

Clap Clap

Written

by

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INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

MAX CLAYTON (28), dark slicked-back hair, slightly chubby, is sat on his bed, staring at the empty wall before him. He is wearing a white vest and dark blue prison jumpsuit. The upper-body part of the suit hangs off his waist.

The gray concrete bricks drably accentuate his loneliness and the growing knowledge that this will be his principle view for a long time.

His face then fills with determination as he turns to the posters, photos and letters that hang on the wall above his bed.

The posters are of red-haired glamour models and Manchester City Football Club players/logos. The photos are of Max's two cats. Some feature him posing with them. All the letters end with "Love Mum".

Max deliberates before standing up and methodically taking them all down. He puts them into three piles - "Posters", "Photos" and "Letters" and then places them under his bed.

His attention then turns to his hair. He seems unsatisfied as he runs his hands through it.

INT. PRISON BARBER SHOP - DAY

Max sits down. The PRISON BARBER wraps a black cape around him.

PRISON BARBER

Right, Max, what will it be?

MAX

The blandest cut possible please. A grade two or three all over. Not a skinhead because I don't want anything with... character.

The barber nods indifferently and turns his electric razor on.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Max, now with short plain hair, is back on his bed, his eyes fixed on the wall again.

He stands and walks over to his desk where a piece of chalk lies. Picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

He approaches the blank wall and slowly starts to write - J-U-L... He stops momentarily, turns away like the letters pain him. He forces himself to continue - I-E C-A-M-P... His BREATHING becomes louder... B-E-L-L.

Max EXHALES, mainly in relief. He steps back and looks at the words - JULIE CAMPBELL.

He sits back down, his eyes never leaving the name. Remorse then floods his face and tears threaten.

VOICES jar Phil out of his gaze. He jumps off the bed and rubs the name off the wall before TWO INMATES amble by.

Relieved, Phil lies on his bed. His determination reemerges.

INT. PRISON - VISITING ROOM - DAY

A din of conversations as FAMILIES, LOVERS and FRIENDS visit INMATES.

Max has been joined by his MOTHER (50s), short gray hair. She looks drained yet projects an upbeat demeanour. She talks fast and optimistically. Max can't get a word in edgeways, his frustration burgeoning throughout...

MOTHER

Peter is confident we can get an appeal hearing before the end of the year. I hope you're staying positive, Max. I just know this injustice will be exposed soon and we'll sue Greater Manchester Police for every penny they've got...

MAX

(finally snaps)
Mum, enough!
(pause; girds himself)
I did it.

Utter shock flashes across his mother's face but she quickly shakes her head incredulously.

MOTHER

No... see, all their interrogations have brainwashed you into believing you--

MAX

--No, mum. Listen...
(articulately)
On March 7th, I sneaked out of the house and went into town. Later
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAX (cont'd)
that night, I followed a girl,
Julie Campbell, as she left a bar.
I dragged her into some bushes down
a quiet street, beat her
unconscious and raped her.

His mother bows her head and noiselessly sobs, the
realisation sinking in. Max takes a second, looking truly
sorry for all the woe he's caused.

MAX (CONT'D)
So, you need to just... let me go.
'Cause that's what I've done.
(ardent determination accrues)
I no longer exist. The person that
I once was has gone. I can't atone
for what I've done so the next best
thing is to dedicate the rest of my
life to helping others.

MOTHER
And how can you do that in here,
Max?

Max has no answer.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Max is sat at his desk. He eagerly opens a letter. It is an
application form for organ donation. He smiles and
frantically begins to fill the form in.

LATER

Max sat on the bed again. Antsy, his eyes dart around the
cell. He is anxious to do something.

The BUZZING noise of a FLY becomes audible.

Max flinches a couple of times as the fly circles his head.
Ben tries to swat it with his hands - CLAP! Misses it. Tries
again - CLAP! Now irritated fully, he has another attempt -
CLAP CLAP!

Bizarrely, the fly stops dead in mid-air, the buzzing noise
stopping abruptly.

Max is dumbstruck. He moves his head up close to the fly and
scrutinizes it. It's wings are extended. It just hangs
there, frozen.

His attention is then riveted to...

OUTSIDE CELL

... an INMATE, who is rooted mid-walk.

Max gingerly approaches him. He waves his hand in front of the inmate's face but there is no reaction from him, not even the blink of an eye. Max remains stupefied.

His eyes widen even more when he rotates to the main body of the cell block to see approximately forty INMATES and several PRISON GUARDS also frozen.

Max, in a haze, slowly wanders around the block. He passes the human statues, captured in mid-activity - several prisoners playing cards, two playing table tennis (the ping pong ball hangs in the air), one inmate stuck in the press-ups position etc.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Max sits back down on his bed. His eyebrows are furrowed in confusion. He looks to be retracing his steps. He holds his hands out like he's about to slap them together. He looks at the fly again. A moment.

He CLAPS once, near where he first tried to terminate the insect... but nothing. He then CLAPS approximately where he attempted the second time... again nothing. He then claps twice - CLAP CLAP! - like the third time...

