

CLOWN HAT

by

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OVER BLACK:

CLOWN (V.O.)
Clowns are suppose to make people laugh.
Ha...Ha.

FADE IN ON:

INT. CLOWN'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

CLOWN, 24. Depressed. Ironic. Philosophical. Lays on his bed, staring at his alarm clock.

CLOWN (V.O.)
I've been awake for forty-five minutes now, staring at my alarm clock. I know when it's going to go off. To serve its purpose. I programed it. I control it, and yet it controls me. Paradox.

Clown pulls the plug out of the wall. Terminating the alarm clock.

CLOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I imagined an existence without time. Without time there can be no commitment. Human beings are allowed to float through their day. To come and go as they please.

Clown sits up in bed. Reaches to the floor for his phone. Dials...Slowly...Like any second his brain is going to tell his fingers to stop dialing.

CLOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That would be awesome. One could argue that without time there is no order to life. No direction or progress. Only blind maneuvering and chaos. Where's the harm in that I ask?

The line RINGS...RINGS again -- Clown hangs up. Relieved no one answered it. Angry no one answered it.

He stands. Officially out of bed.

CLOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm confident that in life, even in chaos, a routine would develop and utopia would since reign. Everything works out in the end. Like Speilberg.

QUICK WORKOUT MONTAGE: Clown does some high intensity reps with DUMBBELLS - PUSH UPS - CHIN UPS - SIT UPS...

CLOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But all those hypothetical and meandering thoughts, "what if...what if...what if..." only leads to one thing: Me, getting my ass out of this room. To start my day, my reality, my routine. My life.

Clown catches his breath. Feels his muscles expand.

MUSIC IN: LOVE MISSILE BY SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK.

Clown opens the CLOSET DOOR. There is ONE OUTFIT on a hook, almost spotlit. HIS CLOWN OUTFIT.

He takes the outfit down, tosses it onto the bed. Goes to his closet for one more item...

CLOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Wait a minute!

His focus is on the upper shelf where a PILLOW, almost spotlit, sits naked. Something's missing:

CLOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Where's my hat? Oh, crap in a box!
 Where's my clown hat!

Clown panics --

TEARS HIS BEDROOM APART in search of his missing Clown Hat....PHONE RINGS.

He answers it, staring down the Clown Outfit on the bed as he talks.

CLOWN (CONT'D)
 (inaudible) the Clown speaking, providing clown entertainment for every occasion in need of laughter. Yes, hello Mrs. Curtis. I'm getting locked and loaded as we speak, no not literally ma'am. Well to reiterate, the initial routine starts off with balloon twisting accompanied by yuk-yuks, ice breakers if you will. Moving into some performance. Music. Dance. Juggling. Somersaults, physical stuff. Um...face painting, temporary tattoos and--no just some hot water and elbow grease will re--non-toxic, yes.

Clown looks like the life is being sucked out of his body via the voice on the other phone. He collapses to the bed, next to his Clown Outfit.

CLOWN (CONT'D)

I'm always prompt. Yes. Yes. Okay.
 Yes. Right. Yes. Very goo--Okay.
 Right. Right. I will be on time. In
 fact, I'm already there. I under--on
 time--I--punctu--I under--Yes.

With anger boiling Clown stands up, walks around the room making half-assed attempts at finding his Clown Hat.

CLOWN (CONT'D)

Hey, Mrs. Curtis, if I'm not there ten minutes early I'll cut my fee in half.... Well then if that happens, go ahead and get your backup entertainment. But I assure you I'm all business. This is my livelihood and I will not disappoint. Your son is going to have a birthday party he will never forget and he's going to have only you to thank. I may be the star, but you Mrs. Curtis, you are the hero. A-ha, glorious. Good day.

Clown takes a moment, thinks ahead to the hell which is going to be this party. Especially without his Clown Hat. -- SONG ENDS.

SLIGHT TIME CUT TO:

INT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Clown puts on his Clown Outfit...

CLOWN (V.O.)

Located in central New Jersey, I'm a clown of many venues and I'm a hot commodity. You'd be surprised how much cheddar a clown hauls in annually. I do birthdays, holidays, retirements, graduations, boys clubs, girls clubs, church functions, fund-raisers, restaurant grand openings, promotional marketing events, corporate annual conventions, industry trade shows. I visit hospitals and nursing homes, Patch Adams has nothing on me.

MUSIC IN: TELEFONE (LONG DISTANCE LOVE) BY SHEENA EASTON.

