

Al

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Over black, we hear a cacophony; Chatter and beeping and footsteps and music, all blended into a discordant hum.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY CENTER - DAY

AL hangs up the phone, despondent. He's sat in the street with his back against a pillar. The city behind him is moving in fast motion; people flash by, lights blur. He's moving at normal speed, smoking a cigarette and staring into space.

After a while, a sound starts to break through the hum; a muffled voice.

FIGURE

Al? Hey Al?

Al finally seems to hear the voice and looks up, but his face remains blank.

FIGURE (cont'd)

What's going on man, what are you doing in the street?

Still nothing.

FIGURE (cont'd)

It's... it's Pete... from... I don't know if you remember me- are you okay?

Al nods and looks away, no comprehension on his face. The cigarette burns away in his hand unsmoked, a long buildup of ash falls from it.

He suddenly gets up from the ground and stands upright, facing the man called Pete. He waits a beat, then walks away without saying a word.

Pete watches Al head for a crossing and step straight out into the road. His eyes widen as he sees the bus speeding towards him. He rushes into the street, grabs Al by his collar and yanks him out of the way just in time.

The bus hurtles by and they stumble back onto the pavement.

PETE

Christ Al! What's... wrong with you?
That was...

Pete is doubled over, catching his breath.

PETE (cont'd)
...fucked you could've...

Al seems unfazed, looking around. Finally Pete straightens up. Al's looking at the sky.

PETE (cont'd)
What's going on man, are you high?

Al looks at Pete, seems to consider him- then walks away again, off into a crowd.

Pete watches him go, dumbfounded. He takes a moment to weigh the options, checks his watch, then reluctantly follows after Al.

EXT. BOOTH STREET - DAY

We're moving past a building, seeing the city refracted in it's glass panels. In the reverse we see Al staring at it as he walks- his mouth slightly open, his eyes wide. Pete follows close behind him.

INT. CORNER SHOP - DAY

Pete stands in the foreground, talking on the phone. Behind him we can see Al wandering around the shop aimlessly.

PETE
No I don't know him know him, we went
on a few dates... I know I'm sorry...
he just doesn't seem to know where he
is, he's...tripping or something I
don't know exactly

He turns around to see Al pick up a packet of crisps, closely examine the ingredients, open them up and start solemnly eating them there in the aisle.

He looks on, concerned.

PETE (cont'd)
Look I know where he lives, I'm just
gonna get him home then I'll be there
okay, I promise... love you.

Close in on Al. He's staring at the ground as he eats the crisps, a look of total confusion on his face. It's like he's searching for something he can't put his finger on.

We go wide and see him stood alone, the shop suddenly deserted.

INT. BUS - DAY

The two of them are sat on a bus. Pete keeps checking his watch. Al's slumped way down in his seat, that blank look in his eyes.

Al's drawing attention from other people on the bus, making Pete more and more uncomfortable. A woman leans over:

WOMAN
Is... is he alright?

Pete brushes her off, makes a gesture to indicate that Al's high. The woman gives a knowing nod, then looks back at Al. Pete looks too, concern growing.

Finally we see Al's perspective; he's slumped, staring ahead and looking like he's trying not to throw up, while the world outside whizzes by lightning fast. That deafening cacophony is ringing in his ears.

EXT. AL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Al's hand rises into view, holding a key. He tries to line it up, but he's shaking too badly. Pete's hand rises to steady him.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

The door swings open to show Al and Pete stood on the threshold.

Pete takes the key out of the door and drops it into Al's breast pocket. He ushers Al to go in ahead of him.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Al wanders to the middle of the room, stops and stands there for a minute.

He sees a picture frame propped up on a window sill and walks over to it. He picks it up and stares at it.

Pete is stood in the doorway, watching. He snaps out of the moment, claps his hands and walks into the room.

PETE
Alright so... I guess I'll be off
then, you're okay here?

He walks past Al into the kitchen

PETE (cont'd)
no... buses, food in the fridge

He wanders through the kitchen looking around, opens the
fridge to make sure.

PETE (cont'd)
Okay so-

He looks back around to find an empty room, the picture
frame resting on the table.

PETE (cont'd)
Al?

He calls again, no reply.

Before leaving the room to search, he takes a look at the
picture on the table. It's an old photo of two kids, a boy
and a girl, grinning.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Pete wanders through the house calling Al's name. He goes by
a window, then doubles back; Al's sat out in the garden,
staring ahead.

EXT. AL'S GARDEN - EVENING

We're close in on Al. The world is still buzzing around him;
birds rustle, branches sway, all in fast motion. Wind chimes
hang from a tree, making a grating jangle.

Pete sits down next to him and he barely notices.

He closes his eyes and all the noise goes away. He takes a
deep breath in. Pete watches as he opens them again.

They sit in silence for what feels like a long time.

Eventually he leans over to Pete and speaks, stumbling over
his words.

AL
I got a... phone call earlier, my...
a friend of mine died, kind of...
suddenly- she... took some pills and
she died just yesterday

He says it with a kind of curiosity, like he's repeating a strange fact he heard somewhere.

We see it hit Pete, see him put it together. He tries to think of something to say, but nothing comes. Eventually he leans over and wraps his arms around Al.

Al doesn't turn, he just keeps talking. He seems unable to stop now.

AL (cont'd)
And we were just talking... we just
talked...

Tears have appeared in Al's eyes, though he's speaking in the same tone; curious, numb.

He talks in these short bursts for a while longer, and eventually falls silent.

He seems to notice for the first time that Pete's arms are around him.

EXT. AL'S GARDEN - SOME TIME LATER

The sun's getting low over the trees and both men turn to watch it.

Eventually Al turns back to Pete, says something we're too far away to hear.

Pete holds onto Al's arm, manages a smile and nods.

As the gate closes behind Pete, he sees Al standing up and wandering to the end of his garden, looking at the trees.

Close in on Al. He watches the wind chimes, which are still going crazy. He breathes and breathes and the world gradually starts to slow down around him. The chimes slow to a twinkle. We hear the churn of the wind in the trees ramp down until it's a low rustling. He lets out a deep breath.

He looks into the middle distance, his face broken in two.