

Stuck

by Steven Burton

EXT. PARK SIDEWALK - DAY

A WOMAN and a MAN walk next to each other in a familiar way.

They both speak into cell phones with friendly, intimate conversations.

WOMAN

I feel so close to you.

MAN

It's as if we're right next to each other.

EXT. PARK

A WOMAN leans up against a railing with her back towards other people in the background.

She is with an animated conversation on a cell phone.

Suddenly a MAN comes up from behind and grabs the phone from her.

The phone smashes to the ground, and then followed by a scurry.

WOMAN

Oh my God!

The man runs off in a fast getaway.

The shocked woman reaches down to the phone on the ground.

WOMAN

What happened? I wasn't finished.  
Somebody do something!

She picks it up, cradles it, and then cries.

Various bystanders approach to comfort her.

EXT. PARK BENCH

JEFF sits with an open notebook computer on his lap.

A cell phone rings next to him on the bench, but he ignores it.

He continues to ponder while looking at the computer.

The cell phone rings.

Jeff shuts the lid on the computer and then answers the phone.

JEFF

Hello?.....Hey! You're back! How was it?...Wow, what an adventure... yeah...sounds great...New Zealand has always been on my list of places to go...yeah?...haha..Nothing wrong with that kind of trouble...Oh yeah...sure...of course, no problem! You should take the call. Thanks for calling me though! ...yeah...Friday, for sure! Can't wait to see the pictures...Ok., good hearing from you. You're the best...later.

He clicks off the phone, and then gets up to move away with his things in a backpack.

EXT. PARK SIDEWALK

As he walks, Jeff punches numbers on his cell phone and then waits for a response.

JEFF

Hi, it's Jeff.....oh just taking a little break from a writing project or block or something like that...It's not far enough along to talk about the plot, but I'll let you know when ready. ...And how are you?...Good... Yes, we've got to get together, but today won't work. Another time for sure. Talk to you later, Bye.

He clicks off the phone.

EXT. PARK BENCH

Jeff sits with the computer on his lap about to open it when the phone rings which he answers.

JEFF

Hello?.....Hello?...Hello? Well, who ever you are good bye....

He tries to pull the phone from his ear, but it's stuck to him.

A frustrating effort to loosen it fails as he gets up off the bench to move around.

He hastily stuffs his belongings into the backpack with his free hand.

EXT. PARK SIDEWALK

Jeff approaches a WOMAN on a cell phone.

JEFF

Excuse me, you won't believe this, but I can't pull this from my ear. Could you help me?

WOMAN

Now that's an original line. Applause, applause.

JEFF

No, really, this is not a joke or come on.

WOMAN

Well, then you're crazy.

JEFF

No, I'm not! This is crazy! It's become part of me.

WOMAN

Good luck. I'm sure there is someone who can help you.

She rushes away as she makes a cell phone call.

Jeff continues to walk and struggle with the phone until he interrupts a MAN talking on a cell phone.

JEFF

Could you call 911? It's an emergency!

MAN

You've got a phone. What's the problem?

JEFF

I can't move my hand or move it off my ear!

MAN

This is some kind of a joke, right?

JEFF (Pulls at the phone.)

No, it's the truth. See? Do you want to try?

MAN (Begins to laugh.)

No, this has got to be candid camera or punked. Where's the camera?

JEFF

There's no camera. This is serious.

MAN

Ok, I'll play along. But, this is not a 911. It's a 311.

JEFF

Whatever, call that!

The man continues to laugh and walks away while he puts the phone back to his ear.

Jeff continues to walk.

JEFF

I can't believe this! This is weirder than the time the squirrel jumped up on my lap in the Park.....or, or, or.....the time I heard two distinct voices coming from a restroom stall next to me, and then I saw only one man come out of it.

VOICE (OS-laughing)

Kind of like bi-polar in the toilet.

JEFF

Yes... Oh, my God!

VOICE (OS)

Yes?

JEFF

That's who you think you are?

VOICE (OS)

I'll think about that. It does have a nice ring to it.

JEFF

Well, while you're thinking about that could you help me?

