

Red 49

written by

John Stone

Theme tune. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjxNnqTcHhg>

FADE IN:

EXT. TRAIN STATION CAR PARK - NIGHT

The monotonous sound of Popcorn (*Jean-Michel-Jarre*) rings out as a row of local CABS sit on rank and wait for the next train to pull in.

TAXI RADIO CIRCUIT V.O

(strong male voice)

*Red 49, go to 44 Habgood Street
and pick up miserable old
Charlie. Drop him at the working
men's club and arrange a return
for later on.*

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Fed up driver, RED 49 (30) sits at the front of the rank and picks up the message.

RED 49

(tuts his annoyance)

Red 49. Roger that.

He shakes his head and pulls off the rank. The sound of Popcorn quietens.

EXT. HABGOOD STREET - NIGHT

Bespectacled, wiry haired and unshaven CHARLIE (80) exits a run down, mid-terrace house, then climbs inside the waiting taxi.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Heavily built Charlie belts up as Red 49 sets the fare meter.

CHARLIE

(gruffly)

I ain't seen you before. You new?

RED 49
(casually)

Yeah.

CHARLIE
When did you start working for
Sanders cabs, then?

RED 49
Tonight. I started tonight.

CHARLIE
You got the short straw, then.
They always give the new driver's
this job. They don't like me over
at your office.

Red 49 quietly nods his acknowledgement.

RED 49
The working men's club, then, is
it?

CHARLIE
That's right, son. My only
salvation these days.

Red 49 pulls off.

CHARLIE /
You seem nicer than the other
driver's who've picked me up in
the past.

RED 49
Thanks. I'll bear that in mind
for next time.

CHARLIE
I can tell. The others are a load
of miserable sods.

RED 49
Are they?

CHARLIE
Yeah, they are. I know the reason
why as well.

RED 49
Why's that, then?

CHARLIE

Cos it's only a small fare. It's not worth their while is it.

RED 49

(acknowledges remark)

Oh. Right.

CHARLIE

You don't seem to mind though, do ya, son?

RED 49

Not really. If I was here for the money I'd be banging me head on the wall.

CHARLIE

I used to be a cab driver meself... not a mini-cab like you are. I was a proper London cabbie.

RED 49

Black taxi?

CHARLIE

Yeah. Licenced by the PCO.

(irritable pause)

Forty-fives years service and not even a golden handshake when I handed me badge in.

(reflects)

Stuffy lot they are at the carriage office.

RED 49

(sympathetically)

That's not nice.

CHARLIE

No, it isn't, son.

RED 49

I'm learning to be a black cabbie m'self.

CHARLIE

On the Knowledge then, are we?

RED 49

Yeah.

CHARLIE
Green or yellow badge?

RED 49
Green - All London.

CHARLIE
Good for you, son. I know it's
not easy these days. It was a lot
easier back when I did it. You
could do it in a year or two back
then.

RED 49
It takes three to four years
nowadays.

POV: WORKING MEN'S CLUB.

Red 49 pulls up outside, then stops the meter.

CU: FARE: 4.40

Charlie sifts through his coat pocket for some loose change
then pays him.

CHARLIE
What's your name, son? I'll ask
for you next time.

RED 49
George.

CHARLIE
George what?

RED 49
George Brown.

CHARLIE
That's funny. We've got something
in common you and me.

RED 49
Oh?

CHARLIE
Yeah. We share the same surname -
Brown.

RED 49

(indifferently)

Do we?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

(interested pause)

Where are you from, then, son?

RED 49

Shoreditch.

CHARLIE

(aback)

Shoreditch?

RED 49

Yeah. Why?

CHARLIE

That's where I was born. All my family are from Shoreditch.

RED 49

Are they?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

(pauses)

What's your father's name, if you don't mind me asking?

RED 49

Reg.

CHARLIE

(knowingly)

Not Reginald Brown, is it?

RED 49

Yeah. Why?

CHARLIE

Well I never! I'm your father's uncle. As he ever told you about me - Old taxi driver, Charlie Brown?

RED 49

(shakes head)

He's never mentioned you. I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

Cor blimey! I'm your
grandfather's Bill's brother.

RED 49

No!

CHARLIE

Cor, I haven't spoken to Bill,
your grandfather in thirty years
I reckon.

RED 49

Why not?

CHARLIE

We fell out. I can't even
remember what it was over now.

RED 49

So you're my great uncle Charlie,
then?

Charlie becomes emotional, then begins to cry.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I am.

RED 49

I'm sorry. I never meant to upset
you. Are you okay?

He hands him a tissue from a box and Charlie wipes his eyes.

CHARLIE

That's alright, son. I'm just
really chuffed I met you now.

Charlie blows his nose.

CHARLIE /

It's just that I never knew I was
a great uncle to somebody. You've
made my day, you really have,
son. I dunno what to say.

RED 49

(smiles warmly)

Well, you've made mine too, great
uncle Charlie.

CHARLIE

Wait till I tell the chaps in the club. They'll be thrilled to bits. I've been so cut off from everyone since I fell out with me brother. I never even knew about you.

RED 49

Well, I'm pleased to meet you after all this time, great uncle Charlie.

CHARLIE

Will you still pick me up at eleven?

RED 49

Of course I will.

Charlie slips off his solid GOLD WATCH and hands it to Red 49.

CHARLIE

Here. Take this, so you won't forget. I usually have to walk home. They always forget to send somebody to pick me up.

RED 49

I can't take that. I will be here, I promise.

CHARLIE

You don't understand, son. I want you to have it, so you won't forget me.

RED 49

I won't for get you. I'm coming back for you at eleven.

CHARLIE

Well, look after it until then.

RED 49

OK. I will.

CHARLIE

Good boy.

Charlie exits the vehicle in high spirits and closes the door behind him.

Red 49 POV: Charlie staggers up the steps to the working men's club, but then turns and falters when he collapses in to a heap on the steps.

EXT. WORKING MEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Red 49 quickly exits the taxi and rushes up the steps. He frantically pumps Charlie's chest, before he is joined by others from inside the club.

RED 49

(frantically)

C'mon great uncle, Charlie, you can do it. Stay alive for me. Don't die. Not now. I haven't gotten to know you yet. Please, c'mon, Charlie. For fuck sake don't die on me!

Charlie lies slumped across the steps with his eyes wide open and lifeless. Red 49 looks up at the twinkling stars in despair.

CU: Charlie's gold watch glistens under the lights as it rests upon Red 49's wrist.

Defeatedly, he walks back towards the taxi and climbs in and restarts the engine.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Red 49 huddles the steering wheel.

RADIO CIRCUIT V.O

Red 49, where are you now?

(pause)

Red 49? Red 49 where are you?

Red 49 switches off his radio and drives off with tears that roll down his cheeks.

FADE OUT.

THE END

Dedicated to my great uncle Charlie Stone.