

Play/Record

By

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TEASER

INT.SUPERMARKET - MORNING

MATT SPARKS, 30, handsome in a slightly careless fashion, is pushing a trolley, CHARLIE ANDERSON, 26, irrepressible, redhead, bounces along beside him grabbing provisions.

CHARLIE

Bullshit!

MATT

Swear to God. It's just not there.
(Points to a shelf)
Tom Collins.

CHARLIE

(Reaching for the mix and
dropping it in the trolley
which is already loaded with
assorted bottles)
Matt Sparks you are so full of crap
it's unbelievable.

MATT

I'm hurt. Here I am trying to
enlighten a young sound engineer as
to her craft and all I get is
abuse. Better grab some JD.

Charlie grabs a bottle from top shelf, holds it up and looks at Matt

MATT

It is his Birthday..?

She grabs two more bottles and moves to drop them in the trolley.

CHARLIE

Listen to you Old Man River. I'm
not falling for this one.
(she strikes a hands on hips
pose)
I am a highly educated student of
sound.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - MOMENTS LATER

Matt and Charlie are loading countless boxes of booze into the trunk of Matt's beige Chevy Caprice Classic.

MATT

Well, in that case, you won't mind if we put a little wager on it?

CHARLIE

Bring it on Grandad!

MATT

Okay, \$10 says there's no kick drum in Heroes.

She slaps his outstretched hand.

CHARLIE

Done. You're so wrong. I know Bowie like I know my own skin. No kick drum! Hah!

EXT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS - MOMENTS LATER

Matt is unloading the boxes from the car. Charlie is stalking up and down. They are parked outside a large wood paneled barn set in the middle of nowhere. It has seen better days, specifically back in the Summer of '74.

CHARLIE

(disbelievingly)

What the..? I mean..! How is there no kick drum in that song!

MATT

(grinning)

I....

CHARLIE

(cutting him off)

Don't you dare, you bastard.
I...this...fff...

She dances a jig of frustration then collapses into trunk. She puffs and pulls a crumpled \$10 bill from her pocket.

MATT

Keep it. You're a sound engineer now. You're gonna need every dollar you've got!

(CONTINUED)

Charlie shrugs and puts away the money. She looks speculatively at the barn.

CHARLIE

So this is Play/Record Studios huh?
It's a bit, em...

MATT

(puffing with the effort of
carrying the boxes)
Rustic? Charming? God damn awesome?

CHARLIE

Run down?

MATT

(grinning)
You think it's bad out here, wait
till you see inside.

CHARLIE

You seem strangely proud of that.

MATT

All great studios are permanently
on the verge of collapse.
(he mimes an Ali shuffle.
Badly)
Keeps you on your toes.

CHARLIE

Says who? The people who work in
them?

MATT

(scratching his chin in
thought)
Erm, yeah. I suppose.

Charlie looks around at the desolate landscape.

CHARLIE

Where are we anyway?

MATT

Welcome to The Greater Boulder
Flood plain. Cheap land, no
neighbors.

Charlie casts another quizzical eye at the barn.

CHARLIE

Perfect. Any chance I can get a
hard hat?

INT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

The step inside. A dark corridor stretches out ahead of them. There is a faint light at the end. They can hear a piano being played somewhere inside. The melody is hauntingly beautiful.

CHARLIE

(in hushed tones)

This suddenly feels very religious.

MATT

(gesturing around, just as
hushed)

Temples of Sound.

CHARLIE

I suppose if I was to turn on the
lights it would ruin the moment.

MATT

Not really. They haven't worked in
years. Just, you know, walk into
the light.

They head towards the end of the corridor. It opens up into the main recording space. It's cavernous, stretching to the full height of the barn. Dusty skylights let in subdued light from above. In the middle sits DANIEL 'DEE' BLANCHFIELD, 70, bearded, rangy, with his back to them, playing an upright piano. They pause and listen.

MATT

(hushed, nodding in Dee's
direction)

The High priest.

CHARLIE

Is that the Beatles piano? I
thought no-one played it?

The music stops and Dee swivels round to them.

DEE

Indeed young lady, not since Isaac
'Tiny' Thomas had a heart attack
right here recording 'Parallax
Odyssey'. But I had a little bout

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DEE (cont'd)
of nostalgia this morning so I
figured, what the hell.

He stands up and walks towards them, taking the box from Charlie and offering his hand.

DEE
You must be Molly. Charmed to meet
you.
(to Matt, pointedly)
Finally.

