Motormouth: The Pilot

By

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Motormouth: Pilot

FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON - MORNING

It’s early morning and the streets of London are slowly beginning to fill up with the sights and sounds of the early morning rush hour.

A NARRATOR with a Brian Blessed style voice begins to speak.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Alas, the fine city of London! Or Londinium as it was once known to our dear old ancestors and forefathers!

CUT TO:

LONDON MONTAGE

- A young boy walks through a rough estate in school uniform, he is soon jumped on and set upon by some thugs of around his age.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
A settlement once described as "a roost for every bird" by former Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.

- A large car park - a jeep reverses into a sports car. Both drivers disembark and scream obscenities at each other.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
A "sexy city full of eccentrics" according to the esteemed actress Rachel Weisz.

- A busy tube station, a man’s Oyster card is rejected several times at the turnstiles and he begins to kick up a fuss, Transport Police arrest him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I believe it was Samuel Johnson who once proclaimed that: "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

- A collection of tramps in an alleyway take miscellaneous drugs and swig from hefty bottles of budget liquor.

(CONTINUED)
"A broken heart is a very pleasant complaint for a man in London if he has a comfortable income" said dear old George Bernard Shaw.

- A sweeping shot of a series of skyscrapers, a collection of depressed businessmen dive off of each one. Solemn expressions on their faces.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Yes, as you can see, dearly beloveds, it’s a beautiful city full of class, sophistication, culture and life. But even in a city as perfect as Londinium heroes are still necessary. And it just so happens that as of this fine day, London was about to become the stomping grounds of a very different kind of ‘hero’.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY TRAIN STATION - MORNING

A very rural, ill-kept train station - acres and acres of fields can be seen in the distance. MAX DEAL (20s) sits at a bench with a series of cases and bags around him. Short, brown-haired, a snappy dresser with a habit of talking with his hands.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Oh my dearly beloveds, it is my pleasure to introduce to you that man there. Max Deal. He was Suffolk FM’s number one agony uncle until London Talk Radio snapped him up and alas, we find him now on his way towards the big city.

Max looks up at the sky.

MAX
(well-spoken; oozing self-confidence)
Have you finished?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Err...well, I have a few more quotes if you’d like?
MAX
No I think I’ll manage without
hearing any more of those, thanks!
I don’t know why they couldn’t just
introduce me with a subtitle but
there we go.

Some tumbleweed floats past.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Did you want to introduce yourself
a little further?

MAX
What is this, speed dating?
(To camera)
Hi there as the voice in the sky
has already endeavored to inform
you, my name is indeed Max Deal and
I am indeed off to start my new job
in London.
(Sound of a train
horn in background)
And, if you don’t mind, I’ve got a
train to catch....

Max grabs his bags and heads O.S.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Don’t mind him, he’ll grow on you
after a while...in a good way mind,
not in the way a fungus or a
rapidly spreading disease does. And
if you don’t like him then I
suppose a second series is out of
the question...

MAX (O.S.)
Let’s just try and make it through
the pilot first.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS – DAY

A high-speed train chugs through acres and acres of
glistening green countryside.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Oh sure, dearly beloveds, I’m well
aware that when I say hero you
expect all kinds of things! But Mr.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont’d)
Deal isn’t a superhero like Batman, nor is he a fine detective like Sherlock Holmes or even Magnum PI and he’s certainly no rootin’-tootin’ cowboy like Marshal Matt Dillon or even a four-legged fighter like Rin Tin Tin.
(Clears throat)
Oh no. Mr Max Deal, agony uncle and life coach extraordinaire, didn’t fight for justice like his peers. Instead he handled it the only way he knew how. By being a resourceful yet downright nosy little bastard.

CUT TO:

INT. LTR OFFICES – DAY

NOTE: This is to be done in the style of a TV advertisement for London Talk Radio.

The offices of London Talk Radio are large and sprawling. Office drones type and phone away at a crises-cross maze of desks and cubicles while harried looking runners keep them sufficiently watered with endless cups of steaming hot Joe.

A large oak door marked "MANAGEMENT" opens and the station manager, ANDREW FRANK (50), steps out. Tall and eccentric, smiling and colourfully dressed. He is never seen without a disgusting tie and a bowler hat.

FRANK
(To camera)
Hello there! I’m Andrew Frank and I’m the manager of London’s favourite all chat all day station. London Talk Radio. And I’m just taking a few minutes out of my busy day to thank you all for listening, and to tell you to continue listening.

Frank grabs a cup of coffee from a runner’s tray and proceeds to gulp it down.

MERCEDES PORTIA (20s) appears from the corner of the office, looking very busy. She’s career driven and gorgeous, professional yet sexy with an exotic, mixed race vibe. Frank steps in her way and puts an arm around her shoulder, she looks annoyed at the interruption.

(CONTINUED)
FRANK
And here we have award-winning investigative journalist, Mercedes Portia! You will of course all remember some of the damning reports she’s made about such travesties as MP spending and drug trafficking around the tower hamlets! And the good news is she’s signed a contract to stay with London Talk Radio even longer, isn’t that a reason for them to keep listening, Ms. Portia?

MERCEDES
(Annoyed; tedious)
Yes, it’s a great station and you should all listen.

FRANK
What have you got coming up for our dear listeners, Ms. Portia?

MERCEDES
I’ll leave them all in suspense.

And with that she trots off into the distance in her leather boots.

FRANK
But asides from the ever enchanting reports from Ms. Portia we have some new shows! First of all world famous psychic investigator Alan Archer has agreed to host a show!

