

A SUDDEN GUST OF WIND

Written by

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EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - THE CITY - AFTERNOON

Sometime after five. Business people dribble through the revolving doors, alone and in pairs...

JOHN (40s) exits the building. He's in an overcoat, carrying a shoulder bag. He walks up the street and out of frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

LONG SHOT: John walks along the pavement amongst the commuting crowd. An evangelist preaches through a megaphone.

John erupts; he swings his shoulder bag into the wall and it falls to the floor. Fellow commuters slow their walks, turn their heads and look to the commotion. Even the evangelist stops his droning. It's so far away that we can't even HEAR what's going on. Just traffic and city sounds.

John semi-frantically steps in several directions and begins to walk away but then returns... He approaches the bag - crumpled on the floor - picks it up, and walks off.

A cardboard sign at the feet of the evangelist reads:
"Welcome to the coldest night of your life!"

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY - AFTERNOON

ANGLE THROUGH THE SHOP WINDOW - ONTO THE STREET.

John appears on the pavement, looks inside and enters. An EMPLOYEE works in one of the aisles.

JOHN

Hi.

Employee looks up...

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm looking for a birthday cake.

The employee walks out from the aisle and points to a small shelf in the corner of the shop.

EMPLOYEE

They're just there.

JOHN

Thanks.

The employee walks to the counter - works behind the till.
John looks at all the options.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRANCE - HOUSE - AFTERNOON

CU: John steps through the front door, into the entrance lobby.

He takes off his bag, hangs it on the rack and looks inside.

ANGLE: the bag. John pulls out a very broken, company laptop and looks at it.

WIFE (O.C.)

(from upstairs)

John?

MED/WIDE on John, standing in the lobby. Birthday cake underarm.

WIFE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Is that you?

Yeah?

JOHN

JOHN (CONT'D)

(so she can hear)

Yes.

BEAT.

WIFE

Did you get the cake?

JOHN

Yes. I was texting you.

WIFE

Oh. My phone's downstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - EVENING

ANGLE on John. His wife lights sparklers on the cake in the background, starts "Happy Birthday", and approaches the table.

The orange glow of the sparklers flickers across John's face and he smiles and sings along.

Their SON is mesmerised by his cake.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

John sits on his side of the bed in the dark.

He looks at his Wife: she's sound asleep under an eye mask. The sound of wind outside rises over the image.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

John steps out of the front door, wearing pyjamas under his overcoat with everyday shoes.

It's very windy; it ruffles John's hair and clothes and he starts to walk.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS

John continues through city streets. Loose leaves and litter whirl around him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATER

Walking, John looks up at the buildings he passes.

POVs: we track along the street and look up at the buildings. They're architecturally magnificent. Like man-made cliffs in the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB - NIGHT

An EMPLOYEE collects litter from tables and we can hear faint conversation in the back of the room (off screen).

The pub's empty - still a mess from the evenings business.

John enters and approaches the bar. He sits on a stool and waits.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB - MOMENTS LATER

ANGLE OVER THE BAR, on John.

The employee walks behind the bar to the taps. The two men acknowledge each other and the employee pours a half-pint for John.

John drinks and sits there. The conversation from the back of the room comes into focus again. We can't see who's talking, but it sounds like two or three men. John turns his head slightly - eavesdrops.

ANGLE: in the back of the room, where it's dark, two figures talk.

RICHARD 2
...three years is a long time.

RICHARD 1
I know. But you kept my name to yourself -- I won't forget that. I'm gonna look after you now.

BEAT.

RICHARD 1 (CONT'D)
There's a job next week.

RICHARD 2
(shakes head)
Sorry Richard--

RICHARD 1
It's safe. Low risk and the money's good.

RICHARD 2
I can't do it. I just got out.

RICHARD 1
So what're you gonna do? Who's gonna give you work?

RICHARD 2
Don't be like that--

RICHARD 1
I'm serious. How long can you live?

BEAT.

RICHARD 1 (CONT'D)
It's no one, Richard. Just me. I'm the only one trying to help you... Look: do the job - you get on your feet - and then if you still want to call it quits I'll help you do that. But you've gotta help yourself--

ANGLE: between the shoulders of the two men, towards John at the bar and the employee behind it, who's cleaning the surfaces now.

RICHARD 1 (CONT'D)
(seeing John)
Who's that?

Richard 2 looks over...

