

The Tinkerer

by

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OVER BLACK

Sparks flicker in darkness.

Flicker again, now concentrated. Behind a large DIAMOND.
Wait no, actually...inside it.

Lights up the--

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

--as a reflection gleams off protective goggles worn by FRANCIS "PINKY" KING (34, black, science nerd, decent shape) who takes in the spectacle of his work. *Proud.*

SUPER: LOCKHEED MARTIN FACILITY - 1985

The once pitch dark lab now lit up in a radiant glow which emanates from the small object in the vacuum chamber. A shadow steps forward from the darkness behind him as...

OVERHEAD LIGHTS flood the room and the vacuum chamber powers down, surprising Pinky, who turns and yanks off the goggles, royally pissed.

PINKY

What's going on?! You just ruined ten years of resea--

The shadow steps forward. Decorated GENERAL MORGAN FREEMAN (42, not THAT Morgan Freeman, but played by, you guessed it, THAT Morgan Freeman), is all business and directs everyone around him with authority.

FREEMAN

--That will be all, Mr. King. You have been reassigned. Follow me.

PINKY

Reassign--? What are you talking--

FREEMAN

This project is over.
(to awaiting security)
Transfer all files to Alpha branch.
Wipe the drives clean.

A phalanx of armed SECURITY fan out across the lab and gathers notebooks, disk drives, computers as Freeman guides Pinky toward the hallway door along with more armed GUARDS.

PINKY

NO! You can't do this! I just--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The armed guards stand post outside the lab doors as Pinky turns and tries to go back in. The guards block his way.

FREEMAN

That's enough! This way, please.

Resigned, Pinky swallows his anger and walks behind Freeman as they head down a series of nondescript hallways at a brisk clip.

PINKY

You going to tell me what the hell is going on?

FREEMAN

Remember that contract you signed right out of Stanford?

PINKY

I'm here, aren't I? I even went through your little spy-training intern program, so what of it?

FREEMAN

It gives us the exclusive right to direct your research as we see fit.

PINKY

Which is what I've been doing! You just saw it...clean energy!

FREEMAN

What I saw was a very expensive flashlight. We have a new direction for your research.

PINKY

You can't just yank me around like--

They turn another corner and Freeman steps through a set of double doors into--

INT. MAINTENANCE AND MODEL SHOP - CONTINUOUS

--a state of the art tool shop with 5-axis CNC machines, grinders, milling machines, and walls of raw materials.

PINKY

--you gotta be kidding me.

FREEMAN

You will put your skills toward every project that comes through this door until your contract ends.

PINKY

(eyes agog)

But that's forty yea--

Freeman's gaze could melt steel. Turns to him.

FREEMAN

--that's right. Now get to work.

Freeman leaves the shop with Pinky standing in the middle, as a time lapse montage of activity begins all around him.

SERIES OF SHOTS - PASSING OF TIME IN MODEL SHOP

- people come and go around Pinky at super speed as Pinky moves in slow motion, first over to a milling machine, helps people with projects...

- then over to a work bench, lays down solder on an electric circuit board, visibly older as years pass by in seconds while he moves slowly to replace the iron...

- now in his 50's, Pinky helps another student operate the CNC machine, and another, and another...more years pass by as his time marches on...

- now well into his 60's as he walks over to his desk, unmoved over thirty years, and sits. People come and go all around him at speed, while he stares off.

- a final shot as a banner reads 'Happy Retirement!' from the corner above his desk, a party of workers and students to celebrate Pinky, who seems appreciative but melancholy.

- lifts a cardboard box of memories from his desk, and exits the model shop, turns off the lights.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. PINKY'S GARAGE - DAY

A garage door opens and lights up this immaculate shop, work benches with outlined tool organizers hanging from the walls, a 3D printer, a floor so clean you could eat off it.

A cardboard box lands on one of the benches, filled with electronic goods and appliances. Wrinkled hands lift out a toaster.

Pinky, now 74, silver hair but still chiseled, flips the toaster over, sees a hand-written Post-It Note that reads "Alice Newberry-Unit 7B. Call me." with her phone number.

Pinky sighs, plugs in the toaster and pushes down the handle; it doesn't lock in place. Rolls his eyes.

Reaches up and grabs the Philips head screwdriver without looking, then in moments has the toaster open. Sees the unconnected spring, re-attaches it. Replaces the casing.

Pushes down the handle and it catches. He pushes another button at the bottom of the toaster, and it pops back up.

