

BUMPER TO BUMPER

by

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SCENE 1. – MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE

F/X: BACKGROUND NOISES – CAR AND
MOTORCYCLE ENGINES, OCCASIONAL BEEPS,
WASH WIPER SPRAY AND WIPERS....FADES TO
IN-CAR AMBIENT SOUNDS PLUS RADIO 3-TYPE
PROGRAM VERY QUIET IN THE BACKGROUND

WOMAN: Turn it up – it's the Traffic Report

MAN: It turns itself up - that's part of the radio settings

WOMAN: Ok then, you turn yourself down so that I can hear it!

RADIO:(D)so long delays there on all surrounding motorways too,
and it looks like it could be hours before the chaos is
cleared.....

MAN: I could have told them that – you just have to look out of the
window to see it.....

WOMAN: (interrupting) And can you tell us whether we should have
turned off at the last exit and whether that would have been
quicker? Does your special traffic report brain have that
special function? (PAUSE)

F/X: FAINT TRAFFIC AND RADIO NOISES

MAN: As I said, the 'A' roads are much longer & probably at least
as busy so we're better off on the motorway

WOMAN: But there was a sign that said the A road was only 45 miles
.....

MAN: (INTERRUPTING) But if you look on the map you'll see it's
much quicker on the motorway.....

WOMAN: (INTERRUPTING) But what's the point of a map when you
can see the signs on the road in front of you telling you a
different way that doesn't involve sitting on a boiling hot
motorway for hours?

MAN: We didn't know there was going to be such a bad traffic jam
when we passed the exit did we?

WOMAN: No – because you don't like listening to the radio in the car!
(PAUSE)

F/X: AMBIENT SOUNDS THEN WASH WIPERS

WOMAN: Tell me next time you're going to do that!

MAN: What?!

WOMAN: Everytime you spray the windscreen I get splashed with
water through the window!

MAN: Oh. (BEAT) I really don't think (SNORT FROM WOMAN)
that arguing is going to help anything – we'll just have to wait
until it clears.

WOMAN: That's right – take the moral high ground, change the
subject.....

F/X: TAPPING SOUND DURING STRAINED PAUSE

MAN: We should have left earlier – you didn't need to clean the kitchen floor it would still be dirty when we got back....

WOMAN: (INTERRUPTING) Yes it would be, wouldn't it? Because you'd never do it would you? And let's just forget that you got up late because you fell asleep in front of the news last night and then couldn't sleep when you eventually crawled into bed should we – we'll just sit here in silence. (PAUSE)

F/X: SOUND OF WASH WIPER AND A MUFFLED NOISE OF INTENSE IRRITATION

MAN: O – sorry about that! Forgot. (BEAT) God I hate traffic. Jammed together like this. I mean look at the state of some of these cars – we'll be lucky if more don't breakdown in front of us just because they're so old. Doesn't anyone actually check them during an MOT? (BEAT) Look at that one! Full of hippies or slackers or whatever they are called now – I bet that's not even cigarettes they're smoking.....

WOMAN: You're just jealous because.....(FADE)

F/X: DIALOGUE FADES AND TRAFFIC NOISE INCREASES AS WE MOVE TO THE NEXT CAR AND NEXT SCENE.

SCENE 2. NUMETAL /THE SLACKERS

GRAMS: TRAFFIC NOISES FADE AS SOUNDS OF GENERIC NU-METAL INCREASE

**F/X: MUSIC FADES AS TRACK FINISHES WITH A
WAILING GUITAR. NEW TRACK STARTS MUCH
LOWER BEHIND THE DIALOGUE**

NUMETAL #1: That rocks! Der der dumder der der wheeeeeeehehehe
(imitating a metal guitar riff)

NUMETAL #2: Don't be a jerk – who says 'rock' anyway – Dawson?

NUMETAL #3: (LAUGHING) Hehehe funny – like 'dooooood' you're so
radical! hehehe

NUMETAL #4: Have you bum-sucked this? – No way are you getting this
before me again you loser.

NUMETAL #2: This traffic sucks. Did you see that guy in the suit evil-eying
us? Bet this wasn't in his plan, either.(BEAT) Don't offer him
the spliff you moron!

NUMETAL #3: Hehehe He could do with lightening up! Well don't sweat it –
he's sulking now– probably listening to some stock reports or
something totally bogus.

NUMETAL #4: Quit it '**Ted**'. I told you – anymore Keanurisms and you're
outtahere – got it!?