INT. CLOWN'S HOME - BATHROOM - MORNING

Clown brushes his teeth. Spits. Rinses.

Clown opens a cabinet where he stores his MAKE-UP KIT. Places it on the counter.

He primes himself and in a series of ECU'S AND TRANSITIONAL DISSOLVES Clown applies his CLOWN FACE.

INT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Clown, all dolled up, checks his appearance out in the mirror. Flawless, save for the spot on his head where the Clown Hat belongs. He pats/pets it. He shakes his head.

CLOWN
Shity shitsticks!!

INT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Clown comes to the SPARE BEDROOM, opens the door. A beat.

CLOWN'S POV OF THE SPARE BEDROOM: A FRAMED PHOTO of Clown and and a MIME hangs on the wall. Other than that...EMPTY.

Clown shuts the door. Rubs his head, retreats to...

INT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Clown enters full of vim, picks up the PHONE, dials...

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

INT. COUCH - MORNING

NIMBLES THE MIME, in his morning fatigues, smokes a CIG and holds a glass of...something as he lounges comfortably on a loveseat.

He answers his RINGING phone...SONG CUTS OFF.

NIMBLES
Hey what's up dude, how's it going this morning?

INT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Clown on the phone, paces around the room.

CLOWN
Hey. Well, not so good actually. I'm standing in my room and--

NIMBLES
Yeah, did you call me earlier and hang up?

CLOWN

What?

NIMBLES

You called me like half an hour ago. Let it ring once, got scared and hung up. What is this junior high? Come on, man. Grow up.

CLOWN

No I didn't.

NIMBLES

Hey, yeah you did buckaroo. It's called caller ID, fascinating staple of modern technology. We live in a brave new world, step out of the cave and embrace it, you'll be amazed.

CLOWN

I got a gig today, and I was wondering if you've seen or had an actual hand in the disappearance of my hat?

NIMBLES

Nope, sorry. It's a cool hat, be nice to add to the collection...Did you look under your bed?

Clown looks to his bed: no bed frame, it rests on the floor.

CLOWN

Yeah I looked under my bed, but...

NIMBLES

Honestly, honestly, yeah. Alright I took it. Yeah, it's in my possession as we speak.

CLOWN

I need it back.

NIMBLES

You don't need the hat, man. Aunt Jemima doesn't wear a hat and still manages to get the job done, take a cue.

CLOWN

Daniel Curtis. This kid Curtis' party is going to be...historically shitty! A shitty, shitty shit festival and it's all going to be your fault!

NIMBLES

It's all going to be my fault!?

CLOWN

A total Houston 500 suckfest! Unless I get my hat back!

NIMBLES

The party is not going to suck because you don't have a hat!

CLOWN

That is where you are embarrassingly wrong, okay. I need my hat back! I need my hat to be a clown! Don't you get that, asshole!?

NIMBLES

It's obvious you take your clowning very seriously but you really sound like a clown Nazi here, okay.

CLOWN

A clown Nazi, that's great, real endearing sentiment. I want to make love to you right now.

NIMBLES

You don't need the hat.

CLOWN

You took it, you spiteful bastard.

NIMBLES

Are you insulting me now!? You're insulting me!

CLOWN

I'm sorry.

NIMBLES

That is some burnt toast right there my friend!

CLOWN

I'm sorry...the hat: just give it to me. This isn't fair.

NIMBLES

Yeah dude life sucks and shit happens, but sometimes you just have to take a bite and wipe your hands. Okay.

CLOWN

I have no idea what that means....Are you drunk right now?

NIMBLES

No, I'm not drunk right now.

CLOWN
You sound totally drunk.

NIMBLES
I'm not drunk dude, I'm drinking but not drunk.

CLOWN
It's 9:30 in the morning!

NIMBLES
It's called an eye opener okay. Leave me alone and go do your gig, alright. Stop judging me.

CLOWN
I'm not judging you.

NIMBLES
Yes you are!

CLOWN
Okay, you got the hat, and...you're not going to give it to me?

NIMBLES
Yeah I do have the hat and no I'm not giving it to you. You Don't Need It!

CLOWN
Okay, it's not about me needing it, it's about you taking it. Why would--

NIMBLES
Because I don't understand you, dude, why do you need the hat to be a clown. The clown is inside you, he's naked, he's proud, he doesn't want a hat, he hates 'em, it's still his show, and he's still funny as shit. Let the world see him and be entertained.

