

COVER VERSION

by

Jack Barth

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Contact:

Emily Wraith
Berlin Associates
7 Tyers Gate
London SE1 3HX
+44 (0) 207 632 5281

emilyw@berlinassociates.com

INT. UPSCALE MUSIC CLUB - NIGHT

The decor, hair and clothes are state of the art, 2006. It's a good-sized crowd, and they're packed tight in front of the stage, attentively enjoying the performance.

The band is Clay Enema (their colourful logo adorns the bass drum), a foursome in their early-to-mid 20s:

DAN, the leader, singer and guitarist. A classic singer-songwriter: cool, pensive, outsider-y.

ELLA, the fetching bassist. She's Dan's girlfriend, and a solid player and vocalist.

CESAR, the other guitarist, a handsome Spaniard, gay and emotional.

SYKES, the drummer: posh, dry wit, loves drugs.

The band has just finished a number, applause dying down.

DAN

Thank you. That was dedicated to my father, who's here tonight.

Dan searches for his father through the harsh spotlight.

Dan's father, BRIAN, a suave older gent, is on his own, at a table off to the side, working his way through a bottle of Pinot Noir. He shyly acknowledges Dan's shout-out.

DAN (CONT'D)

(pointing to the band's logo on the bass drum)

He painted that -- not bad, eh? And he's single, ladies.

Ella GROWLS like a sexy tiger.

DAN (CONT'D)

OK. This next one's our "hit." "Cover version of the year," if you read the NME.

ELLA

Even if you don't -- still says it.

DAN

(to Ella)

I like your logic. And your pretty eyes.

(to CROWD)

Those of you in the mosh pit, you can clap along.

(John Lennon impersonation)

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

And the rest of you, just rattle
your jewellery.

CESAR

Uno dos three...!

Clay Enema kicks into a rousing version of their current hit, an inventive cover version of "Walk Tall (Like A Man)," a mid-chart hit from days gone by. It begins with Ella plucking a funky bass riff.

The crowd WHOOPS in recognition.

As opening titles roll, we see the performance. Dan and Ella sing with passion and playfulness. The band is tight, exuding energy. We don't know it now, but this exciting gig will be the high point of Clay Enema's career.

After 20-30 seconds, with the song continuing, we go to MONTAGE of Dan and the band's next 10 years unfurling.

As the years click past, we regularly return to see them playing "Walk Tall," in sync with the original, but in progressively stodgier venues, and with the band visually changing and aging from their 20s to their 30s.

These gigs are INTERCUT with brief scenes from their lives:

* Dan, working behind the counter in a vinyl record shop, unpacks a box and proudly shows its contents to Ella: the first Clay Enema album, called "Cover Version" -- in vinyl. It has a groovy retro cover, drawn by Brian.

* Ella begins working in a school, teaching music.

* The band, rehearsing in Dan's garage, welcomes a baby-faced teenaged roadie, JUSTIN TATE, who brings them fast-food. We see the original oil painting of the album cover on the wall.

DAN

Thanks, Justin.

* Brian is wheeled out of the house into an ambulance. He's just had a stroke. Dan is beside himself; Ella takes charge.

* Dan shows Justin a guitar chord. Justin strums, doesn't get it quite right, Dan gently corrects him.

* Dan, different hairstyle, serves dinner to an impassive Brian, who sits on the settee in his dressing gown watching an arts documentary.

* Dan presents Justin with a cool guitar. Justin is overwhelmed with gratitude.

* Ella is promoted to a full-time teaching position.

* The band argues during rehearsal. Justin, now older and

somewhat cooler, observes keenly from the sidelines. Brian, better now, totters in offering a welcome interruption with tea and biscuits.

* Dan in his room, struggles to write a new song.

* Justin interrupts a band argument in the garage to demonstrate something on the guitar that Dan gave him. The song "Walk Tall" suddenly stops.

We now hear sync as Justin thrashes away like Hendrix, shaking his Robert Plant goldilocks all about. While Ella, Cesar, Sykes and Brian are impressed, Dan is filled with mixed emotions: what have I created?

After a SILENT BEAT over SLO-MO VISUAL of Justin's triumphant, hair-tossing solo, "Walk Tall" starts up again.

We return to a performance -- now 10 years later. The club is not nearly so spiffy, the audience not as engaged. The song ends to minimal applause. Only Dan remains onstage.

DAN (CONT'D)

Thanks. G'night.

(sighs, frustrated at
the inattention)

Download our album for free.
I don't care. Just listen.

The club's PA immediately plays some modern dance track.

Dan turns to leave the stage -- the others are already in the wings, changing into civilian clothes. Sykes dons an expensive gray business suit.

SYKES

Nice one, Dan.

CESAR

Bueno. Lovely set.

Ella nods and smiles at Dan.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAN'S HOUSE - VERY EARLY MORNING

BIRD SONG. A weary Dan, dressed as in the previous scene and carrying a guitar case, struggles toward a modest pebble-dash suburban house with an attached double-garage.

There's a prominent Yellow Submarine patch over the breast pocket of his denim jacket.

DAN (V.O.)
 "I'm so tired. I haven't slept a wink." The Beatles thought THEY were tired? Try gigging in toilets and lugging your own kit, guys. "A hard day's night?" Try a hard day's NIGHT BUS. (BEAT) Ahh... why can't I write songs like that?

Brian, dapper with a walking stick, greets him at the door with a cheery smile.

BRIAN
 You can, son.

DAN
 Sorry?!

BRIAN
 (chipper)
 Have a cuppa. You CAN. Kettle's already boiled.

DAN
 Oh. Cheers... You're up early.

BRIAN
 I love the morning light.

Dan squints at the morning light, which is quite beautiful. He nods approvingly, shrugs, then goes inside.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S BEDROOM -- MIDDAY

Dan lives in the loft of his father's house.

The decor -- quirky: exotic musical instruments, knickknacks collected from travels, photos of Dan and Ella. Plus racks of CDs, vinyl albums, cool but tatty posters, and, on a small table near the stairs, four vintage bobble-head figures of the Beatles: John, Paul, George, and Ringo.

Over the bed: Brian's original oil painting of the Clay Enema logo, from the band's bass drum.

Hair still wet from the bath, Dan strums guitar while working on the beginnings of a new song ("Leaden Sky").

Dan checks the time on his mobile: 12:01. He sees a text message, opens it with almost embarrassing enthusiasm: HAVE YOU BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT? YOU COULD BE OWED COMPENSATION...

VO kicks in as he goes through his normal, midday-rising routine.

DAN (V.O.)
It's a wonderful thing to have a vocation in life. To know, from an early age, exactly what you were put on this Earth to do.

Dan leaves his room after ritualistically tapping the four bobble-head Beatles figures: BOP-BOP-BOP-BOP.

DAN
(to the bobble heads)
Where are we headed, boys?
(responding in Scouser)
"To the toppermost of the poppermost!"

Dan half-arsedly makes the sound of a CROWD CHEERING.

The heads bobble, remaining in focus as Dan heads down the stairs, going out of focus.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dan enters the kitchen, finds Brian gaping forlornly at the open fridge.

DAN
No milk?

Brian sadly shakes his head. Dan gently closes the fridge, seats Brian at the table.

DAN (CONT'D)
I'm on it.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dan walks toward the corner shop.

DAN (V.O.)
For those with a vocation, the path is clear.
That's not to say it will be easy or obstacle-free, but at least the way forward is obvious, because it is the *only* way forward -- and that's the direction in which you have to keep striving.
(MORE)

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

But what if you *knew* your vocation, but it turned out, after years of focussed striving, that you weren't particularly good at it?

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER SHOP - DAY

Dan picks up some Rizlas, then moves to the dairy cooler.

DAN (V.O.)

I'm a song-writer. I always have been. I wrote my first song aged four and a half, and since that moment of revelation the path ahead has been clear. I am now 32 years old. I've never stopped writing songs.

He reaches for the organic milk, but sees the non-organic is 10p cheaper, and so opts for that. He makes a face that says, "Someday, organic milk. Someday."

DAN (V.O.)

And I've never written a good one.

CUT TO:

EXT. SECONDARY SCHOOL - DAY

A large secondary serving a diverse slice of Central London.

CUT TO:

INT. SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Ella and Dan stand in front of the class, Dan a bit nervous.

ELLA

As I promised, today I've invited a professional songwriter to talk about his craft.

Ella smiles warmly at Dan.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Dan, why don't we just jump right in? Let's see if this class has a hit song bursting out of it. Does anybody have a title, a lyric, an idea, for a song?

Several hands are enthusiastically raised.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Asha?

DAN

(interrupting)

Pardon me, Asha. First, I must say that a *hit* song is not necessarily a *good* song. And a *good* song won't necessarily be a hit.

ELLA

Right, of course. I was just-

DAN

I don't mean... Sorry, I wasn't trying to be like some whiny "artiste". It's just, so much "hit" music today is...

ASHA

(excitably)

Crap?

The other students laugh. Dan looks to Ella:

DAN

Can she say "crap"?

ELLA

Crap's ok.

DAN

Good. So. Who do you guys like? I mean, which *older* artists?

The kids start shouting out names of great artists. Dan acknowledges each with an impressed nod of agreement:

Marvin Gaye!

Nirvana!

Elvis!

Stevie Wonder!

Kanye!

CELINE, a tattooed, tough-looking black girl shouts:
Dolly Parton!

There's an expectant PAUSE.

DAN (CONT'D)

Hell yeah, Dolly Parton! Good stuff. And a good place to start. Dolly grew up dirt poor, and it infuses her songs. At least her earlier ones, like Coat of Many Colours -- before she became more about... tits and wigs.

The class laughs. Dan looks to Ella.

DAN (CONT'D)
Can I say "tits"?

ELLA
(laughing)
Let's not go as far as "tits".
Let's keep it somewhere between
"crap" and "tits".

CELINE
Can we write a song about how some
kids have all the latest phones and
clothes and trainers...

She stares down a posh boy across the room.

CELINE (CONT'D)
...and some don't?

ASHA
(can't contain herself)
But instead of writing about how
the *poor* kid feels, what if we flip
it around?

CELINE
(just as enthusiastic)
Yeah, what if it's the *rich* kid's
song -- but we write it *ironically*?

DAN
(to Ella, impressed)
"Ironically"?

ELLA
(proudly confirming)
Oh yeah.

The entire class gets excited and begins shouting out ideas.

DAN
(to class)
You guys are awesome. Want to join
my band?

CELINE
Ha! You can join MY band. As if.

As the class gathers around Celine shouting out lyrics and she struggles to write them down, Dan sidles over to Ella. They step just outside the classroom.

ELLA
Not bad, Dan.

DAN
I didn't do anything.

ELLA
Sometimes it's about lighting the fuse and then standing back. They obviously like you. And that's rare, believe me.

DAN
Nice, but... listen. You know how you were saying we maybe need to re-think things with the Enema?

ELLA
Absolutely.

DAN
Well, I was thinking, what if we did like a fusion of two classic genres, like psychedelia and, I don't know...

ELLA
The Hokey Cokey?

DAN
Funny. Ska? Has there ever been a psychedelic ska band? Syd Barrett meets... Madness. The band, not the concept. The concept, he totally... met.

ELLA
(struggling to sugar-coat)
What I meant was... maybe we need to think about how the band fits into... our lives. Take Sykes and Cesar: they still love playing, but it's what they do for *fun*. It's not at the very core of their existence.

DAN
I know, it's awful -- it's obvious they're losing the passion-

ELLA
I was going to say, perhaps they've got it right.

DAN
Oh.

ELLA

You know, I'm really enjoying this -- turning these kids onto music. For some of them, it's probably the only thing keeping them from leaving school.

DAN

I know, and that's really great.

ELLA

And it's a regular pay-cheque. So have you thought about it? I can get you an interview. You could get this job.

DAN

Except that I already HAVE a job. I'm a songwriter, remember?

ELLA nods with impatience and growing anger.

ELLA

(now with an edge)

Yes. That's right. I forgot.

ASHA

(calling out to Ella,
interrupting)

Ella! Celine is trying to rhyme "day" with "today"! But that's like the same word, isn't it?

ELLA turns back to the classroom.

CELINE

It's good enough for Justin -- he rhymes "day" and "today," and he's only like amazing.

ASHA

Yeah, Justin IS... amazing.

DAN

Justin... Timberlake? He's all right, I mean, I don't actively hate him, he's got that white Michael Jackson thing dow-

ASHA

(tapping on her mobile)

No, Mr. Dan -- Justin!

She shows the phone to Dan: it's a slick video by Justin Tate, his former Roadie! The song is lame, anodyne pop.

Dan's jaw drops.

DAN
 Ohmygod!
 (turning to Ella)
 It's *Justin* Justin!

ELLA
 I know.

DAN
 (turning back to video)
 Justin the roadie! Wow. Just...

ASHA
 Amazing.

DAN
 (nodding)
 Amazing.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN CAMDEN - DAY

A bit of music (Dolly?) as Dan walks down a grungy street.

DAN (V.O.)
 I guess it's time I came clean.
 I'm a junkie.

We see Dan stopped just outside a used-record shop:
 THE NEEDLE EXCHANGE

CUT TO:

INT. THE NEEDLE EXCHANGE - DAY

Dan browses the vinyl at an old-skool used-record shop, walls decked in a decade-spanning selection of fantastic album covers. He stops to examine a Dolly Parton album.

DAN (V.O.)
 I'm not addicted to drugs -- no, I think any musician who's trying to decide whether to become a drug addict needs to think long and hard about their obituary. When they OD, will the world remember them as a genius who burned too bright, or as an obscure loser? Here's a test. Are you Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Amy Winehouse? Or are you someone most people, even people who know music, have never heard of? (BEAT) Don't get me wrong. I've partaken. Especially when I was younger.
 (MORE)

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

I just think that for a lot of people it's a pose, and then it turns sour when that pose becomes an addiction.

