"PAPER DREAMS"

A short film by

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE – DAY
A road cleaves a path through an otherwise barren and bleak landscape.
A solitary grey crow perched on a telephone pole breaks the silence with a shrill caw.
A figure ambles in the distance, the movements laboured and heavy.

INT. SURGERY – DAY
ADAM (20’s) awkward and apologetic looking, fidgets nervously in his seat.
CLAIRE (40’s) sharp and keen witted, surveys him with professional interest.

ADAM
I’m, I’m better, I think.

INT. ADAM’S ROOM – DAY
Adam sits slumped on the floor by his bed. He takes a swig from a naggen of vodka.
A cut throat razorblade lies on the floor, bloodied.

INT. CHANNEL 7 STUDIO - NIGHT
CLAIRE
I’m saying that in my opinion, these people are being exploited.

The HOST (50’s) a polished man in a neatly pressed suit, sits opposite her.

HOST
Knowingly exploited, is that what you’re saying?

EXT. CARPARK – MORNING
Rows of barriers snake along the open space glinting in the morning sun. Bunting buffets gently in the breeze.
A large sign reads ‘Harmony Auditions’.
EXT. CARPARK – LATER

Crowds of eager HOPEFULS are herded and corralled towards the barriers by ATTENDANTS in hi-vis vests. The crowd files their way through the metal maze towards the entrance.

EXT. CARPARK – LATER STILL

Adam waits patiently in the crowd, hoodie up, his hands thrust in his pocket, staring at the ground.

INT. ADAM’S ROOM – DAY

A lone tear streams down Adam’s face, illuminated by the TV that drones in front of him.

Adam grits his teeth and grimaces.

The raw edge of a shiny razorblade carves its way along skin, slicing a vein.

Adam sighs. His pupils dilate.

INT. WIRED ELECTRONICS – DAY

A CUSTOMER gestures irately at Adam.

CUSTOMER

Look at this, useless.

He thrusts a battered iPod in Adams face.

ADAM

We can replace it.

CUSTOMER

And this helps how, huh? You stood right there and said this was the best on the market. Absolute crap, I’m complaining you to the manager.

An attractive preppy girl, AMY(20’s) interrupts the exchange.

AMY

Excuse me is there a problem?

CUSTOMER

This guy is the problem, a brain dead fucking moron.

AMY

While I understand you’re upset, you have no right to abuse staff here. Customer care would be more than happy to deal with your complaint.
Amy points him towards another side of the shop. With a defiant snort, he marches off.

EXT. WIRED ELECTRONICS - LATER
Adam sits on the steps beside the loading bay, dragging on a cigarette.
Amy exits behind him and props herself on the steps. She casually lifts the cigarette from his hand.

ADAM
Thanks.

AMY
Forget it, he was an asshole.

ADAM
Yeah.

AMY
You need to speak up more.

ADAM
I do.

INT. SURGERY - DAY

ADAM
I made a friend.

CLAIRE
That’s great.

ADAM
She’s nice.

CLAIRE
Do you like your job?

ADAM
I’m concentrating on my songs.

CLAIRE
That’s good I’m glad you have a focus.

INT. HARMONY AUDITION - BACKSTAGE
Adam smoothes out a crumpled piece of paper, the smudged words are scratched in an erratic fashion.
Adam taps his foot nervously.
A CREW MEMBER approach with a clipboard in hand.

CREW MEMBER
You’re on.
INT. HARMONY AUDITION – STAGE
ADAM’S POV
A cluster of blinding lights rain down from above, reaching out from a sea of darkness.
Adam looks to the Crew Member and nods his head.
The intro music plays.

INT. ADAM’S ROOM – DAY
The timer on the HD player advances a digit at a time. Adams face fills the TV screen.
He tentatively opens his mouth and sings.
His first few notes are nervous and strained.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
The producers screen those who audition.

INT. HARMONY AUDITION – JUDGES PODIUM
The JUDGES look at Adam with disfavour.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
They select exactly who they want on camera, good and bad, all in the name of entertainment.

INT. ADAM’S ROOM – DAY
Adam sits on his bed, the TV remote in his hand.

INT. CHANNEL 7 STUDIO – NIGHT
CLAIRE
Some of the people they put through have serious mental health issues.

HOST
Are they doing this for rating?

CLAIRE
I’m hardly suggesting that they would knowingly put someone with a mental health problem on TV for ratings.
INT. SURGERY – DAY

CLAIRE
You are still taking your medication?

Adam bites his nails. He avoids eye contact.

ADAM
Yes. But, I’m better now.

INT. ADAM’S BATHROOM – DAY

Adam pops a container of tablets and spills the contents on the basin surround.

He gulps down a fist of tablets and knocks back a mouth full of vodka.

He leans into the mirror and traces the outline of his bloodshot eyes then smashes the vodka bottle against his reflection.

INT. HARMONY AUDITION – JUDGES PODIUM

JUDGE #1
You want to be a singer, that’s the dream?

ADAM
Yes.

JUDGE #1
Well your dream is my nightmare.

The audience behind the podium underscores the Judges sentiment with laughter.

Adam twitches, each laugh cutting through him.

JUDGE #2
Did you think that was good Adam?

Adam shrugs his shoulders.

JUDGE #3
I liked your song, but your vocals Adam need a lot of work.

INT. ADAM’S ROOM – DAY

A pool of blood meanders across naked floor boards.

A piece of paper held loosely in Adam’s hand is swept softly aside by the pool until it is enveloped and drowned.
INT. HARMONY AUDITION – STAGE

HOST (V.O.)
Do you feel a measure of responsibility, a measure of guilt?

The Judges share a silent exchange of words with each other.

INT. AMY’S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT
Amy lies on the couch watching Harmony on TV.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
We are all responsible.

INT. HARMONY AUDITION – STAGE
Adam trudges slowly off stage, dejected.

FADE OUT:

END