

MAN AND VAN

(Eighth Draft)

Written by
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Unhappily married couple, John and Elaine,
hate each other so absolutely that getting
kidnapped could be the answer to all their dreams.

You can't put a price on love but you can
on hate.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

ELAINE and JOHN MORTIMER are walking down a quiet street. They are both in their late-thirties and wearing expensive evening wear. Elaine wears a shawl around her shoulders and carries a small clutch bag. John wears a jacket with a record shaped lapel pin.

JOHN

How did I ever marry... such a slut.

The film pauses for a moment and a box appears on screen with an arrow pointing to John. The box fills with the following information: John Mortimer, Barrister, Likes: Game of Thrones, his record lapel pin and being right. Hates: Elaine Mortimer.

The film starts again.

ELAINE

(pretend innocence)
Why, whatever do you mean?

The film pauses again and a box appears for Elaine: Elaine Mortimer, Barrister, Likes: Jane Austen Novels, Lemon Chutney and manipulating people. Hates: John Mortimer.

The film starts again.

JOHN

I mean your flirting with Martha's husband.

ELAINE

He could do so much better, I was just trying to rescue him from a lifetime of regret. Something I know all about.

JOHN

Better off with you? Ha! He'd get more love and affection from an artificial limb.

Elaine starts to get angry.

ELAINE

If that's the way you feel why don't you just divorce me?

JOHN

Because, my love, my life, my betrothed. I'd be broke.

ELAINE

Scared to take me on are you?

JOHN

You scare me every moment of the day dear, court would be petrifying.

They stop walking but continue the argument.

A white van is driving down the road in the distance behind them, but getting nearer.

ELAINE

You're a pathetic, little, impotent snake you know that.

JOHN

Impotent? How would you know? It's been years since we've been in the same bedroom.

ELAINE

Oh you've been limp all your life Jonathan.

The van screeches to a halt beside them. Two MASKED MEN jump out, one much bulkier than the other, but both carrying knives. Elaine and John start to back away in fright, but they are quickly grabbed and manhandled through the side door of the van, with the knives against their necks.

INT. VAN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Elaine and John are shoved into the back of the van and onto the dirty floor. The Masked Men sit on them to pin them down and tie up their hands with rope. Elaine's clutch bag is thrown to the floor.

Once tied, the bulkier of the Masked Men nods to the other and leaves the van, closing the side door.

After a moment the van starts driving.

John and Elaine remain lying on the floor, both trying to keep calm. The remaining Masked Man stands up and shouts at them aggressively.

MASKED MAN

Sit up! Now.

John and Elaine sit up on their knees. The Masked Man points his knife at John.

MAKED MAN

Name!

John struggles to reply, he is clearly dazed.

JOHN
John Mortimer.

MASKED MAN
I can't hear you!

JOHN
John Mortimer!

The Masked Man does not reply for a moment. His voice goes suddenly very weak.

MASKED MAN
What?

JOHN
My name's John Mortimer, and this
is my wife Elaine.

The Masked Man is clearly worried, he looks around not knowing what to do.

MASKED MAN
Oh shit.

The Masked Man takes out a piece of paper from his pocket and looks at it. His voice goes back to aggressive again, but with an edge of panic.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)
No, your real name! You.

He indicates towards Elaine with his knife and gets more intense.

ELAINE
He's telling the truth! Check his
wallet if you don't believe us!

The Masked Man considers this. He reaches into John's pocket and takes out his wallet. He looks through the different IDs which confirm what he is being told. He throws the wallet down in frustration.

The Masked Man buckles under the realisation, he leans against the wall of the van and looks at the floor.

MASKED MAN
Oh shit.

Elaine and John share a look. Elaine nods towards something on the floor next to John.

John looks and sees a leaflet, he uses his legs to get the leaflet nearer to him.

The Masked Man slides down the side of the van to a sitting position.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 What the Hell am I gonna do?

John looks at the leaflet. It is for a Man and Van service and shows a picture of the Masked Man (without a mask) smiling by his van. The leaflet gives his name as Craig Scott. John looks up from the leaflet.

JOHN
 (nervous)
 Listen, we all make mistakes...
 Craig.

The Masked Man looks at John in alarm.

MASKED MAN
 How do you know my name!

JOHN
 Umm, there's a leaflet here for
 your Man and Van service.

The Masked Man shouts and kicks at the floor.

MASKED MAN
 Fuck!

JOHN
 Actually I think you did a move for
 some friends of ours, Simon and
 Barbara Morris?

John looks at Elaine for confirmation.

ELAINE
 Yeah... on Clifton Road.

The Masked Man sighs defeated and takes off his mask. He is young, mid twenties, and has a kind face, not like a killer. From now on he is Craig.

