

AFRAID OF THE LIGHT

(5th draft)

by

Paul Laight © 2006

FADE IN:

PITCH.

BLACK.

DARKNESS.

Slow unrelenting TICK-TOCK-TICK-TOCK-TICK-TOCK of a CLOCK is the only SOUND.

It remains like this for some considerable time.

SUDDENLY:

Flashing LIGHT from an unknown source.

MOVEMENT in the room.

FLASHING LIGHT is from a mobile phone on SILENT.

LIGHT moves.

LIGHT illuminates the outline of a MAN'S FACE.

CLOSE IN -- Mobile reveals the name: MATT.

MAN'S VOICE

(whisper)

Knock. Slowly. Three times.

Pause to listen.

MALE VOICE (cont.)

So, I know it's you.

LIGHT goes out.

DARKNESS.

THEN:

KNOCK. . . KNOCK. . . KNOCK at the door below.

MOVEMENT once again. FOOTSTEPS.

Curtains are opened.

STREETLIGHT briefly spills into the room. Allows enough time to see a BIG MAN (early-30's), with dark features and hollowed out eyes.

Curtains shut.

DARKNESS.

Curtains open again.

ANGLE from Big Man's P.O.V:

A WIRY MAN comes into view. He stands out: dressed in a garish floral shirt, white trousers and decking shoes.

The Wiry Man looks at the window.

Curtains whip shut.

INT. HALLWAY - HOUSE - NIGHT

DARKNESS.

Keys CLATTER.

Lock UNBOLTS.

Chain RATTLES.

Door opens.

Streetlight cuts through making the Wiry Man visible. His name is MATT (mid-30s). He's tanned with a clean and healthy look.

MATT (O.S.)

Joe. . .?

Chain RATTLES.

Door opens.

JOE

(whisper)

Get in! Quick!

Door OPENS and Matt is pushed against the wall.

Door SHUTS.

DARKNESS.

Something CLICKS: a gun is COCKED.

JOE
(whisper)
Could you be anymore fuckin'
conspicuous?

MATT
I came straight from Heathrow.

JOE
Ssshh!! Were you followed?

Matt doesn't answer.

JOE
Answer me. Were you --

MATT
-- I'm a professional. It's a
stupid question.

JOE
What's stupid about wanting to stay
alive?

MATT
I'll kill you myself if you don't
remove the gun from my head.

Suddenly there's the SOUND of a STRUGGLE. BLOWS are landed.

MATT
That's how you ask for my help?

JOE
Aaah! It's not loaded. It's
not loaded.

Matt pulls the trigger. CLICK! SNAP! It's empty.

SILENCE.

JOE
(sighs)
Thank Christ you're here, Matt.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Fridge OPENS.

LIGHT pervades. Nothing but booze bottles inside.

JOE
Been somewhere nice?

Light catches Matt checking the gun over.

MATT
Florida. I told you.

JOE
Course you did. Florida. Nice.
Somewhere I could do with being
right now.

Joe removes a Vodka bottle. Two-thirds empty.

Fridge CLOSES.

DARKNESS.

TWIST. Cap opens. GLUG! GLUG! GLUG!

CLICK! Matt turns the big light on.

JOE
NO!

Joe's a rabbit in the headlights.

He lunges across Matt. Turns off the light.

DARKNESS again.

JOE
Don't. If they're out there --

MATT
There's no one out there.
(beat)
When's the last time you slept?

JOE
Try sleeping without guarantee of
waking up.

Joe goes to take another drink. Matt takes the bottle away.

JOE
Hey!

MATT

I want you sober.

JOE

I'm sick of people telling me
what to do.

MATT

You want me to go? I'll go. I'm
gone.

Silence but for Joe's BREATHING.

JOE

Wait. I wanna show you something.
What it's all about. I wanna show
you. . .

INT. CUPBOARD - NIGHT

SPARK.

FLAME.

A match LIGHTS up the frame.

Joe lights a candle.

Claustrophobic's nightmare. Tight. Confined.

Matt and Joe's eyes meet.

Joe, compared to Matt, looks like sickness. Skin is pale,
blood-shot eyes, greasy hair.

JOE

All my life they've looked
down on me. . .

MATT

Joe. . .

JOE

Trust. Dedication. Respect. Words
normally associated with you. Not
me. You're trusted. Valued. You get
to carry the bag. . .

MATT

. . .This ain't helping.

JOE

. . .Not no more though. I've got
the bag now.

Joe bends down. Out of frame.

Hold on Matt. He glimpses down. Uncomfortable.

UNZIPPING sound is heard off screen.

Joe enters the frame once again.

JOE

Look.

Matt glances down. We DON'T see what he sees.

JOE

Ain't that beautiful?

MATT

These are not people you steal
from, Joe.

JOE

I earned this. I earned it.

MATT

You stole from thieves.

JOE

Bad innit? What if bad's all you've
ever had?

Silence.

JOE

I know I can be a liability. . .

MATT

Can be?

JOE

. . .And you've bailed me out so
many times before. But I need your
help. Say you're gonna help?

Matt cannot look at Joe for a moment.

When he finally looks at him Matt nods, "Yes."

Joe rests his head on Matt's shoulders.

JOE
(smiles)
Right. Let's slip this gaff. Get
to the airport. Take a one-way
ticket --

MATT
-- Slow down. Hold your horses.

JOE
What?

MATT
If we're gonna do this, we're doing
it my way.

JOE
But?

MATT
No buts. You're a mess. You need to
sleep first. Then we go to the
airport.

JOE
And if they come?

MATT
I'll be waiting for them.

Silence for a beat or two as Joe thinks.

JOE
You've always been stronger than
me.

MATT
There's just one thing I want.

JOE
The bag? You want a cut. It's
yours.

MATT
I want you clean. Smells like
something crawled into you
and died.

JOE
Y'know what that is?

MATT
Tell me.

JOE
My past. And I'm leaving it behind
thanks to you, pal.

Matt blows out the candle. THEN:

DARKNESS.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

DARKNESS.

MOVEMENT.

MATT (O.S)
I'm just gonna turn on the lamp.
Don't panic. I'm here.

LAMP LIGHT thrown across a cluttered bed.

Joe's in bed. Matt tucks him in and plumps his pillow.

JOE
You'll wake me?

MATT
In the morning.

JOE
What about the light?

MATT
Leave it. I wanna make sure
you're breathing.

JOE
(quiet)
You're good to me, Matt.

MATT
(quieter)
What are friends for?

Joe's closes his eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Matt stands at the doorway. LIGHT from the bathroom silhouettes Matt in the doorway.

Aside from Joe's breathing it's perfectly quiet.

Matt waits.

And waits some more.

This could go on for minutes.

Or at least until one feel tension rise.

SUDDENLY:

Matt moves at pace onto the bed. He straddles Joe and puts a pillow over his face. Holds down with all his might.

Joe's legs kick. Kick. Kick. Kick.

Somehow Joe gets an arm free. Starts flailing, striking Matt. The blows have little effect.

Joe's hand reaches for the bedside table. Tries to grab at something. Anything.

BANG! Bedside lamp falls to the floor.

STRUGGLE continues briefly.

Soon there's SILENCE and:

PITCH. BLACK. DARKNESS.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Knuckles whiten on the wheel. Matt stares ahead intently trying to hold in his emotion.

Takes a deep breath. Looks down toward the passenger seat.

The BAG just sits there. Engine STARTS. MATT drives away.

FADE OUT: