

TALLAHASSEE TWIN

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EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A dusty, desolate, decalescent day.

On one side of the street, an EMPTY STOREFRONT.

On the other side, a store simply called MATTRESSES.

Through the big store windows at Mattresses, a salesman in a work polo **JAMES** (50s) pitches at a trapped **CUSTOMER**.

James lays it on thick, but the customer doesn't bite. They turn to leave, but James grabs their arm.

A short struggle, before the Customer wriggles free.

At the window, James watches the customer disappear.

PRE-LAP: Herky-jerky sounds of a printer.

INT. MATTRESS STORE - DAY

A printer spits out a fan-folded page with edge perforations.

It's archaic, like every bed (and person) in this store.

James tears the page and hands it to **GUY** (40s), who wears a similar work polo and safety belt for heavy lifting.

GUY

This all you sold today?

JAMES

People buy ACs in summer and beds
in winter, that's all. Some things
never change.

GUY

If you say so...

Guy starts loading a mattress onto a hand truck.

ACROSS THE STORE

James lurks behind a **LONE** customer near a twin mattress.

JAMES

You look like a man of industry-

This startles Lone. Up close, James sees this man is sweaty.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 You look like a man of industry.
 You should sleep in something
 industrious.

James moves them down the row to a few fancy queens.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 Queens. Memory foam, flex coiling,
 cooling gel... Nice. But not for
 you.

James guides Lone towards a long king mattress.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 Solid foam. Nothing porous. A
 powerful, reasonable, **stiff**
 California King. Whaddya say?

Lone leans in towards James, like he's sharing a secret.

LONE
 What about a Tallahassee Twin?

James laughs this off.

JAMES
 Tallahassee Twin? That's rich. No,
 I think for you is-

LONE
 Excuse me.

Lone promptly exits the store, leaving James to try to digest
 what the hell just happened.

JAMES
 What a nut.

TITLE ON SCREEN: TALLAHASSEE TWIN

EXT. MATTRESS STORE - MORNING

James saunters down the street to the front door, fumbling
 with the keys to the place.

He feels a presence, turns to find **TWO TEPID WOMEN** (20s)
 lurking behind him.

JAMES
 Hi ladies. Can't wait to get in a
 bed, huh?

The tepid women look back at James - no reaction.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'll show you some Queen options.

The women look at each other knowingly. Woman One leans in.

TEPID WOMAN ONE
Heard you got a Tallahassee Twin.

JAMES
Oh yeah? Afraid I don't know what that is.

Woman Two shows her friend her phone screen.

TEPID WOMAN TWO
(Whispering)
This is the wrong store.

They break their huddle and quickly leave.

JAMES
Wait, ladies!

James watches-

THROUGH THE WINDOW

- As they cross the street and enter the formerly empty storefront, now re-branded as "**WONDER BEDS**"

INT. MATTRESS STORE, BACK OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Guy lounges, eating a bag of Mini-Muffins.

James ambles in, lingers before saying what's on his mind.

JAMES
Did you know another mattress store moved in across the street?

GUY
Yeah, Wonder Beds.

JAMES
Huh. You ever heard of a Tallahassee Twin?

GUY
What's that, some kind of mattress?

INT. WONDER BEDS - END OF THE WORK DAY

Sign says CLOSED, but James knocks anyway.

He holds a box of snacks.

A man in a kurta, **ORION** (30s) comes to the door.

JAMES
Welcome wagon, open up!

Orion lets James inside.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Here.

James hands the box to Orion, who riffles through it.

ORION
Miniature muffins...

JAMES
Oh yeah, gotta be careful with those. They're addictive.

Orion sets the box on a counter next to a freestanding deli ticket dispenser.

A door in the back reads GALLERY.

James walks through the space, which is mostly empty.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Don't see a lot of beds.

ORION
We don't sell beds. We sell wonder.

JAMES
Don't see a lot of that either.

Orion grabs a ticket from the dispenser, hands it to James.

ORION
You will.

James looks at the ticket: "#35 - GALLERY - 10PM."

JAMES
Welcome to the neighborhood-

ORION
Much obliged.

JAMES
- Enjoy the muffins!

EXT. WONDER BEDS - CONTINUOUS

While exiting, James drops the act, walks away.

JAMES
Woo-woo bullshit.

James litters, dropping the ticket in the road.

TIME LAPSE FROM DAY TO NIGHT

Boots walk up to the ticket. James' hand reaches down to claim it. He keeps walking towards Wonder Beds.

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

James steps into a dark room full of all kinds of people he has never brushed up against in his life.

He grabs a seat in the back.

A ghost lamp lights a de facto stage containing a BINGO DRUM, and a ROPE CRANK attached to a BELT.

The vibe is a mix of an AA meeting and the worst community theatre you've ever seen.

Orion emerges from the dark, wheeling in an old **TWIN MATTRESS** propped on a hand cart.

It's covered in cuts, frayed fabric, stains.

Orion delicately dresses a **FITTED SHEET** over the mattress.

Orion spins the bingo drum.

People cling to their tickets.