Suddenly, everything resumes. The fly swoops around, BUZZING. The inmate passes Max's cell. The various CONVERSING/SHOUTING/BANTER of the prisoners can be heard.

Everyone is back to normal, blissfully unaware, except...

Max, still bewildered.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Inmates walk around, use the weights, josh etc.

The odd raindrop begins to fall but it doesn't deter them from getting their precious one hour of daylight.

Suddenly, everyone freezes like before. A moment, then everything returns to motion.

INT. CELL BLOCK ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Max, a mixture of excitement, nerves and marvel, looks out onto the yard. He brings his palms together - CLAP CLAP!

Everything becomes stationary again.

CLAP CLAP... and then resumes.

He continues to "CLAP CLAP" for several seconds, starting and stopping time throughout.

He finally stops, leaving everything fixed.

A few raindrops are stuck in the air.

Max seems mesmerised by them. He slowly extends an arm out and touches one of the drops with his index finger. He watches it trickle down his finger, onto his palm.

Excitement becomes his sole emotion. He peers over to the...

EXT. PRISON YARD - GUARDS EXIT - CONTINUOUS

A door in the fence on the far side.

Max focuses on a PRISON GUARD, stood by the door. Specifically, his key chain that hangs off his belt.

Max strides over to the guard, removes the belt and takes the keys - approximately twenty in all.

He hastily begins to try them in the lock on the door.

Max eventually mollifies, remembers no one can do anything. He calmly resumes. Finally, he unlocks the door and enters another cell block.

INT. PRISON - VARIOUS CORRIDORS/MAIN EXIT - DAY

SEQUENCE: Max using the keys to open various doors. The keys take him only so far, so he swipes another chain off ANOTHER GUARD. Continues his escape. He arrives at the main exit. Goes into the room where prisoner's belongings are stored until released. Max finds his possessions - clothes, wallet (picture of his cats inside) and watch. Starts to change.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

All quiet.

The large doors then OPEN to reveal Max. He stands for a second, pans around to see the coast is clear. Closes the doors. Turns and sees the odd raindrop dotted in the air.

EXT. HILL - DAY

Luscious and green. One of many that surrounds and dwarfs a town.

Max stands on the hill, looking down on the town. A smile curls on his face as he moves his hands together...

CLAP CLAP! Time restarts...

Raindrops continue their descend to the ground as Max bounces down the hill with alacrity. The heavens open up and the rain gushes down. This doesn't bother him...

He's free and he now has a purpose.

EXT. OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE - DAY

SEQUENCE: Max walks around, observing the VARIOUS PEOPLE going about their business. Trivial things seem big to him - crossing a road, automobiles ZIPPING past, paying for a can of Coke, WOMEN'S VOICES etc.

The town is rundown - many shops are boarded up, beautiful old buildings are derelict. The PEOPLE (all ages and races) seem tired and desolate. This place needs help.

LATER - EVENING

The centre is quieter now. Most shops have shut for another day.

Max is sat on a bench, contemplating his next mood. He spots an internet cafe a few shops down, which is still open. He starts for it.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Max is on one of the computers, surfing the internet.

He types "Julie Campbell" in the Google search box, hesitates then adds "rape victim" before CLICKING the search button.

(CONTINUED)

He CLICKS on the first website - a local newspaper article about her entitled "Rape Victim To Set Up Support Group For Abused Women".

With great interest/curiosity, Max reads the article, scrolling down with the mouse. He looks pleasantly surprised. Almost relieved.

He suddenly jolts back when he sees a picture of Julie at the bottom of the news piece. She is a pretty redhead, around 25 years of age.

Max composes himself, scrolls back up and finds her address within the article - "Campbell, 25, of Newport St, Oldham, was on a night out with..."

He starts scrawling the address down on a piece of paper.

EXT. NEWPORT STREET - EVENING

Two rows of modest semi-detached houses either side.

EXT. BACK GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Max climbs over the fences and peers into the houses through the back windows. He seems edgy but shows no sign of stealth or concern for his noise levels.

We soon see why when he inspects a YOUNG FAMILY sat at their kitchen table, in the middle of a family meal only... time has been stopped and they are frozen.

Max scales their fence into the next garden. His determined strides decrease in pace as he approaches the kitchen window...

PAN ACROSS to reveal JULIE CAMPBELL, stationary at her sink, washing dishes.

INT. JULIE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Max arrives at the window, staring at his victim. His mind is racing. He's a mixture of guilt, doubt and uncertainty. He muses momentarily before walking over to the back door. He presses down on the handle and it opens. Max cautiously enters.

Julie's husband KARL (30), handsome, wearing a suit, is sat at the kitchen table. His mouth is open, looks to have frozen in mid-sentence.

Karl's presence escalates Max's uncomfortableness. He goes into the...

LIVING ROOM

... where he sees the door leading into the front porch open. Heads for the door...

FRONT PORCH

He sees the keys in the front door. He unlocks the door and looks outside. No one is around. Max leaves the door open ajar. His BREATHING increases as he summons his courage before lifting his arms up and... CLAP CLAP! Time resumes...

INT. JULIE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Karl continues his sentence...

KARL

... proud. I'm very proud of you,
darling, even if it doesn't take
off.

Julie smiles appreciatively as she continues washing the dishes. Becomes disappointed.

JULIE

All that hard work, though. There's
so many women out there who need
help.

INT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Max, his back pressed against the living room door, out of sight, eavesdrops. He's jittery, ready to bolt out of the house if need be.

KARL (O.S.)

(sympathetically)

I know, love. We've done all we can
writing these letters and appeals.
We just have to prey people dig
into their pockets.

JULIE (O.S.)

It's sad how everything has a
price.

Her words sting Max. He becomes overwhelmingly contrite to the point where he has to get out of there. He carefully exits the house, quietly closing the door behind him.

INT. PHONE BOX - EVENING

Max is on the phone. He scribbles a phone number down on the piece of paper with Julie's address on.

MAX

Great. Thank you.

Hangs up. Keeps his hand on the receiver as he cogitates. Eventually, he lifts the receiver and dials.

INT. JULIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Her phone RINGS. She is sat on the sofa, watching TV. She leans over and answers...

JULIE

Hello?

INTERCUT with Max in phone booth.

MAX

(eyes widen; pause)

Hi. Julie Campbell?

JULIE

Speaking.

MAX

Hi, I read an article about you in the paper. I have a female friend who's suffering from abuse. She's too scared to seek help, so I was wondering if you could give me some advice as to what I can do to persuade her otherwise.

JULIE

Of course. What type of abuse is she suffering?

MAX

(mulls)

S-Sexual.

JULIE

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. You need to understand that it's hard to speak up, especially to a stranger. I was a victim of sexual abuse and couldn't even move from my sofa for months, never mind talk to anyone--

(CONTINUED)

MAX

(over zealous)

--But you're OK now...

(realises; thinks quickly)

... right? Like, that's what it
said in the paper.

JULIE

Yeah, I'm fine. This horrible event
that happened to me has given my
life more purpose than ever. I live
to help other unfortunate women.

MAX

(searching for words)

Good for you. I think it's
wonderful this support group you're
setting up. How's all that going?

JULIE

Still need around ten grand to get
it up and running properly, to hire
the best councillors.

MAX

Ten grand?

JULIE

Yeah.

Max's trademark determination floods his face. Long pause.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

MAX

(to the point; solemnly)

OK, listen, Julie. I promise you
you will have that money by the end
of the night. I promise you.

Julie is taken aback and very bemused.

JULIE

Well... that's fantastic. What's
your name?

MAX

I wish to remain anonymous. The
money will be at your doorstep.
Please accept it.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE

Alright. The money isn't dodgy, or anything, is it?

MAX

Absolutely not. I just want to help. Thank you, Julie.

He hangs up and exits the booth with purpose.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Frustrated, Max hustles along, struggling to concoct a plan.

He spots a CAT surreptitiously crossing a garden. It appears to be hunting.

Max stares in excitement and fondness.

He follows the feline onto a pathway. The cat picks up speed. Max is almost foaming at the mouth as he gathers momentum but suddenly forces himself to halt.

He seems to be in two minds. He finally decides to turn back and heads for the street, controlling his urges.

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE ROOM - EVENING

The lecturer STUART (30s), is sat at a desk, making notes as one of his STUDENTS (18), male, nervous, gives an oral presentation before his CLASSMATES, about thirty in all.

STUDENT

The pattern is prefigured in the credit sequence and urm... provides a blueprint for almost every shot that follows, culminating in the urm... horizontal presence of the motel against the verticality of the old dark house. Urm... I believe *Vertigo* is the perfect example of a film achieving high suspense using mise-en-scène.

His classmates APPLAUD as the student sits back down.

STUART

Well done, Walter. Just one thing - and I've noticed a few of you doing this - try to avoid "urming" throughout your presentations. It projects uncertainty. You want to articulate confidently, so stop and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STUART (cont'd)
think before you convey rather than
starting with "Urm" every other
sentence.

(looks at his notes)
Urm...

GUFFAWS from his students. Stuart raises an eyebrow to them, shoots them an unimpressed yet amused look.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAR PARK - NIGHT

Max mills around the exit, looking over to the university entrance where STUDENTS and TEACHERS enter/exit/chitchat etc. Finally, he sees Stuart heading his way.

Max quickly hides behind some bushes as he spies on Stuart, who is about to open the driver's door of his car when...

CLAP CLAP!

Max scuttles over to the car, passing the now stationary Stuart. Max opens the boot, climbs in and closes it to the point where it appears shut, when in fact he holds it open a crack so he doesn't lock himself inside.

INT. BOOT - CONTINUOUS

Max brings his free hand towards his hand holding the boot door and... CLAP CLAP!

EXT. STUART'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Stuart becomes active and climbs into his car. STARTS THE ENGINE and peels away.

