

Frank

by

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Based on the memoir by Jon Ronson

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BLACK

We hear the opening bars of a song, played most proficiently on a keyboard. It is rousing, like an overture.

TITLES BEGIN as we...

FADE IN:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - ENGLISH SEASIDE TOWN - AFTERNOON

...on JON (20s) leaving work for the day. He looks sweet, diffident. He walks quite enthusiastically down the street.

JON (V.O.)
(Singing)
*Goodbye work
It's time to go home
Through my town.*

He's evidently composing in his head as he goes.

Jon turns the corner onto the SEAFRONT.

EXT. SEAFRONT - CONTINUOUS

Jon's P.O.V: CHILDREN play on the sand.

JON (V.O.)
(Singing)
*Children building
Castles in the sand
In my town.*

Jon passes a POSTER advertising a gig.

JON (V.O.)
(Singing)
*A band's playing tomorrow night
In my town.
They're called...*

Jon looks at the band's NAME. It is a JUMBLE OF LETTERS.

JON (V.O.)
(Attempting to sing)
...The Soronprfbs

A BUS passes. Jon runs after it.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Jon sits on the top deck, looking out. He spots some DRUNK TRAMPS being ignored by passing BUSINESSMEN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The song mutates into something new.

JON (V.O.)
 (Singing)
Drunk tramps
Ignored by businessmen
They walk right by you
Don't even notice you
But you're the special ones

The music abruptly stops.

JON
 (Murmuring)
 No. Too... shit.

EXT. JON'S SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

Jon's commute home is almost at an end. He trudges up the hill, passing identical suburban houses.

A new song starts. This one sounds rather good.

JON (V.O.)
 (Singing)
I dream of an angel
To take me away
I dream of an angel
To take me away

A cautiously excited look crosses Jon's face as he opens his FRONT DOOR. Could this song be the one?

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jon hurries upstairs.

JON (V.O.)
 (Singing)
I dream of an angel
To take...

JON'S MUM
 (Calling from the
 kitchen)
 Hi, sweetheart. How was work?

JON
 (As he hurries
 upstairs)
 Don't talk to me. I've got an idea
 for a song.

JON'S MUM
 Oh mum. Shut your mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON

If you talk to me I might forget
the song.

JON'S MUM

I only asked how work was.

JON

Just let me concentrate on this
song I've got in my head before I
forget it.

JON'S MUM

Well I'm sure if it's good it'll
withstand a little small talk with
your mother.

INT. JON'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A typical suburban bedroom. Cool music festival posters
on the wall.

Jon hurries over to his KEYBOARD, sits down and raises
his hands to play. His hands freeze, mid-air.

He's forgotten the song.

JON

(Murmuring)

Shit.

He stands, walks over to his computer and pulls up
TWITTER.

JON (V.O.)

(As he types)

Working on songs.

Jon's twitter following is 49.

TITLES END

I/E. OFFICE BUILDING - THE NEXT MORNING

There's no music now - just traffic noise.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jon sits at his workstation. He seems to be in marketing.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Jon waits for his order. It's a noisy place - CUSTOMERS
ordering, the CLATTER of cutlery.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beneath the noises we can just discern the sound of the radio playing on a shelf - the drone of a local station interview.

Something CATCHES JON'S ATTENTION - something coming from the radio?

He leans a little closer, trying to hear whatever the sound is - a kind of keening wail? A series of abrupt, violent exclamations? The sound of something smashing? Someone yelling?

CAFE LADY

(Calling)

Cheese and ham panini for Jon?
JON?

On the radio we just catch a distant shout of...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

...cunt!

Jon stares at the radio, wondering if he could have heard that correctly. The Local DJ sounds a little stunned himself.

LOCAL DJ (O.S.)

That was, that was The...

The DJ attempts the same sound Jon made when trying to pronounce the band's name. And also fails.

LOCAL DJ (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And ...I can only apologize.

Jon looks quizzically at the radio. Then he takes his panini.

EXT. SEAFRONT - LATE AFTERNOON

Jon sits on a bench.

At the other end of the bench a WOMAN reads GRAZIA magazine. Jon looks at the cover. It's something about Nicole Scherzinger.

Jon pulls out his phone and types into TWITTER.

JON (V.O.)

Nicole Scherzinger hashtag yawn.

His number of twitter followers has gone down to 47. He frowns.

He becomes aware of some drama occurring on the beach. A PARAMEDIC CREW rushes towards some kind of commotion in the water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon gets up and - along with other PASSERS-BY - walks over to get a closer look.

A MAN is trying to DROWN HIMSELF in the water.

Two POLICE OFFICERS attempt to coax him out.

BEARDED MAN

(Yelling)

No! I'm no coming out! Leave me alone!

Three figures stand watching from a slight distance, their backs to us. Although we don't know them yet they are NANA, CLARA and JEAN BARAQUE.

Jon finds himself beside a parked VAN. A concerned-looking Californian surfer-type stands next to it. This is DON TEAGUE.

The two glance at each other, nod, Jon with a "what happened?" raise of his eyebrows.

DON

We were at this radio station and, he and Clara had a row or, I don't know, I guess ...*physical fight*?
Next thing...

He indicates the water. Jon's gaze shifts to the VAN. Written on the side of it is the JUMBLE OF LETTERS that comprise the band's name.

JON

You're The...

He gamely tries out the sound.

JON (CONT'D)

You're playing tonight.

DON

How? Our keyboard player is trying to drown himself.

The EMERGENCY SERVICES wade into the sea. Jon scratches his face. A beat.

JON

I play keyboards.

Silence. Jon looks worried he sounded opportunistic.

JON (CONT'D)

I mean I'd never...

He indicates the tormented man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DON
(Somberly)
You're in.

JON
(Beat)
But I don't know any of your
songs.

DON
Wait there.

Don climbs into the mysterious darkness of the van. We hear a murmured conversation. Don reemerges.

DON (CONT'D)
Can you play C, F and G?

JON
Yes?

DON
You're in.

Jon looks a little stunned.

JON
So what... what do we do now?

Don turns back to the beach again, watches with profound sadness as the paramedics load the man onto a stretcher and begin to carry him off the beach. One more fallen comrade.

JON (CONT'D)
Should we run through the
songs... or...?

DON
(Still watching)
Come to the stage door at 9pm.

JON
Great! I'll give you my number
in case anything...

Jon scribbles it down on a piece of paper. Don walks away to the water's edge. Jon scuttles over and practically prises the paper into Don's hand.

JON (CONT'D)
So. Stage door. 9pm.

He throws one last look into the van, wondering who the hell's in there, and then heads off.

EXT. SEAFRONT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Jon has wound his way up from the beach, just as the paramedics are loading the half-drowned keyboard player into the ambulance. For a moment the two men lock eyes. For an unnerving moment it seems as if THE DROWNED MAN IS TRYING TO TELL JON SOMETHING - as if sensing some link? Then he's gone. Jon stares at the closing doors of the ambulance.

JON

(Beat)

Is he going to be ok?

PARAMEDIC

He'll be fine.

JON

(Suddenly worried)

He'll still need to spend the night in hospital though, right?

PARAMEDIC

He swallowed a lot of seawater. He'll have to have his stomach pumped.

JON

(Relieved)

Plus I suppose there'll be a whole suicide risk assessment thing.

The paramedic looks faintly disgusted at Jon, climbs into the ambulance. Jon watches as it drives away.

EXT. STAGE DOOR - 9PM

Jon is politely knocking.

JON

Hello?

Nothing. Jon looks at his watch. 9pm.

Jon knocks harder. The door creaks open. He nervously enters.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jon walks down the corridor and finds himself in a grimy dressing room. There's no one there.

JON

Hello?

Jon looks around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On the table there's a SCRATCHING STICK with a very long, curved arm. There's also some bottles of beer, one with an EXTREMELY long straw sticking out of it.

Jon frowns, perplexed.

Suddenly we hear a STRANGE BANGING NOISE from inside the hall. It sounds like someone is repeatedly hitting something.

Jon pauses, listens, puzzled. He realizes - this must be the band. He walks towards...

INT. WINGS - BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jon watches from the shadows.

ON STAGE

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN is repeatedly banging some kind of BIZARRE PERCUSSION INSTRUMENT. This is NANA.

A very YOUNG MAN stands playing bass. This is JEAN BARAQUE.

A furious looking woman stands provocatively at the front of the stage, eating a pear. She tosses it aside and stalks over to an odd, vast contraption covered in knobs and dials and a MAD JUMBLE of coloured wires - an early-1970s analog synthesizer. This is CLARA.

She eats the pear, tosses it aside and raises her hands over the dials. She begins to play. Together they're making an EXTREMELY EXPERIMENTAL collection of sounds.

The audience watch this odd trio uncertainly, waiting for something to happen.

And out of the darkness of the wings someone Jon hadn't noticed emerges...

He's doing a weird jerking, shuffling dance to the music. Strangest of all - he's wearing a large FAKE HEAD, with a SMILING FACE painted onto it. This is FRANK.

Jon and the audience gawp at the strange apparition dancing across the stage before disappearing into the shadows of the opposite wings. Then he wheels around and dances back on.

Jon becomes aware that Don is standing next to him in the wings.

They look at each other for a moment. Then Don gently pushes Jon onto the stage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank, Nana and Baraque ignore him, playing relentlessly on. Clara glares at him but doesn't move.

Jon stands there, not sure what to do next. Then he notices a BATTERED OLD KEYBOARD set up near the back. He walks over, stares down at it.

CLOSE ON JON'S FACE - a faint frown, thinking stopped.

Almost by itself, his hand reaches out and he begins to play - just a little three note figure. And it fits.

As the song begins to swell, Jon's other hand joins the first and he begins to play along.

Then Frank lifts the mic he's holding and begins to sing - and it's one of the strangest sounds you could imagine. Beautiful and ridiculous at the same time.

Jon is lost in the ecstasy of the moment - the realization of a dream.

Then it is abruptly over. The audience are staring in silence, unsure what just happened - not that any of the band are paying them any attention anyway.

Clara has noticed FLAMES licking out the back of her synthesiser. More irritated than alarmed, she uses an old scorched towel to beat out the flames, burning her hand in the process.

Across the stage, Baraque has already begun the bass line to the next song.

CLARA

What are you doing?

Baraque continues playing.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Stop. Will you...

Clara throws a can of WD40 at him. It hits his face.

BARAQUE

(In French,
subtitled)

Now I will have a bruise.

CLARA

Good. Something to look at on your otherwise nothing face.

Baraque indicates the AUDIENCE.

BARAQUE

(In French,
subtitled)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARAQUE (CONT'D)

Now they see what you're like. So joyless. So angry.

Baraque storms off stage.

Clara kicks her synthesiser to the floor where it lies, fizzing and sparking faintly, and stalks off through the opposite wings.

Nana gives a resigned sigh, picks up her sticks and leaves the stage as well.

For a moment it's JUST JON AND FRANK, standing in front of the nonplussed audience.

Jon looks uncertainly at the strange singer and Frank turns his great head to look at Jon - as if seeing him for the first time.

Then Clara is marching back on-stage. She takes Frank by the hand and leads him away.

Leaving Jon alone.

EXT. VENUE - STAGE DOOR - EVENING

The band are finishing loading equipment into the van, in a cold, angry silence. There is no sign of Frank. He must already be in the van.

No-one pays any attention to Jon, who stands watching as they all climb in and drive off without him.

INT. JON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jon lies in bed, tweeting on his phone.

JON (V.O.)

(Typing)

Played keyboards with The...

Jon has forgotten the name of the band.

JON (V.O.)

...with a band tonight. Enjoyed working with them a lot.

INT. JON'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Jon is miserably watching BREAKFAST TV. The keyboard catches his eye. He walks over and starts to play.

He tries to remember the weird, wonderful melody from the night before. He gets a few notes right but then loses his way, the whole thing fading already, like a dream...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stumbles on for a little longer but then gives up.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A miserable Jon walks to work. He doesn't compose a song.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Jon looks bored. Has gazes out of the window. He doesn't compose a song. His phone rings.

JON

Hello?

DON (V.O.)

It's me. So Lucas got out of the hospital and begged Clara to let him back in the band but she told him to lick her ass.

JON

Uh...

DON (V.O.)

So we need a keyboard player. And Frank said "Remember that grateful looking boy who jumped up onto the stage last week uninvited."

JON

(Beat)

I wasn't uninvited. You invited me.

DON (V.O.)

Frank said he thought you brought something cherishable that night. He can sound pretty muffled under the head and so the rest of us thought he said you brought something perishable. Like food that decays easily. Fish or fruit. So we all said, "Come on, man, anyone can do THAT." But then he repeated it clearer and we all agreed to let you join. So. Are you in?

JON

(Beat)

Yes.

DON (V.O.)

Good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hangs up. Jon looks shell-shocked. The phone rings again. Jon answers.

DON (V.O.)
I forgot to tell you where to
meet us.

JON
(Relieved)
I know.

DON (V.O.)
Clacket Lane Services on the M25
at 5pm today. Bring a passport.

EXT. CAR PARK - CLACKET LANE SERVICES - 5PM

Jon is waiting at Clacket Lane. He stares at a wall of fog and drizzle. Nothing. Will this be another disappointment? But then two headlights appear, glowing faintly in the gloom and out of the fog drives the band's battered TOUR BUS, come to save us.

Jon watches with a mixture of excitement and nervousness as the tour bus drives towards him. He pulls out his phone.

CLOSE on the phone: Twitter.

JON (V.O.)
(As he types)
You would not believe what's
happening to me right now.

The van pulls up and the door slides open. We can't see inside.

JON
(Bubbling)
Hi. Hello. I wasn't sure where
to wait. Clacket Lane's pretty
labyrinthine, isn't it?

No answer issues from the van. After a moment Jon climbs in. The doors close and the van sets off once more.

INT. TOUR BUS - AFTERNOON

Jon sits in the front beside DON, who compared to the rest of the band looks reassuringly normal.

