

CHANGING TUNE

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. A BEDROOM - DAY

A man in his mid twenties (Adam Griffin) is sitting at the foot of an immaculately made bed in a perfectly tidy bedroom. A guitar case is to the right of him, his shoes, laces untied, are to the left of his feet in perfect alignment.

ADAM (V.O.)

My name is Adam Griffin, 2 weeks ago I moved from Birmingham in England to Ontario in Canada to live with my Aunt Mary.

Adam looks over towards a desk and focuses on a closed laptop computer.

ADAM (V.O.)

When I was a child I developed Agoraphobia, after my big brother, Jack was murdered by a burglar who misread the layout of our house. He entered my brothers bedroom window rather than my parents room.

(Beat)

After that night I could see that people had become so blinded by greed and violence, that the beautiful world I once innocently saw was broken.

He closes his eyes and faces down. His heart starts to speed up and he holds a hand to his chest and breathes deeply to slow it down.

ADAM (V.O.)

Even at a young age I remember people being so busy that they were alive but not really enjoying life.

He looks up at the clock as the second hand ticks past the 10 on the clock. He moves his hand from his chest and places it by his side, palm down like the other.

ADAM (V.O.)

I don't remember very well but I'm told that I didn't speak to anybody for 7 months after the incident. I Guess I spent that long watching people. That was until my father came home after work with a guitar.

Adam glances out the window to the daylight and breathes in deeply.

He looks back at the clock as the second hand ticks into place and the clock reads 1.00pm exactly. He then exhales and pulls on his shoes and begins to tie his laces.

ADAM (V.O.)

My father taught me everything he knew about guitars. After a while singing became the only way I could escape the uh... confines of my own mind. The only way I could feel free to be me, outside of myself.

He then picks up his guitar and walks out of his room.

INT. A LARGE STUDY ROOM - DAY

A young teenage girl (Emma) is sitting behind a desk looking at a laptop. Her father enters the room and heads towards a file cabinet and fishes for a file.

ADAM (O.C)

Today I'm going to attempt to be me outside. I'm going to attempt to break my phobia. For anybody in Ontario who may be watching this video, I'll be at the mid-point of Eaton Centre Mall at two o'clock in the afternoon on January 30th.

Emma's father turns from the cabinet and looks at the rear of the computer screen with a confused look on his face.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(On the computer screen.)

I'm not asking you to come, but if you'd like to hear me, or if you too are trying to break free. I'd be honoured if you were there. Uh... Thank you.

The video ends and Emma's father walks over with a file in his hand.

EMMA'S FATHER

What are you watching, baby?

EMMA

I think this guy is going to sing at the mall tomorrow at two o'clock.

(beat)

Can I go?

He wraps his arm round his daughter and looks at the screen with a smile.

EMMA'S FATHER

Sure. But only if I can go with you. We'll watch that new movie after the show.

EMMA

Thanks, Daddy.

She wraps her arms round him and hugs him with her eyes closed. They finish their embrace and he begins to walk out. As he gets to the doorway he turns back.

EMMA'S FATHER

Is that guy from England?

Emma looks at her father, nods and then turns back to the screen.

EMMA

I think he said Birmingham.

EXT. OUTSIDE EATON CENTRE MALL. - DAY

Emma and Emma's father are outside of the mall while Emma's father smokes a cigarette. He sucks on the cigarette and then crosses his arms to hug himself to keep warm. Emma looks up at him as he blows the smoke out.

INT. MID-POINT, EATON CENTRE MALL - SAME TIME

People from various walks of life scatter across the mall. A man in a smart suit talks on the phone while in line at a ATM machine. There are 3 people ahead of him, and another behind.

SUIT MAN

I don't know what to tell you. I told you to send the figures over last Thursday. I don't have time to review them now, I have a meeting with Mr Dunfield at three.

The man behind him is a more informally dressed man. He shows a slight of pleasure at the smartly dressed mans unrest. The man in the suit turns and looks the informally dressed man up and down then turns and looks at his watch. 1:57pm

On the other side of the mall Adam sets his guitar down on the floor in the middle of the mall. He has a nervous look about him. Breathing quite heavily, he stands still and pulls the scarf loose from around his neck. He briefly scans the mall surrounding him. He takes a moment to notice a couple of faces pass him. Two young girls.

GIRL 1

It's not the end of the world, he was a jerk anyway. I should've told you sooner.

GIRL 2

(Sobbing gently.)

You did. I just never listened.

An elderly couple.

ELDERLY MAN

I suppose we could get the groceries after lunch.

ELDERLY WOMAN

I don't want to go out driving in the snow.

ELDERLY MAN

I'll have David pick me up later this evening then.

Adam scans these people as they pass him by not noticing him. He bends down and picks up his guitar and holds it ready to play. He pauses. His pulse quickens.

He closes his eyes as his heartbeat picks up pace. His breathing becomes heavy.

ADAM

Calm down. They're only people.

A man places a hand on Adam's shoulder. Adam opens his eyes.

EMMA'S FATHER

Are you okay?

ADAM

Uh.... Yes. Fine thanks.

Adam quickly turns to leave but Emma's father calls after him.

EMMA'S FATHER

You're the guy from the internet right? The guy who's going to sing today.

Adam turns around to face Emma's father.

ADAM

You saw my video?

EMMA'S FATHER

Oh no. Not me. My daughter over there was watching it. She wanted to come and listen to you.

Emma's father points over to a Emma wearing a big coat and a knitted wool hat. Standing on crutches with one leg missing from the knee down. She smiles and waves a glove covered hand.

EMMA'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Hey. Even I'm interested now.

(Laughs)

What are you going to sing?

ADAM

I'm not sure exactly. I.. I didn't really uh...

The smile fades from Emma's fathers face. He can see something is wrong.

EMMA'S FATHER

Hey, that's okay. Just uh... take care okay, buddy.

He pats Adam's arm and re-unites with Emma. Adam stands still holding his guitar looking nervously at the floor.

The two girls return with drinks and stop few yards in front of him expectantly. Still Adam looks at the floor nervously. His body language shows obvious discomfort.

GIRL 2

Do you think he's okay?

GIRL 1

I think he's a little crazy.

Emma's father is trying to get Emma to leave the mall. Signalling for her to follow him.

EMMA'S FATHER

Look at him. He's not playing anything, Emma. Let's go.

EMMA

Just wait, Daddy. He has Ag.. Uh... Agraphobia.

EMMA'S FATHER

In that case we should definitely go. The poor guy is scared out of his mind.

He moves his hand toward Emma's arm but she pulls away leaving his arm outstretched toward her.

EMMA

Please Daddy. Just two minutes.

Adam looks up and sees Emma through the small group that has amassed around him. He then scans the group of faces. His hands are shaking his breath heavy.

ADAM

(Quietly to himself.)
They're just people.

He puts his guitar back on the ground. Pulls his scarf from around his neck. He then ties the scarf around his eyes using it as a blindfold. He bends down and blindly feels for his guitar and lifts it.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(Again to himself.)
Just people.

All is black from Adam's point of view and he can hear the whispers more clearly now.

GIRL 2

I think you were right. What a weirdo.

SUIT MAN

Morgan. Let me call you back.

ELDERLY WOMAN

What do you suppose he's doing Jerry?

ELDERLY MAN

I think he's going to sing.

The group slowly increases as he waits a few more moments before playing. Emma approaches Adam and tiptoes close to his ear.

EMMA

(Whisper.)
I'd like to hear you please, Adam.

Emma walks away to her father. Adam's hands stop shaking. He takes one last deep breath. Exhales and listens for the voices.

They've stopped now and all is black. Adam imagines there being no other living being in sight. He begins to play a few chords, and then begins to sing. Beautifully. A rendition of Imagine by John Lennon.

When he finishes he holds the guitar by the neck and pulls off the scarf. He looks around the group. Nobody says a word and they all just look at him with different expressions.

The elderly woman has tears on her cheeks and shuffles a handkerchief in her hand. The girls look amazed and are linking arms. The suited man is smiling and begins to clap and everyone quickly joins in. Including the informally dressed man who is also smiling.

Adam raises a smile and looks at the group of people. There are close to 30 people applauding him. He then focuses on Emma who is both smiling and has tears sparkling on her cheeks.

EMMA (CONT'D)
(Saying quietly.)
Thank you.

Adam smiles, gives her a gentle nod as if to say you're welcome.

Fade out.