

Work/ Life Balance

Story by

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FADE IN:

ANGLE ON

A radio alarm clock that reads 7:59. The display flips to 8:00 and the alarm BUZZES.

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DISSOLVE TO:

A BLACK CARD

that reads, "Nooooo!"

1 EXT. FLATS - DAY

1

CLOSE UP ON PAUL

who is stressed as he stands on his front doorstep.

PULL AWAY

to reveal that Paul is dressed in a cheap suit. He is a guy in his late-twenties, who hangs out on rung one or two of the office pecking order ladder. Right now he stressed out by a tie that won't behave.

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He fumbles with the knot as he hurries down the steps of the flats where he lives.

He give up. Stops. Concentrates for a moment and shakes his hands as he relaxes down.

CLOSE UP ON PAUL'S TIE

The hands move fluidly and the knot almost does itself.

PAUL

is surprised and pleased with the result.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "Yes!"

2 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

2

CLOSE UP ON LYDIA

a twenty-something, composed, self-contained and focused. She is in a petulant mood.

CUT TO:

A MAN struggles at a self-serve coffee machine to fit a lid onto his coffee cup.

PULL AWAY

to see the small queue standing behind him.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

Lydia is at the head of the queue. Her clothes scream office as does her hair, which is in a bun.

PAN DOWN THE QUEUE TO

Paul, who shuffles impatiently behind Lydia and comes within striking distance of Lydia's bun which is at eye-level.

POV PAUL

the bun is held together with what can only be described by the male mind as chopsticks.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "Chopsticks?"

The MAN picks up his coffee from the machine and leaves. Lydia steps up, takes his place and pauses to think.

Paul just about holds his impatience in check.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "It's not rocket science!"

3 EXT. STREET - DAY

3

Lydia walks down the street carrying a tray with 4 coffees. She is worth watching as she passes the camera and swishes by ALEXANDER, who lies under a cardboard box in a doorway.

PANNING BACK we see Robin hurry down the street.

He scurries past the camera and fumbles with the plastic top of the coffee mug. He stops in line with the bum, snaps the top home, looks at, but doesn't see Alexander, who is in the process of sitting up.

The coffee sorted out, Paul looks up and shakes his head at what he sees.

POV PAUL

Lydia's hips sway delightfully down the street.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "4 coffees!"

He walks past Alexander, but we stay on him. He is about 40, going on a million. He is in a rough state, unshaven, filthy, with unkempt hair. He pushes the cardboard aside, gets up slowly, painfully and shuffles after Paul.

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

ANGLE ON

the radio alarm clock reads 7:59. Beat. The display flips to 8:00 and the alarm BUZZES yet again.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BLACK CARD

that reads, "Oh God!"

4 EXT. FLATS - DAY 4

Paul is stopped on the footpath contemplating a new neck tie with serious frustration.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "Get knotted!"

5 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY 5

LYDIA

has different colored chopsticks in her hair as she stands at the coffee machine with an air of contentment that those who are about to make everybody wait often wear.

PULL AWAY

to reveal Robin who stands two people back in the queue and glares at Lydia.

CUT TO:

Lydia's fingers hover undecidedly over the buttons. They move from Latte, to Americano and back.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "Press the fucking button."

6 EXT. STREET - DAY 6

We are at the same place as yesterday when Lydia swishes down the street with her tray of coffees, passes Alexander (as he struggles from a new sleeping bag) and heads off to work.

Moments later Paul approaches and comes to a stop near Alexander. He takes a sip of coffee.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "Thank you God."

Paul smiles and passes Alexander. Again we linger with Alexander.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 6

He is clean today. His clothes are fresh, his chin shaven and his hair somewhat more tidy. And he wears a set of large headphones. He stands and walks away, leaving everything behind him.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON

the radio alarm clock reads 7:59. Beat. The display flips to 8:00 and the alarm BUZZES yet again.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BLACK CARD

that reads, "No. No. Please no!"

7 EXT. FLATS - DAY 7

Paul is stopped on the footpath contemplating a 3rd neck tie.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "I should have joined the boy scouts!"

