

MEMORIES OF A RAYGUN

INT. TELEVISION FOOTAGE - DAY

An 80s television plays newsreel footage of Jack "Star Eyes" Fletcher, 40, at a press conference with his eyes glowing behind his sunglasses. The footage cuts to a photo of Jack saving scientists from a lab explosion.

MALE NEWSCASTER

Jack Fletcher: a soldier and American hero. After fighting the Axis Powers, he had an unfortunate accident that turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

The next cut shows Jack fighting numerous men in retro science fiction black suits while an elderly man, 60, sits on a rocket-propelled chair trying to line up a clear shot with a miniature bazooka.

MALE NEWSCASTER

With his shining eyes and colossal strength, he dedicated himself to keeping America safe from street thugs and global threats like J'ivara.

INT. CHANNEL 5 NEWS BROADCAST ROOM - DAY

The clip changes to show a male and female newscaster, 40 and 25. In the background, there is a closeup of Jack's face with the words JACK "STAR EYES" FLETCHER in bold letters.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

That's right Bill. As an award for his extraordinary service, the United States government will be unveiling a statue at the Museum of American Legends. Next week, we continue the Amazing Americans retrospective starting with the attack on Time Square and the return of an old masked mystery man-

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

As the female newscaster's voice trails off, the television is revealed to be in a messy bedroom with clothes scattered across the floor. A Mexican man named Seth, 22 is sleeping face down into a pillow with the covers over the majority of his body.

Above the bed is a poster of Jack in a pulp art style standing on a metal platform facing a meteor. Next to the bed is a nightstand with a landline phone, a piece of paper labeled "The Star Eyes Parole Program" with a mugshot of a Seth and a picture frame face down.

The landline starts ringing and Seth opens his eyes slightly before shoving the pillow over his head.

The phone stops ringing and Seth breathes a sigh of relief, but a loud ring goes off to spring out of his bed and scream. The ringing continues as he searches his shorts for the source of the commotion. He yanks out a palm-sized device with a large red button and small speaker holes above it. Seth presses the button and the ringing stops.

SETH

I am awake! What is it!?

JACK

You were sleeping soundly before.

Seth gets up and stretches his body. He starts pulling clothes off the floor, smelling each of them and throwing the clothes that are dirty ground.

SETH

It's my day off, can't you let me sleep.

JACK

I called you every thirty minutes from 10 AM to now. Do you know what time it is?

SETH

I still see the sun, it's not a big deal.

JACK

Seth, I just want you to reach your peak potential and-

While this conversation is happening, Seth migrates to his bathroom mirror, staring at his tired eyes and disheveled hair. His stomach gurgles and he grabs it feeling his stomach fat.

SETH

Yeah, yeah I look and feel fine, Mr.Fletcher.

Seth washes his face and starts brushing his teeth

JACK

Seth, I am just a guy. Call me by my first name.

SETH

Sorry, Jack. Uhm...Why are you calling?

Seth spits out his toothpaste and toothbrush.

Did I miss a parole appointment again? Look, I just had something come up on Tuesday before-

JACK

Seth, it's okay. Just calm down and take some deep breaths. I understand that unexpected events happen. The reason I am calling will be apparent to you in 3...2...1.

Seth gets confused and hears a thud outside the door.

SETH

The hell?

Seth throws on the nearest blue shirt and light blue shorts heading for the door. Opening the door is a brown package with the label "STAR FOUNDATION DELIVERY." Seth takes it over to his couch and struggles to open it.

JACK

Well, you look inside, yet?

SETH

Hang on, I don't have super strength like you.

Seth manages to open up the package. He pulls out a golden piece of paper with a bold black letter saying, "YOU HAVE BEEN INVITED TO PARTAKE IN STAR EYES FLETCHER'S CELEBRATION FOR HIS EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE." Seth stares at this in disbelief.

JACK

After the statue is unveiled, there will be a wonderful party and I thought you might want to join me.

SETH

Wow, just thanks. I have not gone to a party in a while.

JACK

Your welcome, I hope to see you there. It will be quite an impressive gathering, not like the parties you probably went to.

Seth remains silent for a few seconds staring at the wall and away from the device.

JACK

Seth...you still there? Everything alright?

SETH

Sorry.

JACK

Oh was that insensitive. I am sorry, sorry

SETH

Jack, it's okay. I'm fine.

JACK

Alright then. By the way, there are a few more surprises in that package.

Seth continues to dig in the package and finds an identical golden slip of a paper.

