

POLYPHOSPHAZENE (working title)

by

Luzi Katamay
LAS GAFAS FILMS

Luzi Katamay
LAS GAFAS FILMS

info@lasgafas.at
www.lasgafas.at
0699-12323000

TAXI - INTERIOR - AFTERNOON

A TAXI DRIVER sits at the wheel of his parked car, peeling an orange and talking on the phone with a colleague. The car radio can be heard quietly in the background.

TAXI DRIVER
(on the phone:)
An orange! A stupid orange! It doesn't even taste like anything. Dude, can you believe that?
(...)
Really. Pays with a Benjamin, but you think there's anything in it for me? No, he just hands me this fucking orange.
(...)

The TAXI DRIVER sticks a slice of orange in his mouth.

TAXI DRIVER
(on the phone:)
Sure, I like fruit and all that stuff, but ...
(...)
You can say that again. You always know 'em right away. They're the ones that can't even say hello when they get in.)
(...)
You can say that again, my friend. You sure can.

The taxi radio is heard.

TAXI DRIVER
(on the phone:)
Hang on a sec, ok?

The TAXI DRIVER leans over to the loudspeaker.

TAXI DRIVER
(on the phone:)
Nope, nothing for me. I just really like her voice, man. Know what I mean?
(...)
Yeah, that's right.
(...)
Right. And then they never say a word to you the whole time. Or they spend all the time on the phone.
(...)
Yeah, just invisible. You're right. What idiots.

The TAXI DRIVER spits out a seed.

TAXI DRIVER
(on the phone:)
Oranges ... yeah, right.

The side door opens and an older man slides in onto the back seat. He heaves a briefcase onto his knees and rummages through his papers.

TAXI DRIVER
(on the phone:)
Catch you later, man.

1.2 / DRIVING OFF

2

TAXI - INTERIOR - AFTERNOON

The TAXI DRIVER hangs up and checks the new guest, who is paging through his papers and pays no attention to him. The TAXI DRIVER clears his throat, puts down the orange, and demonstratively turns on the meter. Still no reaction. Finally he speaks up.

TAXI DRIVER
And a good day to you too, sir!

The PASSENGER reacts, but without looking up.

PASSENGER
Damn ... Do you have a pen for me? I must have lost mine.

The TAXI DRIVER hands him a pen.

TAXI DRIVER
That must be absolutely fascinating.

The PASSENGER makes notes.

PASSENGER
Yes, yes. It is indeed. It is indeed.

TAXI DRIVER
The meter's running, by the way.

PASSENGER
What did you say?

TAXI DRIVER
I'd like to know where you want me to take you.

PASSENGER
Well, to the patent office.

TAXI DRIVER
And where is that exactly?

PASSENGER
Aren't you from here?!

TAXI DRIVER
Do I look like Einstein?

The PASSENGER finally looks up. After briefly looking the TAXI DRIVER over, he hands him a piece of paper. The TAXI DRIVER studies the address and whistles softly.

TAXI DRIVER
Well then, you'd better just make yourself comfortable back there for a while ...

1.3 / BECOMING ACQUAINTED

3

TAXI - INTERIOR - AFTERNOON

The taxi drives off. The PASSENGER shakes a cigarette out of a package.

PASSENGER
May I?

The TAXI DRIVER shakes his head.

TAXI DRIVER
Sorry, man. Asthma.

The PASSENGER sticks the cigarette behind his ear. When a control light comes on next to the steering wheel, the TAXI DRIVER hits the dashboard next to it. The light goes out.

PASSENGER
I should arrive in one piece, the appointment is important.

The TAXI DRIVER turns around.

TAXI DRIVER
Easy there. Everybody's got their own tics.

Facing forward again, the TAXI DRIVER rolls his eyes as the light comes on again. Then he notices that the PASSENGER is nervously playing with a lighter.

TAXI DRIVER

You too, I guess. Nervous?

The PASSENGER looks out the window and doesn't react.

TAXI DRIVER

What is it that's so important?
Do you have to save the world or
something?

PASSENGER

Something like that, yes.

TAXI DRIVER

Of course.

PASSENGER

This here, my friend ...

The PASSENGER waves a stack of papers.

PASSENGER

... will make life considerably
easier for a lot of people out
there.

TAXI DRIVER

You work for a bank?

PASSENGER

Nonsense! I invented something.
Something really big.

TAXI DRIVER

Oh really, an inventor.

PASSENGER

A chemist actually. I work in
cancer research.