He picks up a Pete Doherty album, eying the cover photo with some disgust.

Pete Doherty. Posh boy had a pretty good band, the Libertines. But the drugs made him think he was some kind of French poet. Nice chapeau, Pierre. Yeah, I know, he did get to shag Kate Moss. And I don't really have a comeback to that. Sort of just out-debated myself. Nice one, Dan. (BEAT)

We see a young woman wearing a Ramones T-shirt checking out an old Duran Duran album.

She would so hate the Ramones if she ever listened to them. Which she hasn't. And won't. And...

(BEAT)

Anyway, to state the obvious. I'm addicted to music. I mainline vinyl. I used to work here, but I had to quit, cause I wasn't just spending my entire pay-cheque here, I was actually spending more than that. I just love to look at the album covers. And the sound. Warm. That crackle at the beginning of a side. Gives me a semi.

Just then, the CRACKLE of a new record starting to play in the shop.

Dan looks down at the front of his trousers. He then looks around to see if anyone has noticed.

CUT TO:

EXT DAN'S HOUSE - EVENING

DAN (V.O.)

I don't know if Justin got my competitive juices flowing, or what, but the very next day I finished my best song yet: "Leaden Sky." I couldn't wait to show it to the band.

Dan bursts from the house swinging his guitar case.

DAN
 (humming the song)
 Lea-eh-den sky-eye... Whoo! Rock
 and roll! Hello, Cleveland!

He almost bumps into Brian, coming up the front path carrying art supplies.

BRIAN
 Hello.

DAN
 All right, dad?

BRIAN
 Yes, I am. Thought I might even
 start painting again.

DAN
 That's great! You must be
 feeling better.

BRIAN
 I am. Oh - I suppose
 congratulations are in order.

DAN
 Are they?

BRIAN
 Aren't they?

DAN
 Why?

BRIAN
 Isn't your record back in the hit
 parade?

DAN
 What?

BRIAN
 You're at number one in the hit
 parade.

DAN
 Am I?

Dan has whipped out his phone and is Googling for all he's worth. Dan soon figures it out -- and is a bit stunned.

BRIAN
 Well?

DAN
 It's not us.

BRIAN

Who?

DAN

Us. Clay Enema. Someone else has covered "Walk Tall Like a Man" -- and yes, it's gone to Number One.

BRIAN

Oh.

DAN

Band called "Shellshock"? I didn't even know.

BRIAN

What number did *you* get to?

DAN

Four... teen.

BRIAN

Oh. Well. Still, you'll be getting some pretty hefty royalty cheques out of that one! Doesn't matter who's singing it, it's who wrote it! Am I right?

DAN

Dad. I didn't write it. Our's was a cover too.

BRIAN

Was it? I thought you wrote that one.

DAN

Nope.

BRIAN

(belting it out basso profundo - like a madman)
"Walk tall, when she passes by...?"

DAN

Nope. Paul Vance and Lee Pockriss wrote it. About fifty years ago.

BRIAN

Oh. Well. Never mind. (BEAT)
Off to do a spot of busking?

DAN

Laying down some tracks. Got a great new song. And... I am late.

BRIAN
Right-ho. Have a good time.

DAN
Cheers.

Dan zips his jacket, which bears that Yellow Submarine patch over the breast pocket, and starts off up the road. A group of COOL TEENS are hanging out, and as Dan passes them, Brian calls out.

BRIAN
Oh, Dan! I still need you to go through that box of toys and throw out what you don't want. It's all your old Lego and cars. I need the space for my studio, so any you don't think you'll be playing with any more...

The cool teens snicker. Dan, wincing, keeps walking. The cool kids follow and harass him a bit before giving up.

DAN (V.O.)
AND the guys will yell at me for being late again. No matter I've just written my best song ever. I wonder if Kurt Cobain showed up 20 minutes late humming "Here we are now, entertain us" -- did the other Nirvana guys, Dave and... Kris? Christ? How do you say that name? Did they whine that he was late? Or did they shit themselves at the glory and the wonder of it? Answer: They shat themselves.
(SHORT BEAT)
And it smelled like teen spirit.

CUT TO:

EXT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - NIGHT

Establishing shot of a decrepit rehearsal studio.

CUT TO:

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT

The session is not going well. The band are midway through Dan's new song, "Leaden Sky" -- and it sounds awful, a dirge. Dan is getting frustrated, looks accusingly at the other musicians. Eventually he stops playing and the others slowly, painfully grind to a halt.

CESAR

Que pasa?

DAN

That's where you were supposed to come in.

CESAR

When?

DAN

Where I said. Four bars in.

CESAR

(to Dan)

That's not what you said.

DAN

Yes it is. Four bars in. That's what that ten-minute discussion we just had was all about.

CESAR

I don't remember.

DAN

You don't remember the discussion?

ELLA

Dan...

DAN

I'm not being arsey, I'm just...
Isn't that what we discussed?

A tense moment of silence. It could become a full blown argument, but nobody wants that.

Suddenly, breaking the tension, Dan's phone beeps: a text message.

SYKES

Shall we have a cuppa?

Dan reads the text.

DAN

Yeah, OK. Let's take five. My dad has locked himself out. Again. It actually says, "Licked myself," but I'm assuming that's the predictive text.

CESAR

If not... then he's one lucky hombre.

Sykes nods. The mood lifts.

ELLA
 (joining in)
 I'm telling you, boys -- pilates.
 THAT'S the secret benefit.

SYKES
 Indeed. There's was this one jammy
 lad at Radley. He was like a
 contortionist.

DAN
 Anyway... I've got to go meet him
 at the Tube.

SYKES
 Still didn't stop him from
 mercilessly bugging all the new
 chaps.

ELLA
 (to Dan)
 Give Brian my love.

They put down their instruments and file out. Ella watches as Dan puts on his jacket, which, for the last time, sports a prominent Yellow Submarine patch on the breast pocket.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUBE STATION - EVENING

The street is dark and deserted. As Dan approaches the tube station, he notes that Brian has not yet arrived.

Dan leans against a poster advertising Shellshock's Number One Hit: "Walk Tall." Back turned to it, he doesn't notice.

Dan deftly rolls a cigarette and lights it. Just as he exhales, calm descending, he looks up, his eyes widen, he coughs as his body convulses in a paroxysm of shock and dismay. The camera spins around to reveal the reason:

It's a gi-normous billboard of a smug-looking Justin, advertising his upcoming concert... at the Royal Albert Hall!

The image smacks Dan like a punch in the face. He grabs his chest, as if having a heart attack, and collapses.

Out of nowhere, a man comes to gently help him up: Brian.

DAN
 Dad...

BRIAN
 Are you OK, son?

Dan silently points at the billboard in disbelief.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 Oh, lovely! He's done all right,
 hasn't he?

BEAT as Dan considers whether Brian realises the effect
 Justin's runaway success is having on him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 (the penny drops)
 Oh. Oh, I see.

DAN
 My roadie. Is playing. The Albert
 Hall. (BEAT) Can I ask you
 something?

BRIAN
 Certainly.

DAN
 Am I just POSING as a songwriter?
 I mean, Ella wants me to get a
 "real" job, and the others have
 already moved on... while I'm still
 living in your loft.

BRIAN
 Which I appreciate. I'm sorry... I
 do think I'm getting better...
 Maybe soon you can...

DAN
 (feels terrible about
 saying that)
 No, no, I just meant that was part
 of the whole... Look. Our only hit
 was a cover version -- and now even
that's been taken away.

BRIAN
 Oh, you mean...

Brian gesticulates towards the poster that Dan is obliviously
 leaning against.

Perplexed for a moment, Dan looks over his shoulder to see
 the Shellshock poster. Registering it, he jumps away as if
 receiving an electric jolt.

DAN
 Aaagh!

Dan shakes his head in disbelief. They say when it rains, it
 pours -- but this is ridiculous.

DAN (CONT'D)
 And that's not the worst of it.

BRIAN

Eh?

DAN

My "great" new song?
 (deep breath)
 It's shit.

Brian doesn't know quite how to respond.

BRIAN

I'm sure it's not... um, excrement.

DAN

I wasn't expecting us to become the Beatles... but I was hoping for better than this.

BRIAN

Not everybody meets their muse at a convenient age, son. But something tells me you're on the verge.

DAN

Yeah, right.

BRIAN

I'm serious.

DAN

Well... thanks.

BRIAN

It can happen any moment.

Dan holds out his hands and looks heavenward, anticipating. After a BEAT, he laughs. Brian smiles back slyly.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I'll be off then.

DAN

(jingling the house keys)
 Umm, haven't you forgotten-?

KRINGGG! A MUSICAL CUE. NOT UNLIKE THE LEGENDARY OPENING CHORD TO "A HARD DAY'S NIGHT." SOMETHING HAS JUST HAPPENED.

Dan turns, looking for the source of the sound.

DAN (CONT'D)

(turning back)
 What the hell was-

Brian is gone -- how did he vanish so quickly? And Dan still holds the house keys.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh. All right, then.

Suddenly, something goes a bit "off" with this scene. The colours become over-saturated, there's a barely noticeable drone, every motion leaves a "tracer" behind it.

Dan looks towards the previously dark roundabout. It's now brightly lit and thronging with people.

Dan's senses -- 1,2,3,4,5 -- are working overtime. He's able to overhear conversations and sounds clearly, perceiving people and objects in sharply detailed close-up.

We hear a strange musical mash-up: psychedelic guitar, sitar, an orchestra tuning-up, music playing backwards, dream-like and swirling. Not unlike the post-fadeout sequence of "Strawberry Fields." Building to a crescendo.

Two young guys holding a conversation...

GUY 1

She loves you!

A helper guiding with his hands a white van backing into a loading area...

HELPER

Yeah... yeah... yeah!

The helper then makes a STOP motion with his hands.

A mother grabbing at her toddler.

MOTHER

I want to hold your hand!

Dan spots FOUR GUYS who vaguely resemble the 1969 Beatles at a zebra crossing. As they do, there is a shout...

SHOUTED VOICE

Get back!

A yellow, 1960s Rolls Royce speeds through a red traffic light, clips the kerb, and careens into the zebra crossing.

In choreographed unison, the four guys jump back out of the way, narrowly avoiding being hit by the car, which hurtles past Dan. Dan makes brief eye contact with the panicked-looking driver. Brian? It can't be.

He watches the car disappear around the bend and then looks back towards the roundabout, where the people disperse almost as quickly as they appeared. The roundabout is dark and deserted again. The four Beatle-looking guys have vanished.

Dan frowns, flicks away his cigarette, and heads back to the studio.

As he hunches up his jacket, we notice the Yellow Submarine patch is no longer there.

CUT TO:

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE SNACK ROOM - NIGHT

As Dan enters, he sees the band making another cup of tea and getting biscuits from a vending machine.

DAN
Hey, you won't belie-

He realises they can't hear him behind the glass. He wanders back into the rehearsal room.

CUT TO:

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT

Absent-mindedly strumming his guitar, Dan starts to play "Yesterday," by the Beatles. It's a relief not to be playing "Leaden Sky," and he drifts into reverie, HUMMING the lyrics.

In the background, standing in the doorway, Sykes, Cesar and Ella listen to Dan playing. When he's finished, they carry on into the room.

SYKES
That was nice.

Dan nods.

SYKES (CONT'D)
What was that?

Dan nods again and smiles. Sykes is trying to relieve the tense atmosphere, and Dan appreciates the effort.

SYKES (CONT'D)
Seriously. Is that yours?

DAN
(playing along)
Yeah, yeah, that's one of mine.
Something I've been mucking
around with.
(in a Liverpool accent)
It came to me in a dream about
scrambled eggs.

SYKES
It's great. Do you want to teach us
that one and give "Leaden Sky" a
break for a bit?

OK. Enough's enough. Dan gets up and straps on his guitar.

DAN
Right, so, four bars after the
chorus, that's when you should
come in, Cesar...

ELLA
Can't we give that one a rest,
Dan? We're all getting
frustrated. I think Sykes is
right, let's move on to something
else for a bit.

DAN
(annoyed)
OK, sure, what then?

ELLA
Why don't you teach us the one
you were just playing?

Dan looks at the three of them. They seem to be serious.

DAN
Are you taking the piss?

SYKES
What? No.

DAN
That was "Yesterday."

SYKES
OK. Well... why don't you want
to teach us?

DAN
"Yesterday"? By the Beatles?

CESAR
So it's not one of yours?

Dan is incredulous, he's not quite sure what's going on,
but the other three aren't smiling.

DAN
It's "Yes-ter-day"...
By-the-Be-a-tles.

SYKES
Don't know them.

DAN
Seriously, Sykes. Enough.

SYKES

I'm sorry, mate, sorry I don't have your encyclopedic knowledge of music, but I've not heard of these "Be-a-tles," and I don't know that song.

Dan has had enough. He slams his guitar into its case and closes it with a bang.

ELLA

Dan... Don't do this -- we're just trying to...

DAN

Just trying to what? Wind me up? It's not funny.

ELLA

Nobody's trying to wind you up.

Dan leaves, Ella follows -- leaving Cesar and Sykes bewildered.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dan is struggling with a broken latch on his guitar case.

ELLA

What's wrong with you? Why can't you calm down?

DAN

I just want to play music. We so rarely get everyone together at the same time to rehearse that it pisses me off no one else can take it seriously.

ELLA

We do take it seriously. We want to play too, but what's the point in bashing away and getting annoyed? Sykes was just suggesting we play that other one to have a break for a bit.

Dan turns round to look at her, studying her face.

DAN

That was "Yesterday". By the Beatles.

ELLA
So you keep saying. I don't know
it.

DAN
It's the most recorded song in
history.

Now she's getting pissed off.

ELLA
Why are you doing this? Are you
saying I don't know about music?
Are you the only one who can know
anything?

Dan covers his face in exasperation.