A few of the office workers unenthusiastically clap at this, clearly on cue.

FRANK
Yes! As you can see even our work force are excited and we’ve known about this for weeks! Asides from Mr Archer, we have also been able to snag Max Deal. I’m sure you’ll all be familiar with his loose cannon attitude to the noble profession of the agony uncle! Well, listeners, we’ve signed him up from countryside radio and he will be hosting his first show tomorrow, how about that for a reason to keep yourselves tuned in to...

(CONTINUED)
OFFICE WORKERS
(Unenthusiastic, in unison)
London Talk Radio, 99.8 FM.
Frank gives a cheesy smile to the camera.
FRANK
Thanks for listening, and most importantly stay classy London!

CUT TO:

EXT. HACKNEY APARTMENT BLOCK - AFTERNOON
An establishing shot of a high rise apartment block, set against the backdrop of a busy Hackney neighbourhood.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX’S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON
A reasonably sized, semi-furnished apartment. There’s a kitchen attached to a modest living space and a few doors adjacent to this which lead to a bathroom, bedroom and spare bedroom respectively.

A grubby, beer-bellied LANDLORD (60) stands at the door with Max, who has his luggage sitting around him.

LANDLORD
What you reckon then? You still wanna take it?

MAX
I sure do, nice to be able to find a reasonably priced place in London! And the fact that you’ve even thrown in some free pet cockroaches is more than a fair bargain.

Max heads over to the window and looks at the city outside.

MAX
Hackney, ey? Looks alright, is it a good area?

LANDLORD
(Trying to be as sincere as possible)

(MORE)
LANDLORD (cont’d)
Oh yeah, top of the range! Only neighbourhood better is maybe Chelsea.

MAX
Ah, Chelsea. Well I suppose at least I can walk around here without worrying about walking into glowingly orange reality TV stars or Russian Billionaires.

LANDLORD
You want it then?

MAX
I’ll take it.

They shake hands, the Landlord looks relieved that he’s got rid of the place.

MAX
Sooo...when was the last time this was decorated?

LANDLORD
Er...definitely been done since the war.

MAX
I’d like to think you mean the war against Iraq, but no doubt you mean the one against the German with the mini mustache and the sweep-over?

LANDLORD
Yeah, the Great War, guvnor.

FADE TO:

INT. MAX’S APARTMENT - EVENING

The apartment is looking a little more homely now. Max, dressed in casual t shirt and jeans, is unpacking and arranging. A couple of posters line the walls now - most notably one of Dale Carnegie.

There’s a knock on the front door. Max answers it and finds DERRICK (late 30s) standing at the door. Dressed in tank top and a faded beanie he’s a sweaty, grizzly bear of a man.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
Can I help you?

DERRICK
Alright there, I’m your neighbour.
I live in the flat next door.

MAX
Ah that would make sense that you’d
live next door. Y’know, if you were
my neighbour and all.

DERRICK
My name’s Derrick.

He offers a dirty hand and Max shakes it with a look of
displeasure.

MAX
And I’m Max Deal.

DERRICK
Can’t stop long but I thought I’d
give you a nice little welcome
gift.

MAX
How thoughtful.

Derrick produces a small baggie of weed and holds it out
triumphantly.

DERRICK
A tenth of my finest, home grown. I
didn’t bring no kingskins though, I
ain’t made of money!

A bemused Max accepts the gift.

MAX
And to think in my last
neighbourhood they brought round a
nice pie, and in the one before
that they brought me some slightly
overcooked lasagna.

DERRICK
It’s good stuff, mate. I call it
steam train, cos trust me - it’ll
feel like you’ve been hit by one
once you’ve had it.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
I can see why marijuana is so popular, who wouldn’t want to be hit by a train! What do you do for a living then, Derrick - licenced pharmacist? Specialising in the treatment of glaucoma? Did you obtain your chemistry degree at Oxford or Cambridge?

DERRICK
Nah, I do a bit of this ’n’ that. I got a van too so if you ever need a delivery boy then be sure to holla.

MAX
A sterling offer if ever there was one.

DERRICK
Alright then, I’ll see you around!

Max smiles and closes the door, once Derrick’s footsteps start to recede he lifts up the baggie and studies it.

MAX
(To camera)
Just think, he never once stopped to ask if I was a cop or anything. That’s trusting for you.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
A police constable living in Hackney?

MAX
What’s wrong with Hackney?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Oh nothing, although there are certainly nicer areas around.

MAX
And you tell me this now! Especially after your opening speeches about how great London is.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I just read the script, dear boy.

MAX
Well let me improvise and tell you to leave me in peace for the evening.

(CONTINUED)
Max sets the baggie down on a coffee table and returns to his unpacking.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON

An electronic alarm clock as it flicks from 06:59 to 07:00. As soon as it hits seven the alarm begins to sound.

INT. MAX’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Max jumps up with a start and immediately slams down the off switch. He wipes the sleep from his eyes and looks up at a wall calendar.

ANGLE ON

The calendar, the day’s date is circled and "FIRST DAY OF WORK" is written in the middle of the box.

BACK TO SCENE

A mobile phone rings from somewhere. A disgruntled Max wriggles around in bed until he plucks it out of the sheets and answers it.

MAX

You have reached the mobile phone belonging to Max Deal, and strangely enough this is Max Deal speaking. How may I help?

It’s Frank.