SETH

I think your delivery service sent an extra ticket.

JACK

Nope, it's for that woman down the hall from you. What was her name, Ellen?

SETH

Elaine.

JACK

Ah yes, Elaine. She could keep you company.

SETH

I don't know if she would want to-

THE VOICE IN THE DISTANCE ON JACK'S END
THE VOICE IN THE DISTANCE ON JACK'S
END(CONT'D)Jack!!! Stop yappin', we
have to leave in three minutes!

JACK

Sorry, got to go, I have press
meetings to prepare for.

Jack hangs up and Seth stares at the slips of paper for a few seconds.

SETH

Oh fuck, what am I going to wear?

Seth begins to desperately search for good clothes. He pulls out a Hawaiian shirt and jeans but looks embarrassed. He falls on his couch, staring at the device Jack got him. He presses the button multiple times.

SETH

Damn it, Jack, why did you only make
this one way.

Seth throws the device on the couch. He picks up the package to throw it away but hears something rattling within it. He tears it and a rectangular grey box with white letters written on the back. It reads "INSTANT TUXEDO BY THE STAR FOUNDATION."

SETH

Heh, Jack thinks of everything,
doesn't he?

He turns over the box and sees the instructions written on the back of how to use it with a red switch encased in plastic. Scribbled in a black pen on the side of the box is a sentence "CALL YOUR PARENTS, ALSO YOUR PROBATION MEETING IS COMING UP." Seth looks at the box with annoyance, grabs his wallet, and heads out the door.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Seth leaves his apartment, heading into the hallway. The carpeting is brown with hints of red and the sun shines brightly through the window. As he is walking down, a woman opens her apartment door. Seth freezes and lets her walk past him, anxiously scratching his arm until she is out of sight.

The only noise is a slight drizzling of rain.

When she leaves, he looks behind him and in front of him and notices some birds flying out the window. Seth quickly walks down the hallway to room 218. The door is normal except for metallic paint on the edges.

Seth knocks on the door. The peephole extends out like a mechanical snake and circles around Seth's body before stopping right on his face. Seth's impatient expression is shown through a red tint on grainy footage with a graph of various bars going up and down along with a pie chart in three sections.

SETH

Come on Elaine, you know it's me.

The peephole snaps back into place while a metal clanking is heard.

ELAINE

It's open.

Seth opens the door and enters her apartment.

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Elaine's apartment is slick and organized. Her apartment has a retro-futuristic aesthetic, light brown carpeting and yellow furniture with a large potted plant near them. Across the wall is a silver control panel with small black rectangles that have a series of flashing, colored buttons and knobs on it.

In the kitchen, there is a large computer with a small black screen and a large protruding keyboard. Soft light comes from it making the environment feel warm, despite the stark grayness. Elaine, 20, wearing a lab coat is working the background on some sort of table bending downward with sparks flying outwards. Elaine gets up from the table, giving a heavy sigh of relief and wipes the sweat from her brow. She wears a white lab coat with reddish-brown hair in a bun and black goggles with green lenses. She lifts them up and pushes a button on the wall.

A couch unfolds and she falls down on her back. Seth looks over.

SETH

What were you doing?

ELAINE

The reactor generator needed repairs, I can't with the risk of a chemical explosion. Nano-machines are so finicky. Always needing the exact amount or else an error occurs. So I have to run the program with slight adjustments to the molecular stabilizer over and over again to find the problem.

SETH

Yeah...stuff blowing up in your face sounds really bad.

ELAINE

You have don't know what I am talking about, do you?

Seth looks around the room and the buttons on the wall. He notices a small translucent television screen that is playing a cartoon.

SETH

Maybe not. How long did this take you?

ELAINE

Well, I have worked since 9 PM.

SETH

You worked until midnight and then passed out until you woke up again?

ELAINE

Not exactly.

It takes a minute for Seth to catch on and then he jumps back.

SETH

You haven't had any sleep? Are you crazy?

ELAINE

Seth, my concerned friend. You have no idea how much Franz's All Night Energy Pills helps reinvigorates the body when it wants to stop moving.

SETH

It means you need to go to bed.

ELAINE

Not when there is research to do. Term papers don't appear out of thin air.

SETH

Never had to deal with stuff like that. But as Jack says, "You need a healthy amount of sleep-

Seth's stomach lets out a loud growl.

ELAINE

Speaking of people with screwed up sleep schedules, when did you wake up?

SETH

uhhhhhh...none ya businesses you nosy girl.