VOICE (OS)

Certainly. What's the problem?

JEFF

I'm stuck here! Now, wait a minute. Where are you calling from?

VOICE (OS)

I'm everywhere.

JEFF

But, I didn't call you.

VOICE (OS)

No, I contacted you. Just consider this a 911 call and I'm here to the rescue. Or maybe a loaded 311. Or maybe just a 121. Get it, one to one?

JEFF

Oh how clever! How long did it take you to think of that?

VOICE (OS)

Well, I've got nothing but time...at least now I can put it to good use.

JEFF

What?

VOICE (OS)

You're problem.

JEFF

This is the Twilight zone! This isn't fair. I have no time for this.

VOICE (OS)

Don't panic. You've tried to pull it off and that hasn't worked. So, let's try some other things, maybe less physical.

JEFF

I don't understand.

VOICE (OS)

Let's experiment.

JEFF

I'm not some kind of experiment.

VOICE (OS)

Yes, you are.

JEFF

No, I'm not!

VOICE (OS)

Look, right now, let's not argue about this. Maybe later, but we've got our work cut out for us. Ok? Can you trust me?

JEFF

What choice do I have? I'm trapped.

VOICE (OS)

No, you're not. First of all, let's move to a more peaceful place.

Jeff frantically walks away while he tries to pull the phone away from his ear.

EXT. PARK POND

Jeff stops.

JEFF

Ok, this is more peaceful. Have you thought of anything yet?

VOICE (OS)

Something will come to me. Be patient.

JEFF

Easy for you to say. Is this some kind of a curse?

He continues to walk while trying to pull the phone away from the ear.

JEFF

God, help me...

VOICE (OS)

Yes?

JEFF

There you go again. If that's who you want to be.

VOICE (OS)

That's not most important. Keep going.

JEFF

I want my ear back and get un-stuck! I've just been trying to keep in touch! What's wrong with that? Now, I can't call anyone!

VOICE (OS)

Call yourself!



JEFF

Oh, that's nuts! I can't punch in my own number!

VOICE (OS)

Now calm down and find a place to sit quietly. An idea is coming.

JEFF

That's what you said before.

VOICE (OS)

Well, I'm saying it again.

JEFF

Forget it. I'll figure this out for myself.

VOICE (OS)

Very well.

Jeff walks off in a huff.

EXT. PARK TREE

He flops down in frustration up against the trunk with phone still stuck to his ear.

JEFF

Are you still there?

VOICE (OS)

Yes, having a little break from you has helped me think. Are you ready now?

JEFF

Ok. Ok. What have I got to lose? Besides everything.

VOICE (OS)

Find an open space to lie down on your back.

Jeff gets up to move away.

EXT. GRASS AREA

Jeff puts the backpack aside and then lays down on his back.

JEFF

Ok, I'm here.

VOICE (OS)

Great. Now relax, look upward, take a deep breath, and then say the first thing that pops into your head.

Jeff looks up and then takes a deep breath.

JEFF

I love you.

VOICE (OS)

Ok.

JEFF

This is so weird. Lately, I have been blurting this out when alone and wondered why and to whom it was meant.

VOICE (OS)

Who could it be?

JEFF

A few people. I've said it and meant it to others. But, have made some mistakes with all that.

VOICE (OS)

Yes, but there's one more very important person, who needs to hear it.

JEFF

Who?

VOICE (OS)

You.

A pause of reflection and confusion come over Jeff.

JEFF

I don't know anymore....What to do.

The phone comes loose from his ear and then he calmly, unconsciously brings it back to his lap.

He opens his eyes to realize what just happened.

He carefully sits up, puts the phone towards his right ear, and then quickly moves it to his left.

JEFF

Are you still there?....Well, whoever you are, thank you.

Jeff sits back in relief into more relaxation.

He pulls out the computer and then opens it.

With inspiration, he types with intense concentration.

The phone rings, but he doesn't answer it.

A BEEP sound to prompt a recorded message is heard.

VOICE (OS)

No need to call back. I just wanted to let you know it has been a pleasure to help you and hope you have a great day!