A long beat.

CLOWN
Are you at your sisters?

NIMBLES
No, I'm not at my sisters.

CLOWN
Where are you?

NIMBLES
I'm like the wind baby, I'm everywhere and nowhere, always felt but never seen.

CLOWN

Come...come have breakfast with me.

NIMBLES

I'm not going to have breakfast with you.
I have shit to do.

CLOWN

Hardly, you're going to be sitting on
your sisters couch chain smoking,
drinking Jim Bean and watching TIVO.
While I'm off performing a nightmare
party without my hat.

NIMBLES

Dude...just remember your Clown oath.
Let it guide you, okay.

CLOWN

I can't even...talk to you--So you're not
giving me the hat back?

NIMBLES

N. O. No. Get over it.

CLOWN

When I see you I'm going to tear your
asshole out and shove it down your
throat, make it a double asshole, that's
what I'm gonna do, so rot in hell. I
hate you! I'm burning all the crap you
left here "roomie"...so, see you later,
assholes!

END INTERCUTS

Clown drops the phone, storms out of the room. He slams the
door behind him. A poster of the cult-classic film
"Scarface" hangs on the door: "Say hello to my lil' friend!"

INT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Clown stares into the open fridge. It contains a half gallon
skim milk, 4 custard cream pies and seltzer water. That's
it.

CLOWN (V.O.)

Breakfast...Nimbles, along with caring
Mothers across the country, preach
breakfast as being the most important
meal of the day, it sets the tone and
harbors essential nutritional and
emotional resonance. And with all of our
history, he declined to have it with me.
He sounded happy. Unfazed. Well...Lego
my ego.

MUSIC IN: OWNER OF A LONELY HEART BY YES.

Clown grabs the skim milk. -- Opens a cabinet revealing a lone box of cereal. -- Another cabinet houses a single bowl. -- A drawer slides open displaying a single spoon.

At the KITCHEN TABLE, Clown drops everything on top of it. Takes the lone seat facing the wall.

Pours the cereal into the bowl...only the crumbs from the flakes fall into the bowl. Pours the milk...only a brief splash.

Clown looks directly into the CAMERA and presents a flashy and ironic "tah-dah."

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN AS:

Two doors open and Clown appears. He's looking down at the CAMERA. He reaches down, grabs hold of something and drags it...REVEAL:

EXT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Clown drags a LIL' RED WAGON away from a small shed that sits on the side of his home.

CLOWN'S LIL' RED WAGON pulls to a stop. Gets loaded up...Balloons are tied to the handle, two pies in the wagon, and a sack full of goodies...SONG ENDS --

EXT. CLOWN'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Clown pulls the LIL' RED PARTY WAGON past a CONVERSION VAN: Tire missing. Hose sticks out the gas tank.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Clown hauls his LIL' RED PARTY WAGON down the street. It's a lonely and sad trudge.

MUSIC IN: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY BY ALTERED IMAGES.

EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - MORNING

Balloons tied to the mailbox bounce in the wind. Cars fill the driveway and sidewalk.

CAMERA HANDHELD cuts through the front grass to the front door. The front door is also decorated, it creaks open.

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - MORNING

The birthday celebration is well on its way. HANDHELD CAMERA (static inserts) walks through the house to get the vibing vibe...kid's running around, parents chatting, etc.

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

The BIRTHDAY BOY DANIEL, 10, has center stage at the table. His closest friends to the left and right of him. Presents, balloons, streamers, plates, napkins surround him...all adding up to this youngster being KING FOR A DAY.

MRS. CURTIS walks into the room.

MRS. CURTIS
The clown is on his way!

The party ERUPTS. A CHANT starts up amongst the kids...

KIDS
CLOWN! CLOWN! CLOWN! CLOWN! CLOWN!

CAMERA finds a SCARED SHIT-LESS KID seated to the Birthday Boy's right.

FREEZE FRAME on him as we SUPERIMPOSE THE DICTIONARY LISTING OF:

COULROPHOBIA. -- Fear of clowns: a persistent, abnormal, and unwarranted fear of clowns, despite the understanding by the phobic individual and reassurance by others that there is no danger.

RESUME ACTION as the SCARED SHIT-LESS KID gets hit by a party favor in the face. -- SONG ENDS.

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Clown pulls his LIL' RED PARTY WAGON up a steep hill.