EXT. STUART'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stuart pulls up outside and enters his semi-detached house, with a pretty garden, located somewhere in the suburbs.

A moment before the car boot lifts open and Max climbs out, blinking his eyes as he adjusts to the streetlights. He finally looks at the house with intent.

He walks to the door and KNOCKS on it before quickly hiding around the side of the house. He waits. The DOOR OPENS...

A quiet CLAP CLAP from Max, who peeks around to see Stuart, frozen, answering the door, his hand on the doorknob.

Max enters the house, nonchalantly passing him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Max enters to find TWO SHIFTY-LOOKING MEN (20s), sports/chav attire, and STUART'S WIFE (30s), business suit, sat around the coffee table. All of them "on pause".

One of the men was handling a bundle of money while she was weighing marijuana on some scales.

Max snatches the money out of the man's hand and counts it - not enough, maybe £300. Puts it back in the man's hand and debates. He exits the room. His FOOTSTEPS can be heard ascending stairs.

INT. STUART'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Max searches the bedroom - under the bed, in wardrobes and drawers etc. He carefully leaves everything as it was. Eventually, he gives in. Discouragement burgeons.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Max walks along, but then stops and backtracks a couple of steps. Looks up to the ceiling to see a door panel.

LATER

Max returns with some stepladders. Places them underneath the panel, scales them and opens the door.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Completely dedicated to growing marijuana. Rows of the plant fill most of the attic floor. Looks to be maintained professionally - high pressure sodium lamps beam, a large fan is RUNNING, pH testers and adjusters as well as nutrients and fertilisers lay around, matt white paint cover the walls etc.

Max enters and beams... jackpot!

He circles the room, looking uninterested with the marijuana. He finally sees a desk at the far end, looks in the desk cupboard to see a large stash of money - thousands of pounds.

INT. STUART'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Stuart where we left him. Max appears from the living room, carrying two green plastic bags. Grinning mischievously, he exits the house.

(CONTINUED)

MAX
(passing Stuart)
Sorry, Stuart. You'll live, mate.

Max scampers to the end of the street and...

CLAP CLAP!

... watches Stuart fully open his door, only to become confused when no one is there. He closes the door shut.

Overjoyed, Max turns onto another street and out of sight.

EXT. JULIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max has just placed the plastic bags down at Julie's door. He RINGS her doorbell... CLAP CLAP!

He walks to the end of the street and hides around the corner... CLAP CLAP!

Time continues. Max pokes his head out to see Julie open her door and pick up the bags. She peeks inside and is gobsmacked to see the money. She looks around, contemplates and takes the bags inside. Max is euphoric.

EXT. OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE - NIGHT

Again, Max is wandering with a pensive expression.

He walks onto Yorkshire Street, where most of the town's bars, pubs and clubs are located. The street is strewn with YOUNG REVELLERS - scantily dressed girls, muscle-bound men with tight tops and short gelled hair etc. It is a boisterous atmosphere. One man KICKS a bin over.

Two MEN hurriedly pass Max. One of them holds his bloodied nose. Both appear shaken up.

MAN WITH BLOODY NOSE
This is the fuckin' last time I'm
coming to Oldham!

MAN #1
Fuckin' rough as fuck! We're lucky
we didn't get stabbed then!

This alerts Max as he hears a RUMPUS coming from around the corner of one of the bars. He turns it and monitors...

THREE LOUTS picking on an ASIAN MAN. Lout #1 pushes the Asian man around as the other two watch on, smoking joints and CHORTLING.

(CONTINUED)

LOUT #1
Fuckin' Paki cunt. Come on then!

Terrified, the Asian man tries to extricate himself but Lout #2 shoves him back towards Lout #1.

LOUT #2
He's trying to run away, the pussy!

LOUT #3
We'd let you go if you were running
back to your own country!

GUFFAWS.

LOUT #1
Come on then, you black bastard!

Lout #1 moves in for an almighty shove when...

CLAP CLAP!

Time stands still and Max heads their way. He ponders. Finally, he picks Lout #1 up, throws him over his shoulder and heads back onto Yorkshire Street.

EXT. YORKSHIRE STREET - LATER

Max enters, now lugging Lout #3. Breathless, he trudges through a large crowd of merrymakers and crosses the road where a police van is parked.

TWO POLICE OFFICERS are frozen in the midst of questioning a group of males. Max has placed Lout #1 behind one of the officers, his hands still in the "about to shove" position.

Lout #2 has been placed adjacent to the other officer, about to exhale marijuana smoke. He is still holding his joint.

Max positions Lout #3 a few feet away from his comrades, so the yob can witness the imminent action.

Satisfied, Max holds his hands up... CLAP CLAP!

Lout #1 shoves the unsuspecting officer as Lout #2 blows marijuana smoke into the other officer's face.

Lout #1 is utterly dumbstruck as to how he has suddenly appeared on Yorkshire street. This is short-lived as the officer pounces on him. The other officer aids his colleague. They cuff lout #1, who HURLS ABUSE at them, and escort him to the police van. Chuck him in.