CRAIG
 Yeah, I remember them two.

John is getting more of a handle on the situation. He speaks smoothly and sympathetically.

JOHN
 This isn't the kind of work you
 wanted to do is it Craig.

CRAIG
 Course not, but business has been
 so... shitty lately I had to...

JOHN
 Branch out?

CRAIG

Yeah. But I never wanted to get into this kind of thing, not really.

JOHN

We know that Craig. Times are tough for everyone right now, but you're a good guy really, Simon and Barbara definitely thought so. And that's why... if you let us go, we won't go to the police. We'll stay quiet and you can have a second chance, make things right for yourself. How does that sound?

Craig is very tempted.

ELAINE

Or...

The other two look towards Elaine.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Well, you couldn't really trust us could you Craig. We know your name and your business, we could get the police on to you in seconds.

John intercedes.

JOHN

Elaine! What the Hell-

Elaine carries on

ELAINE

And why would you believe us anyway, we're total strangers. It wouldn't make any sense to let us go Craig.

CRAIG

What choice do I have? Do you want me to kill you?

ELAINE

No... not both of us.

John looks at his wife in disbelief.

JOHN

You bitch.

ELAINE

How much are they paying you? Not much I expect;

(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)
seeing you're still an amateur. But
I'm sure I could make it worth your
while.

Craig looks interested. John still can't believe this is
happening.

CRAIG
Keep talking.

ELAINE
Shall we say, for the removal and
disposal of my husband here... ten
thousand pounds.

Craig thinks about this for a moment.

JOHN
Fifteen!

Craig looks confused.

CRAIG
To kill you?

JOHN
No! To get rid of her.

Craig looks even more confused.

CRAIG
What the Hell is wrong with you
two.

Elaine is quick to get back Craig's attention.

ELAINE
Don't worry about that. This is
just a business transaction. Now,
I can offer you... twenty thousand,
cash.

JOHN
No you can't.

ELAINE
And how would you know that my
dear? You never trusted me with a
joint account.

JOHN MORTIMER
Fine, twenty two thousand plus...
timeshare of a French Villa in
Cannes.

ELAINE
That's in my name!

JOHN

Oh don't you remember? We signed a contract splitting the months between us. And I got July to September, which I think is when Craig would want to go.

Craig nods, and then looks expectantly at Elaine.

ELAINE

Thirty thousand.

Craig stands.

CRAIG

And the timeshare?

ELAINE

No timeshare.

Craig turns towards John.

JOHN MORTIMER

I'll see her offer, plus the timeshare, and come on, we're both *guys*, we've got to stick together.

Elaine turns to John.

ELAINE

Don't even try that one. You're about as masculine as a training bra. But as for me...

She turns back towards Craig.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

(sweetly)

Well, you couldn't kill a woman could you?

Craig seems disturbed by the thought.

CRAIG

I... don't know.

JOHN

Don't be fooled, she's not a woman.

ELAINE

Look enough games, I'll give you thirty five thousand, in cash, and I'll even help you dig. How's that.

Craig uses his knife to alternate between them.

CRAIG

OK so you're offering thirty five K. And you're on thirty with a timeshare.

JOHN

(to Elaine)

Forty, with a timeshare, plus, I'll kill her myself.

ELAINE

(to John)

You wouldn't have the balls.

Craig seems to be getting confused. He points the knife back at Elaine but she continues to argue with John.

CRAIG

You matching his offer?

ELAINE

You couldn't kill me, or you'd have done it a long time ago.

JOHN

I've just been putting it off, hoping you'd look in the mirror and commit suicide.

Craig shouts and waves the knife around, trying to get Elaine's attention back.

CRAIG

Hey! Are you going to match his offer or not?

Elaine and John are still arguing, ignoring Craig.

ELAINE

You swine faced little shit. I should have put a pillow over your face when I had the chance.

JOHN

Why didn't you then you frigid mare!

ELAINE

I tried to once but you woke up!

John is genuinely shocked. Craig has lost his cool, he screams and swings the knife around recklessly.

CRAIG

Listen to me!

The van goes over a bump and Craig stabs himself in the chest. He looks down at the knife in shock and then collapses.

John and Elaine stare open mouthed at Craig on the floor.

They don't say anything for a moment, and then slowly turn to face each other. The tension between them is astronomical, but they both know they have to work together to escape.

JOHN

Turn around, we can untie each other.

Both of them sit back to back and use their loose fingers to untie the knots on each other's ropes.

The van is still moving as the driver has not noticed that his partner has collapsed.

Elaine and John stand up, rubbing their sore wrists, and looking at the door handle.

ELAINE

Are we going to jump out?

JOHN

I think we have to.