Charlie shakes the offered hand looking confused.

MATT
Ah, no. This is Charlie.

DEE
You move fast kid. I didn't even
know Molly was out of the picture.

MATT
(patiently)
No. Molly's still in the picture.
This is Charlie, my friend. Simon's
sister. Remember Simon? From my
band?

DEE
(looking thoughtful)
Let's pretend I do.

MATT
Anyway, she's just finished her
degree so I thought she could come
in and do some work here, you know,
learn the ropes.

Dee looks even more thoughtful.

MATT
That's not a problem is it?

DEE
Ordinarily, no. No problem at all.
But you see, as of tomorrow, I'm
closing the studio.

Matt glazes over and sits heavily on the piano keyboard. A hideous chord resonates around the room. Simultaneously a cloud of white powder explodes from the inside of the piano. It settles slowly around the room. All three of them are completely covered in it.

(CONTINUED)

DEE
(Eyes wide)
Whoa. Deja vu!

Dee crumples to the floor, unconscious.

Cue "It's the End of the World as we know it (and I feel fine)" by REM

END TEASER

INT.HOSPITAL - LATER THAT DAY

Matt is sitting in the waiting room. He's wearing a hospital gown. His hair is damp. Charlie joins him, similarly clad with a towel piled on top of her head.

CHARLIE
That really happened, didn't it?

Matt nods mutely

CHARLIE
We were really covered in..?

Matt nods again. Then rouses himself.

MATT
Dee once told me they used to hide, you know, 'stuff' in the piano in case they got raided.

CHARLIE
So we were just covered in some rock star's ancient stash? I don't know if that's cool or not.

DR. ARNOLD, 40's, bespectacled, comes over.

DR. ARNOLD
Okay. Mr Matthew Sparks? Ms Charlotte Anderson? You're tests are all clear. It would seem the drug's toxicity level dropped considerably over the years in storage which I suppose, in the circumstances, was a stroke of luck for you. We have however, burnt your clothes as a precaution.

He hands them a small plastic hospital bag with wallets and phones in it.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ARNOLD CONT'D
Now, about Mr Blanchfield.

MATT/CHARLIE
Who?

DR. ARNOLD
(consulting his chart)
Mr Daniel Wallace Blanchfield? You did bring him in right? Elderly gentleman, bearded. Presenting covered head to toe in 30 year old cocaine. That kind of thing doesn't happen a lot round here you know. We tend to notice when it does. The police as well.

Matt and Charlie exchange sideways glances.

DR. ARNOLD CONT'D
Though apparently the officer I spoke to is somewhat at a loss as to how, or even if, it's possible to charge someone for being covered in cocaine. So, Mr Blanchfield?

MATT
Yes, he's ours. We call him Dee.

DR. ARNOLD
So you're not next of kin then?

MATT
He's my Qui-Gon Jinn.

DR. ARNOLD
(confused)
You mean your Obi-Wan Kenobi?

MATT
(firmly)
Qui-Gon Jinn. I'm Obi Wan.

DR. ARNOLD
Right.
(to Charlie)
And you?

CHARLIE
(wearily)
No kin. Or Jinn for that matter.
Just Charlie.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ARNOLD
(forging ahead)
Okay, well, you brought him here so
I'm assuming you're willing to
accept some responsibility for him?

MATT/CHARLIE
Yes.

DR. ARNOLD
Wonderful. Well, he's awake and
he's making demands. He wants out
which is a fairly standard one and
we tend to ignore it.

MATT
It's his birthday.

DR. ARNOLD
And what a lovely present this must
be for him. He's also asking for a
copy of Led Zeppelin IV on vinyl.
(looking helpless)
He's given me a catalog number for
his preferred pressing.

MATT
He was the 6th member of Zeppelin.

DR. ARNOLD
(confused)
Weren't there only 4 of them?

MATT
I mentioned that to him once.

DR. ARNOLD
And?

MATT
(philosophically)
And now I know how long it takes to
wind 2,500 feet of tape by hand.

DR. ARNOLD
(bewildered)
He also asked for a Chest film,
EKG, CDC, Chem-7, blood gas, coag
panel and a bottle of Jack Daniels.

MATT
He loves ER.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE
And Jack Daniels.

DR. ARNOLD
Quite. Well, his diagnosis was remarkably accurate, so I ordered the tests. For a man his age, having led the life I'm now beginning to suspect he has, Mr Blanchfield is in reasonable shape.

Matt and Charlie exchange a look of relief.

DR. ARNOLD
What I mean to say is it's remarkable he's still alive.

Matt and Charlie sober instantly.

DR. ARNOLD CONT'D
He has significant liver damage, lung scarring, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and a tendency to extreme sarcasm.

MATT
We knew about that last one already.

DR. ARNOLD
In a way, this
(air quotes)
"accident" may well prove to be a stroke of luck for Mr Blanchfield. There are some fundamental life choices he needs to make. And soon.

Dr. Arnold turns to leave, pauses, turns back, pulling an mp3 player and headphones from his inside pocket.

DR. ARNOLD
It might not be vinyl, but it's got some Zeppelin on it.

MATT
Thanks Doc.

Matt and Charlie watch Dr. Arnold walk away.

MATT
(looking contemplatively after the doctor)
Do you think we can get a refund on the booze?

INT.HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dee is sitting up in bed staring out the window. He looks not unlike a bear in a hospital gown. With damp hair. Matt enters.

DEE

Hey Kid. Not the most dignified situation you've ever found me in.

MATT

Well, you're forgetting the time I fished you out of the jacuzzi after you electrocuted yourself playing Voodoo Chile.

DEE

Naked?

MATT

Naked. This by comparison, no contest!

DEE

You're okay.

MATT

Oh yeah. Super. How about you?

DEE

Hell yes. That's not the first time a bag of cocaine's exploded in my face.

MATT

Really? For most people I'd imagine that's a one time only event.

They sit quietly for a minute. Matt looks at Dee.

MATT

So, I spoke to the doctor.

DEE

(eying him shrewdly)

Yep. I imagine that was a conversation of some considerable interest. Fact is I've suspected for a time now that I should be slowing down. Just kinda hard to cut the momentum when you've been pushing hard for so long.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Well, looks like now's the time
huh? Cut back on the booze, eat a
bit healthier, maybe get some
exercise?

Dee cocks a querisome eyebrow?

MATT CONT'D

Or at least get outside a bit.
Apparently sunlight is a good
source of Vitamin D.

DEE

(grinning)

Maybe

MATT

(hesitantly)

Is this why you're closing the
studio.

DEE

It's definitely become a factor.

MATT

And?

DEE

We've never really talked about
money, have we? What I mean to say
is, I've never really paid you what
you'd call a salary.

MATT

Well, to be fair, you never really
hired me. I just kept turning up
until you gave me something to do.

DEE

And you've never questioned that?

MATT

No need.

DEE

And therein lies our problem. It
would seem neither of us has been
particularly vigilant of our
financial situation. And cccording
to the nice lady at the bank, that
situation is tenuous.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Meaning?

DEE

Meaning they're about a week away from taking it all and turfing us out.

Matt shakes his head.

DEE

I'll admit I reacted poorly to the news. Apparently, I'm now banned from the bank.

MATT

Add it to the list. No other options?

DEE

Ah hell. Years ago I would've just bulled through this, bookings would have picked up and we would have been sitting pretty. But, well, it can't have escaped your notice that we've been playing a lot more darts recently.

MATT

Yeah, I'm actually pretty good now.

DEE

(grinning)

I wouldn't go that far. But it doesn't look like there's any bookings coming up to get in the way of your practice. That's our problem.

Matt looks crestfallen.

DEE

(rousing himself a little)

Today is my 62nd birthday.

MATT

65th.

DEE

What? Really?

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Yes. Don't you remember McCartney rang you last year? Sang you a special birthday song?

DEE

Which one?

MATT

(exasperated)

Helter Skelter! Oh, come on Dee. What do you think he sang you on your 64th Birthday?

DEE

Never did like that song. See kid, that just makes things worse. I'm now apparently 65. As far as I'm concerned I've aged 3 years in the last minute or so and I'm not very happy about it. Hell, I'm not very happy about any of this. But it's time to call it a day. That's my diagnosis.

MATT

Well, the doctor said you can get out of here in a few hours so you can still make the party if you want to?

(pauses)

I suppose it's a farewell party now. Are you going to tell everyone?

DEE

(shakes his head thoughtfully)

No, lets just keep that under our hats for now. Do they all know I'm 65?

MATT

Yes. They were all at your last birthday. And the one before that. You see how this works? .

DEE

Well, if you get the chance, start spreading the rumor I'm actually 62. 65 sounds old.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Will do.

He gets up to leave then pauses.

MATT CONT'D

Oh, the doctor gave me this. It's got Zep on it. See you in a few hours.

