

MOLLYCODDLED

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBS - STREET - DAY

Modest cottages on a tree-lined street. A bright sunny day.

COTTAGE

A quaint well cared for dwelling. Geraniums and petunias in hanging baskets. A 'Welcome' mat by the front door.

Sounds of a domestic argument pierce the quiet.

Front door flies open.

BRAD falls hard onto his bottom on the mat outside.

Pain and umbrage flit across tightly drawn features. He's mid-30s, wearing typical Summer weekend attire of shorts, bad-taste slogan t-shirt, thongs.

The door slams shut behind him.

A few seconds pass.

Door flies open, a backpack turfed onto the mat swats Brad lightly in the back of the head.

Another few seconds pass.

Door flies open once more. A shaggy DOG, is deposited on the door mat next to Brad.

Brad and the Dog look at one another.

BRAD

Piss in the wardrobe again?

Dog cocks his head innocently, wags his tail.

BRAD

Oh no, that was me wasn't it.

Brad smiles, rueful, gets to his feet, brushes himself off. Grabs the backpack slings it over his shoulder.

BRAD

(to dog)

Too many bloody rules, eh fella?

Dog cocks its head again.

BRAD
C'mon, then.

Trudges off down the

STREET

Dog follows happily. Brad mutters as he goes.

BRAD
Nag, nag, nag. Freedom, buddy.
Let's go get us some of that!

Dog wags its tail.

BRAD
(to dog)
Beach?

Dog's ears prick up at the word, it streaks on ahead.

EXT. BEACH

Brad looks up at Signs covering the entrance.

'NO DRINKING. NO SMOKING. NO LITTERING. NO SKATEBOARDING. NO BIKES... NO DOGS.'

BRAD
No dogs! On a f'in' beach?

Brad looks out at the horizon, at a few early morning swimmers. A 'what the hell' shrug.

A bird swoops low, Dog tears after it, runs toward the shoreline playing chicken with a flock of seagulls.

Brad lies back on the sand, closes his eyes, relishing the sun on his face.

LATER

The sun now high in the sky.

Brad looks burnt to a crisp.

A shadow falls over his face in the figure of -

BEACH INSPECTOR pokes him in the ribs with a baton. Waves a wand over wet Dog's back. Hands Brad a ticket. It reads:

'PROHIBITED DOG. UNRESTRAINED. UNREGISTERED.'

Beach Inspector shoos Brad and Dog off the beach.

EXT. STRAND

Brad and Dog trudge along. Brad looks over at Dog. His eyes light up at an idea.

BRAD
(to dog)
Park?

Dog wags its tail at the word, pants, picks up the speed.

EXT. PARK

Brad slurps coffee, shovels down half a meat pie, throws the other half to Dog. Dog gulps it down, slurps water from a nearby tap.

The park looks like a bomb hit it, save for an old creaky and rusted, Roundabout.

Brad frowns. Dog cocks its head.

Brad and Dog look up at a sign to the entrance.

Scans select words: 'BY ORDER OF COUNCIL AUTHORITY... FOR YOUR SAFETY... DANGEROUS RECREATIONAL DEVICES... REMOVED...'

Brad scowls, hrrmphs. Dog whimpers. Barks once.

EXT. PARK - ROUNDABOUT

Brad takes his cell phone from his pocket, taps Contacts, selects: DIANE.

A photograph of a cute, curly haired and good natured looking woman fills the screen.

Brad's finger poised to dial the number. He changes his mind.

MINUTES LATER

Brad and Dog go round and around and around the Roundabout.

Dog jumps off, squats, dumps a poo front and centre of park.

A WOMAN, early 20s, pushing a baby in a pram, glares angrily at Brad and Dog.

The Woman gesticulates wildly. Brad shakes his head, mouths 'No!' at the Woman, points to the ground, points to her: mouths, 'You pick it up'!

A PARK RANGER roars up on a golf-cart, hands Brad a Baggie, points to the offending article.

A TICKET is torn from a pad, shoved at Brad's chest.

'DOG DEFECATION INFRINGEMENT. FAILURE TO CARRY BAGGIE.'

EXT. PARK - SECONDS LATER

Brad scoops dog poo into the Baggie with a stick while Park Ranger oversees.

Brad gives Dog a dirty look. Dog cocks its head.

EXT. STREET

Brad and Dog trundle down the street, stop at a -

BUS SHELTER

Brad lights a cigarette, inhales deeply, savouring it.

PLUMP WOMAN, 50s, gives Brad a disparaging look, indicates a sign above Brad's head.

Whispers to her FRIEND, also 50s.

Disapproving looks pass down a line of PEOPLE.

All heads shoot daggers in Brad's direction.

Brad looks up at the sign:

'NO SMOKING WITHIN TEN METRES OF BUS SHELTER.'

Someone coughs in an exaggerated manner.

A TRANSPORT AUTHORITY WORKER strides up to Brad. A ticket is ripped from a pad, handed to him.

'SMOKE CIGARETTE CONTRARY TO NOTICE'

Brad waves in protest, stubs out his cigarette.

BUS - MINUTES LATER

People pile on.

Brad and Dog, step up.

Brad now wears dark wraparound sunglasses, baseball hat, makeshift cane. Dog on lead.

BUS DRIVER, 60s, raises a cynical eyebrow, pulls Brad's visor up, slides the sunglasses down Brad's nose, shakes his head slowly - mouths the word: 'No.'

BUS - LATER

Brad looks guiltily at the Dog, now tied to a pole. He takes off his baseball hat puts it on Dog's head to shield him from the sun.

Mouths: 'Sorry buddy'.

Peels off a couple of bank notes to the driver. Bus Driver shakes his head, points to a sign:

'NO CASH. NO CHANGE GIVEN. OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT BUS PASS ONLY.'

EXT. FOOTPATH

Brad lands hard on his bottom on the sidewalk next to Dog.

The bus peels off. Dog licks Brad's face.

EXT. STREET - CITY CENTRE

Brad and Dog wander along, stop at a

BIKE RACK

Brad ties Dog to one corner, sets down a bowl of water.

A pure-bred coiffed POODLE tied to the adjoining bike rack jumps to attention. Dog wags its tail frantically at Poodle.

Brad Mouths: 'Won't be long.'

Dog ignores Brad, totally enamoured with Poodle.

The sun now beats down. Brad perspires, licks his parched lips. Looks further down the road, spots a PUB. Big smile.

INT. PUB

Brad takes a pint of beer and a bowl of hot chips to a table. A sign reads: 'DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA.'

A jubilant look on Brad's face as he fishes a cigarette from his pocket, places it in the ashtray.

Hot chip to his mouth when -

PUBLICAN appears, waggles a finger at him. Points to a sign above Brad's head.

'NO FOOD ALLOWED IN SMOKING AREA'

Publican whisks the plate of chips away from him. Brad outraged, a 'You have got to be kidding me' expression.

LATER:

Brad smokes a cigarette. The ashtray is crammed with butts, and a few empties are lined up like soldiers in front of him.

A forlorn expression, he looks at his watch.

Pulls out his cell, dials 'DIANE'. No answer.

The thump of music. Brad takes the

STAIRS

Down to the -

DANCE FLOOR

Brad dances. He's the male equivalent of Elaine Benes. It ain't good.

A couple of scantily clad GIRLS half his age, whisper and giggle at his antics.

Publican walks up to Brad, points to a sign above the bar.

'INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. SUIT AND TIE REQUIRED AFTER 6 PM.'

Brad looks at the clock. Two minutes past six.

He wobbles drunkenly. Two HEFTY BOUNCERS, take an arm each, lift Brad, turf him out the door and onto the

EXT. PUB - STREET - NIGHT

Brad pulls a beer bottle from inside his backpack.

Takes a long slug. The BOUNCERS reappear, point to a sign:

'GLASS PROHIBITED IN ALL OUTSIDE AREAS.'

They wrestle him to the ground, seize the offending bottle, send him packing across the street.

EXT. STREET - BIKE RACK

The Dog is sound asleep where Brad left him.

Brad rouses him. The dog jumps to attention, excited, wags its tail.

EXT. OFF LICENSE

Brad selects a fifth of Rum, takes it to the checkout.

EXT. PARK - ROUNDABOUT - NIGHT

Dark out. The moon rises in the sky.

Brad on his back, slugging the bottle, Dog, also on his back, legs in the air, spin gently around the Roundabout.

LATER

The Roundabout is stationary.

Brad, sound asleep, snores.

Dog licks Brad's face, barks.

Brad wakes, sticks his tongue out, turns the bottle upside down. A single drop wets the whistle.

He pulls his cell phone from his pocket, dials: 'DIANE'. The phone rings and rings, then cuts out. Brad sighs.

EXT. OFF LICENSE/GROCERY STORE

The place boasts: 'OPEN 24 HOURS!'

Brad enters the shop. A bell tinkles his arrival.

He looks expectantly at a jaded looking CASHIER who shakes his head, points to a sign.

'NO ALCOHOL SOLD AFTER 10 PM'

Brad, stumbles next door into

EXT. KEBAB SHOP

A CLEANER, places chairs upside down on tables.

Brad approaches the door. Locked. Cleaner points to a sign on the shop front:

'NO KEBABS SOLD AFTER 10 PM'

Brad glares at the Cleaner, walks up the

STREET

Shuffles with Dog up the road a bit to another -

EXT. PUB

Brad pulls on the door. It won't budge.

A large sign posted on the door states:

'LOCKOUT LAWS IN FORCE. NO ENTRY AFTER 1 AM.'

Brad presses his face up against the glass, Dog presses his muzzle up against glass. Brad gazes longingly through the window at patrons having fun, flirting, drinking, laughing, playing darts, pool.

EXT. STREET - KERB

Even Dog looks like he's had enough - no spring in his step, a very faint wag of his tail.

Brad steps off the kerb, dog sensibly stays put. Brad weaves drunkenly and diagonally across the road.

- A delivery truck barrels around the corner, flattens Brad, delivery truck continues on down the road.

MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

Brad lies prone like a cartoon figure on the bitumen, hair sticking up on end, shirt torn, bruised from head to foot.

Dog licks his master's face.

Brad lifts his head gingerly -

A POLICEMAN approaches, helps him to his feet. Brad smiles, thankful. Holds his hand out to shake Policeman's hand, ends up with a ticket in his hand instead.

'JAYWALKING AGAINST TRAFFIC.'

This wipes the smile off Brad's face.

Another: 'You've got to be kidding' me! face from Brad.

EXT. SUBURBS - STREET - NIGHT

Back to where it all began. The cottage looms large in the distance.

Dog speeds on ahead. Brad limps along a few steps behind.

Brad opens the front gate to the

COTTAGE

Walks up the front path.

Brad's guitar is on the front door mat, along with a suitcase and a carryall. Brad peeks inside - paperback books, vinyl records, assorted clothes.

A light is on in the upstairs window.

Brad, Dog by his side, knocks on the front door, no answer.

Dog, on his hind legs scratches on the door, no answer.

Upstairs, the light goes out.

Dog slumps onto the front doormat, face between his front paws. Hang-dog expression on Brad's face as well.

Brad eyes the guitar, his face lights up with an idea.

EXT. HOUSE - STREET

Brad TUNES HIS GUITAR, strums, sings a few notes, quietly at first...

A JOGGER runs past Brad, backtracks, runs on the spot, drops a coin in Brad's guitar case, runs on.

Brad, encouraged, beaming smile on his face, looks up at the top window, still in darkness, belts out a rock tune.

Lights go on in adjoining houses. Windows are slammed shut.

Someone yells: SHUT UP!

Nothing happens upstairs though. Light still out.

Brad shrugs his shoulders at Dog. Dog cocks its head.

Brad sings his heart out. He's not bad at it.

A VIOLINIST materializes. A slick looking dude with a handlebar moustache, dressed in a tuxedo. He accompanies Brad.

Big smile on Brad's face.

A song of serenade follows, a passionate and emotive little number.

In the upstairs window, the light goes on.

Diane pokes her head out, arms folded tightly against her chest, a pursed look on her face.

The Violinist continues to play.

Brad holds his hand to his heart, gets down on one knee, extends his arms towards Diane in a desperate plea for forgiveness.

Despite herself, Diane softens, she unfolds her arms, a smile plays around her mouth.

She nods her head okay, gestures for Brad and Dog to come inside, then disappears.

Violinist plays a jaunty upbeat number in celebration.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - SECONDS LATER

The front porch light goes on.

Brad approaching, when Diane flings the door wide open, her arms outstretched.

Dog flies through the door under their feet.

A look of longing between the couple, they embrace. In the throes of a passionate kiss when:

A MOTORCYCLE flies around the corner, POLICEMAN dismounts.

- Violinist quickly ducks behind a bush.

Policeman rips a ticket from a pad, hands it to Brad:

'DISTURBANCE OF THE PEACE'.

Rips off another ticket:

'FAILING TO ACQUIRE BUSKER'S LICENSE'

Brad throws his arms up to the heavens, opens his mouth - expletives fly out -

Policeman continues to write on his pad:

'USE FOUL LANGUAGE IN A PUBLIC PLACE' -

Policeman's pen poised to write another -

Diane clips Brad lightly behind the ear, clamps a hand over his mouth, smiles beguilingly at the Police Officer, hustles Brad inside.

EXT. STREET

Violinist emerges from his hiding spot, plays on.

Jogger appears doing another lap-around. Runs past Violinist, backtracks, runs on the spot, drops coins in Violinist's case, runs on.

Violinist smiles, nods in appreciation.

The light goes out in the upstairs bedroom of the cottage.

FADE OUT.