DAN
Look it up.

ELLA
What?

DAN
Look it up. Look up "What's the
most recorded song in history?"

Ella does not want to play his games.

ELLA
I'm not going...

DAN
LOOK IT UP!

She is so angry, but takes out her phone anyway and starts
tapping in the question.

ELLA
Fine, and then you'll feel
better, will you? Feel good that
you know more about obscure
bands...

Dan, still with his face in his hands, lets out a strange,
strangled whimper.

A pause while the page on the phone loads.

ELLA (CONT'D)
(with the slightest
glint of triumph)
"White Christmas," by Irving
Berlin.

She holds out the phone for him to see. He looks up.

DAN
Bollocks.

ELLA
Yes, what does the internet know about these things? You know far more about music than "the internet."

Dan goes to take the phone.

DAN
Give me that a second.

She snatches it away.

ELLA
Use your own.

She storms off. Dan, still puzzled, tries to check his phone, but it's not working.

CUT TO:

EXT. SECONDARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Dan is waiting for Ella as she wheels her bicycle out of school. He walks along side her for a few beats.

DAN
Sorry, I would've texted, but my phone's suddenly not working. About last night. I was just... frustrated.

ELLA
We're all getting a bit frustrated. But you seem to be of the opinion that you're the only one taking anything seriously. We're all still into the band, but you can't blame the others for looking at alternative ways to pay the bills.

DAN
I know, I don't blame them. I just... I wasn't in the mood for jokes, that's all.

ELLA
No one was trying to wind you up, you're too sensitive.

DAN
I mean the whole Beatles thing. I just didn't find it funny.

Ella stops.

ELLA

That's what I mean, I don't think anybody was *trying* to be funny. You can't expect everyone else to be such music nerds as you are, and if you drop in an obscure reference don't get upset if we're not as clued-up as you.

DAN

But...

ELLA

(mounting her bike)
I've got to go. I'll see you tomorrow at rehearsal?

DAN

Yeah.

She kisses him.

ELLA

And say something to the guys so we don't have to practise with an atmosphere.

DAN

OK.

As Ella rides away, Dan takes out his phone and starts tapping. Still broken. Celine approaches him.

CELINE

I don't get it. She's a solid 9, and even if you had a job, you'd be a 6 at best -- what's up with that?

Dan's doleful eyes briefly flick up from his phone and then back down again, blanking her.

CELINE (CONT'D)

(muttering)
Well, *I* never heard of Clay Enema. Stupid-ass name.

DAN

(suddenly thinking)
Yeah, how about the Beatles? Have you heard of them?

Celine shakes her head. Dan nods for her to check her phone.

DAN (CONT'D)

That's Beatles with an A.

CELINE
B-E-A tles. Right. (BEAT) Nope.

She shows Dan her phone:

DID YOU MEAN 'BEETLES'? SHOWING RESULTS FOR BEETLES.

It displays a list of insect and Volkswagen-based links.

Dan mulls this over. With a sudden urgency, he begins trotting away.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dan is on the land line, just wrapping up a conversation. Brian is sketching on his pad.

DAN
...Yes, mate, well, give us a buzz when you're in town next and we'll grab a beer... Nice one... Give my love to Helen... Will do... Oh, just, before you, um, you know The Beatles...? The Beatles... The band... No, that was the Crickets, Buddy Holly and the Crickets... Nope, not the Scorpions... (SIGHS) No, that was Adam and the Ants. (it's now a Battle of the Music Trivia Geeks) And before you ask, I don't mean Jake Bugg, or Iron Butterfly, or Sting, or The Roches, or Midge Ure, or Flea. (BEAT) You know -- The Beatles. John, Paul, George, Ringo... No?... Doesn't matter, no, I was just trying to remember something, but it doesn't matter. Anyway mate, speak soon, cheers, see ya.

Hangs up. Sits thinking. Serious. Shakes head: This is weird.

He goes to put an old fashioned, "on-the-hob" kettle on, and as he does, he leans in to look at Brian's sketch, an evocative image of a couple that are stewing, post-argument. NOTE: Remember this image, for it shall return near the end.

DAN (CONT'D)
(looking at sketch)
That's... wow, that's incredible.
(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

You really could have been a proper
artist...

Dan realises he's just trod into uncomfortable territory.

DAN (CONT'D)

...if you...

BRIAN

I know you think I gave up my art
dreams when I married your dear
departed mum. That's our family
mythology, right? But who's to say
I would have made it? It's an
unfair world, art -- based as much
on relationships and image as
what's there on the canvas. The
most famous artists aren't
necessarily the best, and the best
don't always become famous.
Commercial art wasn't just a more
stable life -- I really enjoy it.

Dan nods. The echoes to his own art are glaringly obvious.

DAN

Oh, and thanks for that pep talk
the other night.

Brian looks quizzically at Dan.

DAN (CONT'D)

By the Tube. When you forgot your
keys?

BRIAN

(genuinely confused)
Did I? I don't... remember.

DAN

Oh. Right. Hey, I was thinking.
You were a proper hipster back in
the Sixties, right?

BRIAN

Ish.

DAN

Did you ever see the Beatles live?

BRIAN

I do seem to remember...

DAN

Four mop tops, from Liverpool?

BRIAN

Yes. Yes, of course. The Beatles!

DAN
Really? Wow. I was actually
starting to think... Can you name
any of their songs?

BRIAN
It was so long ago...

DAN
But you *do* remember the Beatles.
Definitely.

BRIAN
Oh yes.

Dan tilts his head back, smiles ruefully and SIGHS. Sanity
restored. Or is it?

BRIAN (CONT'D)
The Beatles...
(counting on his fingers)
Let's see, there was... Dave Dee,
Dozy, Beaky, Mick... and Tich!

DAN
No, that was... someone else.

Suddenly, a thought. He runs up the stairs to the loft.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dan zips through his CDs, arranged alphabetically (of
course) on shelves. He traces a finger along the B's: B-
52s, Babyshambles, Backstreet Boys, Beach Boys, Beastie
Boys, Beautiful South.

DAN (V.O.)
I had every Beatles album. On both
CD and...

Down below are crates of vinyl. He flicks through the B's:
Bauhaus, Beastie Boys, Black Sabbath, Blind Faith.

He stands there. Amazed. The kettle starts to whistle as
some sort of realisation starts to dawn.

A thought snaps him out of it: he returns to the CD shelf,
locates the Backstreet Boys CD, and slings it in the bin.

As he leaves the room, he absentmindedly taps the four bobble
heads. But they are no longer the Beatles.

We see in CU that the figures are now Dan, Ella, Cesar and Sykes -- but Dan hasn't noticed. Once again, we stay focused on the bobble heads as Dan exits and goes out of focus.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABBEY ROAD - DAY

Dan walks down Abbey Road, in St. John's Wood. We stay tight on him, so we can't yet see the studio or zebra crossing.

DAN (V.O.)
 Abbey Road. Where the Beatles recorded all their albums. The place is a shrine. Covered in graffiti. Tourists day and night. The zebra crossing from the cover of the Abbey Road album. Legend.

Dan reaches the zebra crossing outside of EMI Studios. It's revealed that there is now nothing special on here: no graffiti, no tourists, no public interest whatsoever.

DAN (V.O.)
 Except now... it's just a pedestrian crossing. In both senses of the word "pedestrian."
 (self-congratulatory)
 Nice one.
 But seriously:

DAN
 (now aloud, hands held out, to the heavens)
 What. The. Fuck?

CUT TO:

INT. THE NEEDLE EXCHANGE - DAY

A few serious looking record-heads are flicking through the vinyl. They look up as the door opens with a bang and a slightly out-of-breath, wild-eyed Dan stands there. He shouts over the music to the guy behind the counter:

DAN
 Got anything by the Beatles?

RECORD SHOP GUY
 Who?

With a manic laugh Dan raises his fists above his head, turns out of the shop and the door slams behind him.
 (This one's in the trailer)

Suddenly, Dan reappears inside the record shop.

DAN
 (shouting from the
 doorway)
 Paul McCartney? John Lennon?

The RECORD CLERK shrugs: sorry. A few OTHER CUSTOMERS look at each other quizzically.

CUSTOMER 1
 Did he say John Legend?

Another customer shakes his head.

DAN
 Yesss!

Dan exits again, leaving them all in bewilderment.

Dan returns yet again. Without a word, he goes to the "C VARIOUS" section, flips through the stack with the speedy prowess of a music shop veteran, finds the Clay Enema album, and moves it to the front of the stack.

He exits once again.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S GARAGE - NIGHT

The band are setting up. The atmosphere is tense; someone needs to break the ice. Ella catches Dan's eye and nods to him: "Go on, like we said..."

DAN
 Listen, guys, I need to apologise
 for last time, for getting all
 snappy and that...

That's all it needed.

SYKES
 No worries mate, it's cool.

DAN
 No, I mean it. I was in a mood,
 and...

CESAR
 Esta bien, amigo...

SYKES
 I shouldn't have kept going on
 about that song. We all agreed
 that we need to concentrate on
 original stuff and give the
 covers a break.

DAN
Yeah, well, I guess that was it,
but there was no reason to jump
down your throat.

Ella smiles at Dan.

SYKES
Water under the bridge.
So. "Leaden Sky"?

Dan tries to sound casual.

DAN
Actually, I've been working on
something... something I wanted
to try out... just to see if...

CESAR
A new song?

DAN
Sort of, well, yeah, something we
could... you know...

SYKES
Nice one, let's hear it.

Dan straps on his guitar.

DAN
OK, it's, well, it's... you might
not...

Suddenly he's not so sure. They will surely laugh at him
and reveal their cruel prank.

He studies their faces for a long BEAT, trying to find a
trace of a smirk. Nothing. Deep breath. Here goes.

He starts to play the iconic opening riff to "Day Tripper"
He plays it through once, twice, three times, four times.

Then, to his surprise, Sykes comes in on the drums in
exactly the right place. Dan loses his nerve, thinks the
game is up, stops playing.

SYKES
Sorry, should I not have...?

DAN
Did you...? Have you heard it?

SYKES
Sorry, it seemed like the right
place to come in. Shall I wait?

DAN

No, you're right, that's the right place to come in. I just, I was surprised, that's all. Yeah, I'll go again...

Another BEAT as he assesses the situation. No, it's all cool.

He starts the riff again, Sykes comes in at the right place, Ella starts a bass line (not quite right but good enough), Cesar joins in. Dan starts to sing, all the time watching the others for signs of mirth. There are none, and he starts to really enjoy himself. The lyrics aren't perfect, but close enough.

Brian has entered, as always with a tea tray. He taps his foot along with the beat, enjoying the song.

They get to the end of the song. Brian applauds.

BRIAN

Marvellous. Is that new?

Dan grins.

DAN

Yeah... yeah, I reckon it is.

The rest of the band make similar noises of approval.

CESAR

Nice work. "An instant classic."

SYKES

Love it. Not exactly sure what a "day tripper" is, but... great.

CESAR

Have you got any others like that up your sleeve?

DAN

Do you know what? I think I might have.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSIC CLUB - NIGHT

A decent-sized crowd hangs outside smoking.

The marquee: TONIGHT RELIVE THE NAUGHTY NOUGHTS: FRANZ FERDINAND/THE CORAL/CLAY ENIGMA

CUT TO:

INT. MUSIC CLUB - NIGHT

It's a nice venue, as the bill features a few of the better known bands of the mid 2000's. There's a decent crowd, but as Clay Enema is just the opening act, they aren't paying the band much attention, waiting for the bands they actually came to see.

Clay Enema is just finishing their set with "Day Tripper." They sound good and their performance is exciting.

DAN (V.O.)
I'm not sure what I was
expecting...

They receive applause at the end as they head offstage.

DAN (V.O.)
But I was expecting more than
that. "Day Tripper" was massive
for the Beatles -- a Number
One... probably.

Dan steps offstage into the wings. The rest of the band are carrying their instruments, packing up stuff, normal.

DAN (V.O.)
And what about "Yesterday"?!
Where are my screaming girls??
I want my Beatlemania!

The club promoter comes hurrying up.

Here goes, Dan grins expectantly.

CLUB PROMOTER
Why didn't you play "Walk Tall"?

DAN
Huh?

CLUB PROMOTER
"Walk Tall"? Why didn't you play
it?

DAN
Dunno. Played new stuff.

CLUB PROMOTER
This is a Noughts nostalgia
night, Dan. These people paid to
hear the old stuff. "Walk Tall"
is in the charts again.

DAN
Not our version.

CLUB PROMOTER

So what? You did it first.

DAN

Third. Possibly not even. What did you think of the new stuff?

CLUB PROMOTER

Yeah, OK, didn't really hear it. Jesus, Dan, don't mess me about. You weren't even supposed to be on the bill, but then the Zutons got all shirty... Don't get me started on the Zutons. Anyway, people are complaining.

DAN

Complaining?

CLUB PROMOTER

Yes! They want to hear the familiar ones. Well, it's too late now.

He hurries away, pissed off. Dan is stunned. Another musician, carrying a flight case...

MUSICIAN

Nice set, Dan!

This is it. Dan smiles broadly.

DAN

Yeah? Cheers! Some new tracks there that I've been...

MUSICIAN

Why didn't you play "Walk Tall"?

And he's gone. This isn't the reaction Dan expected.

CUT TO:

INT GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

The members of Clay Enema attend to their various post-gig business. Sykes is checking the Asian financial markets on his tablet, Cesar is flirting with a handsome guy, Ella is conversing with a record-company guy (JONNO), and Dan is chatting to Alex Kapranos of Franz Ferdinand.

ALEX

Hey, did you catch Justin the other night? Can you believe-

DAN

Now we know how many arse-holes
it takes to fill the Albert Hall.

ALEX

(taken aback)

Whoa. Harsh.

DAN

No, that's a... reference...

(unable to explain, he
waves dismissively)

Um, can I ask you something, if
it's not too weird?