F/X: SOUNDS OF A SCUFFLE IN A CONFINED SPACE

NUMETAL #3: Aw! My arm!

NUMETAL #4: Is a dead arm *bogus* enough for you?

NUMETAL #2: Stop rocking the car you bunch of panty wastes or you're all out of here! (PAUSE)

F/X: CHARACTERS SILENT THEN MUSIC STOPS, TOO

NUMETAL #3: (HUMMING) 'My way or the highway'

NUMETAL #1: Whose tape is it next – no way are we listening to Travis again.....!

NUMETAL #2: Well it's my car so my turn to choose.....and the winner is.....

F/X: (SOUNDS OF TAPE& CD CASES RATTLING)

NUMETAL #2: ...Scorpions!

ALL: General cries of 'No way!', 'Gorky sux!', 'old git!', 'let me out!' 'I'd rather listen to Craig David!'

**F/X: HISS OF TAPE STARTING FADES TO
INCREASING TRAFFIC NOISE AS WE MOVE TO
NEXT CAR AND NEXT SCENE**

SCENE 3. FORTY-SOMETHING WOMAN

**F/X: TRAFFIC NOISES DECREASE AS WE ENTER THE
CAR AND HEAR WOMAN 'S INTERNAL
MONOLGUE**

INTERNAL MONOLOGUE: Hmmmm – they’re nice and young... but on second thoughts look at the state of them – probably don’t own a bar of soap between them. And that music is so loud.....but hang on I know this....

GRAMS: ‘GORKY PARK’ STARTS IN THE DISTANCE

CONSCIENCE: (SAME ACTOR’S VOICE BUT HIGHER-PITCHED AND WITH A NAGGING TONE) Well you should – it was Tom’s favourite and he was about their ages wasn’t he – and how old were you? 30? 35?

INTERNAL MONOLOGUE: Oh it’s you is it? Well, I can’t remember and anyway I wasn’t asking for an answer. There’s no point in trying to guilt me into regretting it because remember – I don’t do guilt anymore.....and it was far too much fun.....mmmmmm!

CONSCIENCE: O Please – spare me! Why can’t you just admit it? All those young men - and there have been so many –has it made you happy? Can you really say you’re fulfilled?

INTERNAL MON: I told you before it’s no good – if my own mother can’t induce guilt in me then you, my overactive conscience, have no chance. And in my own way I did find them fulfilling....at the time, anyway.....

CONSCIENCE: Pity it’s never lasted though, isn’t it? You always found a reason to move on didn’t you – nothing to do with wanting to make sure they didn’t get bored of you first was it?

INTERNAL MON: Actually, you might have something there, but anyway, why does it matter? I had a good time and he wasn't complaining.....moaned a bit maybe but.....

CONSCIENCE: Tsk! Can't you just behave?

INTERNAL MON: No! Because I don't want to! Now leave me to my game. Right, the boys in the Nova are a no-go so what else have we got.....(sounds of moving in the car seat) that man in the suit is too old, too grumpy and looks like he's packed his extra baggage anyway.....so....yep – in the Audi...

LIBIDO: (SAME ACTOR'S VOICE BUT SUGGESTIVE AND LOWER IN TONE) – Hello handsome!

CONSCIENCE: No show without Punch – wondered when you'd show up, Libido!

LIBIDO: I'm never far away don't you worry about that – and we can test that punch theory out for real if you'd like.....

CONSCIENCE: Hurumph!

LIBIDO: Now, he's even a bit more my age so you can stow it. Now he's looking around so meet his eyes – that's it – now, smile and look away.....Great!

INTERNAL MON: O Yes, very good! This is going to make the time go a bit quicker. Now, I'll wind my window down a little more.....

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): So you're not deaf eh? Never hear unless you want to, though do you? God, I hate this! Why did I have to take him? I always get these sorts of jobs – I must have mug stamped on my face...

BOSS: What are you looking at?

MAN (ALLOUD): Nothing! Er..... just checking the mirror – to see if there's any sign of movement behind us....

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): Oh yes - because traffic always clears from BEHIND the queue doesn't it?

BOSS: Eh?

MAN (ALLOUD): Nothing – going to try the phone again.....

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): Who ever wants to go to these conferences anyway – just an excuse not to work and to glad-hand anyone you think might be useful to you in the future.....

F/X: SOUND OF DIALING, THEN ENGAGED RING TONE

BOSS: Hmph – are you sure you're dialing the right number – not like Head Office to have all the lines busy at this time.....let me try.....