Behind Jon sit Nana, Baraque and Clara in all their compelling, alarming, silent, intense other-worldliness.

And in the back, still wearing his FAKE HEAD, is Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARAQUE
 (Suddenly, in
 French -
 subtitled)
 I need to go to the toilet.

CLARA
 (Furious)
 THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE GONE AT
 CLACKET LANE!

Silence resumes.

EXT. MOTORWAY - AFTERNOON

The bus hurtles through the gloom.

EXT. FERRY PORT - EVENING

A foggy evening. There's hardly anyone around. The bus is loading onto a Ferry.

EXT. FERRY PORT - PASSPORT CONTROL HUT - EVENING

Through the fog we see the band showing their passports to two OFFICERS. They reach Frank. They stare at his head.

FRANK
 I have a certificate.

His accent is American. The officers lead him inside the hut.

EXT. FERRY - EVENING

The ferry is crossing the North Sea.

Don stands on deck at the rails, smoking. Jon stands beside him.

JON
 Can I ask... where are we going
 Don?

DON
 We're going to Sweden, Jon.

JON
 (Beat)
 Okay.

A pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DON
What do you think of Frank?

JON
Um...

Jon and Don glance over at Frank. He's sitting on a bench on deck. Clara is, as always, at his side. Frank is smoking a cigarette, using a long cigarette holder that curls under the head's neckline.

He finishes his cigarette, pulls it out of the holder, and tosses the butt away. It catches in the North Sea wind and flies back into his head.

Frank and Clara frantically pat down his 'face' to stop a fire from breaking out.

DON
He's fucking amazing isn't he?
He lives all the way out there,
man.

Don indicates the infinite, black sea, stretching out beyond them.

DON (CONT'D)
In the furthest corners. I wanna
be him.

JON
(Beat. Carefully)
Don? Can I ask... the head...?

DON
He never takes it off.

Jon thinks about this, impressed.

JON
Never?

DON
Never.

JON
He sleeps in it?

DON
Yes.

JON
What about eating?

DON
He sucks liquid food through a
straw that he funnels up under
the neckline.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON
What kind of liquid food?

DON
Complan.

JON
He must have a very bushy beard.

DON
Not necessarily.

JON
How does he clean his teeth?

Don sighs.

DON
You're just going to have to go
with this, Jon.

JON
I'm sorry. I'm just... it's
pretty crazy, isn't it?

He laughs nervously.

DON
(Smiling)
I understand. But let me tell
you something. Frank, for all
his 'issues', is without a doubt
the most one hundred percent
sanest cat I ever met.

JON
Okay.

DON
Believe it. (Beat) Me, on the
other hand...

He laughs. Jon joins in.

JON
Oh, well... you seem pretty sane
to me!

Don nods, stares out at the sea, smiling.

DON
Yeah. (Beat) But no, seriously,
I am severely mentally ill. I
spent a lot of time in a
psychiatric hospital.

Jon's smile fades.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JON

Right.

DON

(Sadly)

I used to have sexual relations
with mannequins.

JON

(Beat)

Right.

DON

(Informatively)

It's a condition.

I/E. VAN - SWEDISH ROAD - FERRY PORT - DAWN

The van drives through a snowy landscape, away from the
ferry port, the sun rising on the horizon.

Jon is in the back, next to Frank, who appears to be
snoozing.

Clara and Nana and Baraque are all asleep in the front.

Jon nervously glances over at Frank's head. He
scrutinizes the hair, the painted cheek...

As he looks closer he suddenly notices an EYEBALL
staring out at him through the EAR HOLE.

JON

(Shrieking)

Jesus Christ!

The eye vanishes, retreating back into the darkness of
the head.

Jon faces front again. The others still sleep. After a
moment Jon hears a noise from under Frank's head.

FRANK

Tsss.

Frank is indicating that Jon gets closer. Jon does.
Frank indicates closer still.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Tsss.

Jon awkwardly gets his ear very close to Frank's
'mouth'.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(An urgent whisper)

HELP ME.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon recoils. Clara stirs in the front, turns to look at them. Frank hurriedly pretends to be asleep. We hear fake snores from inside the head.

Jon stares ahead, not knowing what the hell just happened.

DON
(driving)
We'll be there in two hours
people.

JON
At the venue?

DON
What?

JON
At the... where we're playing
tonight?

DON
We're not playing tonight Jon.

JON
Oh. (Beat) I've only brought an
overnight bag.

No-one answers.

JON (CONT'D)
I don't suppose... if we're
staying more than one night, maybe
if see anywhere that sells clothes
and...

CLARA
Oh. The keyboard player wants to
stop.

Jon says nothing, but notes the insult.

I/E. SWEDISH MOTORWAY SERVICES - EARLY MORNING

Jon looks at the T-shirts. They've all got Swedish tourist slogans: *I Love Swedish Girls*, *I Feel Sweden* and one with a bright yellow silhouette of a naked girl hitch-hiker, with *SWEDEN* emblazoned on the top.

Needs must, Jon picks the naked girl hitch-hiker. He walks towards the CHECKOUT.

Frank is suddenly beside him.

FRANK
Take my arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON

What?

Frank links Jon's arm, and starts to lead him towards the door.

FRANK

Two friends going for a walk. Who could question THAT?

They exit the shop.

EXT. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE - CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

FRANK

(Hissing, urgently)

I am being held against my will.
By the woman.

Jon looks perplexed.

FRANK (CONT'D)

GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Jon hesitates for a second.

FRANK (CONT'D)

RUN!

WIDE: Jon and Frank run urgently across the car park, towards a FOREST.

EXT. SNOWY FOREST WILDERNESS - MORNING

It's snowing. Frank and Jon hack through the undergrowth together. Jon keeps turning to see if they're being followed. They aren't.

JON

Are you okay?

FRANK

(Energized)

I never felt better in my life.
Thank you! It's been terrible.

Frank breathes in the air, a FREE MAN at last.

JON

How long has the woman...

FRANK

Clara.

JON

How long has Clara held you for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

I don't even *know*!

Jon leans over and brushes a dusting of snow from the top of Frank's head. Frank seems to flinch slightly.

JON

(By way of
explanation)

Snow.

FRANK

Thank you!

(Surveying the
forest)

God! Wow! You saved my life.
I'll never forget this.

Jon and Frank continue to walk for a while.

JON

(Kindly)

Is she the one who makes you
constantly wear...

Frank suddenly stops. His 'face' stares at Jon eerily. Jon indicates the head.

JON (CONT'D)

The... big false head?

Frank continues to stare. Jon looks suddenly worried that Frank may not even know that he's wearing a false head.

JON (CONT'D)

(Panicking a bit)

Okay. Too many questions. What
we need to do is work out the
practicalities.

They resume hacking through the undergrowth.

JON (CONT'D)

Our bags are on the bus. So we
don't have any... thing.

FRANK

(Picking up on
Jon's panic)

What'll happen at nightfall? My
face stays warm but the rest of
me can get very cold.

Frank's head gets wedged between two branches. He struggles and fails to get free.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh God. Oh God.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON

It's okay. I've got it.

Jon prises Frank's head free.

FRANK

Thank you.

Ahead of them is a fairly bare MOTORWAY SERVICES AREA.
Jon pats his pockets.

JON

Money. I haven't got any money.
Have you got money?

FRANK

I'm sorry?

JON

(Urgently)
Money! Have you got any money?

There is a pause. Frank hands Jon his change.

FRANK

(Sounding nervous)
It's all I have.

JON

It's not much. Have you got a
cashpoint card?

Frank nervously shakes his head no.

They emerge from the woods and enter the...

EXT. BARE MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA - CONTINUOUS

It's just a toilet and a coffee/snack stand on a lay-
by. There are a few other people there - TRUCKERS, a
FAMILY.

FRANK

(With nervous over-
politeness)
Would you mind if I go to the
toilet?

JON

(Distracted)
Mmm? No, that's fine.

Frank immediately scurries frantically away across the
tarmac.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON (CONT'D)
 (In a flap, not
 noticing Frank has
 gone)
 Okay. I'll send out an S.O.S
 tweet.

Jon gets out his phone and types urgently into Twitter:

JON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The singer from The...
 (Beat)
...band I've joined is a kidnap
victim. I rescued him and we're
now on the run.

Behind Jon's back, Frank zigzags around, panicked and confused, until he's FAR AWAY ACROSS THE TARMAC. The Family and Truckers eye the scene with uncertainty.

JON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (Still typing)
Does anyone know the number for
the Swedish police?

Frank runs up to a TRUCKER.

FRANK
 That man kidnapped me!

TRUCKER
 What?

FRANK
 He's taken all my money! I've
 managed to get away from him.

Frank scuttles into the forest, where he vanishes.

The TRUCKER and his CO-TRUCKER start running towards Jon.

JON (V.O.)
 (Oblivious, still
 typing)
If anything happens to us I want
it on record that the kidnapper
is called Clara.

Jon turns around just in time to see the two truckers loom over him.

JON
 Huh?

TRUCKER
 (In broken English)
 The man in the head has said some
 things about you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON

What?

The trucker takes Jon's arm.

JON (CONT'D)

Hey. Let go of me.

Jon angrily pulls his arm free.

At this, the second trucker throws himself on Jon. The phone flies out of his hand, smashing on the tarmac.

LATER

The SWEDISH POLICE are releasing Jon back to the band.

Don is emerging from the woods leading a dishevelled Frank, his clothes matted with leaves and mud.

Clara gives Jon a withering look. Jon looks embarrassed and confused. Don wanders over to Jon.

DON

Don't worry about it. Everyone kidnaps Frank sooner or later.

I/E. TOUR VAN - SWEDISH ROAD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The van passes through the lovely snowy landscape.

Jon glances at his iPhone. He's managed to stick it together with gaffer tape so it's cracked but still working.

His Twitter following has shot up to 946.

JON

Wow.

DON

Here it is! Vetno! Our new home.

FRANK

I LIKE it!

The band look out of the van windows. Stunned.

EXT. "VETNO" - SWEDEN - MOMENTS LATER

A beautiful, enormous, weird wooden house stands in snowy grounds - something from a fairy tale. The band stare at it.

Jon looks confused and alarmed.

Don unlocks the huge, wooden front door. They enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON
 (Clutching his
 overnight bag)
 Excuse me. How long will we be
 staying here for?

Nobody answers.

INT. VETNO - MOMENTS LATER

The band walk through the amazing house, taking it all in. Jon walks alongside them, wide-eyed, but ANXIOUS, examining the others as much as his surroundings.

JON
 (To Don)
 Don. Sorry. I told work I'd be
 back on Monday. So do you think...

A small shriek O.S.

Frank has got his head wedged in the gap between the staircase and the wall. Don frees him.

DON
 (To Frank)
 Problem area. Under staircase.

FRANK
 (Cheerfully)
 Noted.

They climb the stairs and reach the upstairs landing.

MONTAGE

...of Don showing each band member their BEDROOMS. They're all SPACIOUS and BEAUTIFUL. Jon's is last, at the end of the corridor.

DON
 And here's your room, Jon.

It is TINY - the SMALLEST in the house. But it is still a strange and interesting little wooden room, like something from a fairy tale.

INT. JON'S BEDROOM - VETNO - CONTINUOUS

JON
 Don. How long are we going to be here?

DON
 Just as long as it takes to make the album, Jon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Don closes the door, leaving Jon alone in the bedroom. He stands there - his bag in his hand.

INT. VETNO - JON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jon looks out of the window.

We hear a Theremin playing - beautiful, ghostly.

JON (V.O.)

Vetno.

Jon sits on his bed. He types a BLOG.

JON (V.O.)

Sweden.

Jon thinks. Types carefully...

JON (V.O.)

Snowing.

EXT. VETNO - DAY

Clara is playing a Theremin in the snow, a power cable running back into the house. She looks lost in the music - quite lovely.

JON (V.O.)

We've been here a week. It's a whole new way of living - quite unlike anything I've ever known.

Jon takes a step towards her.

CLARA

STAY AWAY FROM MY FUCKING
THEREMIN.

Jon takes an anxious step backwards.

INT. BEDROOM - VETNO - NIGHT

Jon looks into a bedroom to see Clara, Nana and Baraque lying in bed together, draped casually over one another, Baraque reading a book.

JON (V.O.)

*All the usual bourgeoisie rules
have been thrown out of the
window.*

Jon covertly peeks at Clara's cleavage. He regards the Bohemian lifestyle with admiration.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nana queues for the bathroom. Jon exits, a towel draped over him in a manner so 'studied bohemian' he's making no attempt to cover his penis.

A horrified Nana puts her hands over her eyes and shrinks away, VERY UPSET.

JON (V.O.)
*Although one still has to be aware
of the limits.*

LATER

Don is telling Jon off. Nana still looks upset.

At the end of the corridor, regarding the scene, is Frank.

JON (V.O.)
*And at the heart of the beautiful
madness is Frank. Frank. How to
describe Frank?*

INT. VETNO - JON'S BEDROOM - EARLIER

Jon is unpacking his overnight bag. He looks up to see Frank standing in the doorway, watching him, his big painted smile, his hands on his hips. Jon smiles at him.

JON (V.O.)
Sometimes he seems friendly.

Frank slips into the shadows.

JON (V.O.)
*But at other times more
...menacing...*

Frank reappears in the doorway. Something in his body language makes him seem more threatening this time. Maybe it's because he no longer has his hands on his hips. They're hanging limply at his side.

Jon looks at him nervously, then instinctively lowers his eyes.

JON (V.O.)
But then ...friendly again.

Jon looks up again to find that Frank has his hands on his hips again.

INT. VETNO - LIVING ROOM - EARLIER

Frank is watching a stupid Swedish comedy programme, shaking with laughter.

Jon watches from the doorway.

JON (V.O.)
Also quite ...childish?

LATER

Frank is still shaking with laughter - although it's now harder to see why, as he's watching a gardening programme.