ALEX

It can be weird.

DAN

(smiling)

Right. You were like pretty old
when you first got successful,
right? I mean, you were in the
Yummy Fur, but really...

ALEX

(nodding)

When "Take Me Out" came out, I was
almost 32. So yeah, in rock years,
I was pretty ancient all right.
But, hey, Colonel Sanders was 65
when he invented Kentucky Fried
Chicken.

DAN

I did not know that. (BEAT) It's
just that, I'm 32 now, and I think
I'm finally hitting my stride.

ALEX

I like that new ballad. Like it
a lot, actually. And your closer
-- great guitar riff. I can just
picture that in a car ad.

DAN

(taking it in)

Uh-huh, car ad, uh-huh.

ALEX

Listen, there's this record
company guy here, Jonno. Maybe
you should talk to him.

DAN

Which one is he?

They scope the room. Dan notices a guy in a sharp sports jacket speaking animatedly with Ella.

ALEX
That's him.

Ella smiles at Jonno and takes his business card.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Is she still your...?

DAN
He seems nice.

DAN walks over towards JONNO, who flashes a bright smile.

CUT TO:

INT RECORD COMPANY OFFICE - DAY

It's not the sort of flashy record company office you normally see in the movies. More of an austerity office: open-plan, with rented furniture and other businesses operating out of the same space.

Dan and Ella are on the couch. JONNO subtly admires Ella.

JONNO
Listen, I wanted to meet with you guys, cause I really am a fan of the Enema. I remember buying your record when I was in primary school.

DAN
Which one?

JONNO
Um, Oakfield Lane Primary.

DAN
Which record?

JONNO
Oh! You had more than one?
Great. Good. To. Know.

DAN
Yeah, well, we kind of got screwed by our distri- Did you hear our set the other night?

JONNO
Yeah. No. I was backstage. I don't do... "not backstage." But I hear it was... really good.

DAN

It's just, we have some very strong new songs, with a lot more coming -- a lot more.

ELLA

And although we're currently self-distributing, we might consider going with a record company. To get us "out there" a bit more. Maybe mount a proper tour.

JONNO

I would love to sign you guys. But...

ELLA & DAN

(in unison)

Everyone I know has a big "but."

They smile at each other. JONNO looks confused.

ELLA & DAN (CONT'D)

Pee-Wee.

JONNO

Problem is, I'm not allowed to sign any indie rock. My remit is dance music. It truly doth sucketh, I know, but that's where the money is these days. Ring tones, adverts... It's a "post-social-media landscape..." And no, I don't know what that means either.

Ella exchanges an annoyed look with Dan.

Dan stands up, a fire burning within.

DAN

Ringtones? Did the Clash care about ringtones?

Jonno shrugs.

DAN (CONT'D)

Did Paul McCar... Weller need post-social media?

ELLA

(confused)

Paul McCarweller?

DAN

What's today's date?

JONNO
I dunno. July...?

DAN
I want you to look it up. What's
today's date?

Jonno is totally confused.

ELLA
July the 10th.

DAN
July the 10th. At...
(checking his phone,
which takes one BEAT
longer than it should
to seem cool)
Screen's gone to sleep...
Two-forty-seven PM! July the
10th, two-forty-seven PM. I want
you to remember this date and
time, because a year from now,
you're going to be telling
everybody, back on July the 10th,
at two-forty-seven PM, I could
have signed Clay Enema -- but I
didn't. "I could have signed
Clay Enema!"

AWKWARD SILENCE.

JONNO
Yes, well, as I said, my hands
are tied. I'm really sorry. But
who knows, in this business?
Things change.

DAN takes ELLA by the hand and they head for the exit. He
grabs the door handle to exit. But the door doesn't open --
you need to push a release button.

JONNO (CONT'D)
Hang on.

Jonno pushes the release button.

DAN
July the 10th. Two-forty-seven
PM. Trust me. You will
remember.

ELLA
 (to Jonno, maintaining
 civility amidst Dan's
 strange outburst)
 Bye. Thank you.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: MODERATE SUCCESS

Over a Clay Enema version of "Money (That's What I Want)" (a Tamla Records song the Beatles famously covered), we see modest signs of improvement in the fortunes of Clay Enema.

There's some media coverage, and the band go on a national tour, playing to crowds of literally dozens. Not mega-success by any means, but they are gigging steadily.

DAN (V.O.)
 We decided we didn't actually want a record deal -- if you sell directly online, you get to keep a MUCH bigger chunk of the cash. And let's face it, the record album is dead. It's all singles now.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDENT PUB - NIGHT

We see the band finish a student gig in Loughborough. A pretty blonde chats up Dan after the show.

DAN (V.O.)
 I was starting to get my mojo back.

When he sees Ella watching him, he makes his excuses and turns away.

DAN (V.O.)
 Not that I would ever... I had Ella, bless her. Always there, like a beautiful... cop.

ELLA
 Don't let it go to your head. It's just a music thing. Silly girls love rock stars. And I use the term loosely.

Dan nods, agreeing.

DAN
 I know. I mean, that's the only reason you're with me, right?

ELLA
It's certainly not your
personality.

They exchange a smile.

ELLA (CONT'D)
Actually, I'm serious.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

The song "Money" picks up again.

A queue outside a nightclub. Dan strolls confidently to the front of the queue and offers the doormen a cool salute.

DAN (V.O.)
It was like living in a dream.

The doorman scrutinizes Dan, stops him from breezing inside.

DOORMAN
Is you somebody?

Just then, Jonno the Record Company Guy wheels up and breezes in. When he sees Dan, there is a flash of uncertain recognition. Dan offers this as proof that he is somebody. The doorman shrugs and allows Dan inside.

DAN (V.O.)
It just wasn't THE dream.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Some recognizable music-world faces.

Dan's ex-roadie, Justin, is surrounded by press and admirers -- while Dan has been cornered by some Z-list male tabloid celeb (Eg. Joey Essex).

Justin notices Dan and breaks off from his admirers.

JUSTIN
Dan! How are you? How's the
Enema? Still gigging?

DAN
Still... what?! Have you not heard
"Day Tripper"? "Yesterday"??

JUSTIN

(he hasn't)

Oh... yeah. Of course. I am so happy to see you. I mean, all this...

(open-armed gesture)

It all began with you. My first chord, my first guitar... You'll never know how grateful I am, Dan. You... were my inspiration. And my mentor. My "inspir-mentor."

DAN

That's nice of you to say. I...

JUSTIN

I'm really sorry, I have to catch that guy over there before he leaves. You going to be here long?

DAN

I'm not sure. Anyway... congratulations.

Justin flashes a sincere smile and leaves.

JOEY ESSEX (OR WHOEVER)

(impressed)

You know Justin?

DAN

Know him? I am his "inspir-mentor."

JOEY ESSEX

Whuh?

DAN

I just realised. You know who I've become? Townes Van Zandt.

JOEY ESSEX

That's a funny name.

DAN

(ignoring)

Great songwriter, gets name-checked all the time... Never had a hit record, never made a dime. (BEAT) I don't want to be Townes Van Zandt.

JOEY ESSEX

(total incomprehension)

That's a funny name.

DAN
And I'm not going to be.

CUT TO:

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Dan is playing a new song -- "Hello Hello" -- for the band.

DAN
You say yes/ I say no/ You say
stop/ And I say go go go...

The band is dubious.

ELLA
Is it a children's song?

DAN
(sighs, shifts to
another tune)
Ooh, I admit it's getting better/
Getting better, all the time...
(indicating the band
should sing background
vocals, using falsetto)
It can't get no worse...

The band breaks up laughing.

DAN (V.O.)
It WAS getting better. I was
cherry-picking the best body of
work in rock history... to the
best of my recollection.

A THUNDEROUS CHORD OF DOOM (like the end of "A Day In The Life") as we see a title fill the screen:

ONE YEAR LATER

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MUSIC VENUE - NIGHT

Close on Clay Enema as they wrap up their set with "We Can Work it Out" or some other classic.

As they finish, we pull out to find them, not playing a stadium, an arena, or even a theatre, but the usual pub venue. A modest sized crowd are modestly enthusiastic.

DAN
Thank you! On behalf of the
group and ourselves, I hope we
passed the audition!

The other band members share quizzical looks, down instruments and leave the stage.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The band file off but Dan is lingering, listening to the crowd response, he gestures to the others to hang fire.

DAN
Wait, wait, guys!

They look back at him, confused.

CESAR
What, mate?

DAN
I think they want an encore.

The others listen. No, the clapping is definitely fading.

SYKES
I think we're done, mate.

DAN
No, listen! They want us to go back!

They listen. The clapping ends. The DJ starts a record.

DAN (CONT'D)
Bollocks. Missed our chance. They definitely wanted us back.

The guys are a bit bemused. "Who is he kidding?"

SYKES
Oh well. Leave 'em wanting more, eh?

DAN
S'pose.

Suddenly a young, enthusiastic chap, BILL CHANNON, presents himself and his business card.

BILL
Hello guys. Great set! Brilliant!

DAN
Thanks...
(looking at card)
"Bill Channon, Heavenly Music."
Cheers.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

I think we could have squeezed an encore but we left it too late.

The others looked slightly embarrassed.

BILL

Definitely! Definitely! They loved it! Listen, I've got a smallish music company, not been going long but really going places, you know. I was wondering if we could have a quick chat. I've got a proposal you might be interested in.

DAN

Oh cool, sure.

BILL

I'll let you pack your stuff up. Shall I see you in the pub over the road? Bit quieter.

DAN

OK, yeah, nice one.

Bill leaves them to it. HOWARD, the club promoter, approaches, counting out some notes.

HOWARD

Nice one, guys. Solid.

DAN

Cheers, I think we could have got an encore, but Phil put on a record too soon.

HOWARD

(sceptical)

Well, don't know about that.

(he hands over the cash)

Not going to be able to fit you in now til July I'm afraid. We've got some exciting new bands want to try stuff out before the festival season kicks in.

DAN

July?! Are you kidding?

HOWARD

Sorry, Dan, I can't risk not booking these bands. Some of them are on the brink of becoming massive, y'know? This might be my last chance before they go viral.

DAN
Well, what about us?

HOWARD
Well, mate, I know I can always
rely on you guys. You're solid,
you'll always be here to fill in.
Listen, if anyone drops out,
you're the first on the list.

Howard goes, leaving Dan speechless.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB - NIGHT

The band are at a table as Bill brings over a tray of
drinks and joins them.

THE BAND
Cheers. Thanks. Nice one. Etc.

BILL
Pleasure. That was great tonight,
really great songs. Who does the
writing?

DAN
Me.

CESAR
Mostly Dan.

DAN
Mostly me.

BILL
Some of them sound like absolute
classics. I'm amazed they're not
on the radio.

DAN
Some of them are.

BILL
They should really be reaching a
far bigger audience.

DAN
Would be good.

BILL
I think I might know how to make
that happen.

DAN
We're all ears.

BILL
You've heard of Shellshock?

DAN
The mental disorder?

BILL
No, the band.

ELLA
Oh yeah, the boy band?

BILL
Well, we don't like to say "boy band" -- they're not like one of those manufactured bands from X Factor or something.

ELLA
Didn't they come fourth on Britain's Got Talent?

BILL
Well, yes, but...

SYKES
Oh, I know. Five of them, one's black, one's in a wheelchair?

BILL
That's them!

CESAR
Oh yeah, and the tough looking one and the pretty-boy, cute one.

BILL
Exactly, and Craig is the fifth.

CESAR
Don't remember him.

SYKES
No, don't remember him.

DAN
Anyway, "...not a boy band...?"

BILL
Exactly! Well these guys are massive already. They had a number one last year -- "Walk Tall"?

ELLA
That was-

DAN
 (cutting her off)
 Don't know it.

BILL
 Anyway, it looks as though they're
 about to crack the States. I mean,
 they're mad for Christian
 abstinence music over there.

DAN
 For... what?

BILL
 I think some of your songs would
 be perfect for them.

Sykes, Cesar and Ella visibly wince and glance at Dan who
 is staring at Bill without any readable expression.

BILL (CONT'D)
 You see people of your, forgive
 me, people of your age simply
 aren't buying music. With a
 younger, cooler band singing your
 songs, maybe tweaking the lyrics -
 bit more worshipful - you could
 start making some serious money.

Sykes, Cesar and Ella are cringing. Dan is still staring.

BILL (CONT'D)
 Are you OK?

DAN
 Shell-shocked.

BILL
 That's right! What do you say?

DAN
 What do I say...?

ELLA
 Dan...

DAN
 Now, let me think...

ELLA
 Dan...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The band is being forcibly ushered out of the pub by a bouncer. Dan tries to turn round and carry on the argument but Ella steers him away.

ELLA
C'mon, Dan, you don't want to fight that guy.

DAN
(enjoying himself)
Yes I do! I want to fight him!

ELLA
No, you don't.

DAN
Y'know, when he handed me his card, I was actually thinking: Finally, here's my record deal.

ELLA
I know, can you believe that guy? And who would've thought *he'd* get so upset?

CESAR
Some people can't take a joke about religion.

ELLA
I guess saying you're "bigger than Jesus" is not really all that hilarious to a born-again Christian.

DAN
Yeah, well...

ELLA
Made me laugh, though.

CESAR
Me too.

A bunch of young people from the gig recognise the guys.

COOL BLOKE
Hey! You were playing tonight!

DAN
Yes! Yes we were!

COOL BLOKE
Nice one! Who were you?

DAN
(triumphantly)
We were Clay Enema!

COOL BLOKE
Wicked! Did you see Barrel Earth?

DAN
(enthusiastically)
No!

COOL BLOKE
Do you want to come to a party?

Dan looks pleadingly at Ella, like a begging dog: "Can we go to a party?"

ELLA
(to Cesar and Sykes)
You up for it?

They shrug: Why not?