He sets the toaster back into the box, then pulls out ANOTHER toaster. This with a recipe index card taped to the side which reads "Carmen. 14A. Pisces." as he sets it down.

A kids voice from the driveway breaks his concentration.

LUPI (O.S.)

You know they keep bustin' them just
so you'll fix 'em up, right?

LUPITA RAMIREZ (12, nosy, knows everything) steps inside and looks over Pinky's shoulder as he continues to tinker with the open toaster. He's used to this daily interruption.

PINKY

That so?

LUPI

She said she's a Pisces. It's like
Silver Singles dotcom in here.

PINKY

Why don't you go play with your
friends?

LUPI

I don't have any.

She says it with both a flippant and sorrowful attitude.

PINKY

I can see why.

(points to bench)

Grab me a #6, quarter-inch machine
screw from those trays.

Lupi turns toward an array of carefully labeled individual trays marked with their contents; wood screws, metric bolts and washers, machine screws. His own Ace Hardware.

She finds the machine screw tray, pulls it out, lifts open the lid.

LUPI
Which one is it?

PINKY
The one that says number 6.

LUPI
There's a hashtag 6.

PINKY
Hashtag means number.

LUPI
Seriously? Why don't you call it hashtag? Weird.

PINKY
Just get me a hashtag 6 in the bin marked quarter inch. That's the one slash four quotation marks.

She finds the screw and pinches one out, hands it to him with sass all over her face.

LUPI
I know fractions, smart guy. Here.

PINKY
Set it right there, see?

He points to an machined-threaded hole, below the spring release on the toaster frame.

Lupi sets it in place, as Pinky directs.

PINKY (cont'd)
Good, now connect that clip there.

And in less than a moment, it's done. Pinky flips over the toaster, points to the handle.

PINKY (cont'd)
See if it clicks in place.

Lupi presses it down, and it holds. A slight hum as the filaments inside heat up.

LUPI
 Maybe you can help me with my science
 fair project. Can I go grab a soda?

PINKY
 Sure. Get me one. I'll close this up.

Lupi opens the kitchen door and disappears into--

INT. PINKY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

--the clean and modest kitchen of this simple single level home. She heads to the plain refrigerator, with hardly any magnets or photos at all. Just a few.

One of them and an pretty older woman on a beach, smiling. Another of them and a little girl, not much older than ten. A condolences greeting card stuck with a magnet.

She opens it. It reads 'Sorry for your loss. Emily.'

PINKY (O.S.)
 Make mine a Coke.

Startled, Lupi knocks the card off the fridge, as the card and magnet slide across the floor.

She scoops them both up, hurriedly sets them back on the fridge, opens the door and grabs two sodas, closes it behind her as she leaves.

LUPI
 Coming!

EXT. SILVER CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Pinky and Lupi finish their sodas as they walk the cookie-cutter Senior Living community of single-family, one-story homes, the toasters back in the box, pulled by a wagon.

LUPI
 So, who's Emily?

Surprised, Pinky almost chokes on the last sip. *Coughs.*

PINKY
 S--sorry?

LUPI
 Saw the card on the fridge.

PINKY
Yeah, well...she's my daughter.

LUPI
Was that her as a kid?

Pinky changes the subject, eyes a nearby streetlamp camera.

PINKY
Here's Fourteen-A. Why don't you
deliver this one for me?

LUPI
No way. I don't mess with no Pisces.

Lupi hands him the toaster as Pinky takes it and heads to
the front door.

PINKY
Oh, for Pete's sake. Then stay put.

Before he arrives, it's open...CARMEN D'ANGELO (68, fiery
red hair, champagne glass in hand) steps out to greet him.

CARMEN
Oh, Pinky, you are such a lifesaver!
Care to come in for a drink?

PINKY
Thanks, but no. I'm still making the
rounds, got my helper with me.

Carmen looks over his shoulder, sees Lupi. Disappointed.

CARMEN
Aw, that's too bad. Maybe next time.

PINKY
(hands over toaster)
Hopefully not too soon, but thanks.

Missing the insult, Carmen takes the toaster and gently
touches his hand.

CARMEN
Horrible what happened to Reginald in
8B, isn't it?

PINKY
(retracts hand)
Reginald?

CARMEN

From the Christmas party? The one with all the conspiracy stories? They found him dead in his family room this morning, poor thing.

PINKY

Oh yeah, the journalist. That's terrible. They say how he died?

CARMEN

Natural causes, but I don't trust 'em. Glad we got all those outdoor security cameras installed last year, you know?