(CONTINUED)

Having seen this, Lout #2, in complete shock/confusion, turns to his joint then looks back to the police van before exhaling.

The officers get a whiff of the marijuana and arrest Lout #2. One of the officers READS HIM HIS RIGHTS as he is also tossed into the van.

Max smiles as he sees Lout #3 quickly leave down a quiet street. Max brings his hands together.

QUIET STREET -CONTINUOUS

LOUT #3, also utterly confounded, walks along and stops when he sees Max, now suddenly stood before him.

MAX

Confused?

LOUT #3

(projecting hard man facade)

Wh-What you on about, knobhead?

Lout #3 is unconvincing and it amuses Max.

MAX

You're confused. That's understandable. All you need to know is I'll be watching you, y' dickhead friends and every other dickhead in this town from now on, so... behave.

His words fill Lout #3 with fear. Tries to disguise this again.

LOUT #3

Fuck off!

Lout #3 pushes past Max and continues on his way. He reaches the end and turns to find... Max casually sitting on a grit bin. Lout #3 recoils in shock. Becomes submissive.

MAX

Not the answer I was looking for.

LOUT #3

Alright, we'll behave.

MAX

Good boy.

Petrified, the lout tears off, running as fast as he can.

INT. YORKSHIRE STREET - NIGHT

Max stands at the top end, looking down on the busy, intimidating street. He smiles, his determination appearing.

MAX

Charity begins at home.

Max marches down the street, prowling for troublemakers.

Suddenly, time stops... including Max, in mid-stride!

FADE TO:

LATER

Max still motionless.

FADE TO:

LATER STILL

Max still fixed.

SEQUENCE: FADE IN and OUT several times on Max frozen. This suggests time has been stopped for the equivalent of days, months, maybe even years.

EVEN LATER

CLOSE-UP on Max still a human statue.

The background is out of focus. After a few moments, a blurry FIGURE appears. It appears to be a person transversing Yorkshire Street. The person stops and looks in Max's direction before heading his way.

Person's POV: Bizarrely, a purple mist is now emanating from Max's hands.

CUT BACK TO: CLOSE-UP of Max. The mist has now gone. The person gets closer. It is now visible to see it is a man.

Man's POV: Getting closer. The purple mist has returned. This suggests the mist is something only the man can see.

BACK TO: Max's CLOSE-UP shot. The mist has gone. The man's facial features come into focus. He is ALEX (32), long hair, goatee, Hawaiian shirt, laid-back/affable demeanour.

Alex reaches Max. Looks him dead in his determined eyes. Bows his head down to Max's hands.

(CONTINUED)

Alex's POV: He scrutinizes Max's hands (the purple mist suddenly visible again) then positions them back where they were.

Alex quickly back steps a few feet and... CLAP CLAP!

Unaware of anything, Max continues his search. Alex follows, keeping his distance.

INTERCUT between various angles of Max patrolling and Alex's POV (the purple mist visible) as he trails.

Max rubs his hands together, moving them out of sight from Alex's POV.

Max's eyes dart from left to right as he scours the street.

This makes Alex jumpy, so... CLAP CLAP! He stops time and darts away.

Time resumes soon after. Presumably restarted by Alex.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Busy with late teen/twenty-something PATRONS, dancing on the dance floor to CHART MUSIC or conversing at the bar.

Max enters and scans the room. He looks a tad frustrated, probably hasn't found any trouble to deal with yet.

A BEAUTIFUL REDHEAD, dancing with some GIRL FRIENDS, catches his eye. An intense desire builds within him.

Sat at the bar, Alex and his friend SAM (30), glasses, balding, beige suit jacket, watch Max eyeing up the redhead, conferring conspiratorially and smiling in excitement.

They see Max loiter to the edge of the dance floor, obviously for a better look. This prompts the two men to stand and approach Max.

Max finally notices them drawing in.

Max's POV: A purple mist oozes out of both Alex's and Sam's hands.

Max is perplexed, wary of them as the two men arrive with cordial smiles. Alex takes one of Max's hands, one of Sam's and SLAPS THEM TOGETHER TWICE - CLAP CLAP!

Time stops. The dance music cuts out abruptly. The three men remain in motion. Max is flabbergasted.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

(Birmingham accent)

How ya doing, dude? I'm Alex, this is Sam.

(to Sam)

Well, that's three of us.

SAM

(Southern accent; offers hand; Max gingerly accepts)

What's your name?

MAX

M-Max.

As soon as Max introduces himself, the purple mist cuts off from their hands, the fog evaporating into the air.

SAM

Oh, good. I forgot that purple mist cuts out after introductions.

ALEX

That purple haze, yeah.

(singing Hendrix; mimics playing air guitar)

"Purple haze all in my brain/
Suddenly things just don't seem the same..."

Sam and Alex CHUCKLE. They turn back to Max.

SAM

So, how long you had the ability, Max?

MAX

(shaking cobwebs)

A few hours... I think.

Sam and Alex shoot each other a knowing grin.

ALEX

The maddest day of your life I assume, then.