Dee regards the the player for a moment then pops on the headphones and settles back, a rueful smile on his face.

DEE

God bless technology.

Cue "When the Levee Breaks" by Led Zeppelin

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

A small, somewhat messy apartment. The walls are lined with the memorabilia of a moderately successful music career. MOLLY JONES, 34, dark, athletic, is in the middle of the room. She is clad in Lycra which does her lots of favors. She is stretching in that special way that makes normal people wince. Matt enters in hospital gown and paper slippers. Molly hops round to follow his progress, holding some sort of ludicrous torture pose on one leg

MOLLY

Matt? Matt? Hello?

MATT

(from within the gown as he hauls it off)
Hey Molls. Sorry to interrupt, just need to change.

MOLLY

Is that a hospital gown? Matt? Are you okay?

MATT

(pulling on a t-shirt)
Yeah, just a little studio mishap. Nothing serious.

MOLLY

(unwinding from the pose)
What sort of mishap? Matt?
(she pauses, then)
Hang on, where are your clothes.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

(Hopping about pulling on
trousers)

Incinerated. Just a precaution
though.

MOLLY

(more concern)

What sort of mishap leads to your
clothes being incinerated?

(pause)

Hang on. Weren't you wearing that
French Connection jacket I bought
you?

MATT

Maybe? It was just a, you know,
accident with the piano and a,
ahem, 30 year old bag of cocaine.

Silence

MATT CONT'D

It was only about a kilo and the
doctor said it was wrapped so badly
that it had turned to mush a long
time ago which, you know, was a
good thing since we, erm, got it,
you know, all over us.

MOLLY

We!

MATT

(busily tying his shoes)

Yeah, me, Dee and Charlie.

MOLLY

Now would that be Charlie the
one-eyed harmonica player. Or the
other one.

MATT

The other one. Though I did see
Charlie-One-Eye last....

Matt dries up as he sees the look on Molly's face.

MOLLY

Marvelous.

Molly turns away and embarks on an even more violent bout of
one legged posturing.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Come on Molls. Charlie is, you know, Charlie. She's my best friend's little sister. I've known her since she was 10.

MOLLY

Been spending a lot of time with her lately.

MATT

Well, yeah. She's finished her degree and looking for a job and I can help her with that.

(pause)

Or at least, I thought I could... Anyway, she's a really good engineer.

MOLLY

(puffing and hopping so as not to look at him)

She's also younger..

MATT

Well, we're only a few years apart...

MOLLY

(firmly)

8 years Matt. She's 8 years younger than me. And, redder...

MATT

Yeah but you're bendier.

She throws him a vicious look

MATT

Sorry.

MOLLY CONT'D

And she knows about sound, recording, all that stuff.

MATT

Come on Molls, you do too. Last week I spotted you tweaking the graphic EQ on the Hi-Fi.

MOLLY

(through gritted teeth)

I only did that to stop it messing with my feng shui.

(CONTINUED)

She collapses from here pose and stand hands on hips looking around.

MOLLY CONT'D

God I hate this place sometimes.
(finally looking at Matt
square in the face, pointing
at the EQ)
I have no idea what that thing
actually does to the music.

MATT

(surprised)
Oh. Well, it's really interesting
actually. You see there's a trade
off at mastering down to the
variety of playback systems.....

MOLLY

(interrupting)
And I don't care. I'm not
interested. Not even a little. You
see. I try to be, or I've tried to
be, but...

MATT

Hey, that's cool. I mean, I'm not
interested in your, you know,
erm....

He attempts a very poor version of one of her stretches,
collapsing almost immediately.

MOLLY

Clearly.

MATT

What I mean is, it's not a problem.
We have our own stuff going on,
it's cool. Look, I'm sorry but I've
got to run. I've a car full of
booze to refund, cocaine to Hoover
up and a party to re-organize. You
still coming right?

MOLLY

(measuring her words
carefully)
I'll see.

MATT

Great. See you later.

She watches him leave then stalks to the Hi-Fi, gives the graphic EQ a long hard look before swiping all the sliders into a mess with a squeal of frustration.

INT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIO - LATER THAT DAY

Matt is in the live room. Some music ("Breadcrumb Trail" by Slint) is playing. Matt is hoovering the piano. He is shoulder deep in the inner workings. A silk scarf is tied round his nose.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)
Hello? Hello? Dee? Matt?

Muffled, from the depths of the piano.

MATT
Hang on, stay back a second.

ART POULTER, late 40's, balding, mustachioed, enters the room tentatively. Matt extricates himself from the piano, pulls off the scarf, and jogs over.