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

It's a cool party for trendy young people. Dan and Ella are trying not to look uncomfortable. Cesar and Sykes have already thrown themselves into the fray.

ELLA
Jesus. I haven't been to a proper house party in years.

DAN
I know. Scary isn't it?

ELLA
Oh yeah. We need a spliff.

DAN
(excited)
Ooh! Can we have a spliff?

ELLA
All right, here's the challenge. We split up, meet back here in ten minutes with a spliff.

DAN
(looks at his watch)
Go!

They head their separate ways into the jungle.

CUT TO:

INT. PARTY - NIGHT

Various scenes of Dan and Ella making their way around a cramped house party. Attempting to start a conversation, moving on, feeling a bit old, a bit removed...

Sykes attaches himself to a group of druggies.

Cesar chats up a good-looking young fellow.

Dan, observing the goings-on, suddenly spots Jonno (the record company guy) holding a spliff. Dan turns to leave but it's too late. Jonno comes over.

JONNO

Hey! How you doing?

DAN

Good, thanks. You?

JONNO

Yeah, yeah. Wicked. It's Paul, isn't it?

DAN

No, it's Dan.

JONNO

Dan! That's what I meant! I knew it started with a P or a D. How's it going?

DAN

Good, thanks. Good.

JONNO

(wracking his brains)
Really sorry, Dan. I can't place you. I know we've met before but I can't remember where or...

DAN

July the 10th, two forty seven PM.

JONNO

Was it?

DAN

Yep.

JONNO

Oh. Sorry, I...

DAN

..."don't remember."

Dan takes the spliff from Jonno and moves on into the room past dancing partygoers and the DJ at her decks:

DAN (CONT'D)
Got "Day Tripper"?

The DJ gives Dan the thumbs-up.

Dan heads outside into the garden with his half spliff and finds himself standing next to INDIA, a pretty young woman in a Ramones T-shirt. Just then, the opening riff of "Day Tripper," by Clay Enema, kicks in.

DAN (CONT'D)
(to India)
Good song.

India nods.

DAN (CONT'D)
I wrote it.

India smiles. Dan struggles for a follow-up.

DAN (CONT'D)
I'm writing some tracks for
Shellshock now. They're about to
crack the States.

INDIA
(now she's impressed)
Really?! Wow! That's epic.

DAN
Thank you. Yes. It is entirely
epic. What's your name?

CUT TO:

INT PARTY - CONTINUOUS

Sykes and Cesar meet up, coolly acknowledging "Day Tripper."
Sykes is high on drugs but still amiable.

SYKES
So... Ella and Dan.

CESAR
Mummy and daddy.

SYKES
Daddy sad cause he wanted encore.

CESAR
And then mean man want to buy his
songs for mucho dinero.

SYKES
 (LAUGHS) You know who really
 suffers? The kids.

CESAR
 (laughs, nods agreement)
 Us. The funny thing is, I do love
 that skinny bastard. He deserves a
 break.

SYKES
 It's true. He does.

CESAR
 But he's going to lose her. She's
 sick of him using his father as an
 excuse.

SYKES
 (fading now)
 Yeah. His... what?

CESAR
 You're off your titties, Sykes.

SYKES
 I'll have you know, I resemble that
 remark.

CUT TO:

INT PARTY - LATER

A different song is playing. Ella has procured a spliff
 and is trying to track down Dan. A drunk accosts her.

DRUNKEN PERSON
 Z'that a spliff?

ELLA
 No. Sorry. Speak to that guy...

She points behind her in a vague way. We follow Ella
 through a few more rooms before she pulls her phone out in
 frustration and sends a text. She stands amidst the
 revellers, awaiting a reply. Eventually she moves on.

The camera follows her, like the tracking shot through the
 bowels of the Copacabana in "Goodfellas."

Ella looks around the kitchen -- no Dan. She sees someone
 she knows trying to get high from the nitrous oxide in a
 whipped cream dispenser.

ELLA (CONT'D)
 Seen Dan?

Without stopping, the girl points. She then -- oops -- sprays herself in the face with whipped cream.

As the camera continues to track with Ella, she stomps out the kitchen door into the garden.

Whereupon she immediately comes upon...

Dan and India sharing a joint and conversing intimately.

As Ella approaches, Dan's eyes widen expectantly, almost in terror.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Hi. Here you are. I've been...
Jesus...

DAN

Sorry, we were talking about
music.

ELLA

You left me on my own.

DAN

Sorry. This is...

Awkward pause while Dan and Ella await the girls name.

INDIA

(eventually)
India.

ELLA

Right.
(noting India's T-shirt)
The Ramones? Have you ever even
listened to the Ramones, honey?
Cause I'm pretty sure you'd hate
them.

Dan involuntarily nods agreement. A bit "put out," the girl heads back into the house.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Did you get her number? You two
probably have a lot in common --
like... both of you still live at
home.

DAN

Don't be-

Ella grabs for Dan's mobile.

DAN (CONT'D)

You know I would never-

Ella studies Dan's mobile, then chucks it back at him.

DAN (CONT'D)
Satisfied?

She is not.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT BUS - NIGHT

Cesar, Ella and Dan are on the upper deck of a raucous night bus, surrounded by boisterous kids at least a decade younger. Loud, distorted dubstep plays off one mobile, while loud, distorted rap plays on another.

Ella is being chilly towards Dan.

Cesar is distracted by a cute guy who's checking him out. He begins tapping something into his mobile. The Cute Guy also taps into his mobile.

ELLA
Don't even say it. An uber was a half-hour's wait and at least 40 quid. That may be OK for "Sykes in the City," but-

CESAR
I don't mind staying in touch with the kids -- this could be our audience.

DAN
Yes. If only we could learn to play loud, distorted RUBBISH over tinny mobile phone speakers.

An awkward SILENCE (except for all the noise).

CESAR
I don't know what is your problema, man. We've got more gigs now than in the last 10 years. We're on the radio. Sometimes.

ELLA
It's true. You might even have to start paying taxes!

DAN
Yes, we're probably the biggest stars on this night bus.

ELLA

You wanted the band to get serious again, right? Well, now we're gigging steadily, and you've been offered a mint by this Jesus man to write chart songs. A lot of people wish they had your problems.

DAN

Since when does "success" mean "not as bad as it could be"?

Tense atmosphere. Cesar and Ella exchange a look.

CESAR

(looks out the window)
This is my stop. Adios,
muchachos.

ELLA

See ya.

Suddenly, the Cute Guy a few rows ahead jumps up and follows Cesar down the stairs of the bus.

Ella is astonished.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Did Cesar just pull that young gentleman?

She looks out the window.

ELLA (CONT'D)

He did! Amazing.

DAN

Isn't he, like, married?

ELLA

Ramon moved back to Bilbao two years ago.

DAN

(surprised that he's so
out of touch)
Really? Did I know that?

Ella shakes her head.

Dan, brooding, just stares dully out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - EARLY MORNING BIRD-SONG HOUR

Dan and Ella walk, both with faces like thunder.

ELLA

What's wrong with you lately?

DAN

Nothing's wrong with me. That's my whole point. Everyone else has got the problem.

ELLA

Seriously? Is that what you think? That everyone else -- Sykes, Cesar, the audience, the record companies, me -- WE'VE all got the problem.

DAN

Yes. That's what I think.

ELLA

You're a prick. How dare you. I don't know what's happened to you lately, but I don't like it. You should be happy, you've suddenly found your muse after all these years and you're writing all these new songs...

DAN

Amazing new songs...

Ella stops in her tracks.

ELLA

Really?

DAN

Yes really. These songs are fucking classics.

ELLA

I can't believe what I'm hearing. It's not up to you to say your own songs are "fucking classics". That level of arrogance is so horrible, so ugly. It's up to other people to say whether your songs are any good.

DAN

What about you?

ELLA

What *about* me?

DAN

Do you think they're any good?

ELLA

You know what? In all honesty, I think they're a bit shit.

Dan bursts out laughing, a horrible cruel laugh.

DAN

That is brilliant! That is priceless! "A bit shit"!

Ella is incandescent with rage. She goes to hit Dan but stops herself. She has tears in her eyes.

ELLA

Do you know *why* I think they're a bit shit? Because it's like... you've discovered some trick or... some song-writing formula that lets you churn out this stuff. But... I can't hear *your* voice -- at least not the voice of the Dan I fell in love with.

"All you need is love"? That's great, that's admirable I'm sure, but since when have you ever believed that "love is all you need"? It would be more truthful if you'd written "All you need is fame, all you need is your stupid face grinning out from the covers of magazines. Twenty-year-old drunk girls fawning over you at parties is all you need."

(BEAT)

Maybe this is your new voice. Well I don't like it. I liked your old voice. I liked your old songs. I liked the old you.

DAN

The old me wrote rubbish songs.

ELLA

Y'know, the worst thing that ever happened to you was having a hit with a cover version. Your old songs weren't rubbish -- you just started to *think* they were.

DAN

No, I think you'll fi-

Ella has reached the point of exasperation.

ELLA
 This isn't a love affair. It's
 not even a relationship any more.
 You know what it is?

DAN
 (BEAT AS HE CONSIDERS)
 Momentum?

Ella points her index finger at Dan's face: Bingo!

ELLA
 Yes! Exactly. Momentum. And
 you know why nobody ever writes a
 love song about momentum?

Dan shakes his head.

ELLA (CONT'D)
 Cause it's just too sad. Even
 sadder than breaking up.

Pushing back tears, Ella removes her necklace and hands it
 to Dan.

ELLA (CONT'D)
 I don't want this any more. I
 don't want you any more.

As she turns to walk away.

DAN
 Umm... what is this?

Ella examines the necklace that Dan is dangling.

ELLA
 Didn't you give that to m-...?

Dan shakes his head.

ELLA (CONT'D)
 Oh great! Give me that!

Ella snatches the necklace and storms off.

Glumly, Dan trudges off in the opposite direction, needing
 to catch another night bus.

DAN (V.O.)
 She was right about everything -- I
 mean, not the necklace. Everything
 else.
 I didn't write these songs. They
 were handed to me on a platter.
 (MORE)

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

And though they are among the best songs ever written, in my hands they've been empty, hollow sounds.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: GLOOMY DAN

MUSIC: DAN STRUMS AND HUMS LISTLESSLY AS WE SEE...

DAN BUYING ORGANIC MILK -- BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE HIM HAPPY...

DAN (V.O.)

Ella was no longer my girlfriend - but she stayed in the band. (SIGHS) Chalk up another one to... momentum.

DAN IN HIS ROOM...

It now resembles the room of an obsessed serial killer, as he tries to reconstruct Beatlemania.

SLOW PAN across a wall collage of partial lyrics, Beatles-related graphics, album covers and drawings that aren't quite right, words and phrases like "Maharishi?", "Sitar", "Rubber Sole or Rubber Soul??", and "Back In The USSR -- need to update???"

There is a mock-up of the Sgt. Pepper's album cover, except most of the people depicted are too modern.

DAN (V.O.)

I was even starting to forget the Beatles. It was all just fading away...

Dan now sports a scraggly beard and unkempt hair. Physically, he's looking a wreck.

DAN

(singing, trying to remember lyrics)

I'm fixing a hole where the rain gets in/
To stop my mind from wandering/
Where it will go-o
And I...

(speaking now)

Really wish I could remember the rest.

Brian brings him a sandwich and a cup of tea -- their domestic roles now reversed.

DAN (CONT'D)
 (to Brian)
 Is it "Ob la di, ob la da" or "Ob
 la da, ob la di"?

BRIAN
 (smiling benevolently)
 Yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABBEY ROAD PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - MORNING

DAN (V.O.)
 I thought, one final push, maybe we
 can jump-start the magic... at
 Abbey Road.

Scraggly-looking DAN and the BAND are there for a photo
 shoot. The PHOTOGRAPHER is setting the lighting.

DAN ponders, trying to remember exactly how the "Abbey
 Road" album cover looked.

DAN
 (to photographer)
 I'm pretty sure all four of us
 are in the crossing. But are we
 going left to right or right to
 left?

PHOTOGRAPHER
 (bemused but giving it a
 go)
 Right to left is nice. Like
 Arabic or Hebrew.

DAN
 I'm 85 percent sure it's left to
 right. And Paul is barefoot.

ELLA
 Who's Paul?

DAN
 (lost in thought)
 Exactly. Who's Paul? Is Paul
 the Walrus? Or was John just
 saying that to be nice? I think
 John was actually the Walrus.
 OK. Cesar is barefoot. And he's
 second from the right, with
 everybody walking left to right.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(to Cesar)

He's got such a... specific vision.

CESAR

He's loco in the coco.

A couple of young Japanese tourists passes by, looking at the photo shoot and Abbey Road crossing.

FEMALE JAPANESE TOURIST

What is here? Something special?

She takes out her camera to shoot a photo. Her friend assesses the scene.

MALE JAPANESE TOURIST

No. Nothing to see here.

They walk away.

DAN

(to the group)

All right, let's do it! Let's wrap this up and go record Sergeant Pepper.

The group chats while posing in the Abbey Road crossing.

SYKES

Yeah, about that, Dan. "Sergeant Pepper" is OK, but why is the band leader a sergeant? Is it a Salvation Army band? Ex-military?

DAN

(amused)

You've got a better idea?

SYKES

Yeah, I used to know a guy -- a Master of the Hounds, as it happens -- called Simon Pickles.

DAN

(not quite so amused)

Go on.

SYKES

Well that's it. It's a funny name. Same number of syllables. It's funny. It's supposed to be a funny song isn't it?

He shoots ELLA and CESAR a look -- they nod, encouraging him.

DAN
 "Simon Pickles' Lonely Hearts
 Club Band"?

SYKES
 And take out the "Club" so it's
 just "Simon Pickles' Lonely
 Hearts Band" See? You don't need
 that extra syllable, it scans
 better like this. Easier to say.
 Sounds like a cheesy lounge band.
 (to Cesar and Ella)
 What do you think?