JON (V.O.)
Disconcerting. But mostly...

INT. DINING ROOM - VETNO - EVENING

Frank is ADDRESSING the band at dinner.

FRANK
 Clara. Don. Nana. Baraque...

Frank looks at Jon.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (Coughing)
 Mhwr.

JON
 (Politely)
 Jon.

Frank stretches out his arms.

FRANK
 (With enthusiasm)
 Jon. Here, in Vetno, on our own land, we will make music that has never been made before. We will journey to the furthest corners and grab hold of the music we find there. We are, every one of us, amazing. Here in Vetno we will become *even more amazing*. And we will capture it, here in Vetno, on our *first ever album*.

JON (V.O.)
... mostly inspiring.

INT. VETNO - JON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jon is finishing writing his blog. Moonlight pours in through the window.

JON (V.O.)
*So settling into communal living
 isn't easy. New people, new rules.
 But it's worth it because of
 Frank. I'm happy to be part of
 this. Just... happy.*

Jon presses send. He closes his laptop. A beat of silence. Then from outside comes a sudden CRY. Silence. Then another muffled shout of distress.

Jon looks out the window.

EXT. VETNO - MOMENTS LATER

Jon comes out the back door of the house wearing his coat and boots but no trousers. He sees Don, NAKED, running towards the tree-line at the bottom of the grounds and the frozen river beyond.

In the distance, near the river, Clara plays her outdoor Theremin.

FRANK
 (Shrieking - in the
 doorway)
 Don! Get back here!
 (To Jon)
 Don't let him get to the river!

Jon runs after him, chasing Don as he zig-zags across the snow, but he's too slow to catch him. Don shakes him off.

Don is almost at the river when Clara stoops from behind her Theremin, picks up a lump of WOOD and hurls it at him. It catches Don on the side of the head and he spins to the ground, rolling over and over in the snow.

ON DON

...as he lies crying.

Frank approaches.

DON
 Let me do it Frank! I don't want
 to be me.

Nana and Baraque are standing a little way off, looking scared.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank gives Don a sad hug, although the size of Frank's 'head' makes hugging quite an awkward experience for the person being hugged, so Don has to crane his neck right back.

INT. VETNO - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Frank sits alone on the sofa. Jon watches him from the other side of the room.

FRANK

(Sadly)

Did he tell you about the mannequins?

JON

Yeah.

FRANK

I met one once. Caroline Cuntley.

He offers Jon a handshake, as if he has no memory of ever meeting him before.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm Frank.

JON

(Beat)

I'm Jon.

They shake hands.

JON (CONT'D)

(Beat)

Does he still ...with the mannequins?

FRANK

No, he has relationships with real women now. But ...it's hard you know? He has to try and convince them to lie completely still, so... *(He shrugs)* Don't tell Don I said anything. He might think it's a shameful secret or something. But I say Tell Everyone Everything! Why cover anything up?

Beat. Jon glances at the fake head encasing a real head.

JON

Can I ask you something?

FRANK

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank leans forward, his 'head' in his hands.

JON
(Indicating the
head)
Why do you...?

FRANK
You think it's weird?

JON
A bit.

FRANK
Well normal faces are weird too.
The way they're smooth...

Frank mimes with his hands the curvature of Jon's cheeks.

FRANK (CONT'D)
...smooth...smooth...and then...

Frank mimes with his hands Jon's eyes, nose and mouth - a mime of utter chaos.

FRANK (CONT'D)
...bleurewweurgh...

There's something lovely but slightly unnerving about Frank's way of speaking. The words tumble out of him, like he's a passenger in his own thought process.

FRANK (CONT'D)
All bumpy and holes and I mean what are EYES like? Like a science-fiction movie. And don't get me started on lips. They're like the edges of a very serious wound.

JON
(Thoughtfully)
That's true. But your head is still sort of ...intimidating.

FRANK
Underneath I'm giving you a welcoming smile.

JON
(Beat)
Are you?

FRANK
Like this!

The same static expression.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Would it help if I said my
facial expressions out loud?

JON

(Beat)

Okay. I've been wanting to
thank...

FRANK

Welcoming smile.

JON

...to thank you. Ever since that
night I played with the...sorry,
what's the name of the band
again?

FRANK

I have NO IDEA.

JON

Why do you have an impossible to
say, spell or remember band name?

FRANK

It was Clara's idea.

JON

Anyway, ever since I played with
you that night I haven't been able
to think about anything else.

FRANK

It was the best concert we ever
did.

Jon doesn't know how to respond to this. Clara enters.

CLARA

(To Frank)

He's asleep. I'm going to bed. So
if you want help getting to bed
you should come now... Unless you
want to keep going with your
little chat with the keyboard
player.

JON

(Coughs)

I'm not just a keyboard player. I
write songs too.

CLARA

Oh? How many 'songs' have you
written?

JON

About 40.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

A dreadful silence from Clara.

JON (CONT'D)

45?

FRANK

(Enthusiastically)

You write your own songs?

JON

I'd love to play some for you
sometime.

FRANK

I'd really like that! Big non-
threatening smile indicating that
there's no such thing as failure
in Vetno!

Jon points at his own delighted face.

JON

Delighted look!

FRANK

You're FUNNY!

Frank points at his own face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

DELIGHTED LOOK!

Frank and Jon laugh. Clara looks disgusted.

INT. VETNO - UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Jon passes a bedroom. He peers in.

JON'S P.O.V - Clara lies asleep in bed. Frank sits on a
chair next to the bed.

Jon stands in the doorway. Frank sees him.

FRANK

(Whispering)

First rehearsal tomorrow.

JON

(Whispering)

I've already got an idea for a new
song.

INT. VETNO - MORNING

The band has gathered in the rehearsal room. They're
IMPROVISING far out, experimental music. Jon is surprised
to find himself keeping up with it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

(Calling over to Jon)
 Hey. How did that song you were
 working on last night turn out?

JON

I think kind of interesting.

FRANK

Why don't you play it for us?

JON

Sure. It's pretty rudimentary.
 Feel free to join in if you like.
 It's called Messy Rainbow.

Jon starts to play his composition. Which sounds quite deep and intense and uncannily like Paranoid Android by Radiohead.

JON (CONT'D)

(Singing)
*My mind's a Messy Rainbow
 And suicide's
 The only way
 To make the messy feelings go
 Away.*

A fragile looking DON listens, unnoticed, from the doorway.

JON (CONT'D)

(Singing
 relentlessly)
*Let me do it.
 Let me drown myself
 Don't wanna be me.*

Don looks upset by the song. So do the band. Jon doesn't notice. He's lost in his music, playing relentlessly on.

JON (CONT'D)

(Singing)
Let me drown...

CLARA

(Interrupting)
 DON!

Everyone turns around, thrilled to see him.

FRANK

Hey buddy!

They surround Don, ignoring Jon.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How you feeling?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DON

Better.

Jon awkwardly stops playing.

EXT. THE COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A lovely spring day. The band are walking amid the nature.

JON (V.O.)

*Frank has decided to delay
rehearsals while everyone has a
chance to get back on their feet.
In the meantime we're doing what
he calls 'Fieldwork'.*

MONTAGE

...of the band amid the nature. They're COLLECTING NATURAL SOUNDS on tape recorders.

IN A FIELD

Nana records the sound of a butterfly flapping it's wings.

ON THE BEACH

Baraque records the waves hitting the rocks.

Clara records the wind whipping through a cave.

A TERN ominously circles them all. They all stare up at it. It swoops down, squawking, and dive-bombs Jon.

JON

(Shrieking)

For fuck's sake! It could have attacked any one of us! Why choose me?

The bird files away.

CLARA

Like the zoo scene in The Omen, really.

Frank points his tape recorder at Jon.

FRANK

What was the sound the seabird made as it swooped down, Jon.

JON

Kind of...

Jon lets out a BLOODCURDLING SQUAWK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all laugh. Jon laughs too.

EVENING

The fieldwork is over and they walk back towards Vetno, thoroughly happy. Even Jon seems finally to have settled in with the others.

JON (CONT'D)

(To Frank)

That was a lovely April day.

Frank hesitates for a moment. Then he continues walking.

LATER

Frank is at the piano, composing a song called APRIL DAY.

It is by far the loveliest and most accessible song we've heard from him.

Jon listens, entranced. The other band members do their own thing in other parts of the room.

Jon gets out his mobile phone and COVERTLY FILMS Frank singing April Day. Frank finishes the song.

JON (CONT'D)

(Stunned)

Frank. That was beautiful.

FRANK

Flattered grin followed by a bashful half-smile.

JON

I had no idea you could write music so ...lovely. That song could be big.

Clara laughs sarcastically from across the room.

CLARA

Yes! Top of the Pops for us! I'll phone Lady Gaga!

Baraque sniggers.

CLARA (CONT'D)

(Calling)

Maybe we can play Superbowl Sunday! I'll get T-shirts made!

More sniggering from Baraque.

Frank pulls Jon to one side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK
(Whispering)
You understand!

JON
Understand what?

Clara glances over suspiciously at their private conversation.

FRANK
Understand that people could like our music. Clara doesn't want people to like us.

JON
Why not?

FRANK
I don't know. It's weird.

JON
(Glancing over at Clara)
It's really weird.

I/E. VETNO - KITCHEN - GARDEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jon is busy making a stew. Clara enters.

CLARA
What's this?

JON
Potatoes.

CLARA
(Indicating the stew)
And what's THIS?

JON
(Beat)
Stew.

CLARA
You're making us brain dead with your vegetables you dreary old woman.

JON
(Mystified)
It's just a stew, Clara. It's hearty.

CLARA
Someone needs to punch you in the face.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA (CONT'D)

Perry Como eats stew while he sits in his ROCKING CHAIR LOOKING AT HIS CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS. Is that the music you want us to make?

Jon blinks.

JON

No.

Clara steps in close.

CLARA

Why are you here?

Clara glances in disgust at Jon's SWEDISH TOURIST t-shirt.

CLARA (CONT'D)

You're not going to meet any naked hitch-hikers here. So why don't you stop having secret conversations with Frank and go home.

Jon gathers his courage.

JON

Fuck you.

Clara steps in close.

JON (CONT'D)

Frank picked me. Okay? So it's not up to you.

CLARA

What?

JON

He... he said I was cherishable. And he picked me to join the band.

CLARA

(A smile spreading across her face)

He picked you? There wasn't anyone else. Don couldn't find anyone else. So we were STUCK with you. You're just some fingers being told which keys to press. Ten little bits of bone and skin.

Jon tries to laugh derisively but looks worried that it may be true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON

I... I press my own keys, ok? And, anyway, I'm perfectly capable of finding a way of going to my furthest corners and...composing music...

CLARA

Your furthest WHAT?

JON

(Beat)

My furthest corners.

Clara smiles coldly.

CLARA

You know that incredibly insensitive song about Don's suicide attempt you sang us all the other day?

JON

(Beat)

Yes?

CLARA

It was basically Paranoid Android by Radiohead.

JON

(Beat)

No it wasn't.

CLARA

(Sings) "From a great height. From a great height..." You sang (Sings) "Let me do it. Let me drown myself." Exactly the same.

JON

(Beat)

No it's not.

CLARA

You want to know where your furthest corners are?

Clara walks right up to Jon and waves her hand an inch in front of his face.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Right there! And you know where mine and Frank's furthest corners are?

Clara opens the back door and runs out into the snow. She keeps running until she's far, far away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CLARA (CONT'D)

(Yelling)

...here!

Jon stands at the back door, staring out at her, furious.

JON

You're wrong!

CLARA

(Yelling)

Lick my ass!

JON

(Yelling)

You've only made me more determined than ever to go to my furthest corners and make something of myself in this band and help Frank reach his potential too!

CLARA

(Yelling)

Lick my ass!

INT. VETNO - LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE on Frank. He's making an announcement.

FRANK

Lips pursed together as if to say, "enough frivolity". Today we begin work in earnest on the album.

WIDE - the band sit watching Frank.

MONTAGE begins.

JON (V.O.)

Frank wants us to start everything from scratch.

Frank writes out a strange symbols on a white board for the band to see.

JON (V.O.)

He's created an entirely new musical notation system...

Jon covertly films the scene on his mobile phone.

EXT. VETNO - DAY

Clara and Baraque are making a strange contraption involving household implements.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON (V.O.)
...and new musical instruments...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The band are watching a presentation. A wire runs from Frank's head to a dial in Don's hand. As we watch Don turns the dial and Frank's head begins to GLOW EERILY - lit by some inner mechanism.

JON (V.O.)
*He's working on some new forms of
 visual entertainment...*

Don turns the dial to high - the head glows brightly, then there is flash of light and smoke begins to pour from Frank's eye and ear holes. Don and the others throw wet blankets onto Frank to put the fire out.

Jon covertly films it all on his mobile phone.

INT. OUTSIDE BEDROOM - DAY

The band queue outside the room for their daily *Gestalt Therapy Session*.

JON (V.O.)
*...and he wants us to deconstruct
 everything about our lives.*

We can hear Clara inside yelling at Nana.

CLARA (O.S.)
 (Yelling)
 You fat old whore! You useless
 bitch! Why are you so fucking
 ugly? Dragging around like a
 broken sow pig!

The door opens and Nana walks out, smoking and unruffled. Clara waves in her next victim, looking like a dentist. A nervous-looking Jon enters the bedroom. Clara gives a small smile of anticipation as she closes the door.

INT. OUTSIDE BEDROOM - DAY

Frank is on the floor in the middle of a wrestling bout with Baraque. He's surprisingly strong.

JON (V.O.)
*He's initiated a strict regime of
 physical exercise.*

In a few moments Frank has Baraque pinned and is bending his arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON (V.O.)
*Fortunately we have a "safeword"
 for when things get too intense.*

BARAQUE
 (The "safeword")
 Chinchilla!

Frank releases him and the two get up and shake hands.

