

A Perfect Day

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FADE IN:

1 INT. BEDROOM -- MORNING

ROBINSON, mid-30s, assertive, takes a shower in the en-suite bathroom as TV presents the business breakfast news:

TV PRESENTER

According to a recent CBI report British companies are finding conditions tricky out there. High levels of corporate and personal debt are dragging out purchasing decisions. Some experts warn that the debt burden will have long-lasting effects on the general health of the economy.

Robinson walks into the bedroom clean and refreshed, cheery enough. But once he slips on a crisp shirt and adjusts his cuff-links, he takes a hard look in the mirror.

A VOICE calls out from downstairs:

MARIE (O.S.)

Marmalade or jam?

He hasn't heard. Instead, a line of worry cracks his face.

MARIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Robby, what do you want on your toast - marmalade or jam?

He's shaken out of his glare. Reaching for his tie,

ROBINSON

Marmalade.

He smiles, makes final adjustments, winks at his reflection.

2 INT. KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Robinson strides in from the corridor to this thoroughly modern, chic kitchen. His girlfriend, MARIE, late 20s, blonde, bright eyes, gorgeous smile, scoops marmalade on toast - then,

MARIE

There you go, my love - a big, bold breakfast for my big, bold man. And with...

...she plants a big, fat kiss on his chops.

ROBINSON

Marie, you spoil me rotten.

He takes a bite, happily munches away.

She does a slice for herself, also taking a bite. So two mouths munch away. They kiss again, a wee coo. Then they're ready to leave.

3 EXT. FRONT DOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Stepping outside, Robinson and Marie glance around, ever pleased with the charming estate where they live.

Suddenly, Robinson must hide a distressed look as a POSTMAN walks up the path, handing him today's mail. The white envelopes Robinson passes to her; the brown ones reading "FINAL DEMAND" he clenches tight. Marie opens her mail,

MARIE

Wow, Robby! - we have approval to build the extension at last. Now we can have our dream home.

ROBINSON

Marie, I'm sure it'll be lovely.
I - I have to go now.

He's keen to kiss and leave. She thinks nothing of it.

4 I/E. CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Robinson blows his last kisses as he drives off. Once out of Marie's view he sighs heavily, throwing those bills down onto the passenger seat. The lovely houses of the neighbourhood pass by; he is agitated.

Suddenly, he's caught at a red light. His fingers rap the steering wheel. The sight of those poor, tatty houses across the street draw from him another exhausted sigh.

5 INT. OPEN-PLAN OFFICE -- LATER

The office hums with activity. Coffee in hand, Robinson prepares studiously for a sales presentation. Elsewhere, THE BOSS, late 40s, and JENNINGS, early 20s, look on:

THE BOSS

You see, Jennings, you want to make it big time, you want to make real money, then you could do a lot worse than to study how thorough Robinson is. He's a master salesman.

JENNINGS

Yes, sir. Sir, if I may, what sort of money did he earn last year?

THE BOSS

(laughs)

It's not for me to say, though it was a lot.

(ponders Robinson)

Yep, that boy was born hungry. Likes the good life, too. But then I suppose coming from the wrong side of the tracks he's just grabbing his chances. Truly amazing, though, watching how he keeps it up.

Robinson takes another gulp of coffee, then looks up: the SECRETARY passes by. He grins,

ROBINSON
Nice ear-rings.
(no response)
Nice, er, shoes.

SECRETARY
Leave it, will you? I'm not impressed.

ROBINSON
I thought you'd want someone to talk to. Everyone else around here's too tongue-tied admiring those lovely long legs of yours.

SECRETARY
Still not doing it for me. I prefer a man who's strong and caring, not full of himself. Anyway, you're spoken for; why you talking to me?

ROBINSON
'Look, don't touch' - but I'm only making nice chat. C'mon, you love it; boys with big wallets checking you out. I love your legs.

SECRETARY
It's what you do with the money that counts.

Grinning, he shakes his Rolex. Meanwhile, Jennings returns to his seat close by Robinson.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)
You're so sad. Is that all you ever aspired to be?

She struts off. Jennings laughs: he admires Robinson -

JENNINGS
She likes to play 'hard to get'. So, Robby, you've been putting in the hours lately. Must be another big spend you've got planned - paid for by yet another big, fat commission. Good man.

Robinson smiles; but aside, he winces.

6 INT. CAR -- LATER

Robinson gets in, takes a cold, hard stare at those bills.

7 I/E. CAR -- LATER

Driving along, Robinson psyches himself up...

ROBINSON
Sell, sell, sell...

But he keeps looking at those ominous bills. And still, lovely houses pass by; PEOPLE withdraw cash from ATMs. They buy nice goodies from numerous shops.

He turns into a run-down housing estate. Suddenly, all around is grey and grim; the only colour is the sharp turn of traffic-light red. BLEAK FACES eye him covetously.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

(tugs steering wheel)

I can't come back here. It'd kill me.

(at traffic lights)

Come on, come on...

He waits. He waits some more. Finally, it's green. He is relieved - but his car stalls. And a troop of beat-up cars approach; big motorbikes accompany.