CESAR
 I prefer it.

ELLA
 Me too.

DAN
 (blood boiling)
 "Simon Pickles' Lonely Hearts
 Band"?

SYKES
 (seeing where this is
 going)
 Oh just forget it! My apologies!
 Whatever was I thinking?

PHOTOGRAPHER
 OK, everybody break for a sec.
 Got to let the traffic pass.

The band steps to the side of the road.

DAN
 Guys, I've spent a lot of time
 thinking about this. Believe me.
 It cannot be anything other than
 Sergeant. PEPPER'S. Lonely.
 Hearts. CLUB. Band. End of.

SYKES
 What the hell are you talking
 about, "end of"? We're supposed
 to be exchanging ideas.
 Since when are you the leader,
 making unilateral decisions? I
 thought we were all equals in
 this band.

DAN
 Hello? Isn't the songwriter the
 leader of the band?

CESAR

We all write songs. When's the last time we recorded one of my songs, or Sykes's, or... Ella's?

PHOTOGRAPHER

(to Dan)

Traffic's cleared. Are we going to continue this?

DAN

Yes, we are!

Cesar goes to the side of the road and starts to put his shoes back on.

DAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

CESAR

This is stupid. My feet are cold, and I think I just stepped on some glass.

DAN

Come on man, one more shot.

CESAR

OK -- but I'm wearing my shoes.

DAN

If you put on those shoes, there's no point doing the photo.

ELLA

Explain again why he has to be barefoot.

DAN

Because it's mysterious. If I could explain it, there'd be no poi-

(to CESAR)

Why are you still putting your shoes on?! Take your fucking shoes off!

SYKES

Are you serious?

DAN

Yes I'm serious!

CESAR

You take YOUR shoes off!

DAN

That wouldn't work!

SYKES
You. Are. Mental.

DAN
If you put that shoe on, this
band is over!

ELLA
This isn't about shoes, is it?

DAN
Actually, it *is* about shoes. Take
your fucking shoes off!

Cesar takes his shoe off and hurls it, hitting Dan in the temple. Dan launches at Cesar. Sykes and Ella wade in.

Traffic begins to build as Clay Enema wrestle on the crossing.

DAN (V.O.)
And THAT was the end of Clay
Enema.

SOUNDS OF FIGHTING AND ARGUING, CARS HONKING.

SOUND FADES AS THE CAMERA CRANES UP TO AN OVERVIEW OF THIS
CHAOTIC SCENE. PICTURE THEN FADES TO WHITE...

WE HEAR A PERFECT GUITAR CHORD, AGAIN LIKE THE OPENING
CHORD OF "A HARD DAY'S NIGHT." IT HANGS IN THE AIR...

FADE IN:

INT REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

The white screen pulls out to Dan's POV -- he's holding and contemplating a blank, pure-white square of cardboard, the size of an old vinyl record album.

We slowly pan across a motley assembly of hopeful young musicians, here for an audition.

DAN (V.O.)
They wanted to call the greatest
album in history "Simon Pickle's
Lonely Hearts Band." Ugh. But it
was my mistake. The Beatles were
young and cheeky and... well, they
were rock & roll. Not bankers and
teachers and... whatever the hell
Cesar does. It was time for a
complete re-boot.

REVEAL: Dan has shaved and smartened himself up, early '60s stylee. He wears "mod" clothes, has a mop-top haircut, and even his face looks fresh and shiny. A new beginning.

DAN
 (to the group)
 Hello, guys, thanks for coming.
 The band will be a classic four-
 piece: two guitars, bass, drums.
 Haircuts, clothes... Playing
 music, having fun, getting
 famous, making millions.

The Hopefuls murmur approvingly.

DAN (CONT'D)
 I'm Dan. You probably heard my
 song "Yesterday."

One of the hopefuls, PAUL, speaks.

PAUL
 (Scouse accent)
 Which song?

DAN
 "Yesterday."

PAUL
 Yeah, I heard a lot of songs
 yesterday. On the coach down.
 Which one of *your* songs did I hear
 yesterday?

DAN
 No, the song is... What's your
 name?

PAUL
 Paul.

DAN
 Paul. Perfect. You from
 Liverpool, Paul?

PAUL
 No. Everton.

DAN
 Isn't that the sa-? That's very
 good. Very good indeed. Anyone
 else from Merseyside?

One other guy, James, raises his hand.

JAMES
 I'm from Toxteth.

PAUL
 West or East?

JAMES

West.

PAUL

Ah, the posh one.

JAMES

Aye. We're only the *sixth* most deprived area in England. EAST Toxteth is Number One.

PAUL

As me mam says, Number One with a bullet.

JAMES

(chuckling goofily)

Huh-huh. Bullet.

PAUL

She also calls it East TOXIC.

JAMES

Nice one.

PAUL

She's dead funny, me mam.

DAN

All right. Just choosing randomly now... you two go first. Either of you a drummer?

Paul shakes his head.

JAMES

(sarcastic)

Yeah, that's right, I've got me drum set right here in me pocket.

Paul laughs. Nobody else laughs.

DAN (V.O.)

Ah, that trademark Scouser wit, I suppose. Can't understand a word. If they can play, they're in.

(aloud)

Either of you left-handed?

They both shake their heads.

Dan points at James.

DAN

I need you to learn to play left handed. There's something about the symmetry of a right-handed guitarist and a left-handed bassist.

JAMES

Um, OK. Will you be buying me a left-handed bass guitar?

DAN

Can't you just play it upside down? Or re-string it?

JAMES

I don't want to re-string it.

DAN

Alright, yes, I'll get you a left handed bass. It's settled, then.

DAN (V.O.)

Well, I had two of my Beatles, anyway. The only problem was, they were both Ringoes. Though neither of them was a drummer.

CUT TO:

INT SMALL CLUB - NIGHT

Dan, Paul and James onstage performing, dressed like early Beatles: matching suits, skinny ties, mop-top haircuts.

We hear drums but don't see a drummer or a drum set.

James, Paul and Dan are rocking out -- they sound good. They play an early Beatles number like "I Saw Her Standing There".

The crowd, some of them dancing, is small but attentive. Many of them look a bit bewildered.

DAN (V.O.)

Paul and James turned out to be pretty good. And so even though we were minus one Ringo, we decided to try a few gigs using a session drummer to fill in.

We now see a drummer playing behind a curtain. He's middle-aged, lumpy, bald, tattooed -- not exactly a young mop-top.

DAN (V.O.)

Unfortunately, the best drummer I could get... didn't quite fit the image.

The drummer does a brief solo from behind the curtain. The crowd is puzzled, as they can't see where the beat is coming from.

DAN (V.O.)

But it definitely felt like, after a false start and a wasted year, it was finally time for Beatlemania to conquer the world.

We hear the final notes of "I Saw Her Standing There." The band bows to the crowd, early-Beatles style.

And as they bow... Dan thinks he spots Ella in the crowd! A few sweaty bodies push in front of her, obscuring his view.

Dan is thrilled, almost breathless. Trying to spot her, he catches only glimpses as bodies in the crowd shuffle around.

DAN

Uh... this next number... is about someone very special.

We hear the opening guitar part to "In My Life," then, with a passion not heretofore demonstrated...

DAN (CONT'D)

There are places I'll remember

All my life, though some have changed

Some forever, not for better

Some have gone and some remain

All these places have their moments

With lovers and friends I can still recall

Some are dead and some are living

In my life, I've loved them all

But of all these friends and lovers

There is no one compares with you

And these memories lose their meaning

When I think of love as something new

Though I know I'll never lose affection

For people and things that went before

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

I know I'll often stop and think
about them

In my life, I love you more

Though I know I'll never lose
affection

For people and things that went
before

I know I'll often stop and think
about them

In my life, I love you more

In myyyyyy life... I love you more.

The crowd loves it -- Dan's first true moment of musical
glory in a decade. Dan beams, searching the crowd.

The figure of (possible) Ella emerges from the crowd - but
before we can confirm her identity, a BEEFY YOUNG FELLOW
wraps his arms around her and they snog.

Dan is alarmed... until... the lovers separate, and he sees
that it's not Ella.

Dan is panting, exhaling rapidly.

End on CU of his face, SOUND obscures: an epiphany?

DAN (CONT'D)

Ella.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A van painted with The Beatles logo (but slightly wrong)
trundles along a dark English secondary road.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

The Session Drummer is driving Dan, Paul and James, and all
their kit, from the gig.

Dan is using his mobile, phoning Ella. She doesn't answer,
to his frustration.

The mobile rings: it's Brian. Dan puts him on speaker phone.

DAN
Hey, dad.

BRIAN
(on phone)
Daniel, where are you?

DAN
In the van.

BRIAN
(on phone)
Sounds like I'm on speaker phone.
Hello, boys! Can they hear me?

PAUL & JAMES
Hey Brian!

BRIAN
(on phone)
Are you coming home tonight?

DAN
No, dad. We're out on tour.

BRIAN
(on phone)
Oh. So is it OK if I leave the
door on the latch?

DAN
Yes, it's OK.

BRIAN
(on phone)
OK. Because if you were coming
home...

DAN
You wouldn't latch it.

BRIAN
(on phone)
Right.

DAN
Umm, Dad? Have there been any
calls for me?

BRIAN
(on phone)
Uhhh... You know that stroke left
me a memory like Swiss cheese.

PAUL
(laughing)
Ha ha! Nice one, Brian!

JAMES

Huh?

PAUL

(explaining)

Swiss cheese has holes in it.

JAMES

Ohhh. Excellent!

DAN

(to James and Paul, in
disbelief)

It's a common expression!

James and Paul nod sarcastically: Yeah, suuure.

BRIAN

(on phone)

Are you... expecting any calls in
particular?

DAN

Just, you know... any calls.

BRIAN

(on phone)

Oh. You mean Ella. No, I'm sorry.
Ella hasn't called.

DAN

Are you-

BRIAN

(on phone)

Yes, I'm sure. Why don't YOU phone
HER?

Paul and James exchange an embarrassed look that says: I wish this wasn't on speaker phone. Dan quickly takes the mobile off speaker and puts it to his ear.

DAN

G'night, Dad.

BRIAN

(on phone)

Most likely she'd phone your mobile
anyway, wouldn't she? I mean, if
she WERE to phone.

DAN

Love you, dad.

BRIAN

(on phone)

Me too. G'night.

(suddenly understands)

(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Oh, I see. She's not taking your calls-

Dan abruptly disconnects.

JAMES

Danny Boy, can I ask you something, mate?

DAN

Sure, Paul.

JAMES

I'm James.

DAN

Are you sure?

JAMES

(momentarily doubtful)

I... When do you write all your songs? I mean, we spend a lot of time together, and I never see you composing.

PAUL

Do you stay up all night writing?

DAN

Yes, sometimes.

JAMES

But then when do you sleep?

DAN

I don't need much sleep, I suppose. I've spent too much time sleeping already.

PAUL

Aww, sleep is lovely. When I ask a lass to sleep with me, she's always surprised when I mean just that.

The Drummer, who never speaks, shakes his head disapprovingly at these stupid young boys.

JAMES

Do you really reckon we'll be famous?

DAN

It is an historical fact.

James and Paul exchange a look.

JAMES

I reckon I'd be happy to hear
meself on the radio and to earn
enough to buy a nice motor.
Maybe a Skoda.

PAUL

A Skoda?

JAMES

They're lovely, man. People make
fun of Skodas, but they're near
the top of the league table in
owner satisfaction.

PAUL

Dare to dream, mate. Dare to
dream.

DAN

You'll have a garage full of
Skodas before we're through.

JAMES

I don't think I'd want a garage-
ful. They're very reliable. You
only need one. A garage-ful?
There madness lies.

PAUL

Aye. Madness.

They bump along in silence.

Dan texts Ella: Pls cant we talk?? xx [smiley face]

A fast reply: N

Picking up on Dan's "Pining For Ella" vibe, James and Paul
exchange a look. James lifts his acoustic guitar.

JAMES

Y'know, Danny, back when I was a
wee lad, whenever I was feeling
down, me old man, he sang this
song...

DAN

Thanks, but I'm not really in the
moo-

JAMES

Bah-bah-bah-bah/
I'd like to be/
Under the sea/

Paul and the Drummer merrily join in...

JAMES, PAUL & DRUMMER
 In an octopus's garden/
 In the shade /

The camera PANS across their faces. Paul with a big goofy smile, the Drummer, beating time on the dashboard, ending on Dan... in UTTER SHOCK.

JAMES, PAUL & DRUMMER (CONT'D)
 He'd let us in, knows where we've
 been/
 In his octopus's garden in the
 shade...

DAN
 Wait wait wait -- stop!
 (BEAT)
 How...?
 What...?
 How do you know this song??!

PAUL
 It was a big hit, back in the
 sixties.

JAMES
 Aye. By Richard Starkey. Pride of
 the Dingle.

DAN
 Richard Starkey?!!

PAUL
 Yeah. One-hit wonder.

JAMES
 Knocked "Honky Tonk Woman" off
 number one.

DAN
 Jesus Hendrix Clapton Christ...

PAUL
 You all right, Dan?

DAN
 Yeah. No. Christ. Richard
 Starkey?

JAMES
 That's right.

DAN
 Ringo Starr.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - EARLY MORNING

A weary James, Paul and the Drummer are urged to exit the van as quickly as possible. Their guitars and suitcases come tumbling out after them.

Seconds after the sliding door closes, the van takes off again, leaving the boys curbside, sleepily bemused.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

The Beatles van bangs along the beautiful English countryside.

A sign: LIVERPOOL 50 MILES

CUT TO:

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Dan determinedly drives the now empty van.

DAN (V.O.)

"Octopus's Garden" was Richard Starkey's one and only hit. But it was enough to get him to L.A... where he became a successful hairdresser.