Max nods a "You can say that again" and they share a CACKLE.

INT. BAR - LATER

Time is still halted - the club looks like an oil painting.

Max, Alex and Sam are having a drink at the bar. Alex is in the middle of a story, Max is completely engrossed...

ALEX

... I was at a Pearl Jam gig back in '92. Trippin' out of my mind on LSD! They'd just finished playing "Jeremy" and I was applauding with everyone else. And that's when it started for me. "Started and stopped", I should say. I just thought it was the drugs. Woke up the next day and tried it again. Everything would stop and start whenever I pleased! Was a fun week, dude! Thought I was the only one, until 1997 when I saw Sam.

SAM

Yeah, I thought I was going mad when I saw the purple smoke emanating from you.

MAX

Is there anyone else with this ability?

SAM

Not that we know of.

ALEX

We've been all over the country, to every major city and town for the past decade or so.

SAM

And we've only come across you. Can't be many more people if there is.

ALEX

Well, in this country at least.

SAM

(reminiscing fondly)
All those years, Alex. Seems like a hundred years.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Why? Because you've stopped time for long periods?

ALEX

Oh, hell yeah! On some occasions it's felt like months. You lose track when you're having a blast, man!

SAM

Yeah, and we don't age when time has stopped, we don't put on weight, if you sustain an injury it dissipates instantly when you resume time... We're like Gods!

ALEX

When we stop time, we're seeing infinity and you realise the possibilities this power gives us.

MAX

Yeah, that's what I've been thinking about. I could jump on a ship and sail to - I don't know - Africa and build schools. Or sail to Iraq and stop the war. Eventually, I could create world peace.

SAM

Could you though, Max? I disagree. Maybe at best, you could create harmony for a short period of time but ultimately, we are just animals.

ALEX

Exactly. Conflict is always inevitable. Every species does horrific things to each other and we're no different.

Sam stands up and slowly walks around the bar area, browsing the female patrons.

SAM

We always have done and always will do. We have a superior intellect, which makes us question wrongdoing and feel remorse, but think about it - why should we? Every other

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (cont'd)
individual creature that isn't
human looks out for themselves.

ALEX
Yeah, a bear will eat it's own cubs
to survive, man.

Max looks to be taking this on board, although it deflates
him terribly.

MAX
But the world would be such a bad
place to live in if we were all so
selfish and heartless? I want to
help people, I *have* to help people.

ALEX
You don't have the right. It's up
to people to help themselves.

SAM
(very close to a female
patron; creepy grin)
Exactly.

Max knows all too well what Sam is planning to do.

MAX
Sam, come on. You can't do what I
think you're gonna do.

SAM
Course I can. It's just a bit of
fun. She'll never know.

Sam picks up the female and heads for the toilets. Max is
astonished. Sam stops at the pretty redhead, likes what he
sees but remembers. Turns to Max.

SAM (CONT'D)
I believe this one is spoken for.
Have a good time, Max.

Sam goes into the toilets with the female. Max starts to
boil with rage.

Alex jumps over the bar and starts to empty the till. Max's
eyes widen. Alex notices.

ALEX
Don't tell me you haven't thought
about accumulating money for
yourself these last few hours, Max.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

I certainly have not. Right, that's enough of this...

CLAP CLAP! But nothing happens. He tries again - CLAP CLAP!

ALEX

All three of us need to be in contact to resume time because that's how we stopped it. That's how it works.

(pause)

You seem tense, dude. You remind me of myself twenty years ago. Look at me now, I'm a millionaire without a care in the world.

Max softens, turns to the redhead. His lust growing.

MAX

But I don't deser... I'm not...

ALEX

You know you want her, Max. No one can stop you, you've stopped them.

Alex empties the money into a bin bag.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm off to fill this sack. I'll leave you to empty yours.

Alex CHUCKLES to himself as he exits.

Max stares at the redhead, his mind racing, his sexual frustration continuing to increase. He rises off his seat and slowly approaches her.

He positions himself behind her, sniffing her hair, which arouses him. He goes to put his hands on her biceps but stops approximately a couple of inches short. Maintaining this distance, he moves his hands down her arms, stops momentarily at her hips then continues to her thighs.

Max's eyes are closed in ecstasy as he moves his hands up to her breasts, then up to her neck. He tenses his hands like he wants to throttle her. He hesitates, on the brink of finally grabbing the woman but decides against it.

He backs away and shakes his cobwebs. He scurries to the exit.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

A melancholy, confused Max waits. Alex's bin bag - now full of money - sits beside him.

Max peers into the nightclub to see Alex help Sam carry the female patron back to the bar area. They place her roughly where she was and head for Max. Sam is grinning gleefully.

Max looks torn. He decides to project a chipper facade just as Sam and Alex reach him.

MAX

Listen, lads. I think this is where we say our goodbyes. We want different things, so... y' know.

ALEX

Okay, that's fair enough, dude.

Max smiles and nods. Alex holds Sam and Max's arms. Max and Sam then... CLAP CLAP! Time restarts.

