

WILL YOU HOLD FOR A MINUTE?

Based on a short story 'Are you a doctor?' by Raymond Carver  
Expanded by Sophie Dixon

Outline: A man receives a phone call. The call presents him with a decision,  
a physical disjuncture between who he is and what he wants.

Internalised identity meets externalised situation.

'Will you hold for a minute ?' breaks the original story into singular moments,  
short vignettes which stretch, expand and re<sup>2</sup>compose the pinpointed times at  
which a narrative shifts and changes direction.

The fractured presentation of a story across multiple screens, at various times  
and from various viewpoints emphasises the importance of the spaces within narrative  
which we can never know.

Audio and film work together to present Raymond Carver's original story from seen  
and unseen perspectives. The film lifts away from its narrative spine to become  
painterly, experiential and distinctly human.

The following texts are early examinations into the story and the elements which  
will be expanded upon. The story must be dissected before it can be made.

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Then, tenderly, he put a hand against his chest and felt, through  
the layers of his clothes, his beating heart.

Are you a doctor?

1. Man is at home. Phone rings. Wearing slippers, a robe and pyjamas he rushes to pick it up. He assumes it's his wife who is out of town.
2. At the end of the line is a woman. Man asks where she got his number. She says she found it on a piece of paper when she got home. Perhaps the babysitter wrote it down.

273\_8063      Piece of paper

28. Arnold thanks Clara for the tea. Clara asks if Arnold will come again. Arnold says 'no'. Clara says he must not forget her. She says she is sure Arnold will come again.



9. She implores him to visit. Arnold goes to the bathroom and checks his reflection. Arnold goes to the bathroom and checks his nails.

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Themes of identity and temptation. Identification.

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Situation

Self

.....

.....

Who is Arnold?  
 Who is Arnold in a given situation?

He looked at her carefully, but she was staring past him now.  
 As if she was trying to remember something.

The phone calls and everything will change.  
But nothing has changed because my mind was made up.  
Before I answered.



Almost immediately the telephone came alive again, and this time he answered it. "Arnold. Arnold Breit speaking," he said.

"Arnold? My, aren't we formal tonight!" his wife said, her voice strong, teasing. "I've been calling since nine. Out living it up, Arnold?"

He remained silent and considered her voice.

"Are you there, Arnold?" she said. "You don't sound like yourself."

"strange," he said as he started walking down the stairs. He took a long breath when he reached the side-walk and paused a moment to look back at the building.

Arnold stares into the mirror. Long take - we question if it's a still.

Arnold stares into the camera. He stares at us.

We wonder if it's a photo.

'I'm an old man' he says to the camera.

pause

'oh you're not ' his lips don't move but we hear the words.

'Really, I'm old' he says

he continues to stare at the screen.

We hear a violin start to play (a beginner plays twinkle twinkle)

second screen scene opens

Arnold continues to stare

8063

'Will you hold the phone a minute?' he said.

'I have to check on something' He went into the study for a cigar, took a minute to light it

and then removed his glasses to look at himself in the mirror.

when he returned he was half afraid she would have gone.

he went to look at himself in the mirror.

273-8063



In slippers, pajamas, and robe, he hurried out of the study when the telephone began to ring. Since it was past ten, the call would be his wife. She phoned - late like this, after a few drinks - each night when she was out of town. She was a buyer, and all this week she had been away on business.

"Hello, dear," he said. "Hello," he said again.

"Who is this?" a woman asked.

"Well, who is *this*?" he said. "What number do you want?"

"Just a minute," the woman said. "It's 273-8063."

"That's my number," he said. "How did you get it?"

"I don't know. It was written down on a piece of paper when I got in from work," the woman said.

"Who wrote it down?"

"I don't know," the woman said. "The sitter, I guess. It must be her."

"Well, I don't know how she got it," he said, "but it's my telephone number, and it's unlisted. I'd appreciate it if you'd just toss it away. Hello? Did you hear me?"

"Yes, I heard," the woman said.

Arnold goes home.

Wearing a hat, gloves  
and coat.

He hurries to pick the  
phone up.

'I implore you to come'



From the living room we can hear the sound of the television.

It gets quieter as Clara and Arnold enter the kitchen and pull the door to.

It's a game show and there's the sound of canned laughter.

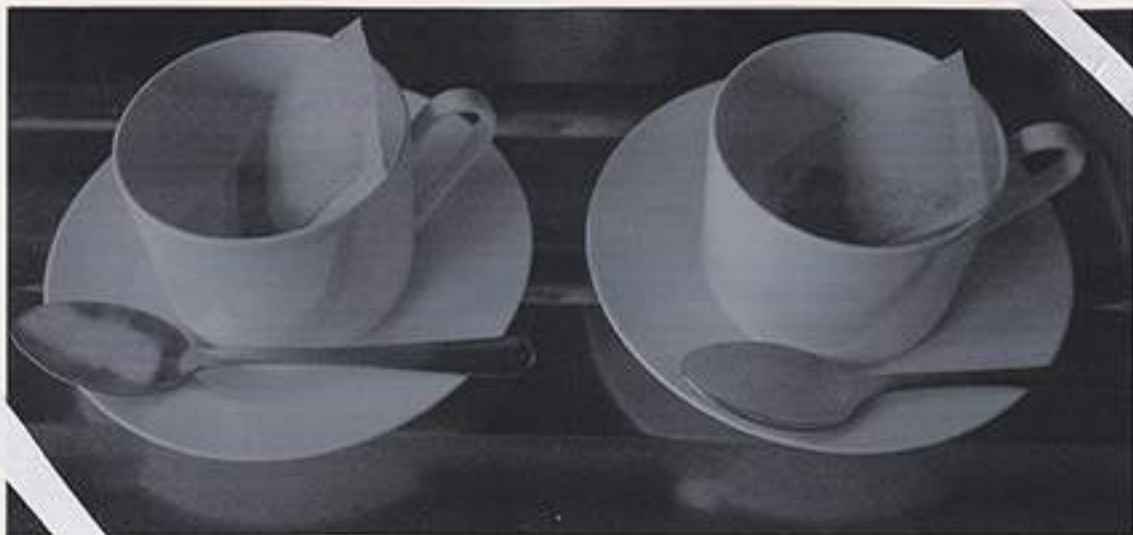
OPENING SCENE - WILL YOU HOLD FOR A MINUTE?

(audio) sound of kettle boiling, TV plays in background)

Scene of two cups, two tea bags, 2 spoons, two lumps of sugar, laid out like surgical instruments on a sterile kitchen surface .

(audio) kettle clicks to end of boil, TV plays canned laughter.

A woman's hand prepares the tea (50 fps slowed down)  
The scene is comparable to a slowly moving still life.



On a third screen we see a mirror above a mantel piece. After a prolonged time a man walks to the mirror. He looks at himself lighting a cigar and he looks at himself intently. On a further screen he is looking straight at the camera.

(audio) a phone rings....and rings. Can he hear it?

The woman's hand from the other screen [redacted]. Has she gone to answer it?

The phone rings. The man continues to stare. He goes to answer.

cut - all screens go black for a moments and we see a number spread out across all the screens.

(audio) as each number appears we hear a note from a beginner playing twinkle twinkle on the violin.