They open the doors of the van. Outside they are driving down a quiet road, the van is moving at speed. John and Elaine move to the front of the van. Their wallet and clutch bag are left forgotten on the floor of the van.

They stand apprehensively, readying themselves to jump out.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Here goes.

They look at each other.

EXT. QUIET ROAD - NIGHT

Elaine and John run, jump out the van and land on the road. They fall over and roll for a short distance. They quickly get to their feet, now bruised and scratched but in one piece. The road is bordered by woodland.

The van screeches to a halt, the Driver has seen the open doors in the mirror. John and Elaine start to run into the trees as fast as they can.

The Driver gets out the van and sees his captives running away. He quickly gets a torch and gun from the van.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

John and Elaine run behind a bush and hide. They watch the Driver coming after them, but then stopping. He shines a torch around and listens carefully but he has lost the trail. He shouts a Polish swear word, stamps his foot on the ground and goes back to his van.

John and Elaine watch as the van drives away. They both breathe a sigh of relief and wipe sweat from their foreheads.

EXT. QUIET ROAD - NIGHT

John and Elaine emerge from the trees back onto the road. They look up and down, but there is no sign of the van. Elaine looks down.

ELAINE

My bag's still in the van!

John pats his pockets.

JOHN

So's my wallet.

ELAINE

What about your phone?

John pats his pockets again.

JOHN

Must have fallen out.

Elaine sighs. The night is cold and she wraps her shawl tightly around her shoulders.

ELAINE

So we're stranded then.

JOHN

Yes, but alive. *Both* of us.

Elaine looks at her husband.

ELAINE

Yeah... I don't really know what to say about that. I didn't really want you killed, it was just... the situation.

JOHN

What, like an impulse buy?

ELAINE

Something like that.

John sighs.

JOHN

Well, anyway, we should get moving.

They start walking down the road. After a few seconds Elaine shudders.

ELAINE

It's cold.

John reaches out his arm.

JOHN

Here.

They walk together arm in arm.

EXT. QUIET STREET - NIGHT

The sky is lighter now and the street is more urban with a few houses and a bench. John and Elaine look exhausted as they approach the bench and gratefully sit.

ELAINE

Once this is over, I think we should get some marriage counselling.

John considers this.

JOHN

Alright.

(beat)

I hear Carol Thorndike is excellent.

Elaine scoffs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What!

ELAINE

Three reasons

Elaine counts the reasons off on her fingers.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Small arse, beautiful face, pert breasts; the woman's a walking advert for what middle-aged men are missing out on.

JOHN

OK, you can choose, just as long as it works then I'm happy.

John smiles and puts his hand on Elaine's leg. She smiles back at him.

ELAINE

Phone box.

Elaine immediately gets up and walks away.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Stay there, I'll call the police.

JOHN

(calling after her)

I need to pee.

ELAINE

(shouting back)

OK.

INT. PHONE BOX - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Elaine enters the phone box and dials 999. She looks back to see John disappear into the trees. Elaine starts to breathe rapidly and her voice shakes with fear and sobs.

ELAINE

Hello, I need help, my husband
tried to have me kidnapped!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

John is stood among the trees. He pulls out his mobile phone from his pocket and dials a number from his contact list.

JOHN

Hi Tim, sorry to call so early. You
won't believe what's happened.

INT. PHONE BOX - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Elaine continues to act the part.

ELAINE

He says it's got nothing to do with
him but... No, I don't know where I
am, I'm just so scared.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

John is calmly talking.

JOHN

If I know her at all she'll be
pinning this all on me... yeah I'm
wearing it...

John smiles and pats his record shaped lapel pin.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Got the whole thing recorded...
 yeah, it's gonna be watertight
 against her.

INT. PHONE BOX - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS.

Elaine looks out the window of the phone box.

ELAINE
 He's coming back... please hurry!

She hangs up and leaves the phone box.

EXT. QUIET STREET - BENCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Elaine and John sit down again.

ELAINE
 They're on their way.

JOHN
 Good.

Elaine turns towards John, she puts her arm high on his thigh.

ELAINE
 I know we ever do this, but do you
 think we could kiss, it might calm
 me down.

She leans in closer to him. John looks surprised but obliges. They kiss with Elaine the more passionate party. John reaches up to put his hand on Elaine's shoulder. They both have their eyes closed.

As John gets more into the kiss Elaine reaches down to his lapel pin. She carefully releases it out and drops it behind the bench. She breaks off the kiss and smiles at John.

John leans back breathlessly and a little turned on.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
 Love you.

JOHN
 Love you too.

They return to sitting quietly, Elaine looking up the street while John looks down it. Unseen by the other, they both have smiles on their faces.

THE END