CLOWN (V.O.)
Egoism. Systematic selfishness. A theory that bases morality on self-interest. Contemporary right-wing libertarians insist that selfishness makes one more useful to society. Philosophers believe egoism is natural and good on the basis of an assumed connection between rationality and objectivity, striving to reach a universal goal: Happiness, 'cause it justifies life and validates value and your parking too.

He stops mid-way up the steep hill, lets go of the handle, stretches his limbs, but the WAGON stays put.

CLOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 According to Nimbles's ideology: Zest, affection, family, work, impersonal interests, and the ability to find for oneself a golden mean between effort and resignation are ways to implement the H-word into one's daily diet allowing you to shit out a smile without effort.

The CAMERA TILTS, straightening everything out. There was no hill. Clown hedges on.

MUSIC IN: FIGHT THE POWER BY PUBLIC ENEMY.

EXT. SUBURBS - STREET CURB - MORNING

FOUR YOUNGSTERS, chillin' out by two pimped out rides. Hoods up. Trunks open. BASS BEAT pumpin'.

Clown rolls up with his 'LIL RED PARTY WAGON. Pauses. The Youngsters look up from their business.

Clown says nothing.

The BASS POUNDS.

Clown bops his head, tap his foot.

The Youngsters stare at him, confused, indifferent. -- SONG ENDS.

Clown stops moving, smiles. His hands come together at his chest, his head is down. Silence. THEN:

MUSIC IN: YOU'RE THE BEST BY JOE ESPOSITO.

Clown launches into a MARTIAL ARTS MARATHON --

VARIOUS SHOTS OF Clown performing KALI, MUAY THAI, SILAT and JEET KUNE DO to the Youngsters....JOE ESPOSITO'S KARATE KID THEME FADES OUT AS...

Clown finishes in the same position he started. Head down, hands clasped. (Did that just happen or was it a fantasy?)

The BASS POUNDS.

FIGHT THE POWER resumes.

The Youngsters dismiss Clown, get back to their business.

A look of failure on Clown's make-uped mug as he grabs his LIL' RED PARTY WAGON handle. Hedges on.

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Clown trudges down the street. Deep in thought and his own world of loneliness and despair.

(VARIOUS CUTAWAYS* TO ACCOMPANY VOICE-OVER)

CLOWN (V.O.)

Immanuel Kant said that happiness is not intrinsically valuable. That the only absolutely valuable thing in the Universe is good will. Maintained by following certain logical principles of conduct: Be truthful. Be honest. Do not make false promises. Be generous and benevolent. Do not waste your talents. Be kind to animals. Do not commit suicide. I try to live my everyday life to those principles. But sometimes, combined with my Clown Oath, it gets lonely and there's an emotion you long for. It's Love. Feeling Loved: that's also happiness. Combined with being taken seriously: that's life. That's all I want. To unselfishly feel respected and be loved.

THEN -- A BASKETBALL whacks him on the head.

Clown recoils, struggles to keep it together as he gauges his surroundings.

EXT. PARK - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

TWO SHIRTLESS, SWEATY DUDES were playing an intense game of one on one. They're staring at Clown. He matches the stare.

Clown picks up the ball.

DUDE #1

What are you suppose to be?

DUDE #2

You got any Big Macs on your cart there Ronald?

CLOWN

Really? You guys really feel the need to embarrass me like that? That's fine.

Clown drops the ball, grabs the handle to the LIL' RED PARTY WAGON.

DUDE #1
 Hey, you embarrass yourself. Walking
 around like that.

DUDE #2
 And you're probably freaking out half the
 neighborhood.

The Dude's talk amongst themselves. Clown hears every word.

DUDE #2 (CONT'D)
 Clowns are scary. Just not natural,
 dude. I heard clown's kill like hundreds
 of people a year. Just snap. You ever
 seen Clown Porn? It's exactly what you
 think it is. Sick.

DUDE #1
 Looks like he could use a hat with that
 outfit.

CLOWN
 (drops the handle)
 Alright, you want to go? I'm not scared!
 I'll take both you suckers on!

DUDE #1
 You serious?

DUDE #2
 I was just clowning around. You clowns
 are cool.

CLOWN
 Play a game of 21? Fifty dollars to the
 winner. Hunnh...eeehh?

DUDE #2
 (to Dude #1)
 I don't know, dude. He's got the
 psychological edge.

DUDE #1
 (confident)
 You're on clown. Shoot for possession.

