

(Name of Project)

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INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

JOHN, male, mid-twenties, runs on a treadmill, fast, pushes himself as hard as he can, a hopeless look on his face.

INT. CLAUDE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLAUDE ROBINSON, male, late sixties, sits on a chair, pensive, he stares out the window.

CU: A clock on the wall, ticking.

TITLE-CARD: Into The Night

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - DAY

John wakes, as if from a dream.

He walks to his dresser and puts on a shirt.

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF JOHN'S HOUSE - DAY

John opens the door and peers outside - Looks left, Looks right.

EXT. FOOTPATH OUTSIDE CLAUDE'S HOUSE - DAY

John walks out his front yard and continues down the footpath for a few paces.

CLAUDE (O.S)

Oi! John. Come here a minute.

John hesitates, but walks up to his neighbours house.

Claude stands before John, smiling faintly.

A pause.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

I've noticed you don't leave the house much...

John awkwardly nods in agreement.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Something we both have in common...

JOHN

Ah, can I ask you something? You haven't happened to see anybody strange around here have you? Lately?

CLAUDE
Hmm, well, no, unfortunately not. A
little specification could help?

John thinks for a moment about how to reply.

JOHN
Never mind. Don't worry about it.

CLAUDE
We've been neighbours for a while
now haven't we? Only now we come
together. I wonder why that is.

JOHN
Well, you actually --

CLAUDE
(interrupting)
-- These houses will double in
price soon. Guess how much I bought
this for? Fifteen-thousand dollars.
Bloody cheap. Now I could sell it
for over three-fifty but your
average dick head is earning maybe
a tenth of that in a year.

JOHN
Maybe the best is over.

A pause.

CLAUDE
That's what they all keep telling
me.

Claude looks around for something to talk about.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Would you like a drink or
something?

JOHN
I have to go Mr. Robinson. But,
I'll see you again soon.

CLAUDE
Don't say it if you don't bloody
well mean it. And call me Claude...
please.

John walks back towards the footpath.

Claude turns around, looking into his house.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
The coffee? Where's the coffee?
(sigh)
That boy from next door was just
over here, he's a strange one.

Silence.

 CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Carol?

More Silence. Nobody.

EXT. CLEARING BEFORE FOREST - DAY

John stands before a gigantic and expansive forest.

He hears rustling behind him and swiftly turns around. Sees nothing.

He turns back around.

A SHADOWED MAN now stands behind John.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - DAY

John wakes. He sits up, then hauls himself out of bed.

EXT. CLAUDE'S FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

John walks to the door and knocks.

A pause.

The door opens to Claude.

John extends his arms out, presenting himself.

Claude smiles.

INT. CLAUDE'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claude motions at John to take a seat. John sits.

 CLAUDE
So, have you found that person you
were looking for?

A slight smirk appears on Claude.

 JOHN
Not yet.

Claude walks into the kitchen and begins making two coffees.

CLAUDE
Have a coffee. Would you like a
coffee?

 JOHN
Yes, thanks.

Claude doesn't hear him.

 CLAUDE
Don't worry, I'm already making one
for you.
 (beat)
You're a reliable young man, John.
You keep coming here to see me - I
appreciate that you're a man of
your word.

John looks around the room and sets his sights on a photo. He rises and moves to look closer. In the photo is a male slightly older than himself, smiling. In another photo is a middle-aged woman, caught off-guard by the camera.

Claude enters holding two coffee's. Claude hands him a coffee. Claude sits with a groan.

 CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Sorry about all the mess. The wife
wants all my old clothes donated.
Of course, I don't want to let them
go, but you should listen to your
woman.

 JOHN
No woman to speak of.

 CLAUDE
Well, someday there will be. I'm
sure of it.

 JOHN
Where is she if you don't mind my
asking?

 CLAUDE
Carol is still out.
 (beat)
She is always in and out and away
 (beat)
- very active still - something
usually lost with time, for me
anyway, not for her, though.

 JOHN
She is lucky.

CLAUDE

What about your folks?

JOHN

My parents quietened down pretty early.

CLAUDE

Well, they are lucky too, they don't have to struggle to keep up with one another.