Alex picks up his bin bag.

SAM

If you ever change you're mind, you'll find us.

And with that, Sam and Alex give each other two high fives - CLAP CLAP! - and they vanish.

Max turns to the nightclub and sees the female patron laughing and joking with friends, blissfully unaware of what Sam has done to her. Max watches her but doesn't appear to feel guilt or anger. He looks almost impassive.

EXT. YORKSHIRE STREET - FAR END - NIGHT

Max is meandering, appearing to be questioning himself. He is extremely introverted.

He approaches another nightclub, where a large QUEUE OF EAGER PEOPLE try to get in, blocking the pavement. Max begins to wade through the chaos. A GROUP OF LADIES are walking towards Max. At the rear of the group is...

Julie Campbell. Max casually glances up and their eyes meet. A moment of wide-eyed horror. Max quickly brings his hands together... CLAP CLAP! Time stops and Max dashes to the other side of the road and down a quiet street.

(CONTINUED)

He puts his hands behind his head, unsure what to do. He kicks a wall in frustration. Eventually, he hesitantly restarts time - CLAP CLAP! - and pokes his head around the corner to see...

... a distraught Julie.

JULIE

Oh, God! I saw him! I saw him!

Julie collapses but two of her friends catch her and help her down onto a step. Her other friends check their surroundings and VOICE their reassurance - "He's not, Julie", "He's in prison" etc. She sits and sobs, very distressed, as her concerned friends COMFORT HER.

Max is crushed. This is worst thing that could have happened. For the best he stops time again - CLAP CLAP! - and bolts away from Yorkshire Street.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

Max sprints down a dual carriageway, weaving in and out of the stationary CARS which face him.

EXT. MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Max is now jogging. Breathless, he slows down to a brisk walk. Tears start to roll.

He sees a HARD-FACED MAN gripping his GIRLFRIEND by the throat, outside a pub ahead of him... CLAP CLAP!

With time now stood still, Phil crosses the road, removes the woman from her boyfriend's clasp and carries her a few feet up the road. He stands her on the corner of the street, facing her boyfriend.

Max returns to the man and puts himself in the woman's position. With the man now gripping Max... CLAP CLAP!

The man is utterly shocked.

The woman too. Very inebriated, she reels and falls into the road as...

A psychotic-looking Max KICKS the man in his testicles. He goes down instantly. Max proceeds to PUMMEL the man in the face. He soon becomes a bloody, unconscious pulp.

The woman is trying to get to her feet, but too drunk to.

Max continues his sickening assault.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

(screaming; maybe more to himself)

Just because you can do something,
doesn't give you the right!

He starts to HUFF as he tires. Just then...

BEEEEEEEEEEEP! followed by a blood-curdling THUD!

Max turns to see the woman lying unconscious in the road, her leg twisted abnormally, and a MAN rush out of his car, having just hit her. The bonnet is dented significantly.

It doesn't look good. The man rushes back to his car, grabs his phone and dials.

Max rushes over to her and checks her pulse. His face tells us she's dead. The man TALKING TO THE OPERATOR can be heard in the background. Max, ashen, stands up, his eyes never leaving her. He hears the man scream "send the police too". This prompts Max to... CLAP CLAP!

Max suddenly disappears.

EXT. BIG COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

A despondent Max looks at the house from behind a tree across the road.

Two police cars are parked outside. THREE POLICE OFFICERS then exit the house before Max's mother becomes visible. She stands in the doorway.

Max quickly holds his hands up, just in case.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Okay, Mrs. Clayton. We're satisfied he's not here. Escapees seldom return to their home... or hometown for that matter.

MOTHER

(upset)

The stupid boy.

POLICE OFFICER #2

We'll keep you posted. We urge you to let us know if you do see him.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Yes, there's no need to get yourself into trouble.

(CONTINUED)

Max's mother manages a smile and closes her door.

Max watches the officers drive away as his worry recedes.

INT. BIG COUNTRY HOUSE - LATER

TRACKING SHOT: Moving through the front porch into the living room, where Max's mother, frozen in time, is just about to sit on the sofa. She looks petrified.

Over to the mantelpiece, where family photos rest. Most of them have a person cut out and feature Max's mother, father and his sister. Older photos establish his mother once had red hair.

Out of the living room and up the stairs into...

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

It has been trashed - clothes, football trophies, DVDs all over the floor, drawers opened, chairs knocked over, posters ripped off the wall etc.

Max is in the room (the tracking shot was clearly his POV). He looks at...

His FATHER (50s), frozen throwing a guitar to the ground. His face full of rage.

This doesn't surprise Max. He grins wryly as he walks over to him. Invites him to punch him on the chin then turns to the mess.

MAX

Had to take it out on something
with me not being here, hey, dad?

Max lies on the bed. His tears return. He has hit rock bottom.

He then sees a cat's tail, poking out from underneath his wardrobe. Max raises a faint smile.

He gets up and picks up the frozen CAT. He then looks under his bed to see another fixed FELINE. He pulls that one out. They are his two cats we saw on his jail cell photos.