George Harrison never became a pop star. I don't know what he did. He died of cancer in 2001. From the comments posted online when he died, those who knew him thought he was a brilliant bloke.

Paul McCartney's whereabouts are unknown. It's funny how people of a certain age have no web presence at all.

And then there's the Walrus. I remember hearing John Lennon say in an interview that he was born during the Blitz.

There were three John Lennons born in or around Merseyside between September 1940 and May 1941. One of them is dead. I got addresses for the other two. Both in Merseyside.

So that's where I'm going.
(MORE)

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

If John Lennon is still alive,
and if I can find him... maybe
something will click. Maybe he's
got the solution to this bastard
puzzle that's become my life.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. LIVERPOOL STREET - MORNING

The Beatles van pootles along a quiet, lower-class
residential street. Dan listens to some '60s soul.

CUT TO:

INT VAN - CONTINUOUS

Dan searches for a house number. He pulls up outside a
terraced house.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Dan gets out of the van and approaches the house. Taking a
deep breath, he rings the bell.

A sullen young woman comes to the door holding an infant.

DAN

Hi. I'm looking for John Lennon.
I was given this address.

The woman nods.

WOMAN

Down the pub.

Dan checks his phone -- it's 10AM. He can't stop himself
from making a judgmental face.

DAN

Umm, thanks.

The woman closes the door curtly.

Dan looks down the street and sees a traditional old pub at
the corner. He walks towards it.

DAN (V.O.)
 Just how random is this life? If you change one seemingly minor choice you made, does your entire life change? If you're late for that meeting with Paul McCartney, and you never form that band, do you end up here, going down the pub every day at ten in the morning?

Dan pushes the door and enters.

CUT TO:

INT PUB - MORNING

Sunlight filters painfully through the filthy leaded glass. The pub is crowded and surprisingly smokey.

The crowd, mostly in its 60s, 70s and 80s, look to Dan enquiringly.

DAN
 Hello.

OLD WOMAN
 Are you the son?

DAN
 Am I...?

OLD WOMAN
 You know -- the bastard.

DAN
 I'm afraid I don't...

The crowd parts to expose... a coffin.

DAN (CONT'D)
 Oh. Oh! Is that... Tell me it's not... Is that John Lennon?

OLD MAN
 I'm afraid it is. What is your relation, may I ask?

DAN
 I couldn't begin...

OLD MAN
 He always spoke of a son he never knew. I'm assuming...

DAN
I guess in a way, I've always
felt like his son.

The people nod, knowingly. A light-bulb goes on inside
Dan's brain.

DAN (CONT'D)
I've always wanted to know more
about him. What did he do? What
was he like?

OLD MAN
What did he do? A bit of this, a
bit of that.

DAN
Was he... a witty man? Was there
a poet inside?

OLD WOMAN
He did like to swear a lot.

They all nod agreement.

DAN
Was he... musical?

They all look at each other, squinting a bit and shaking
their heads as if to say, "Not really. Not at all."

OLD WOMAN
No more than most.

Dan is a bit stuck. He doesn't know how to confirm whether
this was THE John.

DAN
Did he have an aunt Mimi? Did
his mother die when he was young?

A murmur -- no one is very certain.

OLD MAN
I must say, you don't look much
like him.

OLD WOMAN
Not much like him at all.

DAN
May I?

Dan comes over and look inside the coffin.

ECU on Dan's tense face -- will this be the real John?
Suddenly, his jaw drops.

We see the body in the coffin: it's a black man.

The Old Man comes over to look closely at Dan and then the body. He turns back and forth between the two.

OLD MAN
Oh! There's something about the eyes.

OLD WOMAN
Bulge-y.

OLD MAN
Yes. Bulge-y.

The Old Woman gives Dan a big hug.

The Old Man lifts a glass of whiskey.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
To John Lennon!

We pull out to a wide shot of everyone lifting a glass.

DAN (V.O.)
To John Lennon. But not THE John Lennon.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIVERPOOL STREET - AFTERNOON

The van drives along a Liverpool Street.

DAN (V.O.)
There was one more possible John.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIVERPOOL TERRACED HOUSE - DAY

Dan is at the door, finishing his conversation.

DAN
So, you've never heard of John Lennon?

The woman shakes her head.

DAN (CONT'D)
And you've been living here how long?

The door is closed on him.

DAN (CONT'D)
Thank you, madam.

Dan reaches for his tobacco pouch, but it's empty. He spies a corner shop and starts walking toward it.

DAN (V.O.)
That was the only address I had
for the third John. I'd reached
the end of the line.

Dan trudges into the shop.

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER SHOP - AFTERNOON

Dan is at the till with Rizlas and a few snacks. A delivery man barrels in. Burdened by his load, he doesn't see Dan.

DAN (V.O.)
Until just then, the answer hit me -
like a cold slap in the face.

The delivery man swings his load out wide, and a large fish he's carrying slaps Dan across the face with a loud SMACK.

DELIVERY MAN
Sorry, mate, didn't see you.

DAN
(to Shopkeeper)
He once said, "If I wasn't a
musician, I'd probably be a
fisherman." That's it! Yes!

SHOP KEEPER
(couldn't care less)
Anything else?

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL ROAD IN CUMBRIA - SUNSET

The Beatles van motors along a beautiful road near the Cumbrian coast.

DAN (V.O.)
Remember "Power To The People"?
I knew that if John WERE a
fisherman, he'd be a union man.
And it so happens there is a
member of the Maritime Union
named John Lennon, and he's based
in Haverigg, Cumbria.

The van chews up asphalt as it recedes into the sunset.

DAN
 (singing out loud,
 clapping his hands)
 "Power to the people/Power to the
 people, right on!"

On one CLAP the van swerves a bit -- Dan quickly puts his hands back on the wheel and straightens up.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARBOUR, HAVERIGG, CUMBRIA - EVENING

Dan leans on the harbour wall looking out to sea. The sky darkens as the night draws in. There's a fine drizzle.

A small fishing boat approaches the dock. Dan squints into the rain, anticipation and apprehension on his face.

As the boat gets closer he can make out two men aboard, one steering from the cabin, one busying himself on deck.

As the boat pulls into the dock we see that the man on deck, stacking crates of fish and shifting lobster pots, is not much older than a teenager. The skipper is still obscured from vision in the cabin.

The boat docks and the young man leaps across onto land and secures the boat with a rope.

Dan makes his way down some steps closer to the boat and is waiting as the captain comes out of his cabin.

YOUNG FISHERMAN
 All right to go then?

We hear him before we see him.

From the moment he opens his mouth, it's obvious this is the man we're looking for. His slightly retro Liverpool accent, nasal voice and dry sarcasm are so familiar.

JOHN
 Yeah, leave me to it, I don't mind. You go and get your rocks off, see if I care.

YOUNG FISHERMAN
 I told her I'd be there at eight.

JOHN
 Stinking of fish, that'll be nice for her.

YOUNG FISHERMAN

She don't mind, says she likes it.

JOHN

Then she's a pervert.

YOUNG FISHERMAN

I hope so!

The man is in his seventies, his thin face weathered and lined from years at sea. He wears eyeglasses and a fisherman's cap that seems familiar -- it's the same cap Beatle John Lennon wore in the '60s.

The young lad hurries off towards the village. The skipper looks up and notices Dan watching him, then starts gathering the fish crates to the boat edge.

Dan takes the last few steps onto the dock side, hesitates, takes a deep breath and:

DAN

Mr. Lennon?

John looks up briefly and carries on his work.

JOHN

Who wants to know?

DAN

My name's Dan.

(BEAT)

I'm from London.

Dan cringes, why did he say that?

JOHN

Bully for you.

DAN

Are you John Lennon?

JOHN

What's it to you, Dan from London?

DAN

I'm a writer, a journalist, and I'm doing a piece for a newspaper, big newspaper, on...

JOHN

Go on...

DAN
Well, on fishermen or people with
solitary lives, you know, people
who spend a lot of time...

JOHN
Bloody 'ell.

DAN
What?

JOHN
If I had a pound for every London
journalist who came here wanting
to write a "piece" on my
"solitary life," I'd be a rich
man.

Dan can't work out if he's joking.

DAN
Really?

John thrusts a crate of fish into Dan's hands and nods to
the dock side where he wants them put.

JOHN
You're like bloody flies, you
lot. I had three of you last
week, jostling for position as I
came in, shouting at me, asking
how I deal with the loneliness.

DAN
Really?

Another crate. The top fish flaps in Dan's face.

JOHN
I should imagine your London
readers are sick of the sound of
my voice.

DAN
Oh. Well, maybe I could buy you
a pint anyway, and we could...

JOHN
I don't drink.

DAN
Oh.

JOHN
And I've got work to do. These
fish aren't going to gut
themselves, you know.

Dan is stumped. This was his only idea. John sees this and takes pity.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Come back tomorrow morning, five
thirty, and I'll see if I can
grant you an audience.

DAN
OK, cheers.

He starts to walk away. John calls after him.

JOHN
No paparazzi!

CUT TO:

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Dan pays the barmaid for his pint and makes his way to a quiet corner where he sits on his own at a table.

The pub is dark and poky. A proper old-style boozier. The customers are mainly older men, fishermen with craggy faces sitting in groups and talking quietly, relieved to have finished work for the day. Dan observes from his corner.

DAN (V.O.)
The ghost of John Lennon.
Living, breathing, flesh and
blood.
But still a ghost.
What am I going to say?
I want to congratulate him on not
being shot dead outside the
Dakota thirty-odd years ago?
Thank him for all the songs he
didn't write?
When did he start not being a
Beatle? What stopped him being a
musician?
What stopped *all* the people in
this pub from doing countless
other things with their lives?

Dan looks at one of the hoary old fishermen; it's Sir Bobby Charlton.

DAN (V.O.)
Why did *he* never pick up a
football?

Another old guy with long, straggly hair, drinking on his own: Sir David Attenborough, with a rat on his shoulder.

DAN (V.O.)
 Who forgot to inspire in *that* guy a
 love of the natural world?

The door of the pub opens and a filthy old bag lady
 shuffles in -- Dame Judy Dench.

DAN (V.O.)
 What made *her* miss her drama school
 audition?

The barmaid calls out across the room and Dan turns to look
 at her. It's Helen Mirren.

BARMAID
 Oi! You! Out! We don't need
 your kind in here!

DAN (V.O.)
 Or *her*?

Dame Judy spits on the floor and shuffles out again,
 cursing. Dame Helen pulls another pint.

Dan's P.O.V. again: we see that all of these people are
 just anonymous faces.

DAN (V.O.)
 Why am *I* not a rock star?

CUT TO:

EXT. HARBOUR - MORNING

The wind is whipping around Dan's ears as he waits on the
 dock. The waves on the sea are white-capped and seagulls
 screech as they are tossed through the sky.

John approaches. Dan waves and calls out.

DAN
 I suppose you'll not be going out
 in this.

JOHN
 Is that what you suppose, Dan
 from London?

DAN
 You can't take a boat out in this
 weather. Can you?

JOHN
 And how do you suppose I'll then
 put any food on the table?

DAN
Christ. OK. Where's your mate?

JOHN
Gave him the day off. He's in love, or so he reckons. Wouldn't be any good to me in that state. I'll get more out of a London journalist.

Dan laughs and then quickly realises that he is going out with John on the boat. He's nervous. John sees this.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You can experience my lonely, solitary existence first hand.

John hops aboard. Dan notes his own pitifully thin jacket.

DAN
But I haven't got any...

Whump! A heavy fisherman's waterproof lands in his arms, thrown from the boat.

JOHN
Yes you have. Now hurry up before I dock your wages.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARBOUR - DAY

Dan is holding tight to the railings as the small boat leaves the harbour in choppy waters.

JOHN
You all right?

Dan is a bit green, but nods and manages a weak smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Rule number one -- you might want to write this down -- don't fall overboard.

DAN
Check.

JOHN
Cause it's cold as a banker's scrotum out there, and I'm not jumping in after you.

DAN
No sir.

JOHN
All right, we're clear of the
harbour. Hold on tight!

John accelerates out of the harbour, throwing Dan against
the back rail.

CUT TO:

EXT. - BOAT ON OPEN SEAS - SUNRISE

The boat reaches open water and slows down. The sun is now
rising over the land to the east.

John sets about casting his nets.

JOHN
Turning into a nice day.

DAN
(half-singing)
Here comes the sun...

JOHN
So, do you want a fishing lesson,
or do you just want to talk about
my solitary life?

DAN
Bit of both? See how it goes?

JOHN
Ooh, a man who likes to
improvise. An ad libertine, as
it were.

DAN
Are you happy?

JOHN
Jesus. Jump straight in, why
don't you. Yeah, I'm ecstatic.
I'm the happy fisherman.

DAN
If you hadn't become a fisherman,
what do you think you might have
been?

JOHN
A fisher-WOMAN. Get in touch
with me feminine side.

DAN
(laughing)
No, seriously.

JOHN

Oh Christ, I don't know. I'm a fisherman. I'm not unhappy. Don't want for much. I don't think about what I should or could have been. That's the way to drive yourself mad. I know I'd rather be doing this, out on the open sea, than pushing a pen in an office. No offence.

DAN

Did you ever write anything? Poems, or songs, or...

JOHN

No. Long time ago, back in the stone age. Fancied meself a poet. Nowadays, I just think up silly little things, you know, to amuse the grandchildren. And the fish.

DAN

Did you ever... think about starting a band? I mean, back when you were a teenager.

JOHN

Aye. Had a band with some of the lads back in Liverpool. The Quarrymen. We would play, you know, the usual suspects: Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly. We were good -- had a certain... je ne sais quoi.

DAN

Who were the other lads?

JOHN

(trying to recall)
The other lads, the other lads...
Acch. So long ago...

DAN

So what happened?