MATT
Hey Art, you're a bit early.
Party's not starting for a few hours.

Matt slaps Art on the shoulder.

ART
(looking uncomfortable)
Ah. Dee asked me to stop by and start inventorying the gear.

He pats Matt consolingly on the shoulder.

MATT
Oh. Right. He told you about the closure.

ART
(nods sadly)
I should be able to place most of it with my clients. Rest assured I'll do my utmost to secure the highest price I can for everything.

MATT
Thanks Art.

(CONTINUED)

ART
Now, were you just hoovering the piano?

MATT
Yep, long story.

ART
What about the dust?

MATT
Sorry?

ART
(despairingly)
The dust. It's critical to maintaining the specific timbre of the instrument. Years off accumulation that makes this piano unique.

MATT
Art, I'm sorry I didn't consider the dust, but in the circumstances I didn't really have a choice.

ART
Is there any chance I could have a look through the bag. Maybe I can re-instate some of it?

MATT
On any other day Art, I would happily let you dig through the bag for some flaky bits of John Lennon. But not today.

Art looks genuinely crestfallen.

MATT
Chin up old man. Just give me a sec to lock this thing up.

Matt walks over to the piano. He takes one last look inside. Spots something and pauses. A strange look on his face.

MATT
Art, when do we reckon The Beatles were actually using this?

ART
Well, the records seem to indicate the late 60's. Possibly on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ART (cont'd)
Paperback Writer, Tomorrow Never
Knows and, ahem, Ob Li Di, Ob Li
Da.

MATT
(grinning at Art)
Yeah I hate that god damn song as
well. Could you throw me that roll
of gaffer tape.

Art throws the tape to Matt who rips off a strip and sticks
it inside the piano. He closes the lid and jumps down.

MATT
Before you get started on the gear
could you give me a hand with some
chopping.

ART
Chopping?

MATT
Chopping.

INT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS - NIGHT

The party is in full swing. There is a band playing in the
live room. The lounge is packed with bodies. Matt is crammed
behind the small bar in the corner of the lounge with
Charlie. The room might have come straight out of a Frank
Lloyd Wright house, as decorated by Motorhead. Dee
approaches the bar.

DEE
What's that smell?

MATT/CHARLIE
Dee!

DEE
And thanks for the banner by the
way. Very subtle.

He points over his shoulder at a 'Happy 65th Birthday'
banner on the wall. The number 5 has been crossed out and a
'2' written in it's place. Charlie pulls a sparkly badge
with 62 on it from her pocket and pins it to Dee's shirt.

CHARLIE
There, suits you.

Dee looks at Matt who grins and gives him two thumbs up.

(CONTINUED)

DEE

Hmmmmph. Seriously though, what's that smell. It smells...healthy.

MATT

Ah, that would be the Crudités.

DEE

(surprised)

You're shitting me.

MATT

(grinning)

I wouldn't dare, not on your 62nd birthday. Try one. They're good for you.

Dee tentatively plucks a carrot stick from the plate, dips it, and crunches on it thoughtfully. He points the remainder of the carrot stick at Matt.

DEE

You made these?

MATT

Yep.

DEE

I can tell.

MATT

Hah. Hah. Drink?

DEE

You got anything back there that isn't vegetable based?

MATT

(shakes his head)

Gotta cut that momentum, remember?

DEE

I'll pass then. Now, get out from behind there and give this young lady the tour. The proper tour.

MATT

(to Charlie)

You want the tour.

CHARLIE

Hell yes.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Okay, hang on.

He ducks behind the bar and rummages around coming up with a tattered trilby with a 'Tour guide' sticker on the front. He pops it on his head at a jaunty angle and turns back to Charlie.

MATT

Let's go.

They link arms and dive into the crowd.

INT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS - LATER THAT NIGHT

Matt and Charlie are seated at the Beatles piano in the live room. The party has clearly wound down and the studio is almost silent. Art has joined them. Charlie is wearing the tour guide hat.

MATT

I've just realized, that was probably the last tour I'll ever give of this place.

(to Charlie)

How was it?

CHARLIE

Mind blowing.

MATT

Sounds about right.

CHARLIE

Out of curiosity, just how many people have actually died here?

MATT

5.

ART

6 actually.

He points his thumb at the wall behind him. Just visible is the faint chalk outline of a spreadeagled body.

CHARLIE

That seems like a lot.