EXT. VETNO - DAY

The band jog around the house.

FRANK
 Someone's thinking in the key of
 C!

CLARA
 (Calling, as she
 runs)
 Frank can feel someone thinking in
 the key of C!

BARAQUE
 (As he runs)
Il n'est pas moi.

JON
 (As he runs)
 It's me.

Clara runs over to Jon and UNEXPECTEDLY PUNCHES HIM IN
 THE FACE.

JON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Sometimes tensions run pretty
 high.*

The other band members pull her off.

INT. VETNO - KITCHEN - EVENING

Frank, Nana and Baraque are gathered around the back
 door, listening intently as it RATTLES in the wind. From
 somewhere outside comes an answering CREAK of metal from
 another door.

BARAQUE
 (Puzzled)
Je ne peux pas...

Frank holds up a hand to silence him.

FRANK
 Can you hear it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nana and Baraque listen anxiously, trying to hear what Frank is hearing.

LATER

Nana and Baraque are playing bass and snare drum by the door, mimicking the odd little rhythm of the rattle and creak. Frank listens, bouncing his head along enthusiastically.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We could make an entire album out
of this one sound!

Nana and Baraque smile. Jon covertly films on his mobile phone.

JON (V.O.)

*Frank finds inspiration in
everything. I'd love to get inside
that head. Inside that head.*

I/E. JON'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Jon sits working on a new song. It sounds LOVELY. Jon looks very happy with it as he plays.

JON (V.O.)

*I'm really developing as a
songwriter and hope maybe to even
have some of my own songs on the
album.*

Jon continues to play as he glances out of the window.

JON'S P.O.V - OUT OF THE WINDOW.

Frank is lying on a mat in the snow, sunbathing in swimming trunks, still wearing the head, of course.

Clara is standing over him.

FRANK

(Looking up)
How long?

CLARA

(Looking at her
watch)
One more hour.

Frank resumes sunbathing.

CLOSE on Clara.

JON (V.O.)

*Which may not go down so well with
some other members of the band.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Don enters Jon's bedroom.

JON
(As he plays)
Hey. I'm composing a song.

Don listens for a moment.

DON
(Commiserating)
Oh, man. I know.

JON
(Beat)
What?

DON
(Sighing in
commiseration)
I know how it feels to try and
write a song and it just comes out
shit.

Jon's hands freeze at the keyboard.

Don sits down next to him.

DON (CONT'D)
(Sadly)
Listen to this.

Don plays something unexpectedly lovely and quite
brilliantly professional.

DON (CONT'D)
(As he plays)
I composed this. Yeah, I know.
It's shit. Sooner or later you get
the feeling, "Why can't I be like
Frank? Maybe I can be him?" But
there can only be one Frank, man.

JON
(Stiffly)
Actually, I think both our songs
sound pretty good.

DON
(Sharing the joke)
Ha! Right!

Don lights a joint.

DON (CONT'D)
I'm not supposed to because of my
psychosis but fuck it, right?

He pulls on the joint.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DON (CONT'D)

Frank, man. You can't get there.
I've tried, but he's too far out.
I've known it since the moment I
first saw him.

JON

What was he doing when you first
saw him?

DON

A doctor was trying to wrestle his
head off. So he was totally
freaking out.

JON

You first met him at a place with
doctors?

Jon's eyes widen.

JON (CONT'D)

A mental hospital?

Don nods. He offers Jon the joint. Jon refuses.

JON (CONT'D)

How did he end up there?

DON

(Shrugging)
He doesn't talk about it.

JON

(Beat)
Have you ever seen him without the
head?

Done shakes his head.

JON (CONT'D)

Maybe he's facially disfigured!

DON

(Pulling on the
joint)
Whoa!

JON

Forced to wear a mask. Like The
Elephant Man.

DON

Oh man! (Beat) He told me once he
came from Louisiana. That's all I
know.

JON

Louisiana?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DON
Quatchita, Louisiana.

Jon stares sullenly at the keyboard.

JON
It's all right for Frank. He's
mentally ill.

DON
(Beat)
You ever tried Ayahuasca?

JON
What?

DON
Ayahuasca. Shamen have been using
it for thousands of years. You
really want to try and go where
Frank is, you should try it. It's
a hallucinogenic so deep-acting it
awakens your dormant plant DNA.

JON
I don't think we have dormant
plant DNA.

Don looks at Jon like he's crazy.

DON
Well I sure as hell do.

LATER

Jon lies on the bed, warily looking at his keyboard. He falls asleep.

THE NEXT MORNING

Jon sits at his LAPTOP. ON THE SCREEN - An empty Google search box. Jon's finger drifts over the keyboard. He presses H...O...

ON THE SCREEN

The GOOGLE AUTOFILL FUNCTION kicks in. All the search terms beginning with the letter H and O that Jon has ever typed appear in a scroll-down list:

Horny Brunette masturbates and flashes her asshole

Hot Asian teen takes two cocks

Hot young college girls strip down and take dick

Jon keeps typing: *How to be creative.*

MOMENTS LATER

Jon watches a VIDEO called *Unlocking Your Creativity*.

ON THE SCREEN

MANAGEMENT GURU

Creative people like you can see solutions where other less creative people don't even realize there's a problem! Take everyday activities like shaving.

INT. VETNO - COMMUNAL BATHROOM - LATER

We see various accoutrements necessary for Frank's condition - four normal-sized toothbrushes and one with a custom-built ESPECIALLY LONG ARM, an equally long RAZOR and bottles of SPRAY FACE CREAM with long necks.

Jon is rubbing shaving foam onto his face.

MANAGEMENT GURU (O.S.)

As Edward De Bono once said, how often does someone who is using a traditional wet razor stop to consider whether instead of moving the razor it might be easier to keep the razor still and move the face?

Jon begins to shave in this radical, creative new way - keeping the razor still whilst moving his face.

INT. OUTSIDE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clara stands waiting for the bathroom. From inside we suddenly hear Jon give an UNUSUAL CRY of pain. Clara listens, INTRIGUED.

JON (O.S.)

Oh... God!

INT. VETNO - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The band stand around as Clara plays a THEREMIN SOLO that's obviously been inspired by the UNUSUAL SHRIEK Jon let out. The band nod, impressed.

CLARA

I call it The Idiot Shriek.

JEAN BARAQUE

(Murmuring)
C'est tres belle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon watches bitterly, his face tufted with tissue to staunch the blood from his deep shaving cuts.

Suddenly...

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The band look ASTONISHED. They glance anxiously at each other. Hopefully it was just their imagination.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

CLARA

(Quietly)

There's someone at the door.

Nobody moves.

DON

(Nervously)

I'll go.

We stay with the band as they watch Don walk towards the front door. He opens it.

There are four LARGE YOUNG MEN standing there. They are muscular and heavily-tattooed. They and Don speak for a moment.

The band watch with concern, unable to hear the conversation. Don leaves them standing there and walks back towards the others.

DON (CONT'D)

(Trying to control
his emotions)

Okay, I have some news. We have to
leave this house.

The band stare at him in puzzled silence.

DON (CONT'D)

(Freaking out)

PACK YOUR BAGS AND GET OUT!

LATER

Don has been calmed with a cup of cocoa. The four new men are standing together at the back of the room.

FRANK

Okay. Start again, Don. Patient
Smile.

CLARA

Will you stop saying your fucking
facial expressions out loud? It's
incredibly annoying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

(Beat)

Okay.

DON

We've run out of time. We've spent all our rent money. They gave us 30 days notice to leave. And we didn't leave. So they've rented Vetno to a new band.

They look at the four new men, who smile awkwardly.

LARGE YOUNG MAN

(In broken English)

We're Bloodbath.

CLARA

(To Don)

How long have you known this was going to happen?

DON

(Beat)

30 days.

CLARA

Why didn't you tell us?

DON

(Beat)

I didn't want to disappoint you.

BARAQUE

(In French -
subtitled)

We haven't recorded one note of the album.

Everyone looks at Frank.

JON

I can pay.

Everyone looks at Jon.

JON (CONT'D)

When my father died I inherited money. He said it was my nest egg. He said I should only ever spend my nest egg on something really, really important.

(His voice breaking)

I want you to have my nest egg.

Frank stands up. He HUGS Jon. As always with Frank's hugs, the size of the head makes it quite awkward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JON (CONT'D)

It'll buy us enough time to make the album.

LARGE YOUNG MAN

(Broken English)

We've driven all the way from Hudiksvall.

JON

I'll give you money to leave.

LARGE YOUNG MAN

How much?

JON

(Beat)

5000 Krona.

The men look satisfied.

FRANK

(To Jon)

Thank you so, so much.

Jon can't resist shooting Clara a little grin of triumph.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. JON'S BEDROOM - VETNO - NIGHT

CLOSE on Jon's hands as he writes his blog.

JON (V.O.)

It's been a while since I've written anything. We've been pretty busy, working on the new music, fourteen hours a day, for...

We pan up Jon's body. He's still wearing his naked hitchhiker t-shirt, now massively faded. We see his face. He has long hair and a full beard.

JON (V.O.)

(Calculating)

...a year and eleven months now. Which has depleted my nest egg a lot more than I anticipated.

EXT. VETNO - DAY

Looking through the lighted windows to the band practising the same complicated five second sequence...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Again!

Again...

FRANK (CONT'D)

Again!

INT. KITCHEN - VETNO - DAY

The band, wild-eyed and feral, the men long-haired and bearded, ravenously eat their tiny daily ration of SOYA BEANS.

JON (V.O.)

*It hasn't been easy. None of us
have left Vetno since we got here.
We've had to start rationing the
food.*

I/E. FRONT DOOR - VETNO - DAY

A GROCERY BOY stands at the door. Jon, looking starving and animalistic, opens it.

The boy - overpowered by a waft of Fetid Commune Smell - quickly hands Jon the grocery bag.

Jon immediately rifles ravenously through it until he finds a jar of HOT CHOCOLATE POWDER. He guiltily scurries to a corner and pours it hungrily into his mouth.

Clara, passing-by, spots Jon.

CLARA

Thief!

She runs over and attempts to pull the powder from Jon's grasp, whilst simultaneously prising open his mouth and thrusting in her hand, scraping the powder from inside it.

CLARA (CONT'D)

I want it ALL back!

Clara pulls Jon's fingers painfully back.

JON

(Yelling)

Those are my KEYBOARD PLAYING
FINGERS!

JON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*Clara's hatred of me remains as
strong and baffling as ever. I
just seem to rub her up the wrong
way.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In their struggle the hot chocolate jar explodes, the powder covering them in a cloud.

Frank walks in. Clara and Jon stand, caught out, both covered in chocolate. Frank stares at them in silence for a moment.

INT. JON'S BEDROOM - VETNO - DAY

Jon composes at his keyboard. The song is just flying out of him.

JON (V.O.)

A lifetime ago Frank said our job here was to journey to the furthest corners and grab the music we found there. The journey has been a long one. But I think I'm finally there.

A STUNNED look crosses his face.

JON

(To himself)

Oh God. This is REALLY GOOD.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jon runs excitedly down the hallway.

JON

Frank!

INT. THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FRANK'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JON

(Knocking on the door)

Frank?

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jon walks into the bedroom. It's empty.

The sound of running water comes from the en-suite shower room.

Jon stops, staring at something: Frank's HEAD sits on a chair beside the bed.

Jon hesitates and then picks up the head. He peers inside, fascinated. He crosses to a mirror and stands, the HEAD raised above his own. Slowly he begins to lower the false head down over his own face - then he freezes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon gives Clara a triumphant glance as Frank starts working on his song.

Clara takes a seat on the stool next to Frank.

CLARA
And then if you just...

Clara moves Frank's fingers to a different note.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Because if you played ...What was that note you played down there, Jon?

JON
F.

CLARA
Yes because if you played an F there it would be shit.

Jon looks like he's been punched in the face.

Clara and Frank continue to turn Jon's song into something TOTALLY DIFFERENT - something much STRANGER and MORE INTERESTING.

Frank is just innocently going about what he does. But Clara is fully aware that she's crushing Jon.

FRANK
What do you think?

Clara looks up and gives Jon a dreadful, slow smile.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(Beat)
We're ready.

LATER

The band have set up. Don is finishing arranging mics around them.

JON (V.O.)
Frank has decided it's finally time to record the album. They're not using any of my composition which I can't help thinking is a bit of a kick in the teeth bearing in mind the fact that I gave them my fucking nest egg.

Don walks through to the hall outside and sits at a mixing desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DON
(Into desk mic)
Vetno tapes. Take one.

He starts to RECORD.

A MONTAGE of moments from the recording. It twists and turns with overwhelming, beautiful oddness.

We hear the theremin moment inspired by the IDIOT SHRIEK SHAVING INCIDENT. Jon still looks annoyed by it.

We hear the complicated five second sequence they spent weeks practicing over and over.

LATER

The band stand around Don's recording equipment, listening to their work.

DON
That's it, Frank?

FRANK
Uhuh. That's it. We're done, Don.
We're done.

JON (V.O.)
*It took us three hours to record
the album. From start to finish.
Two years' work. Three hours.*

The band stand around, stunned.

Frank notices that Don has a strange smile, eyes glistening.

FRANK
You okay?

DON
(Mumbling)
It's just so good.

He nods.

DON (CONT'D)
We're done.

INT. VETNO - BEDROOM - DAWN

Jon wakes up. He gets up, starts to get dressed. He glances out of the window... stops suddenly, staring at something in the trees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON'S P.O.V - OUT OF WINDOW

Frank is HANGING from a tree. He's perfectly still.

LATER

The band are cutting down the body and carefully lowering it to the ground.

Baraque carefully removes the plastic head to reveal DON - quite dead.

We see the real Frank, wearing his false head, watching from the back of the group. The rest turn to stare at him.

Baraque passes him the spare head Don had worn. Frank holds it.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

The band have set up by the lake.

They're placing Don's body onto a crude wooden raft.