JOHN

Pfft... same old story. A fight for love or glory. A million skiffle bands out there playing the same songs. We had our fun -- well, just enough to get me tossed out of art college. Band broke up, I married Cyn, got a job, saved up to buy a boat.

DAN

But you must have had dreams and ambitions.

JOHN

I did have a dream. Once upon a time. But I've given up on that.

DAN

What was it?

JOHN

I always wanted... a Cadillac. 1957. White wall tires. Dagmar bumpers. Like Eddie Cochran had.

DAN

But you could have changed the world!

JOHN

No I couldn't. The world's stuffed. How could a working-class kid from Liverpool change this screwed-up world? I'm sorry if I disappoint you, London Dan. I'm sorry if your lofty ambitions are insulted by my shallow dream of owning a car.

DAN

You don't disappoint me. Far from it.

JOHN

I've got everything I need right here. Me boat. The sea. All the fresh air I can swallow. When was the last time you saw the sun rise?

DAN

I can't remember.

JOHN

I can't remember the last time I *didn't* see the sun rise. Wouldn't have it any other way. What are you getting at, London Dan? Are you me art school teacher reincarnated and come back to give me a hard time?

DAN

Ha! No.

JOHN
Who are you then? Cause you're
sure as hell not a journalist.

DAN
Is it that obvious?

JOHN
Yes.

DAN
It's a long story.

JOHN
I'm not interested in the long
story. Just where I fit into it.
You'd better not be me son.

DAN
Ha! No, I'm not your son.

JOHN
Thank Christ for that -- cause
you're an ugly fucker.

DAN
Cheers.

JOHN
You're welcome.

DAN
I'm a songwriter.

JOHN
OK.

DAN
I've got a band...
(intently looking for a
reaction)
The Beatles.

JOHN
Oh yeah. Like the van says.
How's it going, this band?

DAN
Really well. Quite well.
No, it's shit, actually.

JOHN
Well which one is it?

DAN

Shit. I've been singing somebody else's songs, and they're great songs, but I can't make them work.

JOHN

I thought you said you were a songwriter.

DAN

Yeah...

JOHN

So write some songs.

DAN

Something happened, a year ago now... it's difficult to explain. I found, or was given a whole bunch of songs by someone else that I could pass off as my own.

JOHN

Why would you want to?

DAN

Because they're amazing songs.

JOHN

And you're happy to take the credit for them?

DAN

I don't know any more. But they were given to me, and I'd be a fool not to use them.

John gathers his thoughts, as if preparing a presentation.

JOHN

When I first started fishing, I was mate to an old guy on a boat a bit smaller than this. Bloody loved it. He taught me everything, not only the technicalities and skills, but the philosophies behind it. He was a wise man. Then Cyn got pregnant and I got scared. Thought I couldn't support a wife and kid on wisdom and philosophy. So I got a job on a big commercial trawler. Regular pay-cheque, but... worst mistake I ever made.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

We spent weeks at sea, out of sight of land, scouring the seabed. And when we pulled up the nets, all the ocean was in them. We picked out the biggest and the best and threw the rest back, dead. There were creatures in those nets that I hadn't imagined could exist, that no one had ever seen before, treasures of the natural world, but we weren't interested in them so we threw them back. I didn't last long. Just long enough to save for a deposit on me own boat. Now I cast a line, toss out a few small nets, give the fish a fighting chance. An ancient battle of wits. The old man and the sea. And I'm poorer but happier.

DAN

(considering)

OK. So what are these songs I've found? The biggest and best, or the treasures?

JOHN

Neither. Throw them all back. Get a fishing rod and catch your own fish.

Dan nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'll ask again: What's this got to do with me?

DAN

Can I play you a song?

JOHN

Aye.

Dan takes his iPod from his pocket and unwinds the earbuds. John sticks them in his ears.

DAN

OK, here goes. This one's called... "Imagine."

He presses Play. We can also hear the song, Dan's version of the towering Lennon tune.

John listens for a few seconds. Gradually a change comes over his face. He looks questioningly at Dan. Then he turns away and continues listening.

The track ends and John slowly takes the phones from his ears, looking out to sea. Eventually he turns to look at Dan, confused.

JOHN
What the fuck was that?

DAN
What do you mean?

JOHN
You know what I mean. Where did that song come from? I *know* that song.

DAN
You've heard it before?

JOHN
No. I've never heard it before. But I *know* it.

DAN
Yeah.

JOHN
How do I know it?

DAN
It's your song. You wrote it. In an alternate life.

John doesn't know what to feel. But he knows it's true.

DAN (CONT'D)
You see, there was this band, the greatest in music history, and you were...

But John shakes his head, he doesn't want to know. He hands the iPod to Dan.

JOHN
Throw it back.

Dan nods. Then he hurls the iPod as far as he can into the ocean.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I meant metaphorically.

DAN
I know.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Wide of the lonely boat on the sea. The sun is sinking low in the sky.

CUT TO:

EXT DOCK - SUNSET

The boat returns to the dock. We see Dan jump onto the harbour side and reach back up to shake John's hand. Then he heads off as John starts unloading the day's catch.

Dan, in a post-Lennon daze, walks over to a fruit & veg barrow (DESMOND'S) and grabs some fruit for the road.

The FRUIT SELLER, a man in his 70s, seems awfully familiar. It's the real Paul McCartney!

A 10-year-old boy tries to grab an apple, but the fruit seller catches him, grabbing his wrist.

PAUL MCCARTNEY
Get back, JoJo!

Dan, still in his reverie, fails to take notice. He drops a few coins into Paul McCartney's hand without looking at him, then turns and walks away.

FADE OUT.

SEQUENCE: TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF DAN STRUMMING AND HUMMING SOME EXCELLENT NEW TUNES...

EXT. DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan is painting over the Beatles logo on the van. (You can still spy the logo through the fresh paint.)

Paul and James, no longer groomed and dressed as Beatles, watch approvingly.

DAN (V.O.)
Call me Yoko: I broke up the Beatles. After meeting John Lennon, I'd be damned if I was going to keep on performing Beatles songs. By the way, for the record, Yoko didn't break up the Beatles. It was Allen Klein, the guy who became their manager after Brian Epstein died. Jerk.

Paul and James shake hands with Dan. Dan hands James the keys to the van.

DAN
 Sorry, I know it's not a Skoda...

James gives Dan a bear hug.

DAN (V.O.)
 I honestly think if anyone else
 could have been the Beatles, it
 would have been us. But only
 John, Paul, George, and Ringo
 could EVER be the Beatles.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON BRIDGE STATION - NIGHT

Dan and Sykes stroll and chat amiably.

DAN (V.O.)
 And there'll only ever be one
 Enema, too. We were mates for over
 a decade. They'll always be a
 hugely important part of my life.

SYKES
 It's FINE, Dan. Really. This
 ceaseless apologizing is doing my
 head in -- I think I prefer the
 old "shoot 'em all and let God
 sort 'em out" Dan.

DAN
 Well, I don't. I know I left you
 high and dry.

SYKES
 Well, at least I was VERY high.

DAN
 You know what I mean. It's no
 way to treat your oldest, your
 best mates. I just hope you were
 able to recover.

They stop walking, as they have reached Sykes's
 destination.

SYKES
 I'm back on my feet. Just.

DAN
 Good to hear.

SYKES
 This is where I leave you.
 Thanks for the chat.

Dan looks upward -- the building rises endlessly skyward.

DAN
This is the Shard.

Sykes nods.

DAN (CONT'D)
You live in the Shard?

Sykes nods.

DAN (CONT'D)
You live in the fucking Shard?!

SYKES
I'd invite you up, but... don't
really want to.

DAN
(laughs)
No, no, that's OK.

SYKES
Not feeling so guilty now, are
you?

DAN
You live in the fucking Shard!
And I still live with my old man.

Sykes shrugs.

SYKES
Good luck, Dan.

Sykes goes inside. He waves at the concierge. Dan
watches. Sykes never looks back.

CUT TO:

INT GAY BAR - NIGHT

Dan and Cesar are having a drink.

DAN (V.O.)
Cesar knew I was at his mercy, so
he got me to meet him at a club in
Soho. Where you drink champagne
and it tastes just like Cherry Cola
-- if you know what I mean.

CESAR
So Dan, what do you think of my
world?

DAN
Umm, nice. Especially if you're
an aficionado of... cock, I
suppose.

CESAR
Dan, you are still my favourite
poet. After Lorca. And Gaga.

DAN
Are you in touch with-

CESAR
Of course I am. Ella is mi chica
prima. Wondering if she has a
boyfriend?

DAN
(mimicking Cesar)
Of course I am.
(back to normal voice)
So does she?

CESAR
Nobody special. Same as always.

DAN
Ouch-io. What does she say about
me?

CESAR
Oh, not much. You know, "That
bastard." "That fucker." "That
fucking bastard." (BEAT)
You hurt her. But I think you
should see her.

DAN
I'd love to... but I'm a coward.

CESAR
Oh, come on. Man up. Grow some
cojones.

Dan shakes his head sadly.

CESAR (CONT'D)
Straight people are such drama
queens.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIAN'S ART STUDIO - NIGHT

As Brian paints the image we saw him sketching in the kitchen
earlier, of the unhappy couple, we see and hear Dan strumming
and humming.

DAN (V.O.)
And I started writing some songs.
Solo, acoustic stuff. Stuff I
actually cared about.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

We hear Dan singing and playing a new song -- it's good.

DAN (V.O.)
It felt pretty good.

As he leaves the room, he taps the bobble heads as usual. But then he stops -- this time, for the first time, he notices that the Beatles bobble heads are now Clay Enema bobble heads. He smiles in wonderment, then gently caresses the Ella head.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan plays on a tiny stage. Most people in the audience are holding musical instruments -- it's Open Mic night.

DAN (V.O.)
I played wherever and whenever I
could. Didn't need much money -- I
was living with my dad.

CUT TO:

INT TELEVISION STAGE - DAY

We see the boy-band Shellshock performing "Day Tripper": the black guy, the guy in a wheelchair, etc.

DAN (V.O.)
I decided to sell a few songs to
Shellshock...

We hear a snatch of this boy-band lip-syncing their version of "Day Tripper."

SHELLSHOCK
You gotta praaay... sinner/
One way ticket yeah...

CUT TO:

EXT. BOAT HARBOUR - MORNING

The young fisherman hands a crate of fish over the side of the boat to John...

DAN (V.O.)
...to help fulfil a dream.

...who carries it a short distance and loads it into the trunk (carefully lined with plastic sheeting) of a gleaming 1957 Cadillac Eldorado, all chrome and fins.

He waves at Mr. McCartney, the Fruit Seller.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS BEAUTY SALON - DAY

A FedEx truck is parked outside.

CUT TO:

INT. BEAUTY SALON - CONTINUOUS

In a POV shot, we see a pair of well-manicured old-man hands, gaudy rings on every finger, opening a FedEx box.

RINGO VOICE (O.S.)
Package from Jolly Olde England.
Wonder what it is.

As he opens the box, Dan's entire attempt at reconstructing the Beatles comes tumbling out. We see familiar bits from previous scenes.

He picks up one of the scraps.

RINGO VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
"We all live in a Yellow
Submarine"? Huh-huh, love it!
Totally fab. Uh-yyeahhh.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

It's not a large or fancy club, but a place where people who love music go to see quality performers.

Dan is onstage. The audience is hushed and attentive.

Dan plays a new song: "Momentum." It's musically exciting, the lyrics fresh, poetic, insightful -- reflective of the Dan we've come to know in the previous 90 minutes.

We pan across the audience: serious, discerning musos who are clearly enjoying this performance. We keep moving through the room until we see Ella in back, leaning against the bar, raptly listening.

She makes her way forward towards the stage, along the side of the room. She stops when Dan notices her. Dan is flushed with delight to see her. He then looks out and realises just how much the audience is loving this song.

DAN (V.O.)

I'm a songwriter. I'm 33 years old. And I think... I might have finally written a good song.

Dan finishes the song. Big applause. Stepping forward, applauding the loudest, is Justin.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

Dan is leaving the club, guitar case in hand. He fiddles with the broken latch. Ella is waiting for him outside.

DAN

Hey.

ELLA

Hey... That was great.

DAN

Thanks... "Bit shit"?

ELLA

Not even a *bit* shit. Reminded me of... Townes Van Zandt.

DAN

You're hilarious. (BEAT) It was about you... Us.

ELLA

Yeah, I know...
(long pause)
What happened?

DAN

Just started writing again. Like I used to.

ELLA

No, I mean, what happened with all those "Beatles" songs? You know, the world's greatest band that no one's ever heard of?

DAN
 (laughs)
 Ha! I don't know. Lost my way.
 Jesus.

ELLA
 So have you decided whether they
 were your songs or not?

DAN
 (thinks)
 Kind of... not.

ELLA
 I knew it! Who wrote them?

DAN
 Let's just say, an old
 fisherman... and some of his
 mates.

ELLA
 Barefoot?

DAN
 Exactly.

An audience member passes by:

FAN 1
 Great set, man. Wonderful songs.
 Hey, can you sign my vinyl?

DAN
 Sure.

The Fan hands Dan a sleeve of the vinyl single of Momentum.
 The cover art is Brian's painting of the unhappy couple.

As Dan scribbles, Ella notices Brian's sleeve art.

She nods and smiles approvingly.

ELLA
 Your public. The price of
 stardom.

DAN
 Oh, I'll always have time for the
 muggles.

ELLA
 The what?

DAN
 The muggles. You know, like in
 Harry Potter?

ELLA
Sorry, I don't...

DAN
Harry Potter? The boy wizard? The
books, the films... You've never
heard of Harry Potter.

He takes a deep breath, waits to see if Ella is joking.
She is not.

After a pregnant pause...

DAN (CONT'D)
Doesn't matter.

CAMERA PULLS UP AND OUT.

"OCTOPUS'S GARDEN" KICKS IN.

THE END