He grabs a ball.

ORION
Twenty-Nine.

A **NEBBISH** person comes to the stage, presents their ticket.

ORION (CONT'D)
What change do you seek?

NEBBISH

Internal.

Some groans from the audience. Orion raises a silencing hand.

NEBBISH (CONT'D)

I'm not normal.

ORION

How so?

NEBBISH

There's a weight inside me. It's paralyzing...

ORION

But you walked up here?

NEBBISH

It's not all the time. I'll be fine, happy even. Bopping along. Then... can't move. I, I-

Talking about this makes Nebbish's anxiety rise.

ORION

It's clinical?

Nebbish nods their head. Orion deliberates on this.

Orion walks *off-stage*. He rummages for a moment before returning with a SCALE.

ORION (CONT'D)

Up you go.

Orion helps Nebbish onto the scale, announces the reading.

ORION (CONT'D)

165!

Orion removes a **KNIFE** from his pocket, hands it to Nebbish.

ORION (CONT'D)

The Tallahassee Twin is yours.

The audience applauds. Orion attaches the rope belt to Nebbish, and works the crank.

Nebbish cuts a slit in the mattress. They test the waters, putting a hand into the mattress slit.

James whispers to the person next to him-

JAMES

This is some woo-woo bu-

The person next to him isn't having it, SHUSHES James.

Nebbish keeps moving inward. Before long, their entire body disappears into the mattress.

The mattress doesn't change shape despite housing a human.

James looks on in disbelief.

Nebbish's muted but jubilant screams cry out from inside.

Orion pulls the crank, yanking Nebbish back outside.

ORION

Quick, the scale!

Nebbish glides over to the scale. They see the number, and immediately hugs Orion in a deep embrace.

ORION (CONT'D)

Well, tell the people!

NEBBISH

158!

The crowd all stands and applauds, except for James.

INT. MATTRESS STORE, OFFICE - DAY

James is on the phone. Agitated. Hold Muzak clicks off.

JAMES

Yes! I'm looking to add an additional product to my order...

Guy trots in, delivers a new gallery ticket (#70) to James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Actually, I didn't see it in your catalogue...

GUY

It's weird over there. Dude kept offering me tea.

James mouths to Guy, "I'm on the phone."

JAMES (CONT'D)

I need Tallahassee Twins... yes, like the town... No, don't trans-

Muzak seeps through the phone. James hangs up.

GUY
Did they have any of those beds
you're after?

PRE-LAP: Sounds of the Bingo Drum, tumbling.

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

Standing room only. James is next to a woman, a **LOOKER**.
Orion finishes spinning the drum, pulls the winning ball.

ORION
Seventy...

James' eyes widen.

ORION (CONT'D)
...Four.

Looker rushes to the front with her ticket.

ORION (CONT'D)
What change do you seek?

LOOKER
External.

The crowd whoops.

ORION
Easy now.

Some laughs.

ORION (CONT'D)
What do you desire?

LOOKER
I want to be beautiful.

ORION
No, that's not it.

Looker tries to come closer to Orion, but he steps back.

ORION (CONT'D)
Don't tell me, tell us.

Looker is flustered. She speaks softly.

LOOKER
I seek beauty...

ORION
Beauty and WHAT?

Looker thinks about how to phrase it.

ORION (CONT'D)
OUT WITH IT!

She responds, but with timidity.

LOOKER
Beauty and... safety.

Orion's aggression washes away, replaced with understanding.

ORION
Say no more.

Orion's off to the wings, returning with a thin blue gymnastics mat that he slides in front of the bed.

ORION (CONT'D)
The Tallahassee Twin is yours.

He hands her the knife, readies the rope. The crowd applauds.

Looker cuts her slit into the Twin, and steps inside.

Jubilant screams follow.

Sounds like skin ripping.

The mattress shakes of its own accord.

A **blood-red stain forms** on the sheet around the slit.

Orion pulls the crank, more resistance than last time.

The Looker falls out from the mattress slit, hitting the mat with a squelch. They're wet, naked and covered in blood.

They stand downstage - now a tall and beautiful man.

The crowd erupts, their fervor only matched by the horror on James' face.

INT. MATTRESS STORE, OFFICE - DAY

James seated at his desk, mid phone conversation.

JAMES
They're doing some sort of blood
ritual, AND, and it feels very
occult. Satanic, even!

An interjection on the other end. James listens.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I want you to go over there and
crack some skulls.

James paces and raises his voice.

JAMES (CONT'D)
It's illegal!... Well, it's
certainly not natural... I can't
just leave it alone!... I know what
religious freedom means...

James calms down a bit.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Fine. Have a nice day.

He slams the handset down on the phone console.

Not therapeutic enough.

He picks up the whole console, rips the phone cord out, and
throws it all against the wall.

INT. MATTRESS STORE - DAY

James steams behind the counter. Guy waits.

GUY
Gonna print my report?

James can't answer. He's busy watching as The Looker
approaches the counter.

LOOKER
Hi there! I was hoping I could get
some help finding a new bed.