PINKY

Yeah, well, see you around.

Pinky walks back toward Lupi as Carmen calls behind him.

CARMEN

Until next time!

Pinky gets to the wagon, looks at the toaster inside. The address, 7B. Then looks up the street.

LUPI

They're breaking 'em on purpose, I tell ya. Just look at her.

Lupi looks at Carmen, who sips her champagne and holds her toaster like a chihuahua, watching Pinky walk away.

PINKY

I'll deliver this last one. Why don't you head home and tell your Nana I said hello.

LUPI

Yeah, okay. I got homework anyway. See you later?

PINKY

Sure thing.

Pinky watches Lupi walk off as he looks back toward the next street. Pulls the wagon past a streetlamp with security cam.

EXT. SILVER CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Several COPS remain in the driveway, as one talks to a silver-haired woman, ALICE, the neighbor at 7B.

Pinky takes the toaster and approaches them.

PINKY
Took care of this for you, Alice.
Heard about Reginald. You okay?

The cop turns to Pinky, as Alice takes the toaster.

ALICE
Oh thank you, dear. And yes, but it's
just awful, isn't it?

COP
And you are?

PINKY
Francis King. Kind of the fix-it guru
around here. Reginald was a nice guy.

COP
King? Pinky King?

PINKY
Umm, yeah. Why?

COP
Wait here.

The cop walks off toward the open garage, talks to someone,
points at Pinky then grabs a box and walks back.

COP (cont'd)
Box here had your name on it.

Pinky takes it, reads "For Pinky King: Tinker on these."

COP (cont'd)
One less thing for my report.

Pinky goes to hand the box back to the cop, but he's gone.
Looks back to Alice, puts the box under his arm.

PINKY
In any case, I'm sorry.

ALICE
Would you like to come inside for a
drink or something?

PINKY
Thanks...no. I best get this stuff
back to the house.

ALICE

Rain check then. And thanks for
fixing my toaster!

(points to box)

Looks like Reginald needed you to fix
some things, too.

PINKY

Yeah, I guess so. Take care.

Pinky waves her off as he takes the box back to the wagon.
Sets it down, then opens the box to see simple electronics,
a modem, an overly large three-headed Norelco Razor.

PINKY (cont'd)

That's odd.

INT. PINKY'S GARAGE - LATER

Intrigued, the box of electronics open on the workbench, as
Pinky handles the vintage three-headed razor. One of the
large floating heads doesn't pivot.

Pops open the top of the razor to expose the blade beneath,
but instead, a micro-SD drive falls out onto the workbench.

LUPI (O.S.)

Whoa, what is that?

Pinky jumps back, startled.

PINKY

Stop sneaking up like that, you'll
kill me dead, I swear! I thought you
had homework.

LUPI

I finished it. What is that, anyway?

Lupi picks up the tiny flash drive in her fingers.

PINKY

A memory drive.

LUPI

What's on it?

PINKY

Don't know.

LUPI

Who's stuff is this?

PINKY
Never mind that. Go to your friend's.

LUPI
I don't have any, remember? Don't you
have something to open that thingy
with in all this stuff?

Pinky takes the flash drive from her, scoots his wheeled chair across the garage floor to another workbench with a dated computer on it and a flat screen monitor on the wall.

Flips a hidden switch on the side of the bench and the workstation comes to life. Monitor fires up.

LUPI (cont'd)
I wanna play Mememasters on this!

Pinky opens an unmarked tray from the bench, pulls out a decryption adapter, plugs it into the computer, then slips the flash drive into it. Red light flips on adapter.

Monitor comes to life with files, as Pinky types in code.

Notices his name on one of the files. Clicks on it.

His old Lockheed Martin employee ID, back in the early 70's.

LUPI (cont'd)
Is that you? You had a lot of hair
back then.

PINKY
What the hell--

LUPI
What's all this mean? And why was it
in some guy's shaver?

Pinky clicks on files, sees one named Project Icarus. Knows this is serious.

PINKY
Time for you to go, Lupita.

LUPI
Ah come on, it was just getting all
James Bond and stuff.

PINKY
See you tomorrow. We'll fix 6C's
microwave.

LUPI

Bet you five dollars she just wants
you to call her "6C".

PINKY

Come on, time to go.

Pinky shoos her outside the open garage door, then closes it behind her...Lupi ducks her head down to keep an eye on the info on the monitor as the door closes shut.

LUPI

You better tell me what's going on--

Pinky looks over at the monitor, the red light on the flash drive adapter blinking.

