A Complicated Man Written by James D. Long

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OPEN.

1. INT. BEDROOM

(Opening credits roll during this scene. They appear as simple white text on a black screen and dissect the sequence)

A man lies in bed whilst a girl walks around his bedroom finishing getting dressed. The man's bedroom is cluttered with books and papers. A typewriter sits on a desk in the corner of the room. A calender is stuck to the wall of the room. The month showing has a red circle on one of the days with DEADLINE written on it. The days leading up to DEADLINE have a giant red cross through them showing that there are 5 days left till the DEADLINE day. The woman grabs the last of her things and leaves. During this sequence a conversation plays over the top.

Interviewer: (voice-over) Thanks for agreeing to this interview Jesse. Really appreciate your time.

Jesse: (voice-over) That's okay. What do you want to know?

Interviewer: (voice-over) Well we're running a feature titled "Where Are They Now?", which tracks the careers of our reader's favourite writers who have had a quiet few years. We ran a poll online and you were quite popular!

Jesse: (voice-over) Quiet few years? What's that mean?

Interviewer: (voice-over) You know, you were once the hottest young writer around. Your first two books flew off the shelves and made it onto everyone's Top 10 lists. You were famous for sticking with old-fashioned typewriters instead of using a computer. What was the reason you used to give for that?

Jesse: (voice-over) I said that with a typewriter you see the words printed straight away. Plus, it's a lot harder to change what you've written so you pay attention more.

(CONT'D)

However we haven't heard anything from you in over five years know, what have you been up to?

Jesse: (voice-over) Erm, I took some time off and I've been writing again recently, just got the last chapter to finish actually...has it really been five years?

Interviewer: (voice-over) OVER five years! There are rumours about a car accident with you and your, at the time, fiance leading to people claiming that you've become a bit of a hermit? Anything you'd care to comment on? (Pauses) ..Hello? (Phone lines goes dead)...Jesse?

We close in on the man still lying in bed. As the conversation ends the man's eyes snap open.

2. INT. KTICHEN

Jesse is walking around his kitchen. He is wearing an old hoodie, a plain T-shirt and a pair of pj trousers. Jesse picks up a blue mug from by the sink, drying it with the sleeve of his hoodie, and throws a tea bag in it. Jesse starts to boil his kettle and stands looking at it. He then fills the mug with boiling water and messily splashes some milk in it. Jesse blows on his tea and walks out the kitchen.

3. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse walks back into his bedroom and takes a sip of tea and almost retches. He spits the tea back into the mug and storms back to the kitchen.

4. INT. KTICHEN

Jesse places his mug on the side, grabs the milk carton and sniffs it. From Jesse's reaction it is clear the milks has turned sour. Jesse frantically opens the fridge looking for a fresh carton. Unable to find one Jesse picks up his cup of tea, almost decides just to drink it before tipping it down the sink. Jesse grabs his wallet off the counter and turns to go out but stops, wobbles and throws his wallet back on the counter. He grabs a coffee jar instead, tips the water out of the kettle, refills it then stands and watches it boil.

5. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse walks back into his bedroom, sips his coffee and places it next to the typewriter on his desk. We can see that he has made himself a black coffee. Jesse fiddles with the page wound into the typewriter. On the page there is only one line written. The line reads;

"Stephen Greenstreet was a complicated man."

Jesse stares at the single sentence on the page and traces his fingers across the typewriter's keys without actually pressing down on the keys. Jesse stops, leans back in his chair and looks over at the calender on the wall. Jesse grabs the red marker pen in an empty mug on his desk and walks over to the calender. Jesse uses the red pen to carefully touch up the "X" on an earlier day, blowing on the calender to dry the pen mark. Jesse stares at the calender briefly before going to sit back at his desk.

Jesse sits at his desk and continue to stare blankly at the page. The glow from the lamp on the desk illuminates his face in the darkened room. Jesse scratches at the week-old beard growing on his face, casually at first but then screws his face in annoyance as he continues to scratch. Jesse then jumps out of his chair and walks briskly to the bathroom.

6. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse walks back into his bedroom with a towel wrapped around his waist, drying his hair with a smaller towel. Jesse sits on the end of his bed continuing to dry his hair. Jesse's hand run to his shoulder where there is a deep scar. The scar runs diagonally from his shoulder to the centre of his chest. Jesse quickly snaps and turns to look back at his typewriter. Jesse walks towards the desk and turns the lamp off plunging the typewriter and desk into darkness. Jesse sighs and falls back onto his bed. Jesse continues to stare at the ceiling, as he does so his vision begins to blur and he starts to drift off. Suddenly Jesse's phone rings and he sits upright. He looks around quickly and grabs his phone from underneath his pillow.

Jesse: (coughs to clear his throat) Hello? ...Oh hey you, I didn't hear you leave this morning. Yeah, I'm okay thanks, you? ...Good good. Going to be home around 7? What time is it now? 6? Really? No, I've been working on it today. I'll just get the place tidy and wait for you...Okay, see you then. Love you too.

Jesse chucks his phone back down on the bed and slowly stands, walking round his room.

FADE TO BLACK.

7. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse is lying in his bed the following morning, staring at the ceiling. Jesse's staring is interrupted by Emma calling from the kitchen.

Emma: You know you're out of milk right?

Jesse: (looking towards the door) Really? No, I hadn't noticed.

Emma: Do you want me to go get some milk? I know you won't drink tea or coffee without milk!

Jesse: It's okay, I don't mind black coffee.

Jesse climbs out of his bed, grabs a T-shirt to throw on and sits at his desk. Jesse reaches for the top of the page wound into his typewriter but finds it's lower than the day before. He turns the lamp on and is startled. The page no longer has just the one sentence on but is covered in text. Jesse sits back, rubs his eyes, and checks again. Jesse then turns the lamp off and on again but the new text remains.

Emma: Since when have you liked black coffee?! You always said you hated it!

Jesse: I didn't have any milk yesterday so tried it, wasn't so bad...

Emma walks into the bedroom holding two mugs of coffee, a blue mug that Jesse drank from previously and a pink mug for Emma.

Emma: You literally just said you didn't know you ran out of milk!

Jesse: (distracted by his typewriter) Did I? Yeah, I didn't...listen, did you use this last night?

Emma: No. (Sarcastically) I had sex with you last night.

(CONT'D)

There's a load of new words on here. More than I've written, I didn't write this.

Emma: No...I remember, you don't "write" anything, you "give birth" to something.

Jesse: Seriously, this isn't mine. I didn't write any of this.

Emma: I thought you were nearly finished with it?

Jesse: I was, it's just this last chapter, the ending. I can't make sense of it. Now suddenly the last chapter's half finished!

Emma: (casually, as she collects her things) Maybe it's just an old thing? You haven't thrown out or recycled old papers in ages. You probably just re-wound an old page in.

Jesse: No, it's my story. Except not mine, someone's nearly finished it.

Emma stands, downs her coffee and turns to leave.

Emma: I'll leave you to it. Been home same time tonight.

Jesse doesn't answer her, instead just mumbles and reads the story on the page.

Emma leaves.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

8. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse is still sitting at his desk and is reading the last few lines of the story on the page. When he finished he pushes back in his chair away from the desk.

Jesse: (apprehensively) Woah.

Jesse reaches down and grabs a tatty notebook on the floor under the desk. The notebook has "BOOK THREE" written on it's front cover in thick black marker.

He flicks through the pages frantically before stopping on a page and dropping the notebook onto the desk. His fingers scroll across the page of the notebook before stopping on a line, written in pencil. The line in the notebook reads;

"Stephen Greenstreet paused briefly, then started to realise what was happening."

Jesse turns his attention to the page wound in his typewriter where the last line reads;

"Stephen Greenstreet paused briefly, then started to realise what was happening."

Jesse jumps back out of his chair and turns away from his typewriter. Jesse reacts when he treads on something. Jesse looks down and sees he has trodden on the red marker pen. Jesse leans down, picks up the pen, then looks the calender. The next day on the calender has had an X written carefully across it. Jesse stares startled at the calender.

Jesse slowly reaches out and touches the red ink on the page, tracing the X outline with his fingertip.

Jesse throws the pen into a corner of the room and dives, face first, onto his bed. Jesse then rolls onto his back and stares back up at the ceiling.

Jesse: Right, I'll just sleep now. I'm still asleep and this is a dream, a very vivid dream, but that's it. It'll be fine tomorrow. Just relax.

Jesse pulls his bed sheet back over his head, and turns onto his side with his back facing the typewriter. He closes his eyes tightly.

FADE TO BLACK.

9. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse wakes up suddenly breathing heavily. Jesse sits upright and rubs his eyes. Jesse surveys his room, not noticing the two mugs of, now cold, coffee Emma had placed on the side earlier. Jesse instead scrambles over to his typewriter and turns on the desktop lamp, illuminating his room.

Jesse frantically looks at the page wound in the typewriter, yanks it out and places his hand over his mouth when he sees the last sentence written;

Jesse pushes the typewriter towards the back of the desk, and stops when he feels something in the way behind the typewriter. Jesse reaches behind the typewriter and pulls out a small pile of written pages.

Jesse starts to flick through the pages, leaning in closer the more he reads.

Emma: Hey! Good to see you're working!

Jesse screams.

Emma: What?! What's wrong with you?!

Jesse: You! You scared the shi..you made me jump! It's happened again!

Emma: What's happened?

Jesse: The typewriter, it's, there's more been written!

Emma: Are you still going on about this?

Jesse: This is seriously, every time I wake up, more has appeared. It's more of this last chapter! Something or someone is doing this!

Jesse jumps out of the chair and runs out of the room, nearly knocking into Emma who topples sitting down on the bed.

Emma: (quietly) Thanks!

Emma leaves her stuff on the bed and walks over to the desk, sitting in front of the typewriter.

10. INT. KITCHEN

Jesse is pouring boiling water into his blue coffee mug. He stirs it vigorously and takes a giant gulp out of one. Jesse's face reacts to the hot, strong, bitter taste as he grabs the mug, plus a small bottle of prescription pills, and walks out of the kitchen.

11. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse walks into his bedroom to find Emma sitting at the desk, reading the page in his typewriter.

Jesse: What are you doing?!

Emma: Reading this, it was in here. This is good stuff. I mean, really great stuff!

Jesse: In it? There should be nothing in there! I took the page out!

Jesse kicks the back of the desk chair Emma is sitting in. As she stands us, she picks up the blue mug of coffee Jesse has placed on his desk. Emma takes a sniff from Jesse's mug and screws her face up.

> Emma: What the hell is this?! How strong is this?!

Jesse doesn't reply.

Emma: Jesus Christ, are you trying to give yourself a heart attack?!

Jesse: (still staring at the page) No, I need both of us to stay awake tonight and see what happens. Prove that I'm not going crazy.

Emma looks in his coffee mug, sneers, and places is on the side.

> Emma: (quietly) Jesse, you've been crazy for years...

Emma then walks up behind where Jesse's seated, leans forward and, without touching him, whispers in his ear.

> Emma: (Coyly) Besides, I'm sure we can think of other things to do to keep us up all night?

Jesse doesn't react. Instead he takes another huge mouthful of coffee and stares intently at the page.

Emma takes her arms off Jesse and stands up.

Emma: (disgruntled) Or not then? Look I'm going to take off. I thought we'd have a quiet night in together but if you're going to stare at your battered typewriter all night I'm leaving. (MORE)

(CONT'D)

Just going to stay with a girlfriend or something.

Emma pauses, almost waiting for Jesse to react or respond. Jesse continues to stare at the typewriter, now clutching the written pages to his chest.

Emma: Fine. Bye.

Emma grabs her stuff from Jesse's bed and leaves.

Jesse downs his coffee, still staring forward.

FADE TO BLACK.

12. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse is asleep at his desk. His arms are folded against his chest and he is still clutching onto the written pages. Jesse wakes gradually and slowly looks up at his typewriter. Jesse yawns and shakes his head. Jesses goes to stand up and realises he is still holding the pages from the night before. He places them on his desk and switches on the desk lamp. As the light flickers on Jesse notices there are now two piles of paper on his desk, the pile he just placed on the desk and another one. Jesse picks up the second pile but remains calm as the top on is empty. Jesse then turns the pile over to reveal each page is covered in writing. Jesse frantically grabs the bottom page, dropping the rest on his desk and kneels on the floor. Jesse grabs his notebook again from under his desk, and sits on the floor. Jesse flicks quickly through to the last page. At the bottom, again written in pencil reads;

"Stephen Greenstreet used to think he was a complicated man. Now even more so than ever."

Jesse reads the page from the typewriter;

"Stephen Greenstreet used to think he was a complicated man. Now even more so than ever."

Jesse stands startled, leaving his notebook on the floor and drops the page on his desk. He turns around with his back to the desk and notices at his calender. The red pen is now lying on the floor beneath the calender. On the calender itself is a series of red X's finishing the day before DEADLINE DAY.

Jesse slowly steps away from the calender and backs out of the room. He closes the door behind him.

13. INT. HALLWAY (OUTSIDE BEDROOM)

Jesse closes the door behind him and slumps to the floor. He sits with his back against the door and his arms wrapped around his knees. Jesse sinks his face deep into his arms and curls his body up further. Suddenly he hears a loud bang in his bedroom and sits up right. Jesse slowly stands, pulls himself together and opens his bedroom door.

14. INT. BEDROOM

Jesse slowly opens his bedroom door and peers inside. Carefully walking in his gaze turns to the typewriter. The typewriter is now empty. His eyes the drop to a thick manuscript sitting on the desk. Jesse walks towards his desk and picks up the first sheet of the manuscript. Jesse reads the title slowly and draw breath when he reads; "THE COMPLICATED MAN". Jesse frantically looks at several pages, confirming this is a hard, completed copy of his book. Holding the manuscript Jesse looks around him and grabs the first thing to hand, which is his messenger bag. Jesse stuffs the manuscript into the bag, throws the bag by the door and falls back on his bed. Jesse lies still, his breathing slows down but Jesse's eyes remain slightly open. The lights in the room go out and when they flicker back on they are harsher and brighter than before. Emma has appeared and is standing over Jesse's bed. Emma leans down to kiss Jesse but just before her lips reach his...

A phone rings.

Jesse snaps out of his trance, wipes his eyes and reaches for his phone under his pillow. The room is back to normal and Jesse is alone. Jesse answers the phone:

Jesse: Hello? Oh hello Mr. Gordon. Yes, I know my deadline date for the last chapter and the whole book is today, but I've had an issue. No I'm not making excuses I've just had a problem...

Jesse stops talking and listens to the other end of the phone, his shoulders slumped.

Whilst he is listening to the phone his eyes look back at his bag lying on the floor against his bedroom door. Jesse looks at the bag.

Jesse: Mr. Gordon? Sorry, I thought I'd misplaced my manuscript, turns out I've just found it. Yes, yes, I can bring it in today. I'll head into town now. Thank you. Bye.

Jesse puts his phone in his pocket, still not taking his eyes off his bag. Jesse walks towards the bag, grabs the handle, stands up right and closes his eyes.

Jesse: Do it.

Jesse suddenly snaps his eyes open, slings his messenger bag on his shoulder and leaves. We stay in his room as he leaves. As the camera pans across the room we notice a photo of Emma wearing the same outfit she has worn through the film. Next to the photo is Emma's pink mug from earlier with a dying flower in it. The calender on the wall has five blank boxes leading up to the circled "DEADLINE" The typewriter on his desk has one sheet of paper wound in it. Focusing on the page we can see just one line of text, it reads:

"Stephen Greenstreet was a complicated man".

FADE OUT.

THE END.