Seth starts looking over the control panel on the wall.

SETH

You have anything to eat?

ELAINE

Black panel on the left push the green button and enter the command key-

Seth runs through a list of command keys typing "FIND_FOOD" and given "INVALID_COMMAND". He types again "UNLOCK_CONSUMABLE_ITEMS" and gets the same command.

SETH

Why is it so hard to find anything in this apartment?!

ELAINE

Have you tried the refrigerator one?

Seth types in "REFRIGERATOR" and a digitized hourglass appears on the screen. The wall begins creates mechanized sounds and mini-fridge begins to pop out causing Seth to jump back.

Seth opens the fridge to peruse. Elaine gets up and starts to stretch, letting her hair loose putting her lab coat onto a nearby hanger. She is wearing a novelty science shirt saying "YOU MATTER" in large text with smaller text saying "UNLESS YOU MULTIPLY YOURSELF BY THE SPEED OF LIGHT TWICE,...THEN YOU ENERGY".

SETH

It still amazes me that you could completely remake this apartment with all this technology.

ELAINE

It's only a crummy apartment when you leave it as it is.

Seth pulls out a half-eaten turkey sandwich and begins munching on it.

SETH

Yeah, maybe you would actually have some limits? By the way, what's your term paper on?

ELAINE

About the ethics of distributing super-science to the-

Elaine gets a baffled look on her face at the choice at Seth's choice of lunch.

SETH

What?

ELAINE

You could have eaten the perfectly ripe genetically modified apple or perfectly seasoned salmon, but you chose a turkey sandwich I made in five minutes?

SETH

What? It's better than prison food?

ELAINE

You always say it's better than prison food.

SETH

Prison food is grey sludge. Although, we will be eating much better food tonight.

ELAINE

What are you talking about?

Seth pulls out the golden invitations and hands one over to Elaine.

SETH

Jack decided to drop an invitation for his celebration to me, but he didn't want me to be alone so he generously gave one to you too.

ELAINE

Seth...I appreciate you wanting me to come to this...gathering, but it really wouldn't be fun for me. Sure there might be some smart scientists from Jack's foundation, but the rest of the guests will be haughty snobs who can't tell a proton from a neutron.

SETH

You won't be the only one out of your depth, I am a nobody too. Jack even gave me this as a gift because I had no good clothes.

He pulls out the instant tuxedo and gives it to Elaine.

ELAINE

Decent enough, portable storage technology. There is a slight-

The sound of thunder crashes outside the window and Seth quickly looks over. The birds who Seth saw before took refuge from the heavy rain on Elaine's patio.

Seth grabs an umbrella on the floor opens up the patio door loudly scaring the birds away.

ELAINE

Seth, wha-why did you do that?

SETH

You had some unwanted visitors on your patio and I did not want them to ruin your setup.

ELAINE

All my stuff is in on the inside of the apartment, nothing would have been affected.

SETH

Well...better safe than sorry.

ELAINE

Seth, you did not need to do that.

Seth slowly starts to get an annoyed look on his face and crosses his arms.

ELAINE

Why did you do that?

Seth mumbles to himself.

ELAINE

Don't pull this bullshit with me.

SETH

Fine! I don't like birds okay, too many bad experiences. They shit on your cars and stare at you with their blank eyes. No idea what they are thinking.

ELAINE

Are you serious? You're being ridiculous right now.

SETH

Then I am ridiculous then!

ELAINE

Why are you escalating things?

SETH

I have a very personal reason for hating those winged beasts of death, alright!?

ELAINE

What do you even have against...it's related to your old life isn't it?

SETH

No, I never said that.

ELAINE

Of course, it does, Seth what happened?

Seth remains silent for a few seconds and starts heading for the door, beginning to sweat.

ELAINE

Where are you going?

SETH

I need to get ready for the party.

ELAINE

What, it doesn't begin for a few hours.

Seth opens the door quickly. Elaine watches in confusion.

ELAINE

Seth!!! I just wanted to talk this out with you. You know I wouldn't intentionally hurt you!

Seth slams the door shut.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Seth stumbles back to his apartment. The rain starts pounding down with flashes of lightning and bangs of thunder. Seth starts hyperventilating and runs, but falls to the wall and starts dragging himself to the room. Elaine rushes to his aide.

ELAINE

Seth come back!

SETH

No, I am okay. I am not afraid of a bit of thunder.

ELAINE

Then why are you against the wall? Come on, let me help you.