John laughs.

JOHN

You seem to be doing fine to me.

A pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

A nice house and a nice woman.

CLAUDE

Yes. Hmm, that reminds me. I have to go out. Would you mind staying around here for a while. I don't want to trouble you - just, we don't like to leave the house empty for too long as a couple of the window handles don't lock properly. You're not busy are you? It would be a big favor to me - there is an extra bed, the TV has a few thousand channels - do whatever you want.

Claude stands up, walks towards the door, puts on a coat and hat from a stand.

JOHN

Uh, I guess I can. I mean, I'm not doing anything.

Claude opens the front door and goes to leave but turns around to John.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's been good getting to know you, Claude.

CLAUDE

The feeling is mutual, John. You're a nice young fella.

Both men are smiling.

Claude leaves.

INT. CLAUDE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Claude enters. He closes the door behind him and puts his hat on the stand. He smells something in the air and walks further into the house.

A table is set with a candlelight dinner. John appears, untying his apron and placing it down. Claude smiles in bewilderment.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
What is all this now?

JOHN
Take a seat.
(beat)
Thanks for this. You've actually helped me out a lot.

CLAUDE
Carol isn't back yet?

JOHN
No, I'm afraid she's not.

CLAUDE
Well, let's dig in, take a seat, John. And don't worry about it, you helped me.

JOHN
I have one more thing.

John exits into the kitchen and returns with a bottle of wine. John fills the two glasses.

JOHN (CONT'D)
OK.

John sits, and they begin eating.

CLAUDE
This is wonderful.

JOHN
I was once a kitchen hand. What can I say.

Claude looks amused.

CLAUDE
(sarcasm)
It all comes clear.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLAUDE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John sits contently while Claude enters from the kitchen with two cups of coffee. He hands one to John and takes a seat. The dinner has been cleared from the table.

JOHN

Claude... I know Carol isn't coming back.

CLAUDE

You do? Was I talking about her?

Claude nods and sips his coffee.

JOHN

I'm so sorry.. You did leave a stranger in your house. And --

John looks ashamed, instantly regretting his words.

CLAUDE

That's fine. I still miss her so much. She was the center of my life since before I was your age. You can't imagine the kind of attachment that develops over that much time - time spent, and time passed - it's unnatural - and the loss I feel..

Claude pauses. John looks sympathetic.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

We used to fight, as any couple does. But for the most part, we understood each other. I think that understanding is key, ya' know - not that full understanding is possible.

John nods.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

The way we communicate through language can only deliver so much - simple things - so we never truly understand what another person is trying so hard to articulate - only at a fairly simplistic level - I don't know. True emotion cannot be easily articulated.

JOHN

The verbal and written word isn't the only word.

CLAUDE

Art.

(beat)

But then we get ourselves a whole new set of problems. Art is fucked - maybe, maybe it helps a little - but --

JOHN

But it's still fucked.

Both men laugh.

CLAUDE

(smiling)

So, wait, what were we talking about?

A beat.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I have my regrets. I wish I treated Carol better than I did, while we were still young. Also, I would have loved to have been there more for my son --

JOHN

(suddenly)

You have a son? I had no idea.

CLAUDE

Yes, Thomas. Mmm.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

I also wish I could have seen my father before he died.

Claude scratches his head.

Thanks for keeping me company, but what do you want to be here with an old man for? Shouldn't you be out finding girls? Or making money?

John laughs.

JOHN

Mmm, I don't know.

CLAUDE

Talk to me, John. The unexamined life is not worth living.

JOHN

Socrates. I wonder what he had in mind. You could learn from your mistakes - great. But what's the point for me? I don't think I have long left. And no miraculous self-realisation is going to change that, or make it better.

CLAUDE

What else is there?. A final reflection can be meditative, it can be good, if that's what you want to hear.

(beat)

I don't know..

Claude chuckles.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Why would you need to be worrying about that anyway? You have plenty of time left. What I do know for sure is that the best is over for me, and I don't mind thinking for a time.

JOHN

That sounds lonely...