JAMES
Looking for a queen?

LOOKER
No, I'm thinking something longer,
something nice and stiff.

JAMES
I'll be with you in a minute.

Looker heads off. Guy watches him walk away, affixed.

GUY
Wow. That might be the most
handsome man I've ever seen.

James stares at Guy, blankly.

INT. WONDER BEDS - DAY

Whilst Orion pours some tea, James barges in, opens his wallet, and places a few hundred bucks on the counter.

JAMES
I'm buying your magic bed.

ORION
No, I don't think so.

James goes back to the wallet, slams down more cash.

ORION (CONT'D)
It's not for sale.

JAMES
What! You don't like money!?

ORION
What would you do with it?

JAMES
Grind it up. Burn it. Restore some
normalcy around here.

Orion puts his hand on James'.

ORION
No one's stopping you from selling
mattresses the way you see fit.

James throws Orion's hand away, and leaves.

Orion watches him go.

After a few moments, James returns, grabbing all the cash he forgot on the counter.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

On their side of the street, Wonder Beds is full of patrons drinking tea, waiting for the Gallery to open.

A glockenspiel plays a few notes, and people file inside.

On his side of the street, James stands alone inside his store, lights off - his beady eyes the only light source.

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

Before a full house, Orion spins the bingo drum.

He pulls a ball, but before he can announce the number...

James enters and walks straight to the front of the stage.

He takes the ball from Orion and - after some initial difficulty - crushes it in his hand.

A hush over the audience as James stares them down - including Guy, whose in attendance.

ORION

What change do you seek?

James doesn't listen, he's busy giving Guy the stink eye.

ORION (CONT'D)

Internal or external?

JAMES

Neither.

The crowd jeers, but Orion holds up a hand to silence them.

ORION

Tell us what you want?

JAMES

I just want a normal, stiff bed.
It's enough for me, and it should
be enough for all of you!

He holds for applause. He ain't getting it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You people, you're delusional.
Worse, you're indulgent!

Orion steps in to prevent a revolt.

ORION

So what I'm hearing is you want
this bed to be stiff, yes?

JAMES

Stiff. Powerful. Not porous. And
sold at a reasonable price, like we
do across the street at-

ORION

Very good, very good.

Orion takes out the knife.

ORION (CONT'D)

Are you certain?

James takes the knife from Orion.

ORION (CONT'D)

The Tallahassee Twin is yours.

Orion readies the belt, but James pushes him off.

JAMES

I don't need your help.

James makes his slit, and steps inside the bed-

INT. MATTRESS VOID - CONTINUOUS

-James floats to the ground from above, held by the rope.

It's an empty square room. Everything within is viewed in
black and white, including James.

Once he reaches the floor, he looks up to see a window back
to the Gallery.

On the ground sits a **TUMBLEWEED** made of bedsprings. It's like
a piece of gnarly folk ark.

James looks at it, in true wonder.

He gives it a small kick.

The tumbleweed briefly rolls, then comes to a stop.

After a moment, its springs start expanding.

This expansion causes the tumbleweed to leak a viscous dark
substance, covering the floor.

James touches a spring, but it cuts his finger.

The spring thistles grow...

In all directions...

Quickly...

JAMES

Hey! Hey something's wrong!

INT. GALLERY - SAME TIME

James' muffled cries for help escape from the bed.

INT. MATTRESS VOID - SAME TIME

James moves towards the wall to avoid the springs, but slips on the viscous substance, throwing him face first into a patch of thistles.

He rises with a crimson mask - or, I *guess* a dark gray mask.

INT. GALLERY - SAME TIME

Orion pulls the crank through massive resistance.

INT. MATTRESS VOID - SAME TIME

The rope yanks James upwards.

He furiously tries for traction on the wall with his feet - he looks like a guy on skates falling.

The springs grow upward in a way that starts to close around the opening to the Gallery above.

JAMES

HEY! PULL ME OUT!!!

INT. GALLERY - SAME TIME

The muffled screams fill the gallery as a red-faced Orion pulls with all his might.

INT. MATTRESS VOID - SAME TIME

Surrounded by springs, James reaches up towards the Gallery.

It's a last-ditch effort.

The springs close completely around the Gallery window, throwing the room into darkness.

INT. GALLERY - SAME TIME

Finally, the rope snaps, throwing Orion to the ground.

INT. MATTRESS VOID - SAME TIME

James is drowning in a sea of springs and gunk.

All that's visible is James' face.

But soon enough, springs cover his mouth...

Then scrawl across his eyes...

No more gaps.

Nothing porous.

INT. GALLERY - SAME TIME

The Tallahassee Twin falls to the ground with a **THUD** that breaks the cement floor.

A speechless audience.

Orion stands, looking at the Tallahassee Twin, in mourning.

Eventually, patrons respectfully head for the exits.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Not a single person on the streets this blistery day.

The storefront at Wonder Beds is empty, a sign on the doors reads "LOCATION CLOSED."

Mattresses is also empty - except for the Tallahassee Twin.

It lays flat and still, the only thing left in town.

THE END