INT. CIA MONITORING CENTER - LATER

A mostly darkened room filled with high-tech computers and monitors, as a map on one of the screens starts to blink.

An OFFICER snaps to life and zeroes in on the activity on the monitor.

Shows files open up as well as Pinky's picture ID on the screen. Project Icarus. More files open.

Officer taps the phone and speaks, eyes on screen.

OFFICER

Sir, Icarus is active.

INT. PINKY'S GARAGE - LATER

Pinky sits back in his chair and rubs his chin.

Looks at the monitor, as files copy to the cloud. Sees an article about clean energy funds diverted into military weapons programs. Military names. Records. Pics.

Then looks back towards Reginald's box of electronics.

PINKY

The hell were you digging into?

Opens the unlabeled workbench drawer, pulls out a small leather case, closes the drawer and heads out.

EXT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pinky sneaks up outside Reginald's house and pulls out the leather lock-pick kit. Jimmies the lock. Pops the door open and disappears inside.

INT. REGINALD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Shrouded in darkness and shadow, Pinky slips into the house, unsure of what he's searching for. A penlight SHINES through the darkness, scans the room.

The light shines across a bookcase, as various awards and plaques glisten as he scans across the family room, over to an office door.

INT. REGINALD'S OFFICE - LATER

Pinky sits in the office chair, penlight in his mouth, opens up drawers, ruffles around looking for information.

Flips over an iPad, tries to open it up. Pushes the button and it comes to life, asks for fingerprint ID.

Pinky looks toward the door, penlight illuminates it.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Hurries past the dirty glasses and plates on the counter.

Scours through the pantry; sugar, flour, baking soda... unable to find what he's looking for. *Shit.*

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Pinky searches the dresser, bedside table. Still nothing.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Penlight in mouth, he searches in a medicine cabinet, ignores the various pill bottles and creams.

Checks the cabinets under the sink, behind the towels. Eyes light up. *There it is.* Grabs it.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Back to the dishes on the counter, grabs a nearby dishtowel.

Picks up a glass with the edge of the towel. Lays it on the counter, then aims the penlight on the glass. Catches a clear fingerprint there.

Pulls out the foot powder and his pocket toolkit. Removes a microbrush. Sprays powder onto the brush, then flicks it ever so lightly across the glass. Heads back into--

INT. REGINALD'S OFFICE - LATER

--and grabs a piece of tape from a dispenser. Lays it across the glass carefully, and lifts it.

Glances at the faint print on the tape through the light.

Sets the tape across the iPad button, presses it with his own, and the home page opens.

Taps icons. Opens and closes folders. Nothing jumps out.

Thinks a moment.

Clicks on the one marked Silver City.

Files and folders cascade open, his eyes go wide.

Clicks the 'Project Icarus' one.

Reflection of Pentagon memos and Russian rebels on Pinky's glasses. And a familiar name. We see it backwards.

General Morgan Freeman. Department of Defense.

PINKY

Oh, shit.

INT. CIA MONITORING CENTER - LATER

The Officer from earlier zooms in on a detailed Google Map of Silver City as he speaks into the headpiece.

OFFICER

Additional files activated just now,
Sir. Sending to you now.

He taps into his computer, punctuates *ENTER*.

INT. FREEMAN HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

In the dark office, a glow from a monitor illuminates General Freeman's face (now 82). Wrinkled and emotionless.

FREEMAN
We'll take it from here.

He hangs up and rubs his chin. Eyes the monitor.

Taps some keys, hits ENTER. Then dials the phone and puts it to his ear.

FREEMAN (cont'd)
You still got a mess to clean up.

The monitor replays footage from a streetlamp security camera outside Reginald's home.

INT. OPERATIVE WORKSTATION - CONTINUOUS

A figure emerges from shadow as the footage shows Pinky approach, then disappear inside Reginald's house.

The glow from the monitor illuminates the face of TYSON GAGE (38, white, chiseled jaw), all business.

TYSON
We'll take care of it.

FREEMAN (O.S.)
I thought you had.

TYSON
I said I'll handle it.

Tyson hangs up and opens a new computer window, types code a mile a minute, as several files open at once; live Silver City Surveillance feeds in quadrants on the screen.

He scrolls through various camera locations then stops at one across from Pinky's house.

The garage door closed.

Tyson turns away from the monitor as he talks in his phone.

TYSON (cont'd)
Get the team ready. Should be a quick in and out, but let's plan for all contingencies--

As he continues, a lone figure approaches the garage.

Lupi.