FRANK

Hello there, Max! It’s Andrew Frank from LTR here! Just thought I’d give you a call to make sure you were up nice and early ready for your first day today!

MAX

Yeah I’m raring to go...

FRANK

Wondrous! Absolutely wondrous! Do you remember how to get here? I take it you’re going via tube?

(CONTINUED)
MAX
That’s right! Stratford’s the nearest station....

FRANK
Yes that’s the central line. Two stops from there, change, go southbound one stop, change, get on the northern line, three stops then take the metropolitan two stops and you’ll get out right outside our offices.

Max is completely lost by this.

MAX
Ah...right...

FRANK
Did you get that?

MAX
Yeah, spot on....

FRANK
Wondrous, absolutely wondrous! Well be here for nine on the dot then! The team here at LTR are dying to meet you properly! I shan’t be there, but ask for Ray, he’ll be your producer.

MAX
Well I’d hate to hold them in suspense any longer. I best get my porridge down me and get on my travels!

Max hangs up.

MAX
(To camera)
Did any of you get that? What was it? Two stops then central line? Then...this is a bloody minefield...

CUT TO:
EXT. OVERGROUND STATION - MORNING

A depressed looking Max stumbles out of a train and into an outdoor station. He dials a number on his phone.

FRANK (V.O.)
Hello! Andrew Frank here!

MAX
Hi...Mr. Frank, it’s Max...

FRANK (V.O.)
Ah, wondrous! I trust you’re just outside? It’s five to nine!

MAX
Err...well...err...where did you say the station was? I’m at...
(checks signpost)
Epping station right now...

FRANK (V.O.)
We’re in Holborn!

MAX
Please tell me Epping is near Holborn?

FRANK (V.O.)
Well, Mr Deal, Epping is in Essex and Holborn is in London...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONDON TALK RADIO - DAY

An establishing shot of the elegant building that houses the offices of the station. A large neon sign bears the legend: "LTR". A constant stream of visitors and employees filter through the building’s revolving doors - which are manned by two burly security officers.

A black cab pulls up from the busy road that circles around the building and a harried looking Max jumps out.
INT. LTR OFFICES – DAY

Office workers talk amongst themselves while answering phones and typing up reports. Mercedes is at a computer editing some images.

A door to her left marked STUDIO comes flying open and producer RAY BRAITHWAITE (40) comes flying out. He’s bespectacled and pleasant-looking yet hopelessly neurotic.

RAY
(Stutter)
W..w...where is he? The sh..s...show starts in fi...five minutes! I’ve not even had a chance to brief him! T...t...t..this isn’t how good radio is produced!

Mercedes looks up at him annoyed.

MERCEDES
Oh relax, please, it’s hard enough to get anything done here without you prancing up and down.

RAY
Relax? R...r..relax? What am I supposed to do if he d..d...doesn’t show up?

MERCEDES
Play some filler music.

RAY
Filler music? FILLER MUSIC? This isn’t a call centre or some executive elevator this is London Talk Radio! We don’t j...j...just play filler music here!

MERCEDES
From what I’ve heard of him he sounds like an idiot anyway so I wouldn’t worry too much. He’ll be gone within a few weeks, you know what Frank’s...

RAY
Mr Frank!

MERCEDES
(Frosty look)
Mr Frank’s like if ratings aren’t going well. Some idiot from some

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MERCEDES (cont’d)
country bumpkin station won’t last
too long...

Max appears.

MAX
My ears are burning, you couldn’t possibly be talking about me could you?

MERCEDES
Normally when you overhear something like that you don’t say anything to avoid the awkwardness. Especially on your first day at work.

MAX
(Sarcastically)
Guess I’m just a renegade then! Burt Reynolds has nothing on me.

MERCEDES
Asides from good looks and a fat bank balance?

MAX
Good looks?
(turns to Ray)
Be honest, is Burt Reynolds better looking than...
(back to Mercedes)
Hang on, do you mean Burt Reynolds now or say...Burt Reynolds in Deliverance in the seventies?

RAY
You’re l....l....late! You need to be on air in a few m....m...minutes!

MAX
(r.e. stutter)
Well I hope you weren’t using the mic before me or else I’ll spend the first five minutes drying it off.

Mercedes has pulled a picture of a young Burt Reynolds up on the computer.
MERCEDES
I can’t quite believe I’m avoiding work to check this, but yep, look at that guy! Ten times better than you. Strong jawline for a start...

MAX
He’s wearing a toupee though! This hair’s all mine, surely that helps me claw some points back?

MERCEDES
Burt Reynolds wore a wig?

MAX
If you think otherwise then you best check your birth certificate for yesterday’s day. All that asides, who even are you?

RAY
T...t...t...this is Mercedes Portia...

MAX
Oh the famous journalist, yeah? Out of interest, did a name like ’Mercedes Portia’ make high school hard or easy?

MERCEDES
A good attitude and exemplary social skills makes high school easy.

MAX
You must have had a tough time.

MERCEDES
Keep talking to me like that and I’ll have Frank chuck you out on your arse before you can say Jack Robinson.

MAX
(To Ray)
I never know whether to say ’Jack Robinson’ after a speech like that or not. Do you think it’s too cocky?

(CONTINUED)
RAY
Hurry up and g...g...get in this studio!

MAX
Hang on a sec.
(Mercedes)
Do you think as the show progresses we’ll end up having a will they-won’t they, kind of ‘we like each other but don’t get along’ romance?

MERCEDES
(Ice cold)
No.

MAX
And with that you’ve ruined what could have been a tantalizing sub-plot for at least a season.