ART

Well, as the events of this morning would seem to indicate, this hasn't

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ART (cont'd)
necessarily been a haven of clean
living. Or electrical safety. Or
even plain common sense for that
matter.

He stares longingly at the piano and gently strokes the lid.

ART CONT'D
It's a shame this historic
instrument had to be polluted like
that.

CHARLIE
You've got a real thing for this
piano, huh?

ART
Of course. It's a piece of history.
It resonates with genius. Legendary
pieces of music were recorded on
it.

MATT
(straight faced)
And Ob-Li-Di Ob-Li-Da

Charlie chokes on a snigger and Art continues.

ART
To me, it's, well, beautiful.

CHARLIE
I get that. My guitar's gorgeous. I
used to just love wearing it. I've
even slept with it a few times.

Art looks stunned at this revelation.

CHARLIE
What?

ART
Well, what I mean to say is, hmmm
....erm...

He puffs and looks at Matt beseechingly.

MATT
I think what Art is trying to say
is that guys tend to think of their
guitars as female. Generally
speaking.

CHARLIE

Oh.

(realization dawning)

Oh!

(mischievously)

Art, is the thought of me sleeping
with my Les Paul Gold Top upsetting
you?

Art looks at the ceiling imploringly.

ART

Ahem. I, well, I. Oh dear.

Charlie slides along the piano seat, closer to Art. A deer
in headlights has nothing on him at this point.

CHARLIE

Did I mention she's equipped with
P90's.

(leaning forward and
whispering)

And a hard tail.

Art makes an incoherent noise

MATT

(chuckling at Art's distress)

Alright, alright, leave the poor
man alone. Art, can you keep
Charlie company for a while.

Art nods, a mix of fascination and fear on his face.

MATT

(to Charlie)

Please don't break him.

She smiles sweetly as Matt turns to leave. As he walks away
he hears Art.

ART

So, erm, do you have any other
instruments?

Matt shakes his head as he walks into the control room.

INT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

Dee is sitting in the control room. The room is dominated by a massive mixing desk, huge monitor speakers and a hulking reel to reel tape machine in the corner. It is part museum, part NASA Control, part lounge. Matt takes a chair next to Dee at the desk.

DEE
(staring into space)
Have you really been sitting in
that chair for 7 years?

MATT
Nearly 10 if you count the sessions
we did with the band. You know
what, it's a blasted uncomfortable
chair.

This elicits a rumbling chuckle from Dee.

DEE
Upgrades

MATT
Hmmm?

Dee gestures around the room.

DEE
Back in '72 Play/Record was cutting
edge. Hell, I was cutting edge. We
did stuff here years ahead of our
time. But look at it now. I can't
even remember the last time it was
painted.

MATT
7 years ago. It was the first job
you asked me to do.

DEE
(looking around, musing)
I can see now why I didn't ask you
to do it again.

They both chuckle. Charlie's laugh floats through to them from the live room.

DEE
She's an impressive young lady.

(CONTINUED)

MATT
She's got Art wrapped around her
little finger.

DEE
(looking around)
I'm sorry it's come to this.

MATT
We'll be alright. Like you say
she's, an impressive young lady.

DEE
And you?

MATT
I don't think anyone's ever called
me an impressive young lady.

DEE
(chuckles)
Hell of a day.

MATT
(nods)
When are you going to tell people.
About the closure.

DEE
Tomorrow. Until then...

He picks up a bottle from beside his chair.

DEE CONT'D
The last bottle of '75.

MATT
I thought the last one was, you
know, the last bottle of '75.

DEE
Well, technically it was, until I
found this one.

Dee rummages around under the desk and brings up 2 shot
glasses.

DEE
She needs a toast to send her off.

MATT
(with a small grin)
Another woman eh?

(CONTINUED)

DEE

Damn right.

MATT

Go on then.

Dee opens the bottle and pours 2 generous shots. They hold their glasses aloft.

MATT/DEE

Play/Record!

They hurl back the liquor then fall about coughing.

MATT

Christ, that really doesn't get any better with age.

DEE

(shaking his head)

Being stored under the jacuzzi for 30 odd years certainly hasn't helped. Another one?

MATT

(nods)

Quick, before it gets any older.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Matt is face down on the bed. His arm is draped across an electric guitar. A door slams somewhere waking him.

MATT

Blagghh. 1975 was a terrible year.

He looks at the guitar next to him. There's a note in the strings. He plucks it out.

MOLLY (V.O.)

Dear Matt. Please answer the following question honestly, for your own sake. Did you notice I was gone before you read this note?