Anxious, he turns his key. Those bleak faces seem to throw mischievous glares his way.

The cars get closer. Closer. He would hide, but he cannot. Closer still, ever closer. That is, until... they pass. And turn into a courtyard car park. It takes a few moments for the entire troop to come to a halt.

He watches as NUMEROUS POOR YET DISTINCTLY WELL-INTENTIONED FACES emerge and all come together. Surprise strikes him; such cheery faces eagerly walk over to help TWO ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE STAFF unpack from their ambulance. These two staff direct activity around tables, with dummies plus general equipment; the whole ensemble moves towards the courtyard's centre; everything is laid out. All now wait.

Eventually, first-aid classes begin.

Robinson scratches his head, ponders the scene. He spots a GIRL, mid-20s, beckon him over.

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

(motions to her)

No... No...

Meanwhile,

BLEAK FACE 1

Like this dude's gonna give up his time.

BLEAK FACE 2

Yeah - just another selfish prick.

It's like he hears it, his confusion compounded by the girl shrugging him off. The first-aid classes continue.

Another try: the car starts. A relieved sigh as he leaves this place, the classes and everything else behind.

8 I/E. CAR -- LATER

Turning another corner, Robinson sees ahead a modern, plush trading estate; then the building he's searching for. A grin breaks across his face - looking at those bills:

ROBINSON

I'll get you lot paid, even if it kills me.

He drives into the car park, soon finding a space.

9 INT. MEETING ROOM -- LATER

Robinson sits face-to-face with two businessmen, MR SPRINGTHORPE, well groomed, late 50s, and PARKER, late 20s, his assistant.

ROBINSON

Well, Mr Springthorpe - what do you think?

MR SPRINGTHORPE

To be fair - I - I like it. Though I do have a few concerns.

ROBINSON

What can I do to win your business today?

MR SPRINGTHORPE

My, I've heard you're keen - you'll do whatever it takes to make the sale.

ROBINSON

I always work hard for my customers.

MR SPRINGTHORPE

Ruthless, eh? Hmmn, and I bet your customers always come back to you?

ROBINSON

No complaints yet.

MR SPRINGTHORPE

So I've heard - hmmn? Ok, I like what I see so I'll give you the order - just for one, mind. Parker here'll give you my specs. You do a good job, and the whole contract's yours. Yet for now, well done.

Robinson beams. They beam too. Robinson checks and passes across the paperwork. He reaches inside his jacket for a pen; but he has a sudden, inexplicable jolt: the pen flies from his hand, crudely landing on the table.

MR SPRINGTHORPE (CONT'D)

Nerves?

Robinson shakes it off, picks up the pen. So Mr Springthorpe does as he means to, he signs the contract. Parker smiles again. Recovering, Robinson smiles too.

10 EXT. BUILDING OF THE MEETING ROOM -- LATER

Robinson shakes hands with Mr Springthorpe and Parker. All's well - Robinson is happy indeed.

Yet as he walks to his car he lets out a huge sigh.

11 I/E. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Robinson jumps in, flings his signed order, scatters those bills. He revs up, laughs and zooms off...

INTERCUT WITH:

12 INT. OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Jennings is at his desk, eyeing up the secretary's form. His phone rings...

ROBINSON

Ha-Ha! Another one bites the dust.

JENNINGS

You got the signature?

ROBINSON

Sure did.

JENNINGS

Well done. I'll let the old man know.

ROBINSON

Good. Listen, there's a few things we need to square up with ol' Springthorpe, but nothing we can't handle. I'll be back soon. We'll take a good look at things then.

JENNINGS

(eyes secretary directly)
Sure thing. Hey, that's a lot of money you made today; what you going to do with it?

ROBINSON

(laughs at his bills)
Keeps me in the life I'm accustomed to.

JENNINGS

(mock hurt as she sways her head caustically)
Yeah, I'd like a bit more of that action, too...
(she gives a delicate smile)
Maybe I need tips from the master.

ROBINSON

Well, I don't like to blow my own trumpet...

...they laugh together. They both hang up.

Robinson whacks on the radio: to the tune *A Perfect Day* he drives on,

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Oh, what a perfect day...

Flushed with his own exuberance he turns a corner and finds himself back at the run-down housing estate. He jolts: it's grim here.

Traffic lights turn red: he stops. Over at the courtyard they're still at first-aid classes. Again, the girl spots him, beckons him to join. He looks over. She tilts her head: a subtle come-on. He laughs; he's on top of the world. Lights turn green; he floors the accelerator.

Those bleak faces disdain his arrogance.

13 I/E. CAR -- LATER

Robinson hits the motorway. He hums,

ROBINSON

*You're gonna reap just what you
sow...*

He booms along, now in the fast lane. He glances at the signed order form, patting it even -

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Yeah, I reckon I've got it sussed.

He zooms into a tunnel, weaving in between lanes, overtaking the KIDS' noses pressed up against various car windows...

...and the HAPPY LADY sings her tune...

...the PUT-UPON HUSBAND recites his shopping list...

...the RESPECTABLE PROFESSIONAL...