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): God, he doesn't even trust me to dial a number on speed dial on my mobile.....why do I bother.....

BOSS: Hmph – engaged for me, too.

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): Well, at least he did something instead of expecting me to do everything – probably still thinks it's my fault that they're engaged anyway. That woman's looking at me again. She's probably blaming me for the traffic jam too. In fact, it probably is my fault. If I didn't hate my job and my boss so much then cosmic forces wouldn't have conspired to lock me in a hot metal box with him for hours on end for a laugh. Why don't I just

MAN (ALoud) : QUIT!

BOSS: What? What are you saying now?

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): (VERY PANICKY) O god I said that out loud!

MAN (ALoud): (TRYING TO HIDE PANIC) - Nothing! Just wondering when the traffic will quit.....

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): (SARCASTIC) Very slinky – good job he thinks I'm an idiot anyway.....

F/X: (SOUNDS OF MOVING IN SEAT)

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): ...at least I'm not stuck in the car with a load of kids.....though at least I could tell them what I thought of them – wow! He's really going for it, isn't he?

F/X: (SOUNDS OF MOVING IN SEAT)

MAN (LOW – TO HIMSELF): Look at that old couple, though – haven't a care in the world, have they? I'd better not look at them too long or I'll jinx them with my bad luck and they'll be divorced by the

(MAN/CONT'D OVER)

OLD WOMAN: (PAUSE) A real jam this, isn't it? Reminds me of that time we first went to France – do you remember?

OLD MAN: (CHUCKLING) – yes, we thought we were really it didn't we? Booked our holiday so we got to France on 31st of July and thought we would start touring the next day.....

OLD WOMAN: (finishing off the sentence)...but we didn't realise that the whole of France start their hols on the first of August! (BOTH LAUGH)

(BEAT)

OLD MAN : Spent 15 hours on the motorway with only a hole in the ground for a toilet!

OLD WOMAN: Urgh! – don't remind me about the French Services – disgusting! (PAUSE)

OLD WOMAN: Still. You live and learn don't you. (BEAT) Eeee – have you seen those young monkeys in the car in front?

OLD MAN: That's a big smile.....

OLD WOMAN: ...I don't think that's his face.....

**F/X: INCREASING TRAFFIC NOISE AS WE MOVE TO
NEXT CAR AND NEXT SCENE**

SCENE 6. FAMILY CAR

**F/X: TRAFFIC NOISE FADES INTO DAD'S RANT AS
WE JOIN THE ACTION IN THE FAMILY CAR**

DAD:If you so much as look at each other again we're going straight home! I'm absolutely sick of it! You should be ashamed of yourselves! I want 5 minutes complete silence from everyone and nobody move a muscle!

JAMIE: 'Cough'

DAD: And that includes your fake coughs!

JAMIE: (INDIGNANT) It wasn't fake – I really coughed!

PETER: He didn't dad – he's laughing now!

DAD: I said SILENCE!

F/X: SLIGHT SOUND OF TAPPING

DAD: Whoever is doing that better stop now.....

F/X: SILENCE THEN SLIGHT SOUND OF KICKING

DAD: This is your last warning.....

SAM: Is it 5 minutes yet?

DAD: (TRYING TO SOUND CALM BUT ACTUALLY SOUNDING STRANGLERED) No, I'll tell you when!

MUM: Are there any services near here?

DAD: No.

MUM: Are you sure, because we've been in the car for over 2 hours now and.....

PETER: I need a wee.

DAD: (GROAN) Look Peter - just sit tight and the queue should move soon then we can turn off and find a loo.

PETER: But I need one now!

SAM AND JAMIE: (TOGETHER) But I need one! Me too!

DAD: (STRUGGLING FOR COMPOSURE) Look boys – we'll be on our way in a bit, just think about something else.

ALL BOYS TOGETHER: But dad, we're desperate...need a wee now....aw come on!

MUM: You can't expect them to wait until the traffic has cleared – that could be hours!

DAD: Well there's nowhere to go here is there? No conveniently placed conveniences just next to the car or anything!

MUM: They'll just have to go behind a bush or something.....(sounds of movement).....maybe over there.....

DAD: And what happens if the traffic moves while they're gone?
What am I supposed to do then?

MUM: That's not very likely, is it? And it'll only take a minute. Just
be glad they're all boys!

PETER: Look dad – someone else is going to those bushes, too!
Haha – he must be really desperate - look at his face!

MUM: Poor man! O dear – I don't think that bush is as thick as he
thinks it is.....Oh!