Max lies back on his bed with his cats, stroking them adoringly as he noiselessly talks to them. He becomes upset again. Looks around his room - this isn't his home anymore.

He sits up and pulls something out of his back pocket. It looks to be an ID card of some sort.

(CONTINUED)

CLOSE-UP: on the card. It is Alex's driving license, which exposes his real name - JOHN BENSON.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. YORKSHIRE STREET - FLASHBACK

When Alex is following Max. Again, we see Max rubbing his hands together as his eyes dart from left to right.

CLOSE-UP: on his hands... a discreet CLAP CLAP! Turns to...

Alex, who's look of intense curiosity for him compels Max to walk over to the stationary man.

MAX'S POV: That purple fog is flowing from Alex's hands.

This befuddles Max, who comes face-to-face with his stalker. He studies him before digging into his pocket, taking his driving license. Max looks at it before putting it in his own back pocket, walking back to where he was and...

CLAP CLAP!

Time restarts and Alex continues to follow Max, unaware of what has happened.

EXT. STREET - SUNRISE

Max's two cats trotting along.

PAN OUT to reveal they are being followed by Max, who looks on fondly. One of the cats becomes alert and slows down when it sees a PIGEON across the road.

This excites Max but he pacifies and urges the cat to continue walking.

They arrive at a detached house. Max pulls the driving license out to confirm the address.

He holds his hands up...

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Max enters with his cats and looks around.

The room is lavished with expensive furniture, art, all the latest home technology etc. There are piles of stolen goods like jewellery, cigarettes, DVD players etc. Alex's bin bag of money sits on the table surrounded by empty champagne bottles.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Sam is snoozing in the bed.

Max enters, delighted to see him - mouths "Yes!". He quietly leaves.

INT. ANOTHER BEDROOM - MORNING

Max, smiling at the door.

PAN ACROSS: to see he is smiling at Alex, asleep in bed.

On CLOSE-UP of Alex...

FADE TO:

INT. CLOSE-UP OF ALEX - LATER IN MORNING

We appear to be where we left him. He wakes up and tries to sit up but can't. He jerks in shock.

He and Sam are tied up on the living room floor - both in a star formation, face up, their mouths duct taped shut.

Petrified, they look at each other, MUMBLING.

Max enters, carrying a butcher's knife. He looks at Alex with a calm, deadpanned expression.

MAX
Alright, John.

Alex and Sam SCREAM MUFFLED PLEADS as Max sits down on the sofa.

The two cats saunter into the room. They jump onto Max's lap. He strokes them.

MAX (CONT'D)
Love cats me. Creatures of the night. They're part of me. And I'm part of them.

Sam and Alex go quiet.

MAX (CONT'D)
I represent them. They represent me. We look out for each other... not just ourselves.

Max stands and holds the knife up. Sam and Alex SCREAM. Max turns around to the cats and brings the knife down - CHOP! Brings it up and down again - CHOP!

(CONTINUED)

The two cats' heads DROP onto the floor. Alex and Sam are stunned speechless. They soon start to PANT when they see Max turn to them with the knife. He hesitates and then leaves the house.

Off Alex and Sam's perplexed/scared looks...

INT. JULIE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

A glum Julie lies on the sofa, wrapped in a blanket. Her eyes are red and swollen. She has dry mascara down her cheeks. She looks absent.

Her husband enters and tries to encourage her to get up, but we can't hear him.

PAN OUT: to reveal we are seeing this from...

EXT. JULIE'S FRONT GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Max watches on through her living room window. He sees her husband give in and head for the kitchen. He turns and looks at his wife with pity. He is crushed. So too is Max.

EXT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - DAY

UPWARDS ANGLE: pointing to the sky. The odd raindrop falls down. Max's face then comes into shot. Drained yet with crazed eyes, he looks over and past us.

He then wriggles briefly, before lifting Alex's license up and putting it in his mouth, holding it with his teeth.

He sees a raindrop land on his finger. It trickles down like earlier. Max stares at the drop before rubbing it dry with his thumb (the thumb on the same hand). Satisfied, he nods firmly before looking forward again.

He is looking at the prison entrance. With the same hand, he picks up his two cats' dead/headless bodies, by their tails, off the ground.

Stunned JAIL GUARDS rush towards him. They look completely aghast.

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

This scene is in silence.

Alex and Sam still tied up, screaming and squirming in agony because they have both had their arms chopped off. Four puddles of blood have formed by their shoulders.

EXT. PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The guard's reach Max. One of them takes the driving license. Another removes the cats from his grip.

Max has chopped one of his arms off. Blood drips as the guard's rush him into the prison.

EXT. HILL - FLASHBACK

Same hill has earlier.

Max burning the five severed arms as he looks down on the town. He holds his only arm up, maybe a "good-bye" gesture.

EXT. PRISON - PRESENT

They're almost at the doors. A smile curls on Max's face.

MAX
Fuck infinity.

He is ushered in and one of the guards SLAMS THE DOORS SHUT.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK

END.