... and plenty of NON-DESCRIPT FACES, too.

Just then Robinson hits dense traffic and surely grinds to a halt. All around, NO-ONE can move.

He looks at his mobile: no signal. He sighs, a little frustrated - yet,

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Oh well.

Looking around he notices a BUSINESSMAN in a big car close by. He tries nodding a salute, but is waved off like some fly being swotted. Robinson is put-out. However, he turns to look at the state of traffic ahead - all these cars, all these people, jammed.

14 I/E. CAR IN TUNNEL -- LATER

Time slogs on. The businessman furiously scribbles away on a pad.

The heat stews; Robinson wipes his brow. He raps the steering wheel with growing impatience.

15 I/E. CAR IN TUNNEL -- LATER

Time ebbs on. Robinson is restless. He keeps pre-occupied, watching the kids' noses ever pressed up against windows...

...the happy lady sings on and on...

...the put-upon husband still recites that list...

...the respectable professional picks his nose.

Finally, the businessman puts down his pad. Again, Robinson attempts a nod, but is snubbed.

Suddenly, the businessman convulses in extreme pain, and just as suddenly sharply uncoils - his pain overwhelms. Robinson catches it all. He freezes in horror.

16 INT. OFFICE -- LATER

Workers prepare to go home; many have left already. Yet silence descends as Robinson, noticeably dazed, enters. Confused, Jennings looks on as he stumbles to his desk, thuds into his seat.

JENNINGS

Robby, what's up? Do you need help?

No answer. The secretary brings over a cup of water,

SECRETARY

Robby...? Here...

Seemingly with a life all its own, the phone desk rings. Jennings picks it up,

JENNINGS

Hello...

INTERCUT WITH:

17 EXT. FRONT DOOR -- CONTINUOUS

In a panic, Marie has TWO BAILIFFS at her front door:

MARIE

Hello... Who's that? Oh, Jennings, is Robby there? Quick, it's urgent.

JENNINGS

(to Robinson)

It's Marie. Sounds pretty important.

Still no response.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Marie, he's here. But I've never seen him like this before... No, he's right here, but...

MARIE

...Well put him on the bloody phone!

JENNINGS

(to Robinson)

Sounds like you'd better take this one, mate.

(still no response)

Marie, I'll have to come back to you, soon as I can. Sorry.

He hangs up.

Marie is left shaking her head, at a complete loss before these two sour-looking bailiffs.

Meanwhile, as Jennings looks at Robinson, motionless, the secretary slowly removes from him a piece of paper: his sales order form with the commission violently erased. She, Jennings and everyone else remain confused.

A solitary tear escapes Robinson's eye.

18 I/E. CAR IN TUNNEL -- DAY

Flashback, NO-ONE seems to notice the businessman lying in his car, most still, eyes glazing over; the cacophony from so many stereos drowns out so much. Only Robinson opens his car door to go over; his strides are hesitant.

Finally, he's there, opens this car's door, assesses the situation. The businessman lies very still, only his chest gently tugs with any sign of life.

Robinson spots the clip pad on the passenger seat, makes out on the paper attached the words "ORDER AMOUNT" and "COMMISSION". Then he freezes - at the bottom is the businessman's name: "ROBINSON".

Robinson is stunned.

Suddenly, the businessman grips his arm, a severe look of fright flashes across both sets of eyes - no words.

Nearby, a WOMAN gets out of her car:

WOMAN

HELP!

(runs over)

HELP! CALL AN AMBULANCE!

A CROWD begins to rush towards the scene.

The businessman convulses. Robinson breathes rapidly, tries to still his own panic.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Well do something - quick!

A COURIER scrambles to run out the tunnel. Once out, he unflips his mobile to make that urgent call.

Robinson unclips the seatbelt, checks all over, but with no idea of what first-aid to give. His panic rises.

The businessman slumps into his arms. Robinson's eyes desperately search the crowd for help.

Suddenly, the businessman exhales a long, last breath. The crowd draws a solemn sigh. All is earthly quiet.

Then a siren wails in the distance, the ambulance weaves through the jam.

Finally, TWO MEDICS approach, to gently wrest Robinson's grip on the businessman. A BOY, 11, and his MOTHER watch.

MEDIC 1
Ok, can anyone explain to me exactly
what happened here?

No response. Robinson remains stunned.

WOMAN
Is he - he dead?

MEDIC 1
Now come on, move along. Everybody,
give us room.
(to Medic 2)
Ok, you'd better take a look at
this fella.

MEDIC 2
Excuse me, sir - are you Ok?

Robinson gives no response. He is walked away. However:

BOY
Is the man dead, Mum?

MOTHER
Baby, *shush*...

WOMAN
What a horrible way to go.

COURIER
Must've been stress - the geezer
stressed himself out.

WOMAN
All that money -

COURIER
- Yep, nice to have; but it's not
all your wealth. Imagine, if all
he amounted to was a heart attack
in a dingy tunnel like right here.

MOTHER
Come on, baby - this is not for us
to watch. I just hope he had a
loving wife and family.

Robinson heard all this. Perhaps he wishes he hadn't.