

Dawn Awaits

Based on a short story by Adam Greindl and Bob Francis
Teleplay by Bob Francis

Characters:

CASHIER
CHERYL
HANK
OPERATOR VOICE
VOICE

FADE IN. THE CAMERA PANS DOWN to a sign. It's a convenient store open 24 hours. Behind is the only lit store in the shopping center. STREAM IN OPENING CREDITS. A big, dark car flies past the camera and parks. CAMERA FOLLOWS FEET as they get out of the car and walk towards the door. CUT TO INT. SHOT of store. A bell rings as HANK opens the door. He checks his watch. CASHIER is bored and sitting behind the counter. He looked up for a moment as HANK walks past him. He tries to make conversation.

CASHIER (calling after him)
Hell of a night, eh? Or is it morning now? I don't know. Night shift, you lose all track of time... you know how it is.

HANK wanders up and down the aisles. He picks up a few items and keeps checking his watch and looking towards the front windows of the store.

CASHIER (almost talking to himself)
Don't get many customers anymore. The big supermarkets are open all night and you can buy cigarettes at the gas station...

HANK pages through a magazine and looks up at the windows. At that moment a police car drives past the windows. HANK checks his watch and smiles. The cops are on patrol, right on time. CUT TO CU, CASHIER.

CASHIER
Of course, I don't really mind, especially on nights like these. Hot and humid... can't sleep, time stands still... So, I might as well be here where it's air conditioned - OH, JESUS!

CASHIER hears the click of a gun being cocked. CAMERA ZOOMS OUT to reveal HANK holding a handgun to CASHIER'S head.

HANK
The money. Give me the money.

CASHIER (scared, obviously)
Yeah, yeah, sure. Just don't shoot.

CASHIER opens the register drawer and fumbles with the money. HANK watches him behind his sunglasses.

HANK
No. Not the change. Just the bills.

CASHIER
Right... here. Forty three dollars.

He offers a small bag. HANK just looks at it.

HANK
That's it?

CASHIER
It's been a slow night. You're the only customer I've had -

HANK
The safe.

CASHIER
What?

HANK (pushing CASHIER)
The safe, God damn it! Open the safe!

CASHIER (pleading)
I can't! I don't have the combination -

HANK (fed up)
Lie! You deserve this -

CASHIER'S eyes open wide. There's a flash and HANK is spattered with blood. He jumps over the counter and works on the safe. CAMERA pans to a security camera in the far corner of the store. CUT TO SECURITY CAMER IMAGE WITH THE TIME IN THE CORNER. It's grainy and black and white. But when HANK stands up after shooting the safe open, it gets a perfect image of his face. Police will know who committed the crime. CUT TO HANK driving in his car. STREAM IN THE REST OF THE OPENING CREDITS. The car pulls into a driveway. CUT TO INT. HOUSE. HANK runs in, he checks his watch: 3:58 am. He picks up the phone and dials a number. CUT TO A DARKENED ROOM. CHERYL turns on the nightstand light and answers the phone.

CHERYL (half asleep)
Hello? Hank... what time is it?

HANK
Four o'clock. I did it, Cheryl. It was like clockwork. The cop patrol was right on schedule. Everything worked perfectly.

CHERYL
Great. How much did you get?

HANK
Almost six thousand dollars.

CHERYL
Oh, Hank, that's terrific. I got the plane tickets. When you pick me up around six -

HANK

Uh, you'll have to pick me up in your car. Now. The cops know who I am.

CHERYL

What happened?

HANK

I – I killed a guy.

CHERYL (shocked)

You what? Oh my God, Hank, how could you kill someone? I thought you said –

HANK

I had to. He – he pulled a knife on me.

CHERYL (completely changes her tone)

Are you all right?

HANK

Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. But we've gotta get out of here. The patrol circles around...
they'll be back at the store in...

(checks watch)

Shit. Like around now.

CHERYL

Okay. I'll pack some things and pick you up in an hour.

HANK

An hour? Okay, honey, don't be any later than that.

CHERYL

Don't worry. By dawn, we'll be halfway to the Bahamas.

HANK

Great. Dawn awaits.

HANK hangs up and looks around nervously. He goes into his bedroom and throws a suitcase on the bed. He crawls into his closet and throws out clothes as fast as possible. He jams them into the suitcase and puts it by the door. He checks his watch and is a little surprised that only ten minutes have passed. He looks around to see if there's anything else he missed. He takes his time – pausing to take a few breaths. He hears a voice and jerks his head up. Brandishing his gun, he looks around carefully, but there's no one there. He checks his watch and notices he still has blood spilled on his arm. It's still fresh. HANK smears it on his arm. He runs to the bathroom and sees spatters of blood on his coat. He takes it off, but the blood has soaked through to his shirt. He rolls up his sleeves and the blood is on his skin. He gets the soap and washes vigorously. The water in the sink gets discolored, but the blood is still there. HANK can't wash it off. HANK runs to the living room and calls CHERYL.

CHERYL (on phone)

Hello?

HANK
Cheryl, where the hell are you?

CHERYL
What are you talking about? You only called me a couple of minutes ago.

HANK
What?

He checks his watch and then checks to see if it is running (it is). He slides down into a sitting position on the floor.

CHERYL
Now you're just jumpy. Don't worry. I'll be there as soon as I can.