DAD: For pity's sake! O well boys – you might as well go too – at
least you've got the excuse of age on your side.....o
dear.....most unfortunate.....

**F/X: SOUNDS OF KIDS GETTING OUT OF THE CAR,
SAYING HELLO TO SOMEONE AND THEN
LAUGHING. TRAFFIC NOISES INCREASE AS WE
MOVE TO NEXT CAR AND NEXT SCENE**

SCENE 7. THE BUSH MAN

F/X: SOUND OF CAR DOOR OPENING...

BUSH MAN: Young fools! What were they laughing at? Can't a man
have a weak bladder without being laughed at? They all
need the loo, anyway.

**F/X: ...SOUND OF CAR DOOR SHUTTING. AMBIENT
TRAFFIC NOISES DECREASE**

BUSH MAN: Oooooo that's so much better! Couldn't have waited any longer. And I don't think too many people were watching.....Now just got to sit it out until the traffic clears.....perhaps a bit of music would help pass the time.....now how about this.....

GRAMS: SOUND OF ORIENTAL-TYPE MUSIC FADES IN

BUSH MAN: Lovely!.....could just doze off.....

F/X: MUSIC PLAYS FOR A FEW SECONDS THEN THE SOUND OF A CAR HORN UP AHEAD

BUSH MAN: What the?!! Who's beeping their horn? What good is that going to do?

F/X: SOUNDS OF MOVEMENT AS HE LOOKS AROUND THE SURROUNDING CARS

BUSH MAN: O right – it's that suited idiot up ahead. His wife doesn't look too pleased. Glad I'm not in that car. O god, the music isn't working. I can feel I need to go again. Blast those tablets! I can't go out again so quickly – everyone will see and I've only just been. I'll just have to sit tight and think about something else.

F/X: CAR HORN UP AHEAD AGAIN

BUSH MAN: Ok – maybe I'll just watch someone else's marriage at work instead! Blimey, I don't fancy their chances of a good break away after this! I wonder if I can hear them from here?

**F/X: SOUND OF WINDOW GOING DOWN AND VERY
FAINT SOUNDS OF AN ARGUMENT....TRAFFIC
NOISES INCREASE AS DOES SOUND OF
ARGUMENT AS WE GO BACK TO ORIGINAL CAR
AND LAST SCENE**

**SCENE 8. BACK TO THE START – ORIGINAL
COUPLE, NOW ENGAGED IN A FURIOUS ROW**

**F/X: TRAFFIC NOISES FADE AWAY TO LEAVE US
WITH JUST THE ROW:**

WOMAN:and I'll press the horn again if you don't stop it right now!
Everyone is looking anyway so I might as well!

MAN: Will you put your window up and shut up! I pressed the horn
by mistake the first time trying to move away from you!

WOMAN: How far did you expect to go in a car this size?!

MAN: (BEAT) I was just trying to get you to understand that.....

WOMAN: (INTERRUPTING)....That you were right and I was wrong –
yes I got that point loud and clear, as did most of the people
around here. I'm absolutely sick to the back teeth of your
superior attitude. You might be a bigwig at work but don't try
it at home.....

MAN:Bigwig? Is that supposed to be a dig? Trust you to bring
my hair into it – I'm SO sorry that my hair is receding it must
be such a disappointment for YOU! Not like Marcus' hair, is
it?

WOMAN: O right – lets bring everything up should we? Have a really good row about everything while we're stuck here. If you don't stop it right now I'm getting out now. I don't care where we are I'd rather walk to the nearest exit than carry on with this!

MAN: Don't be so stupid!

WOMAN: (VERY QUIETLY) Stupid am I?

MAN: No – I didn't mean it like that I just meant.....

WOMAN: (STILL DANGEROUSLY QUIET) So that's it, is it? You think we should always do what you think because I'm too stupid to have a good idea.

MAN: (conciliatory) Now look, I didn't mean it like that – you know I didn't. It just came out wrong because you – I mean we – were getting so worked up that I didn't think what I was saying. Honest!

(AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE)

MAN: Look – I'm sorry. I didn't mean to take it out on you.

WOMAN: (BEAT) hmmm. (BEAT) Yes, well, it can't be helped. We're just stuck with no way out.

MAN: Well don't worry, the traffic should get moving soon.

WOMAN: Yes. The traffic. We're stuck in that too.....

**F/X: FADES INTO TRAFFIC SOUNDS THEN ALL
FADES AT END OF PIECE.**

END

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