TAXI DRIVER

Well, what do you know. Cancer.
Now I'm really interested.

1.4 / FIRST ATTEMPT

4

TAXI - INTERIOR - AFTERNOON

PASSENGER

May I explain it to you, my
patent?

TAXI DRIVER

Oooh ... so I'm your beta tester
before it gets serious, right?

PASSENGER

You're clever. Very good. All right: My patent describes smart biodegradable polymer nanocarriers which are designed to deliver chemotherapeutic drugs directly to tumor tissue before degrading itself to benign, biocompatible small molecules. When in the tumor, an intracellular drug release occurs, thus minimizing side effects and improving therapeutic efficacy of the drug. Known chemotherapeutics are highly toxic small drug molecules, which as well as undergoing rapid renal clearance, have non-specific distribution leading to extremely severe side-effects. But macromolecules with a hydrodynamic ...

The TAXI DRIVER interrupts him.

TAXI DRIVER

Whoa, dude! Slow down, man! I'm a taxi driver, not a fucking Nobel Prize winner.

PASSENGER

Oh.

TAXI DRIVER

Oh?

PASSENGER

Was that too fast?

TAXI DRIVER

Do you seriously think anybody will get that?

PASSENGER

Well, with a little basic ... right ...

The PASSENGER sinks back into the seat.

PASSENGER

God. You're probably right.

The TAXI DRIVER shrugs.

TAXI DRIVER

Well, of course I'm right. You really have to take a different tack, man.

The PASSENGER studies his papers and thinks hard. The TAXI DRIVER pulls a sandwich out of his lunch box, starts eating and pounds on the dashboard next to the control light again.

1.5 / SECOND ATTEMPT

4

TAXI - INTERIOR - EARLY EVENING

After a while the PASSENGER taps the TAXI DRIVER on the shoulder.

PASSENGER

All right.

The TAXI DRIVER turns down the radio a little.

TAXI DRIVER

I'm all ears.

PASSENGER

You and your dilapidated taxi here ...

The TAXI DRIVER starts to object, but the PASSENGER holds up his hand to stop him.

PASSENGER

... you are also a means of conveyance in the classical sense. Right? Now imagine you are not here, but in some random Italian town with all the typical little alleys and cute squares. Let's say Naples, ok? Or maybe Palermo. Now this is, so to speak, the human circulation system with all its bloodstreams and cells and, and, and. Well then, in any case, a call comes in.

TAXI DRIVER

Dude, where is this going?

PASSENGER

You wanted to know how my polymer works, didn't you? Well, I'm explaining it to you now. Hopefully so that you can understand it too, ok? So, may I?

TAXI DRIVER

Whatever. It's not like we don't have time.

(and to himself:)

(MORE)

TAXI DRIVER (cont'd)
 What a bunch of bull.

PASSENGER
 So you're supposed to pick up a customer somewhere and bring him to the other end of town. When you pick the guy up, first you think he must be some kind of lost astronaut or maybe a crazy beekeeper. But in fact, he's a pest exterminator in full gear. And then he climbs into the back of your taxi with a big supply of chemicals. Now this is our active agent. In other words, this is the valuable goods you have to bring to the affected, malignant tissue.

TAXI DRIVER
 Active agent? Oh right, so bring him to the tumor ...

PASSENGER
 Exactly. And what is the destination, you ask. Well, great! Somewhere in some mafia pizzeria in the suburbs there are vermin loose in the kitchen. You usually prefer to avoid this area, but when the passenger waves a big wad of cash under your nose, you're persuaded. So the money is now the connector. This is the particle that connects the active agent with the means of conveyance. So far so good?

TAXI DRIVER
 Ummm. Yeah ... I think so. So ...

The TAXI DRIVER counts off with his fingers:

TAXI DRIVER
 ... means of conveyance - connector - active agent equals taxi - cash - exterminator. And the pizzeria is what, exactly? The tumor?

PASSENGER
 Absolutely correct. So you drive off. The only problem is that it's not so easy to find the shortest route in Palermo.

(MORE)

PASSENGER (cont'd)

Because your American car is so big, you can't even drive into many of the little alleys. Which actually makes perfect sense in this case: If you go squeezing through the nice residential neighborhoods with your obvious oil problem only to burn up there with your load of chemicals, it will do nobody any good. And what does that tell us? Thank God your means of conveyance is too big to pass through the narrow intercellular spaces of the healthy tissue. In the tumor tissue, however, these intercellular spaces are much bigger. The city bypass to the mafia quarter is broad enough - and just like that, your car is at the back entrance to the kitchen.