Clown picks up the ball. Tosses it to the Dudes.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Ball gets checked hard into Clown's chest. Clown dribbles,
 ...SHOOTS....DRAINS IT.

Dude #1 grabs the rebound. Some final TAUNTS before we get
 into the nitty gritty.

MUSIC IN: SHE-BOP BY CYNDI LAUPER -- DOMINATES THE SOUNDTRACK AS --

WE MOVE INTO SLOW MOTION as the ball is checked to Clown.

WE FOLLOW the ball as it ROLLS across the concrete to CLOWN'S possession.

Clown picks it up. The Dudes d-up. Cocky.

Clown caresses the ball. Eye his opponents down, then the basket.

SLOW-MOTION ENDS and like a flash of multi-colored lightning Clown drives the lane...Completes the easy lay up.

SUPERIMPOSED NBA TV STYLE CHYRON gives the score of the match: CLOWN 2 DUDES 0.

Let the game begin:

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE GAME -- Funny, intense angles of Clown blocking a shot, stripping the ball, d-ing up, performing shake 'n' bake type moves, hitting lay ups, turnaround jumpers, taunting, pumping his fist, making accusations of "hacking", looking pissed having given up a basket, fighting for a rebound, etc...

THE NBA TV STYLE CHYRON tells us that Clown now has game point...CLOWN 20 DUDES 4.

Clown dribbles at the top of the key. He's channeling Michael Jordan. He fakes left, fakes right, then releases a FADE-AWAY JUMP SHOT for the game winner.

All eyes follow the flight of the ball...

He nailed it.

Clown is magnanimous in victory.

The Dudes hang their heads. Angry, confused, beaten. They grab the basketball, brush off Clown and go on their way.

-- SONG ENDS.

Clown catches his breath. Deflates as the Dudes walk away. Welching on their bet.

Clown heads to the curb and his LIL' RED WAGON.

Clown steps in dog shit. He stutter steps. Realizes what he's stepped in. Removes his shoe.

On the LIL' RED PARTY WAGON, in one of his "bags" Clown extracts one of those "never ending multi-colored handkerchiefs"...wipes off his shoe.

KIDS (O.S.)
CAKE! CAKE! CAKE! CAKE! CAKE! CAKE!

MUSIC IN: SUPER TROUPER BY ABBA.

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Mrs. Curtis presents the birthday cake (a smiling, limb-stretched clown in gelatin graces the icing) in front of the Birthday Boy at the table. The surrounding KIDS cheer!

QUICK CLOSE UPS OF:

THE CAKE. -- THE BIRTHDAY BOY SMILING. -- MRS. CURTIS WITH A KNIFE. -- KNIFE CUTS THE CAKE, SEVERING THE CLOWN'S LEG. -- PIECE OF CAKE PLACED ON PLATE.

-- REPEAT CUTTING OF CAKE: A DIFFERENT CLOWN LIMB SEVERED EACH TIME, ENDING ON THE CLOWN'S HEAD SEPARATED FROM THE TORSO. -- CAKE PLACED ON PLATE OF THE SCARED SHIT-LESS KID. -- A FORK FROM CAKE TO MOUTH...YUMMY.

SLOW ZOOM ON a stressed out Mrs. Curtis as everyone eats around her...She gulps her glass of wine, exits the dining room.

CAMERA WHIPS TO:

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Clown reeling from the basketball exhibition. He walks past a GARBAGE CAN by the curb, lid off.

Something INSIDE THE GARBAGE CAN catches CLOWN'S attention.

He stares down the can. Reaches inside --

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Mrs. Curtis fills her wine glass. Looks up at --

ECU OF A HAND CLOCK ON THE WALL. 2:02.

Mrs. Curtis looks down at --

ECU OF A PRINTED INTINERARY (she has the day planned out to the minute, Clown is late.)

Mrs. Curtis looks over to --

ZOOM IN ON THE FRIDGE and a business card held up by a magnet.

Mrs. Curtis gulps her wine, eyes on the fridge.

ECU OF THE BUSINESS CARD. "NIMBLES THE MIME" Party entertainment. 732-462-3008. Available without appointment.

Mrs. Curtis Looks up at --

ECU OF THE HAND CLOCK. 2:03

Mrs. Curtis checks the dining room: cake is almost finished. She gets up --

QUICK CUTS as Mrs. Curtis grabs the business card. Grabs the phone. Dials. Gulps. Waits....SONG FADES OUT.