Frank lights the raft and pushes it out onto the water. The flames begin to spread, an improvised Viking funeral.

The band begin to play *Puff the Magic Dragon*...

FRANK

(Singing)

Puff the Magic Dragon, lived by
the sea, and frolicked in the
Autumn mist in a land called
Honalee...

Jon and the others watch the boat drift away into the mist on the lake.

Jon hears a PING coming from the iPhone in his hand. *One new email.*

FRANK (CONT'D)

(Singing)

Little Jackie Paper loved that
rascal puff, and brought him
strings and sealing wax and other
fancy stuff.

Jon is torn between wanting to maintain an appropriate air of mourning and wondering who emailed him. His curiosity wins out. He covertly glances at the iPhone.

His eyes widen - amazed at what he's read.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The fire consumes the raft. Frank stops singing.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Goodbye Don. You were the best
keyboard player we ever had and
the best man I ever knew.

JON
Don used to be the band's keyboard
player?

CLARA
Yes. First it was Don. Then Lucas.
Now it's you.

Frank somberly slips the plastic bag with breathing holes
over his head and leaps into the lake. He begins to swim
towards the boat.

BARAQUE
(In French -
subtitled)
What are you doing?

FRANK
I'm getting his ashes.

BARAQUE
(In French,
subtitled)
Wait until the fire's died down.

Clara notices Jon looking at his phone.

CLARA
(To Jon)
What?

INT. LIVING ROOM - VETNO - LATER THAT NIGHT

A BAND MEETING

Frank is shivering with a blanket around him.

CLARA
You've been secretly putting clips
of us on *what*?

JON
You Tube. But that's not the news.
I got an email.

CLARA
You Tube?

JON
Just snippets. But...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

Show me.

Jon presses play.

CLOSE on the screen: A grainy, tantalizing 20 second video of FRANK singing at Vetno.

JON

I made the clips really short and tantalizing. So you're like a mysterious masked man.

CLARA

You spied on us?

JON

No. Yes. But that's not the point. The point is I got an email this morning. Because of these clips we've been offered a gig. A really important gig.

They stare at him.

JON (CONT'D)

South By Southwest! In Texas. It's very prestigious. They've got a New Discoveries strand. They want us to launch the album at New Discoveries.

CLARA

(Snorting)

How ridiculous.

She heads for the door.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Come on, Frank. Let's get you into the shower.

FRANK

(Looking at You Tube)

Why does it say 23,751 at the bottom?

JON

That's the number of people who've watched the clip.

Frank looks at Jon.

FRANK

23,75...

JON

Reload.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jon presses reload.

FRANK
 ...23,752 people interested in us?
 (Beat)
 This is like magic.

Clara glares at Jon.

JON
 (To Frank)
 I told you we could be big.

EXT. HOT TUB - FOREST - VETNO - LATER

Jon, NAKED, soaks himself in the bubbles, looking pleased with himself. Clara appears, standing ominously over the Jacuzzi.

CLARA
 (Hissing loudly to
 make herself heard
 over the bubbles)
 What game are you playing
 filling Frank's head with
 bullshit ideas about festivals
 in America?

JON
 (Loudly)
 I can't hear you over the sound
 of the bubbles.

Clara angrily prods the Jacuzzi switch. The bubbles get bubblier.

CLARA
 How the fuck do the fucking
 bubbles...?

JON
 (Loudly)
 You just pressed the full bubble
 strength button.

Clara furiously punches the buttons.

JON (CONT'D)
 (Loudly)
 They're on a timer. You just
 restarted. They won't switch off
 for 10 minutes now.

CLARA
 (Shouting)
 Leave Frank alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON

(Shouting back)

YOU leave Frank alone. That time he thought he'd been kidnapped by you? I'm beginning to suspect it was true!

Jon steps out of the Jacuzzi. He's toe to toe with Clara.

JON (CONT'D)

I'm fully aware you want me to end up like Don or Lucas. But that's not going to be my role in this band.

CLARA

Middle Management!

JON

Josef Fritzl!

CLARA

Piers Morgan!

JON

Cunt!

Panting with rage, Clara suddenly notices Jon is naked. Her eyes involuntarily flutter downwards. They look at each other.

EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Jon and Clara are having VIOLENT SEX in the forest.

Clara is on top of Jon, grabbing hold of his hair, SMASHING his head onto a rock on the ground.

Jon is both desperately aroused and also in a LOT of pain. He pants and grunts and says Ow. For a moment he looks worried that she's actually trying to murder him.

LATER

The sex is over. Jon and Clara lie naked amid the nature, looking up at the sky.

JON

This is going to be awkward.

CLARA

What is?

JON

Us. You know. Together.

Clara has a good laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA
We'll never be 'together'.

JON
Right.

CLARA
I find you disgusting.

JON
(Beat)
Oh. Okay.

CLARA
Me with you...!

JON
I get the point.
(Beat)
Clara. What does he *look* like?

CLARA
(Shrugging)
I don't know.

JON
You've never seen him without the
head on?

Clara shakes her head.

JON (CONT'D)
Who made it for him?

CLARA
He doesn't talk about it.

JON
I thought maybe Don had. In the
mental hospital.

Jon stares sadly into the sky.

JON (CONT'D)
Was it awful in the mental
hospital, Clara?

CLARA
What?

JON
Was it awful in there?

CLARA
How do I know?
(Beat)
What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON

(Beat)
Nothing.

CLARA

No. What?

JON

(Beat)
I... assumed you're mentally ill.

CLARA

(Stiffly)
Well I'm not.

JON

(Surprised)
Huh!
(Beat)
So why are you so against us
finding an audience? If it's not
because you're mentally ill?

CLARA

When you package the music you
kill it.

JON

But how are people going to hear
the album if we don't launch it?
The music doesn't exist until
people hear it. Who are we doing
it for otherwise?

Clara looks at Jon as if he's an idiot.

CLARA

For each other.

JON

(Suddenly)
You love Frank! You're in love
with him! You're scared that if
other people love him you'll lose
him!

CLARA

Fuck off.

JON

(Teasingly)
You're in love with him!

Clara picks up a nearby rock and mimes violently
bludgeoning Jon to death. Jon stops teasing Clara.

She puts the rock back down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CLARA

(Sighing)

If you fuck everything up in
America I'll stab you.

EXT. VETNO - MORNING

The band, still long-haired and dirty and bearded,
emerge with their luggage from the SILENCE and
STILLNESS of Vetno.

Everyone looks anxiously at the outside world. They
walk towards their van, which has gathered significant
dust.

JON (V.O.)

*Today we leave Vetno. Hashtag
weirdly nervous.*

I/E. VAN - SWEDISH ROAD - DAY

Clara is driving.

CARS zoom loudly past them. They involuntarily SHRINK
back into their seats like children raised by wolves.

EXT. PETROL STATION - DAY

The band sit in the van, looking deeply self-conscious
and alienated. A PETROL PUMP ATTENDANT approaches.

JON

Don't do anything weird.

Clara shoots the attendant a massively over-friendly
smile.

CLARA

Fill her up please!

Of course in her desperate effort to seem normal she's
coming over as TOTALLY CRAZY.

Frank's arm shoots involuntarily upwards, as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. TEXAS DESERT - DAY

A breathtaking desert landscape, into which drives a
rental van.

INT. RENTAL VAN - TEXAS DESERT - DAY.

Jon looks out of the window.

JON

Wow. It's like Paris, Texas. So, okay, I've booked us a warm-up show in Houston. Very low key. Just to ease our way back into the world. And then straight to South By Southwest...

FRANK

Pull over, Jon.

Frank roots around in the back of the van.

JON

What are you looking for?

FRANK

Don.

EXT. TEXAS DESERT - DAY

The band stand watching as Frank with a bag of Don's ashes.

FRANK

Don, I remember you saying that the desert here was your favorite place in the whole world. After Sea World, San Diego. And I know you were homesick, Don. I know there were times you wanted to come back here, but you didn't because of me. Well you're home now Don. And we're going to make sure that those sacrifices you made weren't in vain. It's your album we recorded Don - and we're going to share it with the world.

He opens the bag and tosses the ashes into the air. There's no wind and they land with a CLUMP on the sand in front of them.

I/E. DRESSING ROOM - MUSIC VENUE - TEXAS - EVENING

It's a down-at heel place in a Houston suburban strip.

Baraque, beard gone, head shaved, is busy shaving the rest of the band's heads. It makes them look even more like a cult. Nana is painting over Frank's painted hair, so that he too looks shaved.

THE WINGS

The band watch Frank, waiting for the word from him, like soldiers waiting for their Captain.

FRANK

In this moment only the five of us know what the whole world is about to know. That we have found the music that will change *everything*.

The band look determined, almost grim. They march out onto the stage to be met by a faint welcoming applause.

They glance at each other, understanding the huge significance of the moment. Nana and Baraque begin to play. After a moment Clara and Jon join in.

Frank stands in the wings, listening. And very slowly his head begins to GLOW.

As the head reaches MAXIMUM ILLUMINATION he BOUNDS OUT onto the stage, jerking and shuffling to the beat.

He sings.

DISSOLVE TO:

A MONTAGE of moments from the live show. It twists and turns with overwhelming, beautiful oddness.

Finally the music ends in a gigantic crescendo. We await the inevitable roar from the crowd. But instead...

...the SMALL, BAFFLED AUDIENCE offer a tiny SMATTERING of UNINTERESTED APPLAUSE.

The band stare at the crowd. They can't believe it.

LATER

The band sit behind a STALL, failing to sell any copies of the Vetno album. The AUDIENCE - ORDINARY LOOKING MEN and WOMEN - walk past them without showing any interest.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We got the music wrong.

CLARA

The music's right. They're wrong. Fuck them. Our American adventure is over. We go back to Europe.

JON

No! Forget these hick conformist fucks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASSER-BY
(Overhearing)
Nice.

JON
Sorry. (Beat) South By Southwest
booked us because they *already*
know and love us!

Frank looks at Jon.

JON (CONT'D)
Things will be different at South
By Southwest. Trust me, Frank.
They love us already there. Frank.
They love us already.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST - DAY

The band, just arrived, make their way through the buzzy
festival CROWDS.

The atmosphere is much more bohemian and hipsterish than
at the warm-up show. A HIPSTER BAND plays on a nearby
bandstand. HIPSTERS in nerd glasses hand out fliers for
their gigs.

Jon is delighted to be among these refreshingly cool,
young, free-thinking people. He's truly in his Xanadu.

Passers-by look impressed by the band.

PASSER-BY
Awesome costumes you guys!

PASSER-BY 2
You look amazing. Where are you
playing?

JON
(To the passer-by)
The Blind Pig.

PASSER-BY
Awesome venue! Good luck!

Jon shoots the others a thrilled and vindicated look.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Jon is at the accreditation desk, behind which stands two
beautiful hipster festival official - SIMONE and ALICE.

Simone exudes LACONIC HIPSTER IRONY, Alice is more UPBEAT
and SINCERE.

The rest of the band hang back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMONE

(Dryly)

My spidey-sense tells me...

Jon grins, impressed, at the phrase 'spidey-sense'.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

...that you guys are The...

Simone attempts their name.

JON

That's us!

SIMONE

And you're Jon.

ALICE

We follow you on Twitter! Awesome job!

JON

(Delighted)

Thanks!

ALICE

So. Here's the passes and an information pack. Oh, did Simone pronounce your name right?

JON

(Beat)

Jon?

ALICE

The band's name.

JON

Oh. I actually don't know.

(Calling, to Clara)

Clara? How do we pronounce the band's name?

A little way back, Clara shrugs, unhelpfully.

ALICE

You guys are hilarious! So a bunch of us are having dinner tonight at a hot dog place in town. Come!

JON

Awesome!

INT. JULY 4TH THEMED HOT DOG RESTAURANT - EVENING

CLOSE on a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN singing a pretty, childlike song - perhaps PRINCESS CHELSEA singing THE CIGARETTE DUO.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We pull back. She's performing on a little stage in the corner.

HIPSTER DINERS - including Jon - regard the singer with FONDNESS. Clara regards her with HORROR.

The place is ironically tacky and July 4th themed - American flags, Uncle Sam paraphernalia, portraits of Joey 'Jaws' Chestnut, the world's greatest hotdog competitive eater.

The band, Simone and Alice eat hot dogs at a big table. Frank holds a napkin over his face to cover the shameful sight of his feeding himself tiny bits of sausage under the neckline of the head.

ALICE

(To Frank)

You guys have been in the forest
so long all this craziness has to
be kind of intimidating I guess.

Frank continues to completely conceal his 'face' with the napkin.

FRANK

(Trying to sound
normal)

Oh quite the contrary, I'm
delighted to be launching our
album here, Delighted look.

Clara's eyes dart across the room.

Clara's POV: A nightmarish montage of HIPSTER MEN and WOMEN, all looking EERILY SIMILAR - nerd glasses, Zooey Deschanel faces, ironic facial hair, tacky t-shirts that advertise Ocean Spray, etc.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(To Alice)

I'm excited that for the first
time we'll be performing for
people who already know and love
us, thanks to Jon and his clever
secret camera.

Frank's voice has taken on a weirdly formal air.

JON

(To Alice and Simone)

They didn't know I was filming
them at Vetno.

SIMONE

(Dryly)

Well, how about you, Mister Secret
Squirrel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON

I AM Mister Secret Squirrel!

ALICE

Well it worked. We noticed you.
And you got invited here.

FRANK

Thrilled grin!

Frank's arm slips and he spills a jug of syrup over himself and his food.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh dear!

ALICE

Oh, man, are you okay?

Frank clumsily tries to clean the syrup off himself.

FRANK

I'm fine! I'm so fine you
shouldn't even bother mentioning
the thing that's currently
happening.

Frank's attempts at cleaning himself are making him and his head FAR STICKIER.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Really! Carry on talking as if
this isn't happening.