Elaine puts Seth over her shoulder and she walks him back to her room, but Seth lurches away from her.

SETH

No, I can go back to my room.

Seth sprints back across the hall and into his room. Elaine follows him, but Seth locks the door. She bangs on it a few times.

ELAINE

Seth, let me in. Please don't get that fucking raygun. Seth...Seth.

Elaine slumps her head and groans. She walks back to her room, dejected.

INT. SETH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Seth grabs a cup of water from his kitchen. He repeatedly fills it up with water and drinks it to the point of water splotches landing on his shirt. He pours water on his head, which causes his breathing to slow down.

He goes into his bedroom and stares at the poster of Jack. He lifts up the bottom portion of the poster to reveal a hole in the wall and reaches into the wall. He pulls out a red and gold raygun which has become faded and grayed. Seth focuses on the raygun's soft hum and gets lost in thought.

FLASHBACK INT. NEW YORK CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Two prison guards, both 35, escort Seth, 21, to the property room. Seth is wearing a prison jumpsuit with handcuffs wearing handcuffs.

GUARD 1

Not very talkative today are you, Seth? You should be jumping for joy, barely anybody gets this opportunity.

Seth stays silent.

GUARD 2

Stop antagonizing him, he is probably in shock at what happened.

GUARD 1

Your joking, right? You know what this kid has done? I am being tame with him right now.

GUARD 2

Don't remind me. I was there when it happened.

They make it to the property room. Jack is standing there.

JACK

Why hello there gentlemen. Take as much time as you need to collect your possessions. I am in no hurry.

Seth goes up to the counter and the guard, a woman, 25, brings out his items.

GUARD 3
Alright, Seth Gar-saya-

SETH
Garcia.

GUARD 3
Sorry, here are your possessions. A
Grey mask, black shoes, black pants,
black shoes, one watch, a pack of
chewing gum, and whatever this toy
thing is.

GUARD 1
Are you gonna dress up again kid? It
will protect you from the pigeons.

SETH
Oh, fuck off!

GUARD 1
Shoot me, so you can land right back-

JACK
That is enough from you! I can handle
the rest from here, you both may
leave.

GUARD 2
You sure about that?

JACK
Do you think he can kill me?

Both guards look at each other and leave. The first guard
passes Seth.

GUARD 1
The Avian should have killed you.

JACK
I told you to go!

Both guards hurry on out the door.

JACK
Now that those two are gone. Hello
Seth, it's a pleasure to finally meet
you.

They both shake hands.

SETH

Nice to meet you too, Star Eyes. I followed your exploits when I was a kid.

JACK

An old fan, nice. Well your about to enter back into the world. A brighter, more accepting world where you can begin anew.

SETH

But I don't have any money, how can I-

JACK

No need to worry my friend, the Star Foundation will be paying for new clothes, an apartment, and even giving you a new job away from the bustling city so you can back on your feet.

SETH

I...I don't know what to say, but will people recognize me?

JACK

No way, your going to the mid-west away from the people of New York. We just need to get rid of that minion suit and that raygun.

SETH

The outfit you can incinerate for all I care, but the raygun stays.

JACK

Inmates are not allowed to have weapons, especially something as dangerous as a raygun.

SETH

Look at it though, it probably doesn't even work.

Jack stays silent for a minute.

JACK

Very well, you can keep up, but using it in any way will be a violation of your parole. I do not think I will be able to save you from that.

SETH
Thank you, Star Eyes.

JACK
Please call me Jack(

Jack puts his arm around Seth.

SETH
Come on, you got a big day ahead of
you.

END FLASHBACK INT. SETH'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Seth points his raygun at the wall and pushes slightly on the trigger. The gun's dilapidated mechanisms whirl around and the gun fires a thin red beam. It singes a slight burn into the wall next to more burn marks. Seth sighs and goes into his closet. He pulls a white can of paint and paintbrush. He paints over burn the marks and tries to make the layer of paint look consistent with the wall.

He puts the paint and the brush down on his nightstand, but part of the paint drips onto the turned down photo. Seth frantically tries to remove the paint, putting the brush and paint bucket on the ground. Seth sinks into his bed while holding the picture frame. It is a black and white photo of Seth, 8, with his mother and father, 28 and 30. They are each to the side of Seth holding one of his hands. He grabs the landline phone and his hands hover over the numbers, but he drops the phone. He puts the photo face down on his nightstand again.

SETH
I am sorry I was too weak. You deserve-

The phone starts ringing