RICHARD 2
(doesn't know)
I don't know. I thought he was with you.

RICHARD 1
(to the employee)
Charlie? Who is this?

The employee looks like a deer in headlights.

RICHARD 1 (CONT'D)
Why's he in here?

...

EMPLOYEE	RICHARD 1 (CONT'D)
I'm sorry -- I didn't think it would--	What?

Silence. The employee is too nervous to respond again.

RICHARD 1 (CONT'D)
(to John)
Who the fuck are you?

John rises from his stool a little...

JOHN

I'm just -- nothing, I just saw the lights were on. Came in for a drink.

BEAT. No one says anything, they all sit there, confused. A confused stand-off.

And John BOLTS. Faster than lightning he's at the door and gets out of there. No one pursues him...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - THAT MOMENT

John is sprinting along the road, totally out of breath. He runs and he runs and he runs.

A corner approaches. John turns and slows a little. He looks over his shoulder and continues along the street. And he sees activity up ahead...

POV: Workmen load crates into the back of a large truck.

John keeps walking - past the workmen, behind the truck, and out of sight for a moment - reappearing through the passenger window.

The DRIVER looks over a checklist behind the wheel.

JOHN

Hi.

DRIVER

Hi.

JOHN

Where do you go to?

DRIVER

Sorry?

JOHN

Where are you going?

DRIVER

Well I've got more than five stops tonight--

JOHN

Right, but what's the last one?

DRIVER

Penzance.

The Driver returns to his checklist... John looks along the street - contemplates, then:

JOHN

Can I come with you?

DRIVER

(looks up from his
checklist again)

What?

JOHN

Can I come with you. To Penzance?

DRIVER

You're serious?

JOHN

Yeah.

...

DRIVER

Alright but you'll have to go in
the footwell until we're out of the
city.

BEAT.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Can't take hitchhikers. It's
company policy.

JOHN

Ok.

John climbs in, shuts the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - THAT MOMENT

The loaders close the back of the truck - the engine starts
up and it pulls into the street/turns a corner out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

John is scrunched up in the passenger seat footwell.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTORWAY - COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

TRACKING the delivery truck along the road. Total darkness except for the rear lights of the truck and the immediate tarmac beneath it.

DRIVER (O.C.)

...so, if we could harness one
small enough - the size of a
mountain or something...

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

John's POV: an Albert Einstein bobble-head on the dashboard... CAMERA PANS to the driver's hands on the wheel.

John is sat in the passenger seat now. He listens to the Driver's talking.

DRIVER

...we could store it in the Earth's
orbit and it would power
everything. Tens of millions of
megawatts... all our power,
renewably sourced from the
radiation of a black hole.

John just looks at the Driver. ANGLE on the driver now:

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Do you know what the information
paradox is?

John shakes his head.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I don't know all the terminology,
but... black holes suck information
and matter in. After that we don't
know where the stuff is or what
happened to it, except that it's in
the black hole. We all know that.
But black holes also *emit*
particles. They radiate heat.

(MORE)

DRIVER (CONT'D)

You know there's even sound inside of them?

Well, as the black hole emits more and more particles, it gradually loses mass until it's not there anymore. It shrinks and then disappears completely.

ANGLE through the windscreen.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

The paradox is... nothing that the black hole emitted before it disappeared - nothing that came out of it - bears any relation to the stuff that went in. That's the paradox.

The black hole is gone. What happened to all the information that got sucked in in the first place? It doesn't just reappear, so where did it go? It's a magic trick by the universe. And the white rabbit's *really* gone.

The road unfolds ahead, lit only by the truck's headlights...

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNISH ROAD - DAWN

They pull in at the side of the road. John gets out and the truck pulls away again.

It's the countryside outside of Penzance - there are no pavements so John walks along the road beside the hedgerows.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNISH MOORLANDS - CLIFFSIDE - DAWN

A large, sweeping, WIDE SHOT of the landscape. Cornish cliffs, bracken vibrating in the wind, and the sea down below... not another person in sight.

We see a dot moving across the screen - John, walking through the landscape... his pyjamas and overcoat blowing in the wind.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH/COVE - MORNING

John descends some steps onto the windy beach and walks across the sand towards the lapping waves.

As he approaches, the shot turns into a CLOSE-UP. John is rustled by the harsh and cold wind - doesn't resist it.

CUT TO BLACK.

END.