ALICE

(Slightly weirded-
out)

O-kay. So. Who have you played for
in the past?

FRANK

(Formally)

Until now our audiences have
tended to be people who chance
upon us and realize after a few
minutes that they don't like us.

Clara stops GLARING at hipsters in time to sigh ostentatiously at this.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I see it in their faces, Clara.
First they're like this. But then
they're like this.

Frank continues to try and clean himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK (CONT'D)

(To Alice)

So this is a most exciting and
unique opportunity you've given
us.

Frank gives Alice a sincere look. By now he has bits of
syrupy-napkin stuck all over his face.

Jon, seeing Frank's predicament, springs into efficient
action. He spits on a napkin and begins wiping the
detritus from Frank's face.

CLARA

Mummy's here.

Baraque sniggers.

CLARA (CONT'D)

(Indicating the
childlike hipster
singer)

Why don't you team up with
Princess Marigold over there and
start a day care center. She can
sing the baby songs and you can
wipe the faces and the asses.

ALICE

Actually, I gotta tell you guys,
We know who you are. Simone and
me. We *found* you. But the audience
won't have heard of you yet.

FRANK

(Astonished)

But more than 23,700 people
watched us on You Tube.

JON

(Nervously)

They're cool, though, right? I
mean...

He surveys the room. Jon's POV: the same people Clara
found so eerie Jon is finding awesome.

SIMONE

(Dryly)

They'll love you.

Jon does a slight double-take. Simone's vocal tone is
consistently so ironic it's hard to tell if she means
anything she says.

ALICE

Are you crazy? They'll go crazy
for you! You do know that a stand
out gig at New Discoveries can...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Alice does an impression of a rocket shooting off into the stratosphere. Jon looks alarmed.

ALICE (CONT'D)

But, hey, don't sweat it! Just be yourselves! Maybe do some research about which bands did well at New Discoveries and which bands didn't in previous years and try and work out why and just be yourselves!

The singer finishes to APPLAUSE from everyone except Clara, Nana and Baraque.

INT. HOTEL BAR - LATE AT NIGHT

The place is deserted. Jon sits hunched intensely over his laptop. The rest of the band enter.

FRANK

What is it Jon? You look scared. Has something bad happened?

JON

Not scared. I've worked something out. Look.

They approach Jon's laptop.

JON (CONT'D)

(Enthused)

Right. Frank. You're abnormal.

Frank nods, equally enthused.

JON (CONT'D)

Let me show you someone else who's abnormal.

Jon presses play.

ON THE SCREEN - A You Tube clip of BABY DEE singing beautifully but very strangely...

BABY DEE

(Singing)

*Who can save me from the man
Who wields the grinding stone
He wields the grinding stone.*

JON

Abnormal. Did a New Discoveries.
16 You Tube hits.

The song ends. We hear a smattering of applause from the tiny audience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON (CONT'D)

Whereas...

Jon presses play.

ON THE SCREEN

A more MAINSTREAM band - still difficult and avant-garde, but with a generally more likeable, nerdy, ironic, SELF-AWARE demeanor, and a nice stable drum beat.

JON (CONT'D)

Still abnormal. Stormed New Discoveries. 380,000 You Tube hits. What does this teach us?

FRANK

(Beat)

Go on.

JON

That two years in the forest has calibrated us slightly too far towards the wrong sort of mental. Everything that's successful here happens within a certain boundary that we are currently just outside of.

CLARA

Nobody's listening to you.
Mediocre Child.

FRANK

(At Clara)

Shh.

Clara looks like she's been slapped.

JON

We've always demanded that the audience stretch their corners all the way out to meet ours, Frank, but what if we pull our corners in a tiny bit - just a tiny, tiny bit - so everyone's corners can meet in a place that's still a really long way off but a bit less...

Jon does a exaggerated impression of Clara's Idiot Shriek Theremin solo.

JON (CONT'D)

...and a bit more... *likeable*. Do we want a smattering of baffled applause at New Discoveries or do we want to raise the fucking roof?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ON THE SCREEN - the more likeable band finish their song to RAPTUROUS APPLAUSE.

JON (CONT'D)

Frank?

Frank holds his hand out to hush Jon. A silence. Frank is silently composing.

FRANK

(with great import)

I think I'm writing my most likeable song ever.

JON

(Beat)

Can we hear it?

Clara looks like she wants to kill Jon.

INT. BEDROOM - HOTEL - LATE AT NIGHT

Frank sits at the keyboard. The rest of the band gather in readiness to hear Frank's most likeable song ever. Jon films the scene on his iPhone.

FRANK

I've always dreamed that one day I'd have a band member who shared my vision of creating extremely likeable music. So thank you, Jon. You gave me the little push I needed. Okay. Enough chatter. Here it is. My most likeable song ever.

Frank begins to play.

Bang! Bang! Bang! It's the same glorious, strange, ridiculous, totally non-mainstream stuff that Frank has always played. The madder end, in fact, of his oeuvre.

Frank finishes. A beat.

CLARA

This is your most likeable song?

FRANK

Yes.

Clara doesn't show a thing on her face.

CLARA

People will love it.

Frank raises his arms in jubilation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON
 (Clearing his throat)
 Actually, Frank, I think we can
 push the likability even further.

FRANK
 No way! You're shitting me. (Beat)
 HOW?

EXT. FOREST - EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

The band has gathered with their instruments. Jon has got hold of some VIDEO EQUIPMENT. He's standing behind the camera.

CLARA
 (To Jon)
 Let me see if I got this right.
 You want us to make a video in
 which we pretend our music doesn't
 matter so the people here who act
 like babies won't be scared of us.

JON
 No. Well, sort of. Look. You know
 the crazy person on the bus that
 nobody wants to sit next to?
 That's us. But if we just lighten
 up... be a tiny bit more likeably
 self-aware...

CLARA
 I'm not playing a fucking ukulele,
 I'll tell you that now.

FRANK
 I'm going to point at my head a
 lot! Like this!

Frank dances around a little too over-zealously, pointing at his head.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (As he dances)
 Press record, Jon. I'm ready.

Jon presses record on his video camera and hurries over to take his place behind the keyboard.

They start playing a MORE HIPSTER version of one of their songs.

Everything is a little different. Frank's voice and dance seem more IRONIC. Jon has a new, ironic, keyboard sound. And hipster sunglasses. Baraque and Nana are dutifully going along with it - their bass and percussion are more unvarying than normal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Only Clara is holding out. She has adopted her most intimidating scowl, and is playing as HARSHLY as she can muster. But her protest is useless. Jon has managed to make them sound likeable rather than alarmingly experimental.

The overall effect - seeing the band like this - is both likeable but also strangely sad.

The song reaches an instrumental section. Frank addresses the camera.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(Talking too fast)
Hi, South By Southwest. We're the
Sknprfbs or something.

CUT TO:

CLOSE on a computer screen. The Forest Video has been uploaded to the NEW DISCOVERIES website.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We've been in the forest for two
years like secret squirrels but on
Friday night we emerge so come and
see us then at the Blind Pig you
guys and watch us shake the leaves
from our clothes and be not like
secret squirrels any more but
regular squirrels.

We pull out to see that we are in...

INT. SIMONE AND ALICE'S OFFICE - DAY

Simone and Alice watch the video. Alice regards it with an upbeat and enthusiastic smile, Simone seems more laconic.

I/E. CANOPY. SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST - EVENING

A New Discoveries PARTY is in full swing. The CROWD and the decor are cool and ironic and hipsterish.

SIMONE
(Dryly, to Jon)
Love the promo video.

Jon looks at her quizzically. Is she being ironic or sincere?

JON
(Beat)
Thanks?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMONE

I'm being sincere.

JON

Phew!

Across the party, Frank is being chatted up by a HIPSTER GIRL.

HIPSTER GIRL

Awesome promo video.

FRANK

(Talking too fast)

Thank you we're going for a kind of not believing in anything thing awesomely.

Clara gets in really close and gives the girl her best DEATH STARE.

HIPSTER GIRL

(Dryly, to Clara)

Oh. Hi.

A chilling silence from Clara.

HIPSTER GIRL (CONT'D)

I know you. You're the woman from the band who looks like she's from a different band.

Jon, joining them, smirks. He's filming the party on his iPhone.

CLARA

(To Frank)

Come on, Frank. Let's get away from these children.

FRANK

(Talking too fast)

Leave? Good heavens, no. I'm incredibly happy to be here and relaxed.

LATER

The party continues in full-flow. Clara is confronting Jon in a corner.

CLARA

Frank's tipping over the edge.

JON

No he's not. What are you talking about? He says he's incredibly happy to be here and relaxed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLARA

He said it in an unhinged tone of voice and you know it.

They look over at Frank, who continues to flirt with the girl.

JON

He looks pretty happy to me. Whereas you seem...

CLARA

What?

JON

(Coldly)
Out of control.

Clara falters, suddenly seeming less confident. She just looks at Jon.

JON (CONT'D)

Gosh. You've run out of insults?

LATER

The party is getting more riotous. Jon wanders anxiously through the crowd.

JON (CONT'D)

(Calling)
Frank? (Beat) Frank?

He finds Nana and Baraque.

JON (CONT'D)

(To Nana)
Have you seen...

He realizes this is pointless. He turns to Baraque.

JON (CONT'D)

Have you seen Frank?

BARAQUE

(In French,
subtitled)
Clara has taken him away.

JON

Where? To the hotel?

Baraque gives Jon a cold smile and says nothing.

JON (CONT'D)

(Startled)
Where?

EXT. PARTY - MOMENTS LATER

Jon runs through the streets.

JON

(Calling)

Frank! Frank!

(To a hipster passer-
by)

Have you seen a man wearing a fake
head?

HIPSTER PASSER-BY

(Laconically)

A crazy-looking lady is pulling a
guy with a fake head along just
around that corner. Could that be
the guy in the fake head you're
looking for?

JON

(Beat)

Likely.

Jon runs around the corner and sees...

...Clara PULLING Frank away, her hand firmly clasped to
his.

JON (CONT'D)

(Yelling)

Stop.

Clara and Frank stop.

JON (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're taking
him?

CLARA

Fuck off, Jon. He's falling apart.

JON

(To Frank)

She's the one who's nuts, Frank.
Not you. You're fine!

Frank breaks free of Clara. He walks towards Jon.

JON (CONT'D)

You know it. You told me yourself
that Clara is crazy. She kidnaps
you and she's very weird and
doesn't want you to have fans.

CLARA

Remember what things were like at
Vetno, Frank. There was no stress.
Everything was good there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At this, Frank suddenly stops, midway between Jon and Clara. He glances from one to the other, not knowing which one to go to.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Everything was quiet and good at Vetno, Frank. Don't you remember? Let's go back there.

JON

See! She wants to keep you locked up like at Vetno. She's just weird and jealous.

CLARA

You're out of your depth, Jon. Frank. You're not well. We need to be somewhere quiet. Just us.

JON

Tomorrow night is everything we've worked for! They're ready to love us, Frank. Frank. They're ready to love us. Don't throw it away.

Frank looks at Clara.

FRANK

Clara.

He starts walking towards Jon.

JON

Oh thank God.

Jon watches Frank walk towards him in the moonlight. It's a beautiful sight. Jon gets out his iPhone and begins to film it.

CLARA

(Calling)

You win. Well done.

Clara starts walking towards Jon too. Jon continues to film the scene.

JON

(A little tauntingly)

I'm sorry Clara. I hope you're not too sad. Are you a little sad?

CLARA

Yes I'm a little bit sad.

Clara is almost upon Jon now. Jon suddenly realizes Clara's holding a KNIFE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON
(Panicking)
Chinchilla!

Clara STABS JON IN THE LEG.

PANDEMONIUM

Jon falls to the floor and rolls about shrieking.

PASSER-BY
Jesus Christ.

JON'S P.O.V - from the floor.

Clara turns to Frank. Is she going to stab him too? But she suddenly realizes what she's done. The knife falls to the floor.

CLARA
Frank.

A PASSER-BY grabs her.

ON JON - lying on the floor, beneath the pain, a gleam of remorselessness in his eye. His dream has come true.

INT. JON'S HOTEL ROOM - SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST - MORNING

Jon is lying on the bed, his leg bandaged, typing into TWITTER on his laptop.

JON (V.O.)
Clara Fricke, our very own Syd Barratt, was arrested today and charged with assault after stabbing me in the leg. See link. We will all miss Clara and sincerely hope that our own crazy diamond will also shine on.

Jon smiles slightly to himself.

JON
And... twitvid.

Jon lies back on his bed, satisfied.

INT. FRANK'S HOTEL BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Jon hobbles quietly into the room and joins Baraque and Nana staring at a prone Frank lying on his bed.

BARAQUE
Il Dort.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON
He's dead?

BARAQUE
Asleep.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
He's sick.

Jon and Baraque both turn, surprised. It is NANA. And this is the FIRST TIME SHE'S SAID A WORD during the entire movie.

JON
(Thrown)
He's... just had a fright. He'll be fine for tonight.

NANA
Not Frank. You.

JON
(Beat)
Sorry?

NANA
I've known it since the first time I saw you. On that beach. You'd have DROWNED Lucas to take his place in the band.

JON
(Beat)
No I wouldn't have.

NANA
Because you look inside of yourself and you can't find anything there.

JON
Yes I can.

NANA
So your only hope is to live off Frank's talent like a tick. Which is why you had to get rid of Clara. You had to make her stab you.

JON
Clara CHOSE to stab me!

Nana sits beside Frank on the bed, takes his hand.

NANA
(Gently)
Frank?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

No answer.

NANA (CONT'D)
 (Not so gently)
 Frank!

FRANK
 (Beat)
 What?

NANA
 We can't play without Clara.

JON
What? What are you talking about?
She's going to prison! We don't
know how long for! Meanwhile we
have the biggest gig of our lives
coming up in three hours.

NANA
 (Ignoring him)
 Frank?

