would come by and take our cards. I'll never forget what he said either. "You ain't in my platoon to be playin' these sissy games cause there ain't..."

ALLEN & LUTHOR

"No pansies in my platoon!"

They laugh heartily together as Luthor shuffles the cards.

INT. SUBWAY STATION PLATFORM - MORNING

Another TRANSIT WORKER unlocks the gate and gets the station ready for the morning.

ALLEN(o/s)

Ha! And again I whoop your
sorry ass, ya bastard!
What is that four in a row
now?

LUTHOR

Ah, and these is my cards
too, I should be whoopin'
yo ass.

ALLEN

Alright, my deal, gimme them
cards, Luthor, would ya?

A noise of an approaching train is heard unbeknownst to
Allen and Luthor.

LUTHOR

Your deal? You crazy, you just
dealt. I may be getting on in
years, but I ain't no dummy.

The noise grows with every word Allen and Luthor speak to
the point that they appear to be moving their mouths with
no words coming out at all.

LUTHOR(cont.)

Now gives me the cards, would
ya?

The train pulls up to the station and opens its doors.

ALLEN

No way, it's my deal, so
would you just get over it,
boy? I am dealing and that's
final.

The doors close and the train pulls away.

LUTHOR

Boy? Ha, you crazy, come now,
gives me the cards.

THE END