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Clown strolls down the street...the LIL' RED PARTY WAGON loses a wheel behind him...Sparks fly as it drags against the concrete. Clown stops. Investigates --

Clown goes ballistic...Temper tantrums to end all temper tantrums...

Clown collapses to the curb. -- CLOWN OUTFIT in disarray, hair crooked, one shoe on, trash cans thrown about around him, his LIL' RED WAGON immobile.

A FEMALE JOGGER jogs down the street. Wears a perfectly coordinated running suit and has ear buds in her lobes.

She jogs past Clown and after a short beat, returns, walks over to him, stares. -- It's not everyday a one-shoed clown is sitting on a street curb.

JOGGER
(slightly out of breath)
Hey. You okay? Not enough room in the
the clown car?

Clown ignores her.

JOGGER (CONT'D)
Forget to pay your dues? A disgraced
member of the clown society? Like your
outfit. Could use a hat though.

That got CLOWN'S attention.

JOGGER (CONT'D)
I should know. There's a reason my
shoelaces match my headphone cord.
(MORE)

JOGGER (CONT'D)

It's sad but I'm a coordinating bastard
who thinks you could so use a hat.

CLOWN

(snaps)

Leave me alone! I know! I know about
the hat, don't talk to me about the hat!
Screw that hat! I don't care about the
hat! It's just a hat! Stupid hat!

Instead of scared, the Jogger's intrigued. She's not going
anywhere.

Clown does a double-take as they make eye contact.

JOGGER

Alright, done with the hat. But a
haircut maybe, someth--

CLOWN

I think I...yeah, I know you.

JOGGER

You do bachelorette parties?

CLOWN

No. I do kids.

JOGGER

That sounded so wrong.

CLOWN

I specialize in kid's birthday parties.
I do other events but kids are the best.

JOGGER

In pay?

CLOWN

Validation. When you make a kid laugh,
as oppose to a drunk 20something
completely unaware of what it is you're
actually doing or why you're there in the
first place, there's a real sense of
satisfaction. Kids make you earn it.
And when you succeed in making them laugh
you know it's genuine and...I don't know,
it's the ultimate reward.

JOGGER

Today's gig didn't go so well, huh?

CLOWN

I'm on my way to it.

JOGGER

Oh? Well what happened?

CLOWN
Shit. Happened.

JOGGER
I've never seen a party clown so depressed. You are seriously breaking my heart. What's wrong?

CLOWN
Listen, thank you for your time. But please leave me alone.

JOGGER
(extends her hand)
Jen Lantz. Ring a bell? You said you knew me.

Clown does know her. He shakes her hand, and as he SAYS HIS NAME, A CAR WHIZZES PAST, HONKS --

DUDE IN CAR
YOU SUCK CLOWN!!!!

Clown and the Jogger ignore the car, break the shake. She sits next to him on the curb.

JOGGER
Wow. I haven't heard that name since our high school graduation.

CLOWN
I rarely go by it now. I have a...persona.

JOGGER
You were funny...in high school. You did drama. You were good. I saw you in twelfth night. Where'd you go, a clown college? Do they have those?

CLOWN
Yeah, I spent a year at one. Learned the history, balloon tricks. I'm more of a physical clown. Grew up digging Dan O'Conner, Buster Keaton, Chaplin...I have a degree.

JOGGER
In clowning?

CLOWN
Philosophy. Courtesy of Drew University.
-- You?

JOGGER
I went to Villanova and majored in
business. Now I'm a newlywed trying to
be an actress.

CLOWN
Congratulations.

JOGGER
Thanks. Are you...?

CLOWN
I'm not seeing anyone.

JOGGER
But you are wounded. I can tell. It
oozes from you makeup.

CLOWN
I recently ended a four year
relationship, yes.

JOGGER
And it bothers you.

Clown looks at her with his painted on clown face, offers:

CLOWN
Am I that transparent?

JOGGER
You're a clown on a street curb that
looks like he just got run over a semi-
truck and wants to kill himself.

CLOWN
Why did you get married?

JOGGER
Because he asked.

CLOWN
That's not a reason.

JOGGER
It is when you were waiting for him to.
I'm not stupid, I have a plan. I have my
senses about me and I'm completely,
unequivocally in love with him. Why the
hell not?

CLOWN
What is love?

JOGGER
It's different for anyone. You have to
figure it out on your own.

CLOWN

What is it to you and your fiancée?