Ray is starting to hyperventilate.

MAX
Come on then, let’s get in this studio before you decorate your drawers a dark shade of brown.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The studio is large and hi-tech, a long wooden counter full of equipment an microphones runs across the room. Max sits at a microphone on one end while a sweating, frantic Ray sits the other side – continually flipping switches and checking the clock.

MAX
And that’s all we have time for today, folks. But it’s been lovely talking to you this morning as I’m sure it will be every morning. Always a pleasure never a chore! I’m Max Deal and you’ve been listening to my show, good day!

Max flicks down the fader and a couple of adverts and jingles begin to play.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
You can stop sweating now the show’s over. City problems sure are different to country problems.

RAY
There’s s...s...some funny people in the city th...though! Lots of gangsters and all sorts of n...n...nutters you should make sure your advice d....do...doesn’t annoy any of them...

MAX
Oh please! London gangsters? It’d take more than Ray Winstone and Danny Dyer to make me lose any sleep. Now Bob Hoskins...well...that may well be a different story...

RAY
You’re lucky the fader is down! Mr Winstone listens sometimes!

MAX
You worry about everything don’t you?

RAY
I u...u...used to think it was e...everything but now I’ve rounded it down to about ninety percent. I d...d..don’t worry about bowel movements for example, that just makes them worse!

MAX
And I’ve just got myself into a conversation I don’t want to be in...

There’s a knock on the door.

RAY
Who is it?

MERCEDES (O.S.)
Are you live or have you finished?

MAX
Well if we were live it’d be a bit awkward right now...
RAY
We’re done.

Mercedes enters with a tall, middle-aged man.

MERCEDES
Is it alright if I record an interview in here? Studios 2 and 3 are fully booked.

RAY
Mr Ottoway’s show d...d...doesn’t start for a while y...yet...so you’ve got a bit of time.

MAX
(To the middle-aged man)
I recognise you, you’re something to do with Parliament aren’t you?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
I’m a politician, yes.

MERCEDES
Please don’t bother my interviewees, if you guys could make yourselves scarce that’d be great.

MAX
What’s the angle, Miss award-winning journalist? Has he been using his expenses to jet away to Dubai? Or maybe he did the dirty with John Major while he was in charge?

MERCEDES
Grow up.

MAX
Okay, okay! I know where I’m not wanted!
(gets up to go)
Let me know when we can start the whole romantic sub-plot.

MERCEDES
Just keep checking the weather forecast for the day hell freezes over and you’ll know.

Max and Ray exit.
MIDDLEAGED MAN
(Deadpan)
What a dick.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And thus, after meeting a couple of his colleagues and presenting his first show Max Deal left the station to explore his new home!

MERCEDES
Do you mind?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You’re doing the whole talk to the Narrator thing as well? I thought it was just Max...

MERCEDES
Why did you even need to narrate that anyway? The next scene will no doubt show him...

CUT TO:

EXT. HACKNEY STREET - AFTERNOON

Max walks down a street full of seedy shops and off licences. A market is going on in the middle of the street, selling all sorts of knock-off goods.

A friendly SALESMAN comes bustling up to him.

SALESMAN
Hi there, sir! Would you be interested in signing up to...

MAX
I couldn’t possibly! I’m afraid I’ve got commitment issues and I’m just not looking for anything long term at the minute.

Salesman looks confused as Max walks off.

MAX
It’s not you, it’s me. I’m sorry, let’s be friends?

Max ducks into the nearest convenience store.

CUT TO:
EXT. PARK - EVENING

Early evening has descended upon a busy park. Kids play basketball in courts, mothers wheel their offspring up and down the park’s many pathways and gangs of youths hang around benches.

We focus on one group of lads in particular. They’re all in their late teens, dressed in hoodies and sweat pants. JINX (17) appears to be the leader. He’s aggressive and street-tough, with the physique of a natural athlete and a face that’s already a road-map of scars.

He looks up and sees Max approaching – map in one hand and a couple of bags of groceries in the other, he looks lost.

    JINX
    (Quietly to his mates)
    Yo, yo, check this guy...watch this one...

As Max gets closer Jinx moonwalks back until he’s in his way, Max ends up walking right into him, however he’s so engrossed in following his map he only looks up briefly.

    MAX
    (Absently)
    Sorry about that...

He goes to walk on by Jinx begins to assume a bullying persona.

    JINX
    Ey, what the fuck did you just say?

Max walks on, Jinx grabs him by the shoulder and spins him round.

    JINX
    Ey, man, what the fuck did you just say to me?

Max looks up now, curious.

    MAX
    I believe I said that I was sorry for walking into you?

    JINX
    You better watch what you say to me, boy.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
Okay then, well, if we ever walk into each other again then I won’t apologise, I’m sure that would suit you better.

Max pushes past Jinx and attempts to walk off.

JINX
Don’t you walk away from me. What you got in those bags?

Jinx attempts to grab one of Max’s bags, he dodges it.

MAX
I’m sorry, were you attempting to steal a bag full of milk and bread?

JINX
You got a cocky mouth on you, man, I think maybe I should bust you up a little bit.

MAX
Why would you want to do that?

JINX
I don’t like the way you’re talking to me and I don’t like the way you come strutting through my park and end up barging into me.

MAX
Well there’s a lot of things I don’t like in life. Like the fact no one in Hollywood can make a good Hulk movie. But you don’t see me flying on over to the US and shoulder-barging Ang Lee until we get into a fight. Violence isn’t always the answer.

JINX
You obviously don’t know who I am. (steps in closer; threatening)
How much you got on you? Give me a few notes and I might just let you get out of here without an ear-to-ear smile.
MAX
You’re probably the rudest guy in Southern England right now. First you walk into me, then you refuse to accept my apology – you know, the apology I shouldn’t even make? And now, after copious threats, you’re asking me for money. Do you know how absurd that is?

One of Jinx’s friends speaks up.

YOUTH
Just do him, man, can’t have some jumped up prick talking to you like that.

MAX
Oh look, you’re being peer pressured now! Come on, guys, really? There’s a whole wide world out there, plenty of opportunities for you all and you’re not gonna achieve anything by beating up a guy who’s just trying to get his shopping home.

JINX
Right that is it...

Jinx is about to let Max have it when one of his friends stops him.

YOUTH
Ey, look out!

They turn and see two uniformed cops stalking through the park, little more than several meters away.

JINX
Oh, you lucky, man, you real lucky! You best get on your way before I decide to just do you right in front of them.

MAX
Just when I thought you didn’t have a generous side to you! Well, it was lovely meeting you all, always a pleasure – never a chore!

Max continues down the path, Jinx looks majorly vexed.
JINX
I warn you! This is my hood! I’m the big bad wolf round here and next time I see you I ain’t gonna be so level-headed. You obviously ain’t from round here, man, you can’t speak to people like that! Less of all Jinx!

YOUTH
Shoulda shanked him there and then.

JINX
I’ll see him again.

Jinx’ phone rings and he answers it.

JINX
Yeah?

A split-screen ensues with Jinx and his uncle ZED (40s), he’s nearly toothless and as lean and as mean as a bullwhip.

ZED
Yeah? Don’t you mean Hello Uncle Zed? Don’t answer your phone to me like I’m one of your little mates.

JINX
(sheepish)
Sorry...it was a private number, I wasn’t sure...

ZED
Full of excuses ain’t you? Just like your bum of a dad was. Ain’t never gonna be any better than him, boy. Mark my words.

JINX
I’m sorry, Uncle Zed.

ZED
Yeah I’m sure you are. Get your mangy ass down to Victoria park, two tenths and a wrap. Guy named Milo. Meet in two hours.

JINX
I know the boy.
ZED
Good. See to it that you don’t fuck it up else you won’t see tomorrow.

JINX
Okay.

Jinx hangs up.

YOUTH
As if you let him talk to you like that, man.

JINX
I know what he’ll do if I talk back.

YOUTH
You’re getting bigger than him already, you could easy...

JINX
Ain’t like that. Uncle Zed knows people, he’s connected in places we ain’t never even heard of. Lot of guys got his back. Even if I did get him outa the picture they’d ice me right out if they knew I’d done it.

CUT TO:

EXT. VICTORIA PARK - EVENING

Night is now slowly descending on another park, this one is much larger than the one we were at previously. The armies of mothers and children have slowly given away to weed-toking hippies and groups of youths just like Jinx’s.

MILO (late 20s), a skinny, jittery runt sits on a bench. Tapping his hands to his knees - in time with the d & b music that can be heard filtering out from his headphones.

Jinx appears on the edge of the pathway, hood pulled up - he’s all business now. Milo stands to greet him, they slap hands.

MILO
Yo, man. You getting pretty big man. Remember being in the same block as you years back, you was a lil kid.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  

JINX  
Yeah I remember how you did me for a bike my mum got me.

MILO  
Ah, hell, I’m sorry man. If it make ya feel any better I got a lot of use outa that.

Milo laughs, Jinx doesn’t.

JINX  
Come on, bro, hurry up. I got places to be tonight.

MILO  
Busy guy, yeah?

As Milo reaches into his pocket Jinx looks left and right. He doesn’t notice a couple of hooded guys emerge from some bushes behind him, one brandishes a baseball bat.

JINX  
Yeah no...

CRUNCH! The bat catches Jinx across the back of the head and he jolts forwards. Milo is on him in seconds, as are the hooded guys – hitting him in the guts and head with blow after blow.

Jinx tries to fight back – but he can’t, the beating is coming too thick and fast – all he can do is spit blood and eventually sink to his knees.

Milo kicks him in the face a few times while his associates dig through Jinx’s pockets until they come up with a series of baggies and wraps. One of them also finds a notebook.

MILO  
(Snatching it)  
What the fuck is this?

He leafs through the book – it’s full of drawings and sketches – some of them are really good. Milo laughs.

MILO  
You trying to be an artist or some shit? Fucking fairy.

Milo spits on the book and throws it over Jinx’s prone form, before sprinting off into the night ahead with his cronies. Jinx spits blood and groans groggily.

CUT TO:
INT. ZED’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

A dirty, delapidated high rise apartment in the middle of a seedy apartment block. Ill-furnished and full of drug paraphernalia. Zed sits on a battered armchair drumming his hands on his thighs, he looks mighty impatient.

A buzzer sounds, Zed jumps up to his feet and stalks over to the intercom.

ZED
(Into intercom)
Yeah?

JINX (O.S.)
(Groggy)
L...l...let me in...

ZED
You! Where the fuck have you been? What have I told you about fucking me around? You know you bring the money here straight away.

JINX (O.S.)
I’m all messed up...

ZED
Fucking hell! Get up here! NOW!

Zed, with eyes full of menace, angrily slams his finger into the ‘OPEN DOOR’ button.

After a few seconds there’s a knock on the door and Zed rips it open, a battered and bloodied Jinx stumbles into the room.

ZED
What the fuck happened to you?

JINX
Milo and his boys...absolutely did me...I thought he was safe...

ZED
You just let them turn you over like this?

JINX
There were too many of them, they had bats...

(CONTINUED)
ZED
Did they get anything?

Jinx gulps.

JINX
Yeah....

ZED
(Angrier by the second)
How much?

JINX
Uncle...

ZED
HOW FUCKING MUCH?

JINX
It’s all gone...

Zed lets out an almost inhuman roar of nothing but unadulterated rage and punches his nephew in the jaw. Jinx crashes to the floor and Zed kicks him in the ribs time and again.

ZED
I’ll kill you...I’ll fucking kill you...this is the last time you mess things up you fucking ungrateful little leech...

Jinx weakly tries to protect himself.

ZED
Nothin’ but a burden on me ever since your fuckin’ mother died...

Zed pulls Jinx to his feet and then hurls him into a set of drawers, sending the contents of the drawers flying. A couple of bottles hit the floor and smash.

Jinx lands in a heap on the floor, Zed swings another kick into his side – before taking a few steps back and snapping a switchblade out of his pocket.

JINX
Un...uncle Zed....please...

ZED
Oh you’re fucking begging now? No one with my blood in ’em ever begs for no one...

(CONTINUED)
Jinx manages to get to his feet, he’s too groggy to think straight and before he knows it Zed slams the blade into his ribs.

Jinx takes a few tender steps back, mouth opening and closing in horror. Zed goes for him again, but this time Jinx somehow finds some strength and strikes for Zed’s throat, hitting him with the hard-side of his open hand.

ZED
You fucking....

With power and speed fuelled by adrenaline Jinx side-steps Zed’s next swipe with the blade and strikes his uncle again. As Zed crashes onto the ground the young drug courier turns and runs out the open door.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - NIGHT

A bloody, frenzied looking Jinx runs away from Zed’s apartment block, zig-zagging through the courtyard as he does so.

EXT. ZED’S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Zed steps out onto his dirty balcony and watches his sprinting nephew with anger. A slight trickle of blood runs down his nose.

ZED
I’LL FUCKING KILL YOU! YOU ENJOY YOUR LAST FEW FUCKING BREATHS! NEXT TIME I SEE YOU I’LL FUCKING KILL YOU! DON’T YOU EVER COME BACK HERE!

Zed kicks the balcony in fury.

FADE TO:

INT. PUB - NIGHT

A fairly standard East London pub, full of the usual sorts of characters and a cheery Barman. The clock above the bar tells us that it’s 11:30 in the evening.

Max and Derrick sit at a couple of bar stools, nursing pints of Bud. Both look mildly intoxicated.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
Four pound a pint, this sure is a different world to my old country pubs.

DERRICK
That’s cheap for London, mate!

MAX
Quite the place this, isn’t it? Everyone here either looks like an extra from Eastenders, a villain from Lock Stock or one of Del Boy’s trade rivals.

Derrick laughs.

DERRICK
These are the East Ends for ya!

Max looks up at the clock.

MAX
I best be getting back anyway, should at least try to get to work on time tomorrow.

DERRICK
Alright, mate, I’ll join ya.

MAX
Hard day of work yourself?

DERRICK
Yeah, gotta help my mate move a sofa from Stratford to fuckin’ Golder’s Green.

MAX
Sounds like the sort of strenuous day that’d give even Alan Sugar nightmares.

The two of them sink their pints, slip their jackets on and leave the pub.

DERRICK
(To the Barman)
See ya later, Al.

MAX
Al, that’s a great name for a bartender. Brilliant bit of

(MORE)
MAX (cont’d)
characterization there. No doubt leaving the audience with many questions - is he called Alexander, Alistair or maybe even...Allison?

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK – NIGHT

Max and Derrick walk through the same park from earlier, it’s pretty empty aside from a few youths and the occasional hobo.

DERRICK
Nah, fella, you ain’t properly experienced East London until you’ve had some hot pie and mash in your life.

MAX
I’ve had that particular dish many times.

DERRICK
Not down here you ain’t! Trust me! You shout me this weekend and we’ll go down to the pie shop.

MAX
It’s actually called the pie shop?

DERRICK
Nah it’s called the pie and mash shop.

MAX
Where do they think of these names?

DERRICK
Inventive in it!?

MAX
Hold up, I need a slash.

Max stops by the nearest bush and sighs with relief as he begins to let it all out. He’s nearly finished when suddenly he hears a GROAN from the bush.

MAX
What was that?
Max quickly zips up and pushes aside some of the leaves and soon the smashed up, bloodied form of Jinx appears. He’s barely conscious.

MAX
Fucking hell!

DERRICK
Leave him, man, you don’t want to get involved with any of them gang kids. Nothing but trouble.

MAX
I know this guy! He gave me some trouble earlier...

DERRICK
Leave him, c’mon.

MAX
As much as I’d love to he’s in a bad way. I’m gonna call an ambulance.

Jinx looks up at Max from his pain-ridden eyes, a look that resembles something of embarrassment crosses his face before he passes out cold.

Max dials 999, as he awaits an answer Derrick begins to giggle.

MAX
What?

DERRICK
You certainly got your revenge didn’t ya? Poor fucker’s covered in piss now.

MAX
Poetic justice that. Piss me off and I’ll piss on yo...err...hello...operator? No! No! I was talking to someone else...can I get an ambulance please?

DISSOLVE TO:
INT. HOSPITAL WARD - AFTERNOON

A bandaged up and grumpy looking Jinx sits in one of the beds in a busy hospital ward. One of his legs is hanging up in a cast while half of his face is covered in dressing strips.

A NURSE trots into the room.

NURSE
You have a visitor.

Jinx looks tense.

JINX
Wh...who...who is it?

NURSE
It’s a gentleman from a radio station, he says he’s not family.

Max appears at the door.

NURSE
Is everything okay?

JINX
I guess. (she trots off; he glares at Max) What the fuck you doing here? You’re that punk from the park...

MAX
A punk? Of all the things to say, do I really look like a punk?

JINX
Whatever.

MAX
It’s great to see you too.

JINX
What the fuck? If you was in hospital all smashed up and I appeared how would you react.

MAX
I’d be on that morphine switch within nanoseconds, I’ll give you that. Although, you should probably know that I was the guy who found you...

(CONTINUED)
Jinx closes his eyes and sighs as he remembers this.

**JINX**
A’ight, so you’ve seen me. Docs say I’ll live, that’s it you can go.

Max sighs and sits down on the seat adjacent to the bed.

**MAX**
What’s with all the attitude?

**JINX**
What’s with you coming in here trying to be my friend? Especially after I damn near opened you up last night.

**MAX**
I thought I’d give you this.

Max takes Jinx’s notepad out of his jacket. Jinx leans forward and snatches it out of his hands, pissed.

**JINX**
What the fuck, man? You were rooting round my pockets while I was on the deck?

**MAX**
This is coming from the guy who was after my wallet the first time we met? But no, it fell out of your pocket as they were loading you onto the ambulance and it was...err...covered in some kind of liquid so I dried it for you.

After a pause, Jinx asks sheepishly:

**JINX**
So...what did you think?

**MAX**
Actually really good, and trust me I’d tell you if they were shit. Do you go to art school?

**JINX**
(Laughs)
Not a fucking chance. My life’s been all mapped out since I was born and certainly don’t involve higher education. Anyway, I’m a dead man as it is.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
What’s your name?

JINX
Most people call me Jinx.

MAX
Ah, too bad, you can’t them to stop?

JINX
Trust me, it’s a lot better than my real name. Who the fuck are you anyway, bro?

MAX
Max Deal.

JINX
That even a real name?

MAX
Folks at the orphanage seem to think so. I work for London Talk Radio if you’ve heard of it.

JINX
Yeah I know the one, what you do there?

MAX
I host a show and I help people.

JINX
You ain’t some religious guy are you?

MAX
Nah, I just answer and help people’s problems. You could call me a life coach, an agony uncle or just a psychiatrist without the degree.

JINX
Trust me when I say you ain’t got a chance in hell of solving my problems if that’s what you’re thinking.

MAX
That sounds like a challenge if ever there was one.
CONTINUED: 35.

JINX
Yo, listen, these ain’t problems like ‘oh no my wife’s cheating on me’ this is really stuff, I got a guy after me, the likes of which you ain’t ever encountered.

MAX
Who is it?

JINX
It’s my uncle man, he deals to the local neighbourhoods and estates. My mum died when I was like five and I lived with him every since, you don’t know how many times he’s beat me. Only way I ever got any money at all is through carrying for him.

MAX
Why don’t you just run away?

JINX
Uncle Zed ain’t someone you can just run away from, plus I ain’t got nothing and nowhere to go. I figured living with him is better than living on the streets.

MAX
Why did he leave you in such a state?

JINX
Not long’s after I saw you he sent me down to Vikki Park to drop some product off. I knew the guys so thought it’d be cool, wasn’t as careful as I shoulda been.

MAX
Didn’t go well?

JINX
Nah, lost well over a few hundred quid’s worth. Uncle Zed lost it like I never seen before, you know he stabbed me in the side! I managed to get the hell outa there but I know he’ll catch up with me. He’ll kill me. You don’t know what he’s like.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
He sounds absolutely charming on all accounts, this may be a little too obvious and I’m pretty sure of the answer – but why don’t you go to the police?

JINX
They ain’t interested in helping a bum like me, been in trouble too many times before. Plus Zed’s got connections going as far back as some of the sergeants there. He been in the game a long time.

MAX
I’m sure he can’t be that unreasonable. I’ll go and talk to him for you.

JINX
(Laughs)
Oh, boy, you put yourself in a world of trouble. People tried to talk to Zed before – social workers, teachers all that shit. He ain’t reasonable. He just ain’t that kind of guy.

MAX
The thing is they’ve only ever spoken to them from their point of view, they’ve never tried to see things on his terms. You can’t possible hope to solve a problem if you’re only seeing one side of the story, just how you can’t understand a play if you can only see your own lines.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Very profound.

MAX
Thanks.

JINX
Whatever you say, bro, I just know that you don’t know Zed.

MAX
What’s his address?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JINX
You don’t want it, trust.

MAX
I’m gonna sit here and hum as loudly as possible until you give it to me.

JINX
Oh just ‘cos I can’t get out of this bed to hit you, you think that’s gonna work, yeah?

Max starts to hum loudly.

FADE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

Max walks across the courtyard of Zed’s apartment block. He looks up at the various balconies and finds himself being regarded curiously by a series of characters – some thuggish, some elderly. He sticks out like a sore thumb round here.

Max pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket and takes a look at the address which has been scrawled upon it.

MAX
Number twenty-five. What a beautiful place.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZED’S BALCONY - AFTERNOON

Max walks across the balcony, which runs alongside the apartments’ front doors. He finally reaches twenty-five and takes a deep breath.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
As much as Max Deal really didn’t want to get involved in all this he just couldn’t help himself from helping out. In a world where many are merely living to meet their own needs, this is why I consider the public-spirited Max Deal to be a hero.

Max knocks on the door. A dog starts barking from somewhere across the courtyard – startling him.

(CONTINUED)
He knocks again. Nothing for a second, and then suddenly the door is ripped open and he finds Zed standing there. Max instinctively recoils.

ZED
Who the fuck are you?

MAX
Good afternoon to you too! My name’s Max Dea...

ZED
If you’re selling something I ain’t interested.

MAX
No, no. Do you mind if I come inside?

ZED
Do I fuck! You ain’t coming in here, ain’t got a clue who you are...

MAX
It’s about your nephew, Jinx...

ZED
That little rat? He’s dead next time I see him.

MAX
How about if you leave him alone he’ll keep well out of your way? He acknowledges that he made a mistake and he’s sorry, it’s...

Zed hits Max with the laser-sharp precision of a trained boxer, Max falls almost pathetically against the railings of the balcony, bumping his head.

ZED
’The fuck you think you are? Coming here and try’na tell me what to do. When I want someone dead they’ll be dead and that kid ain’t got a hope in hell. He’s been nothing but a burden to me, now you get out of here before I fucking stick you one as well.

CUT TO:
INT. HOSPITAL WARD - AFTERNOON

A bemused Jinx sits up in bed while Max, plaster across his nose, sits on the chair next to him.

MAX
What’s the obsession with stabbing round here?

JINX
(Laughs)
Welcome to the mean streets.

MAX
I don’t get why you can’t just go to the police?

JINX
A - he knows too many people. B - that’s how people work from where I’m from, we don’t tell-tales...

MAX
Even if your life depends on it?

JINX
Yeah.

MAX
So you’re happy to just die? I looked through that notepad of yours, it’s really good – you’ve got talent, and you’re gonna let that go to waste just because of some unwritten code of honour? Life isn’t about that. Maybe for idiots like your uncle who are never gonna be any better, but not for someone who’s got potential...

JINX
Listen to you preaching on.

MAX
Answer me this honestly – do you want to die?

JINX
Man...

MAX
Do you want to die?

(CONTINUED)
JINX
Of course I don’t...

MAX
If I said I knew someone who could solve this, would you mind if he got involved?

JINX
Who the fuck would you know who could handle Zed?

MAX
(Grinning)
It’s not just the city boys who know people. One of the biggest ways to get anywhere in life is through networking - it’s all about who you know and what they can do for you. I’ve got a list of people who owe me a favour longer than my dick.

JINX
You don’t know no one then.

MAX
Shut up and get some rest, I’ll get this sorted for you.

JINX
You’re getting him killed?

MAX
Just frightened. A lot more frightened than he’s ever been.

JINX
Where will I go though? I’ll be as good as any of the other bums out on the street.

MAX
(After a beat)
There’s a spare room in my flat. Behave and it’s yours when you need.

JINX
Hell, man...I don’t know...

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

MAX
(Standing to leave)
Just remember: you owe me one from now.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON
A large wooden door with a block of distorted glass running across the top half of it. Through the glass a large, bullet-headed silhouette can be seen. A phone rings.

SILHOUETTE
Yes?

MAX (O.S.)
Hi there, is that John Colt?

COLT
Colt speaking.

MAX (O.S.)
John, it’s Max Deal.

COLT
(Softening)
Max, long time no speak.

MAX (O.S.)
How are things going with Amy?

COLT
Good, very good – couldn’t have done it without you.

MAX (O.S.)
Talking of that I was hoping you might be able to do me a favour.

COLT
Go on...

MAX (O.S.)
There’s a guy down here in London, needs a bit of fear put into him. Perhaps you could give him a bit of the old Yardie torture treatment.

COLT
Oh I don’t know, I haven’t done any of that in a while.

(CONTINUED)
MAX (O.S.)
A young lad’s life is in danger if you can’t.

COLT
Very well. Name and address?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - NIGHT

It’s late night and Zed slinks across the courtyard towards his flat.

COLT (O.S.)
Hey...

Zed spins around – nasty little eyes scanning the courtyard – but there’s no one there.

ANGLE ON

Zed, narrowed eyes still searching every corner of the perimeter. Then he hears a heavy footstep, and then his eyes widen like a rabbit caught in headlights as a huge shadow falls over him.

FADE TO:

EXT. LONDON ART SCHOOL

Subtitle: 2 months later

A large, sweeping building set in one of the nicest boroughs of the fair capital. A sign outside the school reads ‘OPEN DAY’.

A taxi pulls up alongside the edge of the kerb and Jinx gets out. He is dressed well – grey v-neck, suit trousers and with a large portfolio folder in his hands. Max gets out the other side of the taxi.

MAX
(Pays driver)
Thanks.
(To Jinx)
You ready?

JINX
I dunno…I don’t think it’s any good.

(CONTINUED)
MAX
Well if you don’t think it’s any good then they’re not gonna think it’s any good. What’s the motto?

JINX
(Sighs)
Self-promotion and confidence is key.

MAX
Amen to that. Come on then, let’s make you the next Picasso...

JINX
I’d rather Banksy.

Max laughs and the two of them head up the stone steps which lead toward the main doors.

FADE OUT