

THE LUNCH BREAK

Short film - 5th draft

by

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BLACK SCREEN

Cacophony of noise sounds out: phones ringing, copiers whirring, printers firing, chitty-chatty of VOICES, office hubbub and "Good Morning Universal Exports!" repeated over and over again. The sounds combine and peak and then suddenly there is SILENCE and we CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

TIM DOUBT (late 20s), eyes closed, releases all the stress of the morning in one long SIGH of breath.

Tim's eyes open and he takes in the solace of his surroundings such as: a circular stretch of water larger than a pond; the ducks and other water fowl; the verdant grass, hedges and trees.

He open his leather satchel. Removes his lunchbox. Then his bottled water. Turns the cap and takes a sip. Replaces the cap. Opens the lunchbox. Carefully unfolds a serviette and places it on his lap.

Then he removes a sketchbook filled with illustrations.

Picks up his sandwich and is about to take a bite WHEN he hears a GRUFF MALE VOICE roar something barely understandable.

GRUFF MALE VOICE (off)
Grrrr... Get out of it you bastards!

Tim looks up and SEES a MALE VAGRANT (50s) yelling at pigeons. The Vagrant sways from side to side muttering under his breath. He spots Tim who averts his gaze to avoid eye contact.

Tim stares straight ahead as if thinking, "Please don't come this way!"

Suddenly he HEARS coughing as the Vagrant almost has a fit trying to clear something from the back of his throat.

Tim's face moves from surprise to disgust to repulsion as the Vagrant RETCHES off-screen. Tim looks at his sandwich then puts it back in the box.

The Vagrant shuffles then slumps onto the bench. He takes out a bottle of whiskey from his pockets and takes a lengthy swig.

Tim stares straight ahead. Uncomfortable with the stranger.

VAGRANT

(Irish accent)

I hate birds. Dirty things. Filthy.
Especially pigeons. Rats with wings.

Tim mentally notes the irony of the statement from a greasy-haired, stubble-bearded, dirty-clothed filth-monger sat next to him.

The Vagrant looks at the sandwiches. The Vagrant coughs and splutters again. Tim pushes the sandwiches toward him.

VAGRANT

Thanks son. Very kind.

The Vagrant picks up a sandwich. Coughs over it. Takes a bite.

VAGRANT

(mouth-full)

Better than pigeon.

TIM

Pardon?

VAGRANT

(swallows)

I said it's better than eating
pigeon. Duck's okay. Bit fatty
though and tough to catch.

TIM

Nice.

VAGRANT

What you drawing?

TIM

Nothing.

VAGRANT

May I?

Tim shows him the sketch pad. The Vagrant leafs through it.

VAGRANT

Very. . . Interesting.

TIM

It's just. . . Ideas.

VAGRANT

Did you study?

TIM

Yeah. What good it did.

VAGRANT

You work near here?

TIM

Not far.

VAGRANT

Something artistic?

TIM

I work in surreal estate.

VAGRANT

What?

TIM

Surreal. . . Estate. . . You - said
- Artistic. . . Joke. Property.
I work in property. I answer the phone.
Admin. Exciting. The stuff dreams are
made of.

VAGRANT

Wageslave?

TIM

Pays the rent.

VAGRANT

While destroying your soul.
My advice is follow your dream.

TIM

What if you can't afford a dream?

Beat or two.

VAGRANT

You have to escape. Don't get trapped.
I worked in an office for a year.
I walked out. The fear of doing
the same thing day in, day out for years
was frightening. I followed my dream.

The Vagrant swigs from the bottle then BELCHES loudly. He
offers Tim the bottle. Tim shakes his head.

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TIM

(mild sarcasm)

Ooo...kayyy. How's that working out for you?

VAGRANT

Don't fall into their traps.
We imprison ourselves with jobs we hate.
Responsibilities, debt, children, love,
marriage, kids, work. You married.

TIM

No.

VAGRANT

Kids?

Tim shakes his head, "no!"

VAGRANT

There's no stopping you then.

TIM

I'm saving for my own flat.

VAGRANT

No. No. No. That's not a dream.
That's a rat-trap.

TIM

There's a recession. I've-

VAGRANT

There's always a recession. That's the
biggest trap they set. The banks. The
politicians. The rich. They all set their
traps. To catch the common man. Keep
him down. Think! There must be something
more than pushing paper. Punching the
clock. Day in. Day out. Eventually
the clock punches you. Into submission.

TIM

We don't use punch-clocks anymore. It's
done via fingerprint recognition.
And blood sample.

The Vagrant coughs and splits globby phlegm to the ground.

VAGRANT

Even worse! Orwell was right!

TIM

Joke!

The Vagrant takes Tim's sketch pad and flicks through it.

TIM

I can't afford to be out of work. I hate looking for work. It's like shopping for your own gravestone. You're looking for something you don't want.

VAGRANT

Just like the time my ex-wife went missing.

Tim laughs. Offers the Vagrant his apple. He grabs it and takes a bite.

VAGRANT

What you need is a break.

Tim looks at his watch.

TIM

Talking of which. My break is. . .
Got to get back to the--

VAGRANT

Orifice?

TIM

Yeah.

VAGRANT

Who's your hero?

TIM

My hero?

VAGRANT

Who would you want to be like?
Which one person?

TIM

You wouldn't have heard of him?

VAGRANT

Try me.

TIM

Alan Moore.

VAGRANT

The World Cup winning Captain?

TIM

No. He's—

VAGRANT

--Watchmen. V for Vendetta. From Hell.

TIM

(standing up)

Talking of hell. Got to get back to work.

VAGRANT

Of all the people who have ever existed you choose Alan Moore as your hero. That's original.

TIM

It was either him or Hitler.

VAGRANT

Give me your number. I'll see what I can do. I have contacts.

TIM

Really?! You'd do that for me. Good talking to you.

VAGRANT

I at least owe you lunch.

TIM

I'm not too keen on pigeon.

VAGRANT

Rat! I thought we could have rat.

Beat as the two share a moment. Tim rips a page from his notebook and writes his number on the piece of paper.

TIM

Well, this has been... Weird. See you.

The Vagrant waves goodbye and watches Tim head off into the distance. THEN: he looks up and sees a YOUNG MAN, early 20s, standing there.

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YOUNG MAN/ASS. DIRECTOR
They're ready for you on set,
Sir Ian.

SIR IAN McCULLOCH - renowned actor - nods and stands. Walks
with the Assistant Director.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Good lunch, Sir Ian?

SIR IAN
(accent switches to R.P.)
Yes. It helps to get off set you
know. Work through the character.
Ideas. Emotions. Go on ahead. I
have a phone call to make.

The A. D. walks on ahead and Sir Ian takes out his mobile
phone. Dials. Then follows behind.

SIR IAN
(On phone)
Chris. Darling. How are you?
(listens)
Yes, looking forward to the shoot.
(listens)
Oh, now. Today? Something for the BBC.
I play a sage-like Tramp. Very Alan
Bennett. Great to be in something that
doesn't involve Wizards and green-screen.
(laughs/listens)
How's prep going? Are you at storyboard
stage yet?

EXT. OFFICE - DAY

Tim trudges back toward the office.

SIR IAN (CONT./V.O)
(on phone)
Good. I need a favour. I have just
Met a very promising comic-book artist.
Absolutely brilliant. The boy just
needs a break. . .

FADE OUT: