

MAD WORLD

By Matthew Nsubuga

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FADE IN:

INT. CHARLES' APARTMENT - DAY

A filthy apartment with a garbage-ridden floor, half-eaten food left on top of the T.V., and a box of Coco-Puffs laid on it's side underneath the coffee table.

An angry episode of Jerry Springer bellows from the T.V.

Filled with many miscellaneous objects and ads and beer cans, one thing that stands out on the table is a photo of a man and a boy standing side by side, smiling.'

CHARLES (V.O)

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. Everybody when they are old wants to look back on their lives with pride and achievement. They want to feel they have accomplished something they can be proud of; something their children will be so proud of they would look at them and say *I'm proud of you mum or Dad*. But this isn't reality. We live in a mad world.

Slowly CHARLES is revealed to us. Laying on the couch. Feet up wearing nothing but a t-shirt and boxers.

He is black, old and rugged. Grey hair fills his face, as do wrinkles.

Hanging from his hand is a can of BEER dripping onto the already damp carpet.

The whole living room is revealed. Very TIGHT and CRAMP with a sofa, table and a T.V. It is Pretty basic and it has a BROWN carpet with BLUE wallpaper.

It is dark and the curtains closed.

From the midst of DARKNESS a dog appears. You notice straight away it is a ROCKWEILER.

It trots towards a knocked out Charles and BEGINS licking his face.

Covering Charles face with dog spit, looks quite REVOLTING.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES (V.O)

It felt like life had just eaten me up and just spit me back out. A man's purpose is a wondrous thing but a man's emptiness is quite the opposite.

Charles slowly opens his eyes and discovers his dog licking his face.

CHARLES

Ah for God sake Casey get off me.

Looks at the time: 11:20am

INT. BATHROOM

The cold taps crash against the sink. Charles TAKES both his hands and drops them in the oncoming tap and drenches his half awake face with water.

He stops and STARES at the mirror for a moment.

CHARLES (V.O)

Imagination is the one weapon in the war against reality. When I look in the mirror I don't see myself, I see someone else. 10 years ago I had a wife. I had a son. But what God gave me he felt the need to take back.

He gets a towel and dries his face.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY 12PM

He steps into the living being chased by Casey. He checks his answer machine but it responds - You have no mail.

Casey carries on JUMPING up and down LICKING Charles' bare legs.

CHARLES

Why you so excited?

CHARLES (V.O)

Talking to a dog. I know what you're thing but it helps.

He goes on his knees and starts rubbing the dog. He SMILES and LAUGHS.

(CONTINUED)

PEERING from the corner of his eye he notices a photo on top of the layers of rubbish on his coffee table.

He leaves the dog and approaches it. He PICKS it up and takes a long look at it.

It is a picture of him and a boy.

The SMILE which was once before had totally disappeared. A SADNESS feels his rugged face.

He removes the newspapers on the couch and sits down. He PICKS up the phone which dangled from the side of the chair.

He stares at it for a moment. His eyes turn watery, so he rubs them away. He takes another look at the photo and GLARES for a moment.

He can not DELIBERATE with himself any longer. He picks up the phone and begins dialing a number.

No answer.

It goes to answer mail. He SIGHS in disappointment.

ANSWER PHONE

Please leave you message after the tone.

BEEP

CHARLES

Well its me, Dad. I was just wondering. We haven't seen each other for a long time since you got married and I haven't even seen the baby. Maybe you .... and your family, if your not busy or anything can come round for dinner or something. A small thing nothing big just me, you, Jessica and the child.

Charles chuckles out a small laugh.

CHARLES

I don't even know the name of the baby. Anyway I think I nattered on for long enough. Give me call.

He puts the phone down. He stares at the blue wall paper covering the living room. holes and scratches tear it apart.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES (V.O)

Nothing I've ever done has given me more joy and reward than being a father to my son. Death changes you. Death of of a person may be the end but it is also the beginning.

He SNAPS out of his small gaze. SPRINGS up from the couch and slaps on a tracksuit and some black shoes.

CHARLES

Come on Casey. Lets go for a walk.

On the way out he puts the picture into his pocket. He grabs Casey's lead. Casey follows him.

EXT. PARK -- DAY 12:30PM

Charles stands in the centre of the grass. He watches Casey dance and run around. There are no kids about as it is a weekday.

Charles stares as some other people walk round the park.

CHARLES (V.O)

Is man an Ape or an Angel. I see these same type of people walking around everyday. They think life is a gift and you should go out and enjoy it. But it ain't that simple. There's a burden on everyone when we make relationships. We have commitments and loyalties. But in the end everyone is the same. They think it will never end. The supreme irony of life is that hardly anyone gets out of it alive.

Creeping from behind him a lady suddenly comes to his attention.

She's quite tall and blond. A soft face white face, her names SARAH.

SARAH

Hi is that your dog over there.

Charles turns and sees Casey on top of a pedestrian.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES  
HEY CASEY COME OVER HERE NOW!

Casey gets of the terrified man and runs towards Charles.  
Sarah giggles.

SARAH  
My names Sarah nice to meet you.

CHARLES  
Charles.

They shake hands.

SARAH  
Thats a nice dog you got there.

CHARLES  
Thank you it was a gift from my  
brother.

Charles bends down and puts Casey on his lead.

SARAH  
Really? I wish I had a brother who  
gave me a dog as a present.

They both giggle like school children.

CHARLES  
I know you, you live opposite the  
Watterson's.

SARAH  
Yeah thats me.

CHARLES (V.O)  
The Watterson's.

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

Charles walks home with Casey.

Brimming from the other side of the road are sounds of  
partying, sex and drugs.

CHARLES (V.O)  
That place was like a club. You  
would see different cars pulling up  
there every night.

INT. CHARLES BEDROOM -- WINDOW

CHARLES

I would sometimes look outside my bedroom window and watch mayhem ensue. Fights would happen , police would show up. That's just how it was and no one could stop it.

EXT. PARK -- DAY 13:00PM

CHARLES

How do you take that noise everyday.

SARAH

I survive.

CHARLES

You should complain to the council or something. It shouldn't be allowed.

SARAH

Whats the point they never listen, everyone is scared of them.

There's a short silence.

SARAH

I think I should be going now.

CHARLES

OK. It was nice meeting you Sarah.

SARAH

You to. You need to keep a better watch on your dog next time.

CHARLES

I know.

He smiles. She walks of towards the park gates.

CHARLES (V.O)

Sometimes you have to take risk to make things happen in your life.

CHARLES

HEY, WAIT.

She stops and turns around.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

Are you doing anything else later.  
I was thinking maybe if you want to  
you can come round for some dinner  
or something.

SARAH

Oh I'm sorry I'm married.

CHARLES (V.O)

Not all risk pay off.

CHARLES

Oh I thought because...

He points to her finger.

CHARLES

You didn't have a ring you were...

SARAH

Oh sorry. I forgot it at home. I'm  
sorry if I gave you the wrong idea.

CHARLES

It's fine. I'll see you again  
another time.

SARAH

Alright bye.

Charles' face looks pitiful as his dog begs him for  
attention.

INT. CHARLES LIVING ROOM -- DAY 15:00PM

Charles sits on his couch watching T.V. - Steve Wilkos.

On the screen the topic shows -

" DEADBEAT DADS "

Charles picks up his can of BEER and taking a little sip.

CHARLES (V.O)

T.V. - The worlds greatest  
invention. So much time and effort  
is wasted on it. My mum use to  
always say:

INT. FAMILY HOME -- FLASHBACK

Image of Charles' mothers face waving her finger. She's very black with short hair and bulging eyes.

CHARLES MOTHER  
YOU THINK TOO MUCH. STOP THINKING  
AND START DOING.

INT. CHARLES LIVING ROOM

CHARLES  
All I think of now is what could  
have been.

Suddenly HUGE BANGS are being thumped on the front door.

Charles jumps up startled. He moves towards the front door where Casey is makes a lot of noise.

He reaches the front door. He looks through the hole.

CHARLES  
Who is that.

JASON  
It's me open up.

CHARLES  
Jason?

A smile covers Charles' face.

He unlocks the door and opens up. JASON pushes his way through into the house and into the living room.

Jason is tall, smart looking and well built with long side burns.

Charles chases behind him.

JASON  
Look at this dump.

CHARLES  
Jase what's wrong.

Jason turns and looks Charles right in the eye.

JASON  
Listen. I'm going to be real clear  
here. I don't want you calling my  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JASON (cont'd)  
house. I don't want you hassling my  
family. I don't want you in my  
life.

Jason's face has tensed up with anger.

CHARLES  
Son. I know we have had our  
differences since mum. But I'm your  
father you can't just cut me out of  
your life.  
(pleading)  
I need you, you need me.

JASON  
When I most needed you, you wasn't  
there. You drank instead. You  
sicken me.

CHARLES  
It was a hard time for both of us.  
She meant a lot to me.

JASON  
What about me Dad. What about me.  
She meant a lot to me. You're  
selfish. You're a drunk. You're  
life has no purpose.

A tear drips down Charles face.

CHARLES  
Listen son. Just listen.

Jason tries to walk out of the living room but is stopped by  
his Father.

JASON  
If you don't get out of my way, I  
will make you.

CHARLES  
I just want you to understand that  
I agree with you. I am a drunk. A  
shameful father. But we need each  
other. I want to change. I want my  
life to have meaning.

JASON  
You think the world owes you a  
living; the world owes you nothing.  
You will never change. Just stay  
out of my life.

(CONTINUED)

Charles lets him drift past him. He PLUMMETS to his knees as Jason slams the door on his way out.

CHARLES (V.O)  
Life's a bitch. It really is. Like  
a slap in the face.

INT. APARTMENT FRONT DOOR -- EVENING 18:00PM

Charles opens the front door wearing his LARGE over coat and brown Dusty stick.

Casey runs TOWARDS Charles as he begins to leave.

CHARLES  
You stay here and don't touch  
anything. I'll see you in a bit.

He shuts the front door.

EXT. MAIN ROAD -- EVENING 18:15PM

Its THUNDERING down with rain.

Charles trots through the main road, head down clutching himself.

CHARLES (V.O)  
If a man hasn't discovered  
something that he will live for, he  
isn't fit to live. My mind is clear  
now.

INT. PUB -- EVENING 18:30PM

As Charles steps into the pub you see the rows upon rows of men sipping on their evening beer.

He heads to the bar. At the bar two men sit both white, minding there own business.

Charles joins them. He sits down and gestures a call to one of the waitress.

CHARLES  
Love, can you get me a shot. Make  
it a double and keep them coming.

The waitress passes him a cup. Then pours a shot into it. She repeats this with another cup.

CHARLES

Thank you.

Charles puts them away without a breath.

CHARLES

Keep them coming.

One of the white men sitting at the bar turns around.

He's got short hair, small mustache with a Scottish accent, his name is MATT.

MATT

Hey you live just by me.

Charles twist his head around drowsily.

CHARLES

Sorry do I know you.

MATT

I live across the road.

CHARLES

Really? Never seen you before.

MATT

I moved in there five years ago with my wife Sarah.

Charles eyes glows.

CHARLES

Sarah.

MATT

Yeah. Do you know her?

CHARLES

No. Just the name of a friend. Well nice to meet you ...

MATT

Matt

CHARLES

Matt. Nice to meet you Matt.

MATT

Nice to meet you yo. Mind if I ask you where you work.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

I don't work anymore, but I used to be a useful carpenter.

MATT

Carpenter?

CHARLES

Yeah but that life is gone now.

MATT

So what is the special occasion.

CHARLES

What?

MATT

You took two shots you must be celebrating something.

CHARLES

Oh no no no. No celebration just a new focus.

MATT

A new focus?

CHARLES

A new focus in life. A new direction.

MATT

What is this direction?

CHARLES

Have you ever felt that there is something in life which is waiting for you and all you need to do is look for it.

MATT

No

CHARLES

Well I have discovered that my goals are to change and become a better person so that someone else rather than me cares whether I die or not.

MATT

Cheers to you, me and your new focus.

(CONTINUED)

Matt lifts up his beer, so does Charles and they touch it together nodding their heads.

CHARLES

I think I will be heading off ...

MATT

Matt.

CHARLES

Oh yes Matt.

Charles struggles of his chair and stumbles out.

EXT. MAIN ROAD -- 20:00PM

Charles stumbles down the high street in darkness. He clutches his can of beer with real intensity while in short gaps he drenches it down his throat.

As he makes his way home he sees a shop "COSTCUTTER". He wiggles his can, nothing is inside. So he scampers across the road like a MANIAC towards the shop.

INT. COSTCUTTER -- 20:20PM

He makes his way in. Not many people are inside. Only from what he sees is too hooded youths, a white lady and young white male.

He turns to the shopkeeper who is keeping a watchful eye on the two youths.

CHARLES

Hey. Where your drinks?.

SHOPKEEPER

By the tins, down in that corner.

CHARLES (V.O)

The drink is like a cancer or drug which attacks you and kills you but you are addicted to it and you can't do anything about it.

Charles glances at the two youths who stand by the chocolates near the entrance of the shop.

CHARLES

Shouldn't you boys be at home or something.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES (V.O)  
A failed generation.

YOUTH #1  
Carry on walking old man.

CHARLES  
I don't get it. What do you get  
from hanging in here or on the  
streets all your lives, don't you  
have dreams, focuses or directions.

YOUTH #2  
(talking to his friend)  
Is this man still talking to us.

They both laugh at Charles.

CHARLES (V.O)  
I don't know why I was talking to  
them. Maybe I saw my son in these  
boys. Lost and failed.

Suddenly there's loud skid from outside. The youths turn  
their attention to the shop entrance.

SLOW MOTION:

A man pokes his head into the shop and lifts up his arm.

CHARLES (V.O)  
Everything slowed down for me. For  
some reason I saw this as my  
chance. As a way of giving my life  
meaning.

As the man lifts up his arm you see the handgun sticking  
out.

He SHOOTs.

Charles DIVES.

Charles catches both bullets aimed at the young men. The  
youths FLINCH. The man has GONE.

His body is laid out. Still and soft. The youths surround  
him panicking; PETRIFIED. Unable to MOVE.

CHARLES (V.O)  
When I was a boy my dream was to be  
a carpenter. To make things. As I  
lived my dream all my life's  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES (V.O) (cont'd)  
meaning was lost when my wife died  
of cancer. I could no longer say I  
was proud of what I had achieved.  
Life is not measured by the number  
of breaths we take, but by the  
moments that take our breath away.  
I can be happy now. My life had  
meaning. I didn't die with no  
accomplishments. I saved lives, I  
gave a people another chance in  
life. Man can be an Angel.

The youths stands over him. One of the faces change into  
Jason's. He smiles right back at Charles.

Charles ruffles out the picture of him and his son standing  
side by side. He stares at it.

CHARLES (V.O)  
Maybe my son will be proud of me  
now. Maybe he will no longer need  
to look down on me but to think  
high of me.

Charles lets go of the picture. He stares at the ceiling as  
he takes his final breaths.

CHARLES (V.O)  
I can be with her now.

A picture of Mary. Soft brown eyes and caramel brown skin.  
Black smooth hair and curved soft lips.

Charles finally lets go. His neck relaxes. Eyes still open.

CHARLES (V.O)  
We can be together. Away from this  
MAD WORLD.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END

CREDIT SEQUENCE INTERCUTTING VIDEO TAPES OF CHARLES, MARY  
AND JASON TOGETHER AS A FAMILY.