JOGGER

A constant desire to see him naked and a daily challenge to make him laugh and or think plays a huge role in me willing to wake up next to him and him only for the rest of my life.

CLOWN

I thought I had that.

JOGGER

What happened?

CLOWN

I guess...I had one bad day, went to sleep, woke up and from then to now, here on this curb, I forgot how to care. And somewhere in between, they left, and I'm alone.

JOGGER

Well, sometimes cupid misses, winds up grazing the target. You bleed, but you'll be okay in the end. And stronger for it. You're going to need that strength to make the arrow stick in the future.

CLOWN

That's what I want. A future. I want to forget this life. I want to forget that my life is nothing more than a joke that everyone gets but me. I want to move on. I want to forget him, but I'm stuck. It's hard when the bloom is off the rose. Even when it was dead to begin with.

JOGGER

You don't want to be a clown anymore?

CLOWN

I do. But without him. He designed my face. He helped with my act...He took my hat. He clouds my every memory and rains on my every parade.

JOGGER

He who? He you? He God? He me confused.

CLOWN

My ex is a he. I'm gay. -- Yeah.

JOGGER

Good to know, because this whole scene felt like something out of a anti-climatic porn movie anyway.

CLOWN

The hat was everything. I no longer have a touchstone for happiness.

(rubs his head)

He robbed me of it. I don't know how I'm going to do this party today.

JOGGER

Just make it about the kids. You did say their smile was the reward. Do it for you, do it for them.

CLOWN

It's not that easy.

JOGGER

Show me what you do.

CLOWN

What?

JOGGER

Show me what you got. Just me. Give me a performance. A new act. Free of your ex. Free of the baggage. You're an etcha sketch that got shook up like a can of paint. I'm a ten-year old girl. Make my birthday.

Clown takes a beat. There's something about her energy, her spirit...Clown stands. Gathers some things from his 'LIL RED WAGON...Clown gets his shit together, picks up his shoe, puts it on.

JOGGER (CONT'D)

(claps)

Yaaay!!!

CLOWN

I usually charge \$75.00 an hour.

JOGGER

I'll pay you in interest.

The subsequent VOICE-OVER plays over:

A SLOW MOTION MONTAGE OF Clown PERFORMING in front of the Jogger -- He juggles, performs some physical acrobatic gems of comedy gold, twists some balloon animals. She loves it. Clapping, smiling...Clown does a magic trick, he finishes with a memorable DANCE, offering Jogger a bouquet of flowers that, embarrassingly, SQUIRTS Clown in the eye.

CLOWN (V.O.)

Life and happiness: Pessimism. The chief metaphysical reason has to do with the idea that existence is based on the Will. The manifold wants and desires which every animal and every human being experiences are manifestations of Will, and these desires and wants are a perpetual source of misery. For if a desire is not satisfied then that state of affairs is inherently miserable. On the other hand when desires are satisfied they are inevitably and immediately replaced by other desires, which probably will not be satisfied. Life itself is a long-term itch you can never satisfy. It is dreadfully miserable. The empirical reason for pessimism lies in the fact that wherever we look, we see much pain and unhappiness. Desires are the source of frustration and other evils. The wise man must not even desire death, because he knows that death is better than life. The wise man resigns himself to being alive and accepts death calmly. But I guess a life without happiness can be worth living. As long as it's a life worth living for the person who is living it. I guess...

Clown finishes. Jogger CLAPS relentlessly. Clown eats up the praise. A new outlook.

They repair the 'LIL RED PARTY WAGON and Clown is ready to go.

Jogger gives him a hug. He gives her a nod. Jogger jogs off.

MUSIC IN: HELL IS FOR CHILDREN BY PAT BENETAR.

Clown grabs hold of the handle to the 'LIL RED PARTY WAGON and moves on...happy as a game show host.

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Empty plates and plastic cups litter the table. The Birthday Boy and his surrounding friends personify boredom and overindulgence: Not enough entertainment. Too much cake.

Mrs. Curtis enters. A full wine glass. A full smile.

EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - STREET - AFTERNOON

Better late than never, Clown and his LIL' RED PARTY WAGON saddle up to the house. Just as --

A CAR pulls up, blowing a NOVELTY HORN. Meets Clown head on.

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The looks of boredom are vanquished by the HORN. KIDS and PARENTS react joyfully. Run out of the room.

Mrs. Curtis is happy/satisfied.

EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Nimbles exits the car. The last person Clown wanted to see.

They slowly approach each other. Nimbles, nervous. Clown, a portrait of suppressed anger.

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The KIDS watch the stand-off THROUGH THE WINDOW. Excited.

INTERCUT THE KIDS REACTIONS.

EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - STREET - AFTERNOON

Nimbles stays in character, giving a sheepish/innocent look.

Clown boils over, THROWS THE PIES from his wagon at Nimbles.

Nimbles diligently, silently...dodges them. Clown could not be more pissed. Nimbles crosses his arms, looks with pity at Clown.

Clown takes a beat. Stares at Nimbles. Nimbles mimes: "a man without a hat. Oh no!"

Clown lowers his head. His eyes have turned evil. Demonic. -- SONG FADES OUT...Clown reaches into one of his bags...pulls out a GUN!

The GUN is now pointed at Nimbles.

FLASH ON:

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Clown staring down the GARBAGE CAN. INSIDE THE CAN: A GUN rests atop a hefty bag. Clown reaches inside --

BACK TO:

EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - STREET - AFTERNOON

Clown has gone crazy. Rational thought no longer available to him.

Nimbles breaks character, reaches into his back pocket and produces...THE CLOWN HAT.

NIMBLES

Okay, okay. Shit man. Here, I had it dry cleaned for you.

Nimbles tosses the HAT to Clown. Clown ignores it. Tightens his grip on the GUN.

INT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Kids and Parents are horrified. Some are close to tears. Mrs. Curtis can't believe what she's seeing...more wine will help. The SCARED SHIT-LESS KID backs away from the window, wide-eyed.

SCARED SHIT-LESS KID

I knew it! I-I-I-knew it!

(to a Parent)

Told you I didn't want to go this stupid clown party!! Evil, evil, evil!

He RUNS off. The Parent chases after him.

PARENT

Dougie!!!

EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE - STREET - AFTERNOON

Nimbles encourages Clown to take the hat...

Clown kicks over his LIL' RED PARTY WAGON. Turns the GUN on himself, holds it to his head.

NIMBLES

Dude, what are you nuts? This isn't you. In front of the...clients. Bad business bro, you know better.

Clown, gun to his head: HE WANTS TO DO IT!! Nimbles does an assessment: the kids. The parents. The sad, broken clown...

NIMBLES (CONT'D)

Dear Heavenly Father. As I stumble through this life, help me to create more laughter than tears. Dispense more happiness than gloom, and spread more cheer than despair. Never let me become so indifferent that I will fail to see the wonder in the eyes of a child or the twinkle in the eyes of the aged. Never let me forget that my total effort is to cheer people, make them happy and forget at least momentarily all the unpleasantness in their lives. And, in my final moment, may I hear you whisper, "When you made my people smile you made me smile." -- Amen?

CLOWN

Amen.

Clown pulls the trigger...

NIMBLES

Nooo!!

...REACTIONS of everyone...*

Clown pulls the trigger and --

WATER SQUIRTS OUT THE BARREL.

A beat. Nimbles freezes.

Clown pulls the trigger again. Soaking the side of his face.

Nimbles mimes "scratching his head...hmmm."

Clown wipes a smudge of saturated make-up from his face. He holds his hand out in front of him observing his fingertips. Looks to Nimbles.

Nimbles smiles at Clown.

Clown takes a beat and closes his eyes. And with child-like glee he douses his face with water from the gun.

MUSIC IN: DEATH OF A CLOWN BY THE KINKS.

The kids and Parents and Mrs. Curtis exit the front door.

Clown looks to them...

THE REST OF THE ACTION PLAYS OUT IN SLOW MOTION:

The Kids smile at Clown.

Clown does a silly DANCE for them.

The Kids start LAUGHING/CHEERING.

ZOOM IN ON Clown, he wants to cry...looks to Nimbles --

Nimbles shakes his head in admiration.

Kids LAUGHTER builds...

Clown picks up his HAT...puts it on....

Nimbles gives him a thumbs up. Then "mime claps."

Clown does a "break-dance move" ending with his middle finger sported to Nimbles.

Nimbles mimes "shocked/appalled"

LAUGHTER/CHEERS from the Kids.

Nimbles DANCES toward Clown. Clown DANCES toward Nimbles.

WIDE SHOT, BLACK AND WHITE:

....EVERYONE DANCES ON THE FRONT LAWN....

THE SONGS FADES OUT...

THE END.