(Matt winces, looks around the room, then at the guitar in the bed, then continues reading)

Exactly. I think it's best if I just stop seeing you. We had fun for a while

(Matt smirks)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MOLLY (V.O.) (cont'd)
and you made me properly happy. But
now not so much. Like you said, we
have our own stuff going on. Good
luck with it. I've deleted my
number from your phone. Molly.

Matt looks hard at the guitar beside him then back at the
note.

MOLLY (V.O.)
P.S. I know you smirked when you
read the line about having fun.
That's not the kind of fun I meant.

MATT
(exasperatedly)
Oh come on!

He leaps up in a whirl of sheets, flails about uselessly for
a moment then collapses on the floor.

MATT
This is not shaping up to be a good
day.

He reaches for the hi-fi remote on the table beside him and
preses play. Music plays ("Pavement Tune" by The Frames). It
sounds horrible. He scrambles up, looks at the graphic EQ
and methodically begins re-setting the sliders. As he works
through the process the music becomes sweeter and his face
sets with resolve.

MATT
(to himself)
Right then Sparks. Time to man up.

The music swells up. Montage of Matt on the phone,
chuckling, earnestly talking, pleading. We hear none of it
but in the end he grabs his coat and leaves.

INT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIO - LATER THAT DAY

Matt walks into the lounge. Charlie is already there
cleaning up.

CHARLIE
Hey.

MATT
Hey.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

I know it's going to be one of the shortest internships in history but I figured, what the hell, I'll probably learn something.

MATT

It mightn't be as short as you think!

CHARLIE

Oh?

MATT

(excitedly)

I'm going to buy the studio. I'm going to sell my place. I've got some royalties set aside. My Dad's lending me some. I can raise \$350,000.

CHARLIE

(uncertainly)

Sell your place? Where are you going to live?

MATT

Here!

CHARLIE

Here? You're kidding?

MATT

No. That's the great part. There's a whole apartment upstairs. I can live here!

CHARLIE

And Molly?

MATT

Ah. Well, you see, Molly's left, so that won't be a problem. So what do you think?

Charlie looks at him for a moment then walks over, takes him by the hand and leads him to a sofa. They sit.

CHARLIE

I think it's a terrible idea. Probably the worst I've heard in years. Almost as bad as Queen still touring.

(CONTINUED)

DEE (O.C.)
What's that about Queen touring.

Dee walks in. Matt looks at Charlie, she shakes her head. He stands up.

MATT
Dee, I want to buy the studio.

Charlie collapses back on the sofa.

DEE
Hmm. Well if we're going to talk business I'm going to need some coffee. You want some?

Matt nods.

CHARLIE
You got cream? Sugar?

DEE
(rummaging in a cupboard)
I'm not even sure I have coffee.

He gets the pot on and turns to Matt.

DEE
Okay, shoot.

MATT
Right. I know you both think I've lost my mind and this is about Molly leaving or some such...

DEE
(interjecting)
She left? When?

MATT
This morning. I woke up and she'd turned into a guitar.

Dee pours coffee for them all. Charlie looks at it suspiciously.

DEE
Same thing happened with my 2nd wife. As it turns out I was much happier with the guitar.

CHARLIE (O.C.)

Oh God. Men!

MATT

Anyway, this is not about Molly. Or at least, not necessarily all about Molly. I've been here almost every day for 7 years. I like it here. I like working here. I want to keep working here. It's really that simple.

DEE

It is huh? And you have plans then? Plans to turn the place around? Make it profitable again? Plans you've been keeping secret for the last 7 years?

MATT

Plan is a very strong word.

CHARLIE (O.C.)

I have a plan.

They both look at her. She stands up.

CHARLIE CONT'D

(gesturing to Matt)

Don't sell it to him.

Matt blusters

CHARLIE CONT'D

Sell it to us.

There is silence.

DEE

(smiling slightly)

Go on.

CHARLIE

(to Dee)

On his own he'd make a mess of it. He's too much like you.

As she speaks Dee and Matt, standing together take identical sips of coffee, mirroring each other perfectly.

DEE

True. He is a chip of the old head block.

(CONTINUED)

Matt and Dee grin at each other.

CHARLIE

(rolling her eyes)

What's that, a tape joke? See, that's exactly what I mean. You're probably the only two guys in the whole state who get that joke. This isn't a studio, it's a boys club. And right now, you seem to be the only two members. You need some new ideas to turn this place around. That's where I come in.

DEE

I see.