TAXI DRIVER

But what I don't understand is why the guy doesn't just drive there himself.

PASSENGER

Seriously? Have you ever heard of a hypothesis? You're not Italian either, are you? Let me finish, before I lose the train of thought.

TAXI DRIVER

Sorry.

PASSENGER

So: a little nervously, you open the door for your strange passenger. As you know, this is kind of a dangerous neighborhood, due to the high crime rate and so on. So there is a different pH-rate, to put it in chemical terms. And it is exactly this different pH-rate that is now responsible for dissolving the connector, which has so far connected the active agent to its transport system. And that would be? Right: the fare. You see, just as you expectantly hold out your hand to the pest exterminator, some little bastard

(MORE)

PASSENGER (cont'd)
runs past and grabs your money.
Force of nature and all that. So
while you run after this dirty
little thief, the exterminator
marches straight into the lion's
den, ...

The TAXI DRIVER suddenly hits the brakes. The PASSENGER falls over.

TAXI DRIVER
Daaaaamn. Sorry, man! All these
fucking cats out here. But your
story is really exciting too.
Respect!

The PASSENGER sits up and straightens his glasses.

PASSENGER
... in other words, into the
kitchen to chase out the
cockroaches. So the active agent
dutifully goes to fight the
tumor, while you're still
desperately chasing the
connector. When you come back to
your taxi, all out of breath, you
realize it's gone. Literally
vanished into thin air. Either in
parts on the black market or as a
wreck at the bottom of the
Adriatic Sea.

TAXI DRIVER
What?! What the ... oh, those
fucking mafiosi.

PASSENGER
But that's what's great about my
polymer: there's nothing left
over. Everything that's needed to
bring the active agent straight
to the tumor simply dissolves
into nothing.

The TAXI DRIVER slaps the steering wheel.

TAXI DRIVER
Boom!!! Although - if somebody
steals my taxi ...

PASSENGER
But do you get it now? You
understand how it works?

1.6 / SUMMARY

5

TAXI - INTERIOR - EARLY EVENING

TAXI DRIVER

I think so. You developed this pomerol thing ...

PASSENGER

It's called polymer.

TAXI DRIVER

... you developed this polymer. It's a kind of transport system for anti-cancer active agents that are hooked up with it through a connector. It finds its way to the tumor through the different-sized spaces between the cells. Those are bigger in the tumor than in the healthy cells, so the transport system only fits through the affected tissue, everything else is left alone. When it arrives at the tumor, the connector dissolves because of a different pH rate, so it unhooks the active agent from the transport system. So while the active agent is taking care of the tumor, the polly ... polymer? the polymer dissolves. All gone. And the active agent is only there where it's needed. So the upshot is ...

The TAXI DRIVER stops the car.

TAXI DRIVER

Fewer side effects.

1.7 / CONCLUSION

6

TAXI - INTERIOR - EARLY EVENING

The PASSENGER gapes at him in amazement.

PASSENGER

Wow.

TAXI DRIVER

What do you mean, wow?

PASSENGER

That was quite impressive.

TAXI DRIVER

Thanks. We're here, by the way.

PASSENGER

Excuse me? Oh, right.

The PASSENGER looks first at his watch and then at the meter.

PASSENGER

What? It's already 7:30?

TAXI DRIVER

No, that's the fare.

PASSENGER

Oh, whew ... I was afraid ...

While the PASSENGER searches through his pockets, the TAXI DRIVER holds out his hand.

TAXI DRIVER

You go get that tumor, dude. And before it pisses off for the day.

The PASSENGER hands him the cash.

PASSENGER

Wouldn't you like to just come upstairs with me? You did that so well!

TAXI DRIVER

No sweat, man. You just come up with a crazy story like that for the guys upstairs, and nothing can go wrong. Even I finally got it.

The TAXI DRIVER hands the change to the PASSENGER, who waves it aside. Smiling, the TAXI DRIVER stuffs the money into his pocket.

TAXI DRIVER

Thanks a lot, mister. You know, I think that was by far the most interesting ...

The TAXI DRIVER turns around, but the PASSENGER is already gone. On the back seat there is a stack of papers and a pen. The TAXI DRIVER picks up the rest of the orange, eats a piece and makes a face. Then he picks up his phone.

TAXI DRIVER

What's up, man? You hungry? I think I could go for some pizza now.

(End)