JON
 (Bulldozing)
Which, by the way, is getting
bigger by the minute. The stabbing
could not have come at a better
time, Frank.

He takes out his phone.

JON (CONT'D)
 I posted the stabbing clip two
 hours ago. (Beat) We are currently
 Twitter's worldwide number one
 trending topic. I've had everyone
 at South By Southwest on the
 phone.

He plays the clip on his phone - we hear the tinny scene
 playing out.

NANA
 (To Frank)
 Baraque and I have packed our
 bags. We're leaving.

JON
 What? No. You... you can't.

From the phone we hear a tinny Jon.

JON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (Over phone)
Chinchilla!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JON (CONT'D)

You can't leave! We've had 467,328 views.

Jon presses reload.

JON (CONT'D)

Reload. 467,914 views! They're all watching!

(To Nana and Baraque)

Don't leave.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - LATER

Nana and Baraque shoot Jon a triumphant look as they head towards the hotel exit.

NANA

(Over her shoulder)

Good luck playing tonight with no band members.

JON

(With bravado)

I don't need luck and I'll tell you why! One word! ...Unplugged!

Nana and Baraque hesitate for a moment. Has Jon pulled an ace card? A little less sure of themselves, they leave.

INT. FRANK'S HOTEL BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Frank is sitting up in bed now. Jon is hobbling animatedly around the room.

JON

Unplugged! Me on acoustic guitar. You on vocals. Delegates really like it when bands go unplugged. It's a special thing. It's kind of pure.

Jon sounds like he's trying to convince himself as much as Frank.

FRANK

"Delegates"! "Unplugged". It's like you speak an amazing foreign language!

There's an edge to Frank's voice which could be excitement. Or could be panic.

JON

I'm fluent in it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank stares at the empty room behind Jon. Jon notices Frank's tapping hand.

JON (CONT'D)
Frank? Are you okay?

FRANK
Just excited. Just... so...
excited!

LATER

Jon and Frank are in the midst of a REHEARSAL in the bedroom - just Frank's vocals and Jon's guitar.

JON (V.O.)
*Hello Twitter. Well I have to say
it's extremely nice to have Frank
to myself without the others
constantly going "Blah blah blah
Jon you're a twat" and stabbing
me.*

They're playing the Vetno music, but the difficult experimental sounds have been replaced by Jon's unexpectedly LIKEABLE INDIE GUITAR SOUND.

JON
This is actually REALLY GOOD!

And he's right. It's LIKEABLE. And also quite ORDINARY.

FRANK
We're igniting the light and
letting it shine!

Frank wanders into the bathroom as Jon continues to play.

FRANK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Just doing my ablutions!

JON
Be as quick as you can!

Jon continues to strum.

LATER

Jon stands at the bathroom door, still strumming.

JON (CONT'D)
(Beat)
Frank?

Frank walks back into the room. He has taken a cosmetic kit to his head. He's given himself VERY ROSY CHEEKS, a GARISHLY HUGE SMILE, bright BLUE EYE SHADOW...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

We can cure CANCER!

Jon stares at Frank uncertainly.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST - DAY

Jon is holding Frank's hand, leading him towards the venue.

Frank shakes off Jon's grip and veers off to the edge of the fun, where HIPSTER SECURITY GUARDS are keeping the fun penned in with concealed BARRIERS.

Frank tries to climb over a barrier.

HIPSTER SECURITY GUARD

(A big fun smile)

Hey man, where are you going?

FRANK

To let off fireworks at a cancer hospital.

HIPSTER SECURITY GUARD

You're funny.

The Security Guard turns Frank around so he faces the crowd again.

HIPSTER SECURITY GUARD

(CONT'D)

Hey, have a great South By.

He gently pushes Frank back into the crowd.

FRANK

Don't touch me!

(Glancing at

something O.S.)

Ohmygod! A store that sells medals and feathers!

INT. STORE - MOMENTS LATER

It's busy, with HIPSTER SHOPPERS. Frank is frantically pinning medals and feathers to his outfit.

JON

(To the owner)

It's okay. We've got money.

STORE OWNER

You're the guys from the Internet.

JON

Yep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STORE OWNER

I tried to get tickets to see you play tonight, but it's totally sold out. You're the hot ticket. What happened to the woman who stabbed the guy?

JON

(Beat)
She's in jail.

STORE OWNER

Oh really?

JON

Believe me it's no loss.

FRANK

(Shouting across
the room)
What does a man have to do to get some sex around here? I have NEVER HAD SEX!

Everyone looks at Frank.

I/E. MUSIC VENUE - EVENING

A VERY BUZZY atmosphere. A LONG QUEUE to enter - 100 cool people in a really cool venue. These are the movers and shakers.

The stage lights come on. The audience hush in excited anticipation. Many in the crowd have their SMARTPHONE VIDEOS ready in anticipation.

His guitar around his neck, Jon limps onto the stage, to cheers.

HECKLERS

Chinchilla!

There's laughter. Jon gamely points at his bandage and gives the crowd a thumbs up.

Jon begins to play, his COMPETENT INDIE SOUND.

After a moment Frank walks onto the stage, to a big cheer. He walks to the microphone.

He stands there, looking at the EXPECTANT AUDIENCE, at bloggers filming him on their iPhones.

Frank starts to sing. But words don't come out. Instead it's the same weird, high pitched shriek we heard at Vetno.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon continues gamely on, although a look of MASSIVE PANIC crosses his face.

The audience glance at each other to say, "Is this cool? How are we supposed to react?"

Frank starts to shake uncontrollably. He falls backwards, hitting his head on the speaker.

He reaches up to his head and feels a CRACK. He follows it with his finger as it gets wider, wide enough to stick his finger in.

Jon stares at the stunned audience, then down at Frank.

He's urgently trying to say something to Jon. But the words won't come out. He indicates that Jon gets closer.

Jon does. He puts his ear right to Frank's 'mouth'.

JON

(Urgently)

What, Frank? What is it?

FRANK

This music is shit.

We PULL BACK to see the full catastrophe on stage, Frank lying, a mess, on the floor, Jon on his knees at his side, the audience standing there, stunned, many of them filming the calamity on their iPhones.

I/E. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Jon and Frank are slumped in their room. Jon looks utterly defeated.

ON TV:

PRESENTER

...Cleveland, Ohio band Mister Gnome had all of Austin talking last night with a barnstorming set at South by Southwest...

FRANK

Aren't we supposed to be playing at South by Southwest?

Jon lets out a big sigh. He looks at his iPhone.

CLOSE on Jon's iPhone - *13 new emails.*

We catch a glimpse of a few words:

'You guys are insane!' 'From Sony Music'. 'If you can somehow pull it together...'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON
 (Glimpsing hope)
 Frank. I know you weren't happy
 with the music. So let's work on
 it together.

Frank shakes his head.

JON (CONT'D)
 Why not?

FRANK
 You're not Clara.

I/E. CAR - AUSTIN - DAY

Jon is driving towards the city limits.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - TEXAS DESERT - DAY

The DESERT looms just beyond a cluster of scrappy,
 working-class trailer homes.

Jon pulls up outside one.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

He knocks on the door. A PERUVIAN SHAMAN answers.

JON
 Hello. I saw your advert. In
 High Times?

The Shaman considers this.

SHAMAN
 Do you have \$40?

Jon hands the Shaman the money. He beckons Jon inside.

INT. TRAILER HOME - CONTINUOUS

The Shaman leads Jon through the living room - where
 his WIFE is watching Daytime TV - and into his
 kitchenette, where an enormous ORNATE SHAMANIC BLOWPIPE
 sits on the table.

He begins to prepare the AYAHUASCA POWDER. He starts to
 CHANT: 'O-day-o-day-o-day...'

SHAMAN
 (Between chants)
 Ayahuasca. The doorway to the
 other realms. I evoke the spirit
 of the plant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He continues chanting. The TV is blaring O.S. The Shaman flinches, irritated, and chants louder to try and drown it out.

SHAMAN (CONT'D)
 (Finally, yelling
 to his wife)
 Will you TURN THAT DOWN!

She does.

SHAMAN (CONT'D)
 (Between chants)
 It was my wife's sister's idea.
 (Adopting a woman's
 voice)
 "Move to America. You can be the
 movie stars' Ayahuasca shaman!
 You'll live in Beverly Hills!"
 You know what it turns out movie
 stars don't want?

JON
 What?

SHAMAN
 Ayahuasca. (Beat) Are you of
 sound mind?

The Shaman continues to chant, heating up strange liquid on the hob, chopping plants.

JON
 I am.

SHAMAN
 You are not depressed?

He unexpectedly pours steaming black liquid, filled with pink petals, onto Jon's head.

JON
 I suppose I've been miserable
 lately but I wouldn't say
 depressed. (Beat) Why?

The Shaman blows weird grey smoke on Jon's head. It snakes around his face.

SHAMAN
 Ayahuasca takes you to the
 furthest corners of your
 imagination. You must be strong
 enough to face what you find
 there whether it be angel or
 beast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JON

This is *exactly* what I've been wanting to do! I *really* want to go to my furthest corners.

SHAMAN

Why?

JON

(Gravely)

Because I want to unlock the music.

The Shaman nods.

JON (CONT'D)

Have I taken the Ayahuasca yet?

SHAMAN

Not yet.

JON

Good, because nothing's happened.

SHAMAN

You will take it. Something will happen.

The Shaman lifts the blowpipe. Jon takes one end of it in his mouth. He hesitates, wondering what the hell he's about to do to himself.

JON

Actually can I just...?

The Shaman blows the powder into Jon's mouth.

Jon looks at the Shaman. Then he falls backwards into the sofa. Almost instantly he sits back up again and takes a NOTEBOOK from his pocket.

JON (CONT'D)

I'm going to write music now.
Goodbye.

He walks PURPOSEFULLY out of the trailer and towards the DESERT.

EXT. TEXAS DESERT - LATER

Jon wanders through the dunes, wildly unhinged but blank faced.

WIDE - He has not strayed at all far from the FREEWAY. A steady stream of CARS roar past him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon reaches a CRUMBLING ROADSIDE CAFE and he gratefully sits down at a table outside. He takes out his notebook and stares at its blank white page, waiting for inspiration.

The cafe sign above his head CREAKS slightly in the breeze. Jon stares sternly up at the sign.

JON
Be quiet. I'm trying to hear
what's inside me.

And suddenly ALL SOUND CUTS, and Jon finds himself sitting in an IMPOSSIBLE SILENCE.

He looks at the CARS and TRUCKS roaring past. But they too are HORRIBLY SILENT.

Jon looks trapped and frightened inside this oppressive silence, like an insect trapped in an airless jar.

Jon listens to the infinite silence inside himself. He mouths a subtitled sentence.

JON (CONT'D)
(Subtitled)
I can't hear anything.
(And then,
terrified)
I can't hear ANYTHING!

He looks down at his body and - like a bubble of nothingness - he POPS. He EVAPORATES. He is GONE.

INT. KITCHENETTE - MOTEL ROOM - SOME WEEKS LATER

Frank and Jon are eating at the tiny table. Jon is unshaven. The place is a mess.

A steel, pull-down light hangs over the table. As Frank bends forward to his Complan his head clinks against it. It dings.

He leans back. Then he leans forward to the straw again. He clinks his head against the light again. Another ding.

Jon watches him in mounting irritation.

Frank leans forward again. Jon catches the light and pushes it up before there can be another "ding".

JON
(Hardly caring any
more)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON (CONT'D)

The motel owner says if we don't pay in full by the end of the week they're going to throw us out.

A FLY buzzes around Frank's head. Frank tries to swat it, but - being in a fake head - his spatial awareness is shot to hell and he accidentally swipes a cup, spilling rancid coffee all over Jon.

FRANK

Oh Jesus I'm sorry.

Frank grabs a dirty cloth from the sink and starts to mop at Jon's coffee sodden trousers. As he does his head comes very near to Jon's face and Jon leans back in disgust. Clearly, Frank is beginning to smell under his head.

JON

Jesus!

Jon picks up a VERY LONG STICK with a BABY WIPE attached to the end. He waves it at Frank.

JON (CONT'D)

(Through gritted teeth)

I *made* it. Now will you *use* it?

Frank inserts the baby wipe inside his head. Trying to clean himself. Jon watches in silence. Suddenly...

JON (CONT'D)

(Softly)

Take it off.

Frank stops moving.

JON (CONT'D)

The head. Maybe you should take it off.

Frank stares at Jon for a long time. Then he shakes his head no.

JON (CONT'D)

(Trying to be enthusiastic, but sounding tense and nuts)

You know, in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy they say face your fears! They say Take The Head Off! So let's do it! Let's take the fucking head off!

Jon walks closer to Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

(Scared)

Jon? I don't think I...

Jon reaches Frank and tries to touch the head.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I've got a certificate.

JON

(Beat, quietly)

I know you've got a certificate.

(Beat) I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A
FUCKING CERTIFICATE!

Jon and Frank are struggling now, Jon is trying desperately to PULL Frank's head off.

The sudden VIOLENCE inside Jon is shocking.

JON (CONT'D)

Take it off!

Weird noises begin to emanate from inside Frank's head. They're the noises of a terrified animal.

The shock of the noises makes Jon hesitate for an instant.

As he does, Frank slips from his grasp and runs shrieking towards the door. He manages to get it open and runs out...

And Jon, as if waking from a nightmare, realizes what he's done...

JON (CONT'D)

No! Frank! I'm sorry! I don't
know what I was thinking! Frank!

EXT. STREET - TEXAS SUBURBS - CONTINUOUS

...the BRIGHT SUNLIGHT.

Shrieking, bewildered, Frank runs confused out of the motel and towards the SIDEWALK.

Jon runs a little way after him.

JON

Frank! I'm sorry! Come back!

LONG SHOT

Frank runs, disoriented, onto the sidewalk, then over the curb, and out onto the HIGHWAY. He gets smaller and smaller. He keeps going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And then he is HIT BY A CAR.