8 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY 8

Again, a small queue gathers before the self-serve coffee machine.

Paul stands directly behind Lydia, contemplating her hair.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "5 seconds earlier."

9 EXT. STREET - DAY 9

We are at the same place as yesterday, and the day before that, when Lydia sashays towards us with her tray of coffees, passes Alexander (as he struggles out from under a blanket) and heads down the street.

Moments later Paul approaches and comes to a stop near the Alexander. He takes a sip of coffee. And for the first time he actually sees Alexander.

Alexander is looking bad again. He is dirty, his beard is growing. He has a high-viz jacket over his coat, his headphones are held together by duct tape and he is surrounded by empty cans.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "Jesus."

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 9

Paul turns away and walks off. Again we linger with Alexander, who stands up and leaves everything behind him.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON

the radio alarm clock reads 7:54. Beat. The display flips to 7:55 and the alarm BUZZES yet again.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BLACK CARD

that reads, "Watch out Chop Stick Lady!"

10 EXT. FLATS - DAY 10

Paul walks slowly away from the flats, his tie already made up. He is happy, under no time pressure.

11 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY 11

Paul smiles as he stands at head of the small queue with Lydia right behind him.

He takes his time when his turn comes. He approaches the machine slowly.

He presses Americano, coffee pours from the machine. He moves the coffee aside, thinks a beat, then puts another cup under the spout and presses the button a second time.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "Take that, Ms Chop Sticks."

12 EXT. STREET - DAY 12

Paul strolls down the street glaring at the two coffees in his hands.

A BLACK CARD

reads, "What kind of idiot are you?"

He approaches Alexander, who has pushed aside a cardboard box and sits on the steps looking real bad. His headphones are gone but the high-viz jacket remains.

Paul sees him. He stops, looks at the coffees, then gingerly approaches Alexander and extends a cup.

ALEXANDER

smiles and takes the offered coffee.

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(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 12

PAUL

is undecided, embarrassed. He nods silently urging the *
tramp to drink. *

Lydia approaches and passes by, Paul pulls himself together *
and follows after her. *

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON

the radio alarm clock reads 7:54. Beat. The display flips
to 7:55 and the alarm BUZZES yet again.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BLACK CARD

that reads, "Yes! It's Friday!"

13 EXT. FLATS - DAY 13

Paul is happy as he walks slowly away from the flats, he
wears his usual cheap suit, but he has no tie.

14 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY 14

PAUL

smiles and presses the Americano button.

COFFEE

pours from the spout.

PAUL

takes his coffee and walks past the queue.

Lydia glares after him as he passes.

15 EXT. STREET - DAY 15

PAUL

is still happy as he approaches Alexander's doorway. He
sips his coffee and casts a glance in Alexander's direction.
He stops short, all happiness gone, worry now his dominant
emotion.

POV PAUL

Alexander wears a little hat for heat, but that is his
only protection. There is no sleeping bag, no blanket, or
flattened cardboard box as he lies on the steps, one very
ill man. He hardly moves, but his eyes are open and he is
conscious.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

PAUL

fighters his fear and leans closer to check out the tramp.
He doesn't know what to do, frantically searching for
help.

*
*

He is relieved when Lydia approaches with her tray of
coffees. He waves to get her attention.

*
*

She stops, looks at him, follows his gaze to Alexander,
then looks him in the eye again, before walking past him
as though he does not exist.

CLOSE UP ON PAUL

as he watches after her. He checks out Alexander. He is
torn.

PULL AWAY

as Paul struggles with himself then walks away.

*

After a few, faltering steps he stops.

*

CLOSE UP ON PAUL

as his head goes down in shame

PAUL

returns to Alexander.

He squats beside the dying man, half talking to himself,
half talking to Alexander.

*
*

Paul feels for a pulse.

*

Alexander is unresponsive.

*

Paul's phone shakes in his hands as trembling fingers hit
keys.

*
*

He hovers over Alexander and mutters into the phone
which he clings to, a desperate man praying for a miracle

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FADE OUT: