

DOPPELGANGER
A Short Script
By
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FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER:

dop·pel·gäng·er or **dop·pel·gang·er**
\ 'dä- pel-, gan-er, -, gen-, ,dä-pel-
' \ n [German *Dop- pelgänger*, from
doppel- double + *gänger* goer](1851)

1 : a ghostly counterpart of a
living person
2 a : DOUBLE 2a **b** : ALTER EGO b
c : a person who has the same name
as another

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Asleep in his bed, twenty year old JOE LUCAS tosses and turns
under the covers.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Darkness fills the streets. Along the sidewalk, a DARK FIGURE
walks by the building, stopping to look up to a third story
window.

INT. BEDROOM

Move over the covers on Joe's bed all the way up to his face.
When he rolls over and throws the covers off, his eyes OPEN.

He sits up sudden, looking around at the shadows on the
walls. Then to the window.

JOE'S POV

the curtains on the window RUSTLE even though the window is
closed.

JOE
Who's there?
(beat)
Hello?

Joe RUBS the back of his neck.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

The figure walks on, disappearing into the night.

INT. LIVING ROOM. JOE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Garbed in his pj's, Joe exits a kitchen with a cup of tea or coffee and sits down on a sofa, switches on the TV - nothing but black and white static.

ON A WALL

a coo-coo clock TICKS away.

JOE'S POV

the hands read: 2:45AM

JOE
Jesus - three nights in a row. This
is ridiculous.

As Joe readies another sip, the clock loudly CHIMES out. He SPILLS the drink over his shirt and onto the sofa.

JOE
That's it.

KITCHEN

Searching through the cabinets, Joe retrieves a BOTTLE of PILLS. He reads it closely.

JOE
Take two before bedtime. Do not
operate heavy machinery. Will cause
drowsiness.
(cocks his head)
Unlikely.

He POPS two pills and chases with a SWIG of milk from a jug.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Dressed for work, Joe opens the door on his car and gets in behind the wheel. As he fumbles with his keys, he happens to look up.

JOE'S POV

a HANDPRINT on the windshield.

JOE
The hell is this?

Joe starts the car and turns on the window washer/wipers.

JOE
Damn kids.
(laughs)

He puts it in gear and check the mirrors before pulling out.

EXT. JOE'S CAR

From the side, the car pulls away from the curb trailing a rear flat tire. The car stops. Joe sticks his head out the window.

JOE
For crying out loud!

INT. CAR

He GRIPS the wheel with both hands and attempts to rip it from the dash.

JOE
DAMN IT!
(takes a breath)
Okay.
(gaining calm)
Okay - take it easy.

Joe turns and looks at us, feigning smile.

EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

Standing beside two other people, the bus pulls up. They board. Joe is last to get on. The bus driver holds his hand up at him.

BUS DRIVER
Sorry - full.

JOE
Come on, pal.

BUS DRIVER
You'll have to wait for the next
one. Should be along in ten
minutes.

Joe looks at his watch as the bus drives away; the passengers packed like sardines staring down at him. As the bus passes, something in the window catches Joe's eyes.

JOE'S POV

he does a double-take while seeing himself staring back from one of the windows. Was that real?

BEAT

as Joe stares into space for a moment.

INT. BUS

Up the aisle, we come to Joe seated in the corner staring out the window. Briefly, he turns his head and looks over his shoulder.

Seated across from him, he catches sight of an elderly MAN who smiles back with a vacant look.

Joe turns away uncomfortably.

OLD MAN
(matter-of-factly)
Dé-jà vu.

JOE
What?

OLD MAN
Can you see me?

EXT. BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

Joe comes out of his state.

JOE
What?

OLD MAN (O.S.)
I know you're there.

Joe turns around, no one there.

JOE
What? What? Hello?

ON JOE'S FACE

the despair of perspiration as he searches for the voice. Is it a dream?

INT. JOE'S CAR

Joe comes out of his trance still gazing at the handprint on the windshield.

MOMENTS LATER

Joe is busy JACKING up the rear of the car. He stops, catches his breath, checks his watch. He sighs then stares up at his apartment window.

Everything seems to spin.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Asleep in his bed, Joe looks to be in a quality state of REM. He's snoring lightly, calmly breathing.

INT. BUS

Leaning against the window, Joe's face is distorted and back-dropped by his breath vaporizing on the glass.

The bus ride is a bumpy one and JOLTS him out of his nap. He looks around, straightening his collar, gaining his composure. Joe catches sight of the old man across from him, who returns a gesture with a fatherly grin.

JOE
I had a flat tire.

OLD MAN
Are you really sitting there?

JOE
(is he drunk?)
Right - sure thing.

Joe turns away, hoping not to encourage the man into conversation.

MOMENTS LATER

Joe looks over. He's not there. As is anyone else, except for the lone bus driver up at the wheel.

Shocked, Joe gets up and makes his way down the aisle.

EXT. BUS STOP

The bus stops, out gets Joe in an obvious state of mental inebriation. As the bus drives away, he stands there looking down at his feet, now bare.

He grabs his head, whimpering.

JOE
(out of his element)
What - what is this?!

INT. BEDROOM

From his deep sleep, Joe SUDDENLY RISES and TOSSES the covers off the bed. He looks around the room, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. He's drenched in sweat.

From the doorway, something catches his eye.

JOE'S POV

the FIGURE of a man walks by, disappearing into the apartment.

Joe LEAPS out of bed, his fear THROWING him back against the wall. Heavy, strained breathing as he searches for a weapon. He quickly secures a baseball bat from beneath the bed and edges up to the door.

JOE
Who's there?!
(a terminable beat)
H.. hello?
(clenched jaw)
Look, I've called the cops pal. I
have a gun. I'll use it!

HALLWAY

Joe edges from his room and slowly makes his way along the wall, bat held high.

The sweat GLISTENS on his face, trailing a bead down his neck. He's full of adrenaline, ready to strike, ready to defend himself to the death.

IN AN INSTANT

he LEAPS into the living room SWINGING the bat from side to side, YELLING and CHARGING over the sofa and TUMBLING across the floor. Quickly, he makes for the light switch. A BUMP, a BANG and a SMASH... on come the lights.

Joe stands there, the living room in disarray and himself, enraged and out of breath. After a moment, no one there.

-- He comes out of the bathroom;

-- Closing the closet doors;

-- And double-checking the balcony door lock.

Calm, surreal silence in the apartment. Joe stands staring vacantly at the blank TV screen.

SUDDENLY

the coo-coo clock CHIMES.

The old man's voice faintly fills the room.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
I know where I am.

Joe reels around, SWINGING at nothing.

JOE
(looking around)
Who are you?! Where are you?!

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Listen.

JOE
Look, pal, I'm not having this -
whoever you are you'd best show
yourself.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Did you see me on the bus?

JOE
(deciding his next move)
This isn't happening; it's a dream.

OLD MAN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
You're probably afraid.

Joe WILDLY SWINGS the bat, YELLING...

JOE
GET OUT!! Get out of here!

and runs throughout the apartment, KICKING open the doors, looking through every closet, drawer and empty space.

JOE
What the hell is happening?

INT. BUS

Rocked awake, Joe gazes around at the passengers, every one of them staring back. The old man isn't on the bus. In his place, a WOMAN about 30.

WOMAN
(semi-concerned)
Were you in the war?

Joe brushed his hand through his hair. He's beat.

JOE
Excuse me?

WOMAN
(beat)
The war - sometimes they come back and have such terrible nightmares. It's nothing to be worried about. My husband had it when he came back. Battle fatigue. Have you been at the VA?

Drained and at a loss for words, Joe says nothing and closes his eyes, hoping he'll awaken.

EXT. JOE'S CAR

Still jacking up the car, Joe happens to look up to his window. The curtains RUSTLE.

JOE'S POV

a FIGURE walks past the window.

Joe quickly averts his eyes and grabs his face, cupping out the light. Slowly he reveals a strained grimace and looks back to his widow. Nothing there.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Dressed for work, Joe sips on coffee and paces from the kitchen and pulls away the curtains on the window. He looks out, studying the surroundings.

JOE'S POV

his car, against the curb, idles.

INT. JOE'S CAR

At the wheel, Joe pokes his head out and looks down at the rear tire: not flat.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

Like a dark cavern, we hear: the SQUEALS of tires on polished concrete getting closer.

Moving by the rows of cars come to an empty space just as Joe's car pulls in and parks. At the wheel, Joe pauses in thought, the engine still rumbling.

He turns off the ignition and gets out. Adjusting his tie, Joe takes a breath and heads into the car park.

Walking down the cavern, Joe stops and turns. We hear: footsteps walking then stop.

JOE'S POV

his eyes scan the furthest reaches of this underground cavern. Darkness to the edge and beyond. It's vast and eerie. Not a soul in sight.

Joe brushes it off and continues on his way. Silence permeated only by footsteps, his and another.

As he walks, Joe's eyes feel around behind him. Someone's there. Quickly, he turns. No one.

ON JOE'S FACE

pain of despair.

BLACK SCREEN

OPEN ON

a concrete wall. Pull back to reveal Joe moving along side on side. Nearby, a parked car in which he edges by. It's dark, gloomy and a hollow wind GUSTS through the park-aide.

Move from Joe to the other side of the wall, where a figure, edges along towards the end.

SPLIT SCREEN:

-- Joe moving slowly;

-- The figure moving slowly;

-- Joe taking a breath;

-- The figure taking a breath;

JOE
Who's there?

FIGURE
Don't look at me.

Joe edges closer.

JOE
Who are you?

FIGURE
You're not supposed to know.

JOE
You were in my house.

FIGURE
No.

Joe comes to the edge of the wall.

JOE
I want to see you.

FIGURE
Stay away.

Joe steps out from his side and turns towards the figure. The figure comes into view, now that of himself, darker, shallower; almost a bad clone.

ON THE DARK JOE'S FACE

circles under the eyes, like a drug addict. He squints.

Joe YELLS. The yell echoes into the park-aide, and fades away.

WHITE SCREEN

We hear: a hollow wind.

INT. HOSPITAL

A series of LIGHTS and FLASHES. As Joe, on a gurney, is being wheeled down a long corridor by two ambulance attendants and a nurse.

ON JOE'S FACE

his eyes FLICKER. Like an epileptic fit, his head moves from side to side.

JOE'S POV

QUICK FLASHES OF:

- Overhead lights;
- A doctor in a mask;
- An oxygen mask coming closer;
- A nurse checking his pulse.

OVERHEAD

Move down on Joe's form, lying on the gurney, being poked and prodded like a specimen by even more hospital staff. We hear: voices and machines.

DOCTOR'S VOICE (V.O.)
Where was he found?

FLASH TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

Joe lying on the ground, convulsing. Nearby, the shadow of a figure walking by.

BACK TO SCENE:

A LIGHT shining in Joe's EYE.

NURSE'S VOICE (V.O.)
4th street parking lot.

DOCTOR'S VOICE (V.O.)
A mugging?

NURSE'S VOICE (V.O.)
Looks that way.

FLASH TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

The form of Dark Joe receding back into the shadows behind the wall.

BACK TO SCENE:

A SYRINGE is prepared with a substance. Follow the needle as it makes a PUNCTURE in Joe's arm.

DOCTOR'S VOICE (V.O.)
Well, there's no sign of any
trauma. No head wound.
(beat)
No odor of alcohol or medicinal
substances. What have the police
got to say about this?

NURSE'S VOICE (V.O.)
No witnesses. They're doing a
search of the area. It's possible
he might have been chased by an
assailant.

HALLWAY - LATER

Joe is being wheeled from a room and down the corridor.

INT. WARD - NIGHT

The outside moonlight filters in through the bars on the windows. Moving by rows of beds, in each a sleeping man, come to Joe's bed at the far end of the ward. He's staring up at the ceiling, not a blink.

We hear: men's VOICES from behind an opaque, glass door.

JOE'S POV

two FIGURES, obviously medical staff, are talking about him.

VOICE #1 (O.S.)
What's your recommendation?

VOICE #2 (O.S.)
Three weeks?

VOICE #1 (O.S.)
Any sign of a brain injury?

VOICE #2 (O.S.)
No - that's just it, we're at a loss to find anything wrong with him. No symptoms. And he won't - or refuses - to talk.

(beat)
He has no family. Well, at least none that we know of.

VOICE #1 (O.S.)
We're transferring him to the Montview Institute on Thursday.

INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Move through the door and into Joe's bedroom where he's lying awake, staring up at the ceiling.

He turns his head and looks at us.

JOE
(placid)
I didn't realize what it was I had witnessed all those years ago. Only now can I fully comprehend.

EXT. COURTYARD. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

In front of a lush garden, come to the old man seated on a bench, staring at the flowers.

The old man gets up and walks to a fence. Beyond, the city scape rising over a tree line.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Seated in a leather chair, Joe nervously clasps his hands together, clenching them, rubbing them, scratching the skin.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
How are we this morning?

JOE
(discerning)
You're implying control again.

Seated across from Joe, the DOCTOR, an older gentleman in glasses, holding a pad of paper.

DOCTOR
Very well - how are you this morning?

JOE
When can I go home?

DOCTOR
It's not quite that simple. You've yet to make the necessary adjustments to warrant a release. Two years we've had your company, Mister Lucas. And in those two years, verbalization has only occurred these past few days.

JOE
I guess I have a lot to think about.

DOCTOR
Care to tell me about it?

JOE
There's nothing to tell.

DOCTOR
Why don't you let me be the judge
of that.

Joe looks over his shoulder, feeling in the incoming sunlight
from a window.

JOE
Everything's a nightmare.

DOCTOR
You've had a traumatic experience.
One that subsequently rendered your
subconscious incapable of rational
thought.

JOE
I wasn't mugged.

DOCTOR
Why delay the inevitable? You're
avoiding. And we have plenty of
time.

JOE
I don't know what happened to me.

DOCTOR
There's an explanation for
everything, Mister Lucas. Straight
forward, it's up to you to break
free of the fear.

Joe lowers his head, holding his hands to his face.

FLASH TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

Through the darkness, a concrete wall comes into view. It's
an ominous scene, eerie and shaky.

JOE (V.O.)
I've been here before.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
Where are you?

Moving past the wall, rows of cars.

JOE (V.O.)
 The parking garage. It's darker.
 The light can't escape. I work
 here. Up on the seventh floor.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
 What can you see?

Moving past the cars, Joe stands in the middle of the floor.
 He's looking about - studying his surroundings.

JOE
 Hello?

Joe looks closer, squinting his eyes for a better view.

JOE
 Who's there?

JOE'S POV

a DARK FIGURE at the far end of the park-aide moves from one
 side to the other.

JOE
 Who's there?!
 (a terminable beat)
 H.. hello?
 (clenched jaw)
 Look, I've called the cops pal. I
 have a gun. I'll use it!

ZOOM TO:

THE END OF THE PARK-AIDE

where the figure steps out from behind a wall.

ON JOE

his face draws white, drained from fright with no expression.

JOE'S POV

the figure is that of himself, only darker; the copy of self
 in a nightmarish form.

BACK TO SCENE:

Joe raises his head, breathing strained, short breaths.

JOE
 (fearfully)
 Oh, God - it's not right.
 (almost in tears)
 I wasn't supposed to be there.
 (a strained beat)
 He wasn't supposed to be there.

DOCTOR
 Where? What did you see?

Joe starts to shake. His eyes ROLL back and he begins convulsing in the chair.

HALLWAY

A pair of orderly's followed quickly by a nurse, hurry down the hallway and into the doctor's office.

We can hear: Joe's SCREAMS, YELLS and WHIMPERS coming from within.

Back away from the doctor's office and recede down the hallway.

FADE OUT:

WHITE SCREEN

JOE (V.O.)
 Did you see me on the bus?
 (beat)
 I had a flat tire.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
 Can you see me?

JOE (V.O.)
 What?

OLD MAN (V.O.)
 Can you see me?
 (beat)
 Listen.

FADE IN:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The old man alone in his element, walking along. He looks perplexed, studying the surroundings. Passing in the street, a BUS.

BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

The old man waiting for the bus to arrive, standing beneath the shelter. The bus pulls up, he gets on.

INT. BUS

As the bus pulls away, the old man makes his way up the aisle and takes a seat nearer to the rear. Opposite him, an empty seat. He smiles at the seat with a vacant look.

OLD MAN
(matter-of-factly)
Dé-jà vu.

BEAT

as a few passengers give him a puzzled stare.

OLD MAN
Can you see me?

BEAT

as one of the passengers comments to another as to the mental state of this old man.

OLD MAN
I... I know you're...
(a cough)
I know you're there.

The old man begins to SHAKE. And MUMBLE incoherently.

EXT. NEXT BUS STOP

The bus stopped, the old man STAGGERS out, composes himself then quickly makes his way along the sidewalk.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Seated in a leather chair, Joe nervously clasps his hands together, clenching them, rubbing them, scratching the skin.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
How are we this morning?

JOE
(a realization)
What?

Perplexed, Joe looks up at the doctor.

JOE
(matter-of-factly)
Dé-jà vu.

Joe stands, feeling his head, thinking, rationalizing.

JOE
It wasn't me. It was him.

Joe swings around looking at us, piecing it together.

JOE
It was you.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

Out of the darkness, steps the old man.

OLD MAN
But I wasn't there.

INTERCUT:

JOE - DOCTOR'S OFFICE

JOE
Yes - but you were.

JOE
You never saw me.

JOE
You were in my house.

OLD MAN - UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

OLD MAN
I don't understand?

OLD MAN
No - but I knew.

OLD MAN
How?

JOE
A doppelganger.

OLD MAN
It makes no sense!

INT. BEDROOM

Joe asleep in his bed.

JOE (V.O.)
It was a dream. In it: I saw myself
watching my own body - watching my
self, the other me. That's how it
begins.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Doppelgangers are omens. Bad
things. Death.

JOE (V.O.)
Only if you believe that. It's a
tale - a myth.

A FIGURE walks into the room and stands at the foot of Joe's
bed.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
I was watching myself. The dream
manifested beyond the realm of the
dream, making itself seem real.

From the foot of the bed, move up to the face of the figure:
it's Joe looking at himself. There's no emotion here.

JOE
(staring at himself)
In the dream, the self breaks free
of the subconscious.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

Joe, walking past the cars, comes to the wall.

JOE
I know you're there.

From behind the wall, Joe's other self emerges. Both he and
Joe stand eye-to-eye. Neither says a word.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
The two couldn't become one again.
That's why...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Joe paces the office, all the while the Doctor taking down notes as he speaks.

JOE (CONT'D)

... my mind gave up. It was a - -

DOCTOR

Defense mechanism. It's how the brain reacts to stress. You lose the ability of speech - of comprehension. Untreated, it becomes an unstable mental condition in which resides a separate personality.

(beat)

You can readily observe it in the institutions.

Joe paces to the window and stares out. Looking down, he sees someone.

JOE'S POV

the old man stopped on the sidewalk, looking up at him.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Here, the old man comes to Joe's car. He walks to the front and PRESSES his hand onto the windshield.

OLD MAN

The imprint of time. Left for myself to awaken.

Old man looks back up to the apartment window.

OLD MAN

It's a dream again.

Old man stares down at the rear tire. Walks up and kicks a small, metal screw out from beneath.

OLD MAN

Go back to sleep.

EXT. COURTYARD. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

In front of a lush garden, come to the old man seated on a bench, staring at the flowers. He looks up and over his shoulder. He smiles and closes his eyes. He's falling asleep.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Asleep in his bed, Joe tosses and turns under the covers.

From there, move to the window where the moonlight shines through.

From there, move out of Joe's bedroom and into the

LIVING ROOM

Calm, quiet. Move up to the wall where the coo-coo clock ticks away. The hands read: 4:23AM.

FADE OUT:

THE END