Matt pulls Charlie aside. They have a whispered conversation.

CHARLIE

Sorry, I just kinda jumped in there.

MATT

No, you're probably right.
(pauses)
Man this has been a weird morning.

CHARLIE

I can put 20 grand in the pot.

They both take a deep breath, nod to each other, and turn to Dee.

MATT

\$370,000.

DEE

(shakes his head sady)
\$400,000 or I'm living in my car.
If I'm lucky.

Matt and Charlie look at each other helplessly.

ART (O.C.)

I'll give you \$30,000 for the Beatles piano.

They all whip round. Art is stood in the doorway. Matt looks at Dee but Dee avoids his gaze.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

It was never The Beatles' piano
Art.

Dee gives Matt a sharp look.

ART

Oh, I didn't know you knew.

Dee looks at both of them in turn.

DEE

Hang on, how did any of you know?

ART

Well, I sold the real one to a
collector in Japan about, eh, 5
years ago? So, you know, that was a
bit of a give away for me.

MATT

Oh. Well I only found out
yesterday. I found a factory
sticker dated 1976.

DEE

(to Charlie)

Did you know?

CHARLIE

I just assumed it was bullshit from
the start. But, you know, every
studio needs a few good stories,
right? Like all those people who
"apparently" died here.

They all look at Charlie.

DEE

Actually, that's all true.

CHARLIE

Oh. Wow.

DEE

The piano though, that was just a
gag that got out of control. Hell,
suddenly everyone knew about it. I
was glad to have the excuse to lock
it up. Didn't feel right, people
coming here just to play it.

(CONTINUED)

ART

Well, my offer still stands.
\$30,000 for the piano, wherever it
came from.

Dee looks at them, some sort of realization dawning.

DEE

You're really serious about buying
this place? You know what you're
getting into right?

Matt and Charlie nod.

MATT

Molly left this morning and instead
of chasing her I'm here trying to
save this place. So, there you go.

CHARLIE

You're a terrible boyfriend.

MATT

Yep.

Charlie regards him for a moment in despair.

CHARLIE

Look, I know I only got here
yesterday but I'm hooked. Sure it's
tired, and old, and clearly
dangerous, and smells a bit...

MATT/DEE/ART

What smell?

CHARLIE

Really?

The 3 men look baffled.

DEE CONT'D

(to Art)

The piano?

ART

It might not be the Beatle's piano,
but it is the Play/Record piano. I
don't have to try too hard to prove
some pretty impressive providence
as to it's recording career.

Dee looks at them all in turn again.

(CONTINUED)

DEE

Well then, congratulations on your new piano Art. And a toast. To the new owners of Play/Record Studios.

They raise their mugs. Much hugging and back slapping ensues.

EXT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS - LATER THAT DAY

Matt and Charlie wave as Art drives off with the piano in a trailer. It makes an horrendous racket as it bounces down the track. Dee joins them pushing an ancient motorbike. All three wince at the noise.

MATT

I hope he knows a good tuner.
(to Dee)
So, what now?

DEE

I think I'll have a holiday. Never really had one of those.

They shake hands. Charlie steals a quick hug which seems to surprise Dee. He looks at them both a little lost for words.

DEE

Thank you.

He kicks the bike to life and sets off down the lane.

DEE

(shouting)
Momentum kid. Watch that momentum.

MATT

(shouting)
Yes Sir!

Matt and Charlie head inside.

INT.PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

CHARLIE

Okay boss, what's first?

MATT

Well, the place could do with a lick of paint.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

Hmm. I don't think that's going to cut it.

MATT

Okay, what do you think partner?

CHARLIE

(cocking her eyebrow at him)
Partner eh. Well, I have a list.

She reaches in her pocket, pulls out a piece of paper and unfolds it. Both sides are covered in scrawled handwriting. Matt marvels at it.

MATT

I'm going to need some more coffee.

CHARLIE

That's number 1 on the list. Get decent coffee.

Matt continues scanning the page.

MATT

Hang on, I can sort out item 32 right now.

He hands the list to Charlie who looks at it quizzically. He exits the lounge into to the hall. There are two doors with hand written signs on them, one says 'Pisser' the other says 'Shitter'. He pulls the 'Shitter' sign down, revealing a 'Ladies' sign underneath. He looks very happy with himself.

MATT

(shouting)
Done.

Charlie walks out, hands him some gloves, a toilet brush, and various bottles of cleaning products.

CHARLIE

Nearly done.

She walks off.

MATT

Ah crap.

END PILOT