The car screeches to a halt as Frank flies over the windshield.

Jon starts to run towards the scene of the accident.

He reaches the car, and then he walks around it, expecting to see Frank lying there.

But Frank isn't there. Instead there is just his HEAD, lying SHATTERED on the road.

The driver is standing there, shocked.

JON (CONT'D)

Where did he go?

DRIVER

That way.

JON

Did he look injured?

DRIVER

He was limping.

JON

(Beat)

Did you see his face?

The driver begins to answer.

Jon takes half a step back into the oncoming traffic and is HIT BY A CAR.

Cut to BLACK.

I/E. HOSPITAL - TEXAS - DAY

Jon lies asleep. He's on a drip. Bandaged up.

He wakes up. Looks around. He can't remember why he's there.

And then he remembers. He closes his eyes.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A heavily bandaged Jon sits waiting in the station. A COP walks over with a form on a clipboard.

COP

You want to report a missing person?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON

Yes.

COP

Ok. What's the person's name?

JON

(Beat)

Frank.

COP

Frank what?

Jon considers this.

JON

Just... Frank?

The Cop examines him balefully.

COP

Age?

JON

Uh, somewhere between thirty
and... fifty?

COP

(Beat)

What's he look like?

Jon considers this. He starts to tear up.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jon, still bandaged, but on the slow path to recovery,
sits at the counter, staring out into the distance.

The YOUNG MAN beside him has been watching him for a
while. Now he clicks his fingers.

YOUNG MAN

Been driving me crazy, but I know
who you are.

JON

(Emptyly)

Oh?

YOUNG MAN

You're the Chinchilla guy, right?

Jon nods sadly.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Awesome. Chinchilla guy, and the
guy with the big head and the
crazy chick... Clara? Right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon looks at him.

JON

How do you know her name?

YOUNG MAN

Are you kidding?. You're like myths. There's footage of you fucking everywhere online.

Jon laughs sadly.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

All totally erratic and shit. Nervous breakdowns. "Chinchilla!" People rolling around on the floor. Just wayward! And now it's all, 'What's happened to Frank? He's just *vanished*.' Fucking hilarious.

Jon looks at him with dislike.

JON

I don't think it's hilarious.

YOUNG MAN

Really? I thought it was supposed to be hilarious. I mean, like that Clara? Being a total freak.

Jon stares down at his coffee.

JON

Don't call her that.

I/E. ROADSIDE BLUES BAR - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY

A down-at-heel roadside venue. Jon enters to find the place practically deserted - just some TRUCKERS and BIKERS and DRUNK LOCALS.

Clara, Nana and Baraque are on stage playing the blues in a perfunctory manner to the small uninterested crowd.

Jon stands in the doorway, looking profoundly sad at what he's reduced them to.

Clara and Nana and Baraque notice him. Their blues trail off to silence. A few of the DRUNKS applaud uncertainly.

LATER

Jon and the band sit at a booth table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

(Coldly)

We're trying to raise the money to
get back to Europe.

Jon looks desperately sorry.

BARAQUE

(In French,
subtitled)

How did you find us?

Jon slides a NEWSPAPER across the table.

CLOSE on the newspaper. Between gig listings for 'Bayou Boogie' and 'The Chicken on the Bone Party Band' is one for a residency for 'The Oeccscclhjh Blues Trio'.

JON

Everything you said, Nana. It was
true. I was a snake.

(His voice breaking)

You have to let me try and put it
right.

Clara turns her face away.

JON (CONT'D)

(Utterly broken)

If you don't let me try, this is
what I'll be until I die.

BARAQUE

(In French -
subtitled)

The man who killed the music.

JON

I love all of you. And I'm so
sorry.

A silence.

CLARA

Where's Frank?

JON

(Beat)

He ran away.

CLARA

(Softly)

Then I will help you find him.

Jon looks at Clara with huge sadness and gratitude.

I/E. CAR - BLEAK COUNTRY ROAD - MINUTES LATER

Jon gives Clara a sad, world-weary smile. Two travellers who have been through a great and terrible adventure together.

JON
I turned us all into freaks for
people to laugh at on the
internet.

Clara pulls a cigarette out of her packet and pushes in the car's cigarette lighter.

JON (CONT'D)
So I was thinking that the way
to find Frank might be...

Clara unexpectedly leans over and begins VIOLENTLY STRANGLING JON.

JON (CONT'D)
(Yelping)
Clara?

Clara grabs the back of Jon's head and starts to slam it repeatedly into the steering wheel.

JON (CONT'D)
That really fucking hurts!
Clara!

Clara grabs the red-hot cigarette lighter and presses it against Jon's skin. It sizzles.

JON (CONT'D)
FUCK! FUCK! Clara!

The car swerves off the road, into a field, and crashes into a tree. Their heads slam against the windscreen.

EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Clara and Jon stand by the wreckage of Jon's car.

JON
What the fuck did you do that
for? You could have killed BOTH
OF US!

CLARA
(Yelling - the old
Clara)
I leave you alone with him for
FIVE MINUTES!

Clara begins to calm down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON

Are we okay now? You've got your revenge?

CLARA

We're okay now.

JON

It's finished?

CLARA

It's finished now. I've got it out of my system.

EXT. BLEAK COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

Jon and Clara are limping through the nothingness, back towards the roadside bar.

A TRUCK approaches. Jon sticks his thumb out, giving the truck driver a plaintive smile.

Clara gives Jon a MASSIVE SHOVE, trying to push him into the truck's path.

The truck narrowly misses Jon, its horn blaring.

JON

Jesus FUCKING CHRIST, Clara!
Will you fucking FUCKING STOP?
(Astonished)
You're actually trying to kill me!

Clara gives Jon the finger.

CLARA

Fuck you and fuck Frank.

She quickly walks away - back in the direction of the Roadhouse.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - BLEAK MALL - LATER

Jon sits at a table, looking wretched, surfing the net.

CLOSE on Jon's web search. Page after page is dedicated to videos and photos of the band: the Chinchilla stabbing, the Vetno rehearsals, Frank's nervous breakdown on stage at South By Southwest.

And then more pages - fans speculating on Frank's disappearance and possible whereabouts. There are sightings in Fairbanks, Alaska, Pahrump Nevada; Quatchita, Louisiana...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon stops suddenly and STARES at the words - Quatchita, Louisiana.

INT. JON'S BEDROOM - VETNO - THE PAST

A FLASHBACK to...

DON
He told me once he came from
Louisiana. That's all I know.

JON
Louisiana?

DON
Quatchita, Louisiana.

EXT. RURAL LOUISIANA - DAY

A GRIM LANDSCAPE of RURAL POVERTY, strewn with old rusting metal, abandoned vehicles, shacks, hungry-looking dogs.

HILLBILLY CHILDREN and OLD PEOPLE stare suspiciously at JON as he pulls up outside a SHACK in his HIRE CAR.

GPS VOICE (O.S)
You have reached your destination.

I/E. HIRE CAR - CONTINUOUS

JON
(To himself)
Christ. It's like Winter's Bone.

CLOSE on the details of the POVERTY and SUSPICION.

Jon gets out Twitter.

JON (V.O.)
(With great solemnity, as he types)
I've found Frank's childhood home. It's so bleak. No wonder he never talked about it. I wouldn't be surprised if he was the victim of some kind of...

Jon sighs.

JON (V.O.)
...farm abuse. And now I get it. This is the pain you need to make the great music. Hashtag but is it worth it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon nervously leaves the car, approaches a HILLBILLY MAN. Other HILLBILLIES stand a little way off, watching.

JON

(His voice quivering)
I've come to see Frank.

The man stares silently.

JON (CONT'D)

(Beat)
Wears a fake head?

The hillbilly spits on the floor.

HILLBILLY

Ain't no one round here wears a fake head.

JON

(Beat)
Okay.
(Plucking up courage)
Except He grew up here. And he's been sighted here. So I think he actually may be here?

The hillbillies share a HARD-TO-DECIPHER LOOK.

HILLBILLY

He's in the shed.

The hillbilly indicates a nearby CREEPY WOODSHED.

JON

(Beat)
Frank's in that shed?

HILLBILLY

I'll show you.

The hillbilly walks towards the shed. His friends follow.

HILLBILLY (CONT'D)

C'mon.

Jon nervously begins to follow.

JON

Actually, you know what, I think I'll leave it.

HILLBILLY

He's in there. I'll show you.
(Calling towards the shed)
Frank. You got a visitor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The hillbillies, with a now terrified Jon in tow, ENTER the shed.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Lying on the floor, in the straw, is an OLD SCARECROW with a grotesque FAKE HEAD.

The HILLBILLIES laugh.

HILLBILLY
Is this your friend?

Jon politely laughs.

HILLBILLY (CONT'D)
I told you ain't no one round here wears a fake head.

JON
Right!

HILLBILLY
What's the address you're looking for?

Jon gets out his MAP QUEST print-out. The HILLBILLIES ponder it. The Head Hillbilly spits on the floor again.

HILLBILLY (CONT'D)
You typed the wrong zip code into your GPS.

JON
Did I?

HILLBILLY
(Pointing at the print-out)
Says here 71008. You typed 71007.

JON
Oh, gosh.

HILLBILLY
Place you're looking for's about nine miles that way.

JON
(Beat)
Thanks.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - LATER

The contrast couldn't be starker. This is as MIDDLE CLASS SUBURBAN as it gets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon sits in his hire car at the bottom of a driveway. He looks disappointed.

JON
(To himself)
It's like where I bloody grew up.

He takes a breath. He climbs out of his car.

In the front garden ...a FIGURE, his back to Jon.

Jon walks towards the figure. He stops suddenly, afraid. Then he takes a few steps forward.

The man turns around. He has the most incredible, expressive face.

It is obviously Frank.

JON (CONT'D)
Oh, Frank. I'm so ashamed. I should never have tried to pull your head off.

MAN WITH AMAZING FACE
(In a voice sounding nothing like Frank's)
I'm the tree surgeon. I'm just here to look at the tree.

FRANK (O.S.)
Hi Jon.

Jon turns around. Across the garden is Frank. Without his head. Looking nice, gentle, and really quite normal.

He's standing with two elderly people - Frank's PARENTS. All three are wearing gardening gloves. Mary holds a running hose. They stare at Jon with puzzled smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jon sits with Frank, his Mother and Father. They drink coffee but Jon doesn't touch his.

MOTHER
It used to be a miracle to see him downstairs like this, right Frankie?

FRANK
(Smiling)
That's right.

FATHER
When Frank was a boy we couldn't get him out of his bedroom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER (CONT'D)

I mean, he'd get hysterical if we tried to move him.

JON

What happened to you, Frank?
Something must have happened to make you like that.

Father looks at Jon like he's an idiot.

FATHER

Nothing happened to him. He's mentally ill.

Jon glances over at the mantelpiece. There's a FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH from Frank's childhood.

CLOSE on the photograph: Frank's PARENTS and TEENAGE FRANK, trying to hide his face with his hand.

MOTHER

When he was about seventeen he stopped talking altogether. They called it Selective Mutism. He selected it to be all the time. We didn't know what to do. So... that was when he went into the hospital. Broke my heart.

JON

(Hopefully)

And that's when you started making music? As a kind of expression of the madness?

FRANK

No. I was always musical. Far back as I can remember. If anything the madness slowed me down.

Frank frowns at his memories. Then he points at his face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Look! Facial expressions! Oh, you were right about encouraging me to take the head off. Now I've got used to it it's fine. I think I'd been using it as a bit of a crutch.

FATHER

The head was my fault. I made him his first one. He was 14. He just begged me and begged me. He said it was for a costume party.

(Getting upset)

I did it. Even though I knew there wasn't any costume party.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A silence.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Turns out the worst thing to do with an anxiety disorder is pander to it.

MOTHER

Who knew?

FATHER

He never took it off again.

FRANK

Do you want to see my bedroom?

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jon and Frank stand in a little boy's bedroom.

FRANK

This is where I wrote my first music.

JON

Have you written anything since you've been back?

FRANK

No. I tried, but nothing good came out. It sounded, no offence, Jon, like the kind of stuff you'd write.

Jon smiles sadly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I know what you were getting at downstairs. You were hoping that some *...thing* had unlocked the music in me. Something you never had. But some people have got it and some people haven't. That's the truth of it. I mean, I'm terrible at everything else. There's probably something else you're great at!

(Brightly)

Like band management! No. Not band management. Marketing!

Jon nods, sadly accepting of his fate. Frank sits on the bed.

FRANK (CONT'D)

But I'm not good at music any more either. It's slipped away. I guess because Clara's gone. So.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JON

It's my fault.

FRANK

No it isn't. You've basically been really helpful.

Jon sits on the bed next to Frank.

JON

Frank. I need to explain to you how I ruined everything.

We drift away from them, out of the window, into the garden, where Frank's mother and father are doing some gardening.

JON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I think it started right back on that beach in England...

INT. ROADSIDE BAR - EVENING

It's the same down-at-heel bar we met Clara and Nana and Baraque at. They're still there - playing the blues to LOCAL DRUNKS who don't care.

Jon and Frank enter. They stand hesitantly at the back.

Jon gives Frank a small push. He hangs back as Frank walks towards the stage.

Clara notices this stranger approaching them. There seems something familiar about him.

He climbs onto the stage and approaches the microphone. And he starts to SING.

And then she realizes. A look passes between Clara and Frank.

And, slowly, as Frank sings, we BEGIN TO PULL BACK.

Clara plays more intensely. As do Frank and the others. And the music makes sense again. It swells to something beautiful ...difficult but beautiful.

As the music builds into joyful life, we PULL FURTHER BACK, over the AUDIENCE, who don't seem realize that something incredible is happening. They look uninterested.

But then one or two drunks appear to notice that the music has changed into something else. They GLANCE UP from their drinks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jon listens from the back. He watches for a moment. Then he slips out of the door. And we...

FADE TO BLACK.