CLAUDE

Yeah, well, it is - but -

(beat)

I think you understand me, John. I think that we understand each other.

A pause.

JOHN

There's something I think I should tell you.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - EVENING

John is lying back on his couch, reading a copy of Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand.

The phone rings. He answers.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Good evening, this is Sally from St. Michael's Hospital. How are you?

JOHN
Uh.. fine--

WOMAN (V.O.)
(abruptly)
I will need you to come in as soon
as possible. We have Claude here at
the moment.

JOHN
(mumbling)
What?

WOMAN (V.O.)
You are listed as his emergency
contact. You are John, aren't
you?

John hesitates.

JOHN
Yes. Yes, I am.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Well, we will need to you come in
as soon as possible.

JOHN
OK. Thanks.

John hangs up. He looks to be in deep thought, until:

He quickly gets up, and moves towards the door. He opens the
door and steps outside.

John looks right, then left. TWO POLICE OFFICERS walk
confidently down the road toward John's house - a MAN and a
WOMAN.

John scrambles back inside.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Fuck!

John is frantically trying to figure another way out of the
house - he stops, and waits a few moments.

It doesn't last. He hurriedly exits into another room.

Silence.

A doorbell rings.

EXT. JOHN AND CLAUDE'S STREET - DAY

Quiet, tranquil, and peaceful suburban street. Nothing seems to be out of the ordinary...

EXT. JOHN'S BACKYARD - DAY

John has his back against a wooden fence. The police officers walk towards the fence, searching as they go.

John cautiously begins to peek around the corner.. He sees them and pulls back, his face filled with fear.

John spots a nearby plank of wood - hunching and lowering himself a little with his back turned to the fence opening, he creeps over and picks it up.

As he turns around, the woman appears, spots him - he cunningly drops the plank --

POLICE WOMAN

Stop. Stop right now. Don't move.
 (projects voice O.S.)
 Oi! He's over here.

The woman then approaches him and forces him onto the ground with her foot. John groans. She kicks him in the side. John grunts. He struggles up and moves a couple of feet away, she fails to stop him, but doesn't stop trying.

JOHN

Just wait. Wait.

John picks up the plank. The woman hesitates. John smacks her over the head with it - she is out.

John collects himself, and hurries off.

INT. HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Claude, in a hospital bed, hooked up to a drip.

John enters, looking unkempt.

Stands a little way from the bed.

JOHN

Claude. Shit. What's happened?

CLAUDE

John. Nothing much, don't worry about it. Just going through the motions

Claude chuckles. John is unamused.

JOHN

I can't live with this anymore -
with what I did. I don't know what
to do. I'm so scared - and now
this?

(beat)

It's unfair.

CLAUDE

It doesn't matter what you do,
John. Just have a think about it,
then do what you want.

(beat)

The universe doesn't care about
your bullshit, or mine. It is
completely indifferent.

JOHN

(plays the sarcasm
straight)

Thanks for that. I feel a lot
better.

Claude rubs his forehead, and pushes his drip out of the way,
irritated.

CLAUDE

I hate these places.

(beat)

I don't think I can tell you
anything else. I don't think there
is anything else to tell.

John looks distressed.

JOHN

(calm)

I'm going to get something to eat
downstairs. Do you want anything?

CLAUDE

Whatever you're having. No use
worrying about cholesterol now...

John leaves the room.

INT. HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

WIDE: Claude is lying down in bed, hardly visible.

John enters.

He has two bowls filled with a variety of junk food.

Hands one to Claude.

Claude places the bowl on the table next to him.

Extends his arm and holds John's hand.

CLAUDE

Thomas..

John looks petrified. Tries to speak, nothing comes out.

Another pause.

John walks out of the room, through a corridor, fighting back TEARS.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Bedroom, empty.

Kitchen, empty.

Lounge room, empty.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A CAR moves through a dark street.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

John, a little calmer, but still upset.

JOHN

Here we are.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The car turns a corner.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

John watches the passing scenery.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Moving through another street, the car gradually slows down.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A traffic light - red.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

John fights back tears again. His despair evident.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The car, stopped at an intersection, the traffic light hanging above.

THE END.