HANK
Okay... okay. Just hurry up, please? I think the cops are on to me.

HANK hangs up the phone and fumbles with his hands for a moment – unsure of what to do.

HANK (to himself)
Oh, man, Hank, you need some sleep.

HANK goes into the bedroom and crashes down in his clothes. After a few seconds, he falls asleep. It's not quiet sleep however. DISSOLVE TO HANK IN VARIOUS SLEEPING POSITIONS. He tosses and turns, but wakes up refreshed. He rubs his eyes and stretches and checks his watch... and does a double take. Only two minutes have passed.

HANK
What the hell... I just put in a new battery.

HANK gets up and walks into the kitchen. The big clock shows the same time that his watch does. He makes sure it's plugged in and running all right (it is).

HANK (shakes his head)
Okay, you're just a little freaked out. Don't lose it now or the cops'll get you. Come on now, let's get it together.

He visibly relaxes and checks out the fridge. He makes himself a sandwich and opens up a beer. However, he keeps looking at the clock. He goes into the living room and runs through the channels on TV. Nothing much is on. An old black and white western and a Star Trek episode ("Wink of an Eye"). The VCR clock also catches his attention. While he's earing, he runs through a pile of magazines on the couch. He pases through a couple, trying his best to ignore the time. However, it's too strong a temptation. Finally, he grabs the phone. CUT TO CHERYL'S HOUSE. She picks up the phone.

CHERYL
Hello?

HANK (forcing himself to sound calm)
Hi, Cheryl. It's me again. Uh, could you tell me what time it is?

CHERYL
What, you don't have any clocks at your place?

HANK (swallowing anger)
Just tell me what time it is.

CHERYL (looks at her clock)
About four thirty.

HANK
Exactly four thirty?

CHERYL
No... uh, four twenty-six. Is everything all right?

HANK
Yeah, fine. Why?

CHERYL
You sound a little strange.

HANK
I'm fine. See you soon.

HANK looks at the kitchen clock. It's says 4:26 – almost mocking him. Suddenly he hears a voice again.

HANK (whirling around)
Who's there?

On Star Trek, Captain Kirk tries to brush a way a buzzing noise, thinking it's an insect. HANK watches for a moment or two – listening to the explanation of how Kirk's been speeded up. He looks back at the clock. It's still 4:26. He rips through the kitchen drawers, throwing stuff out all over the place. Finally, he finds the phone book and dials the number for the time. It rings once and then picks up.

OPERATOR VOICE
At the tone, the time will be 4:26 and ten seconds...
At the tone, the time will be 4:26 and twenty seconds...
At the tone, the time will be 4:26 and thirty seconds...

While HANK has been listening, he's been watching the kitchen clock go slower and slower. He counts "Mississippi" in between the beeps, getting twelve, then fifteen between them. Finally, HANK puts the phone down and grabs the clock off the wall. He shakes it vigorously to no avail. He throws it. Then he sits and watches as the second hand moves slower and slower. Finally it stops altogether. HANK picks up the receiver up off the floor.

OPERATOR VOICE
At the tone, the time will be 4:26 and thirty seconds...

At the tone, the time will be 4:26 and thirty seconds...
At the tone, the time will be 4:26 and thirty seconds...

Almost completely numb by shock, HANK slowly hangs up the phone. He walks into the living room where the VCR clock has stopped at 4:26 as well. So has his watch. The TV picture is frozen in mid scene. HANK backs away, very frightened.

VOICE (laughs then whispers)
He who kills...

HANK
Who are you?

VOICE (laughs then says a little louder)
He who kills...

HANK
Who is this? What have you done to me?

VOICE (laughs and even louder)
He who kills, pays with his soul.

HANK (nonplussed)
Come out, whoever you are! Show yourself!

VOICE (even louder)
He who kills...

VOICE laughs and it follows HANK through the house as he tries to escape it.

HANK
Shut up! Shut up! Damn you!

HANK gets to the door and stops. He turns around. The VOICE stops laughing.

HANK
What are you? My conscience? The devil? You want me to go out there and turn myself in...

HANK grabs his suitcase and sits down right in front of the door.

HANK
Well, I won't. My girlfriend will be here soon. Maybe it will seem like forever, but I can wait. You hear me? I can wait until Hell freezes over!

HANK folds his arms and waits... and waits... and waits... MULTIPLE DISSOLVES OF VARYING SHOTS OF HANK WHICH COMBINE TO FORM A ZOOM OUT... DISSOLVE TO RISING SUN. Light is pouring in through the windows. There's a knock at the door. Nobody answers it. Another knock.

CHERYL (outside)
Hank? Hank? It's me. Let me in.

Still no answer. A few more knocks, then a pause. The door unlocks and CHERYL comes in. She looks around.

CHERYL
Hank, are you in here?

The TV is showing the end of Star Trek. CHERYL shuts it off.

CHERYL
Hank, where are you?

She sees the kitchen clock lying in the hallway. She hangs it back up.

CHERYL
Come on, Hank, this isn't funny anymore.

She finally sees the suitcase lying by the doorway. CHERYL walks over to it and looks over it. CHERYL almost screams, but holds her mouth to stop it. CAMERA TRUCK UP to reveal a dusty pile of clothes – the ones last seen worn by HANK. Now, all that's left of HANK is a dusty skeleton. FREEZE FRAME, FADE OUT.