

**Out Of Character**

by

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Shooting Details - Two actors, one location (modern house/home)

Budget - Low. Minimum of \$100 U.S.

Market - Short Film Festivals

Audience - Ideally 20 - 55 years old

FADE IN:

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

JACK - 50s, slim, spectacled, grey hair - sits typing at a computer - with some reluctance.

Used cups, plates, an empty pizza box, overloaded ashtrays and ten old screen-writing reference books surround him.

He rubs his eyes. Glances up at a big clock on the wall - 2:45 a.m.

He yawns. Types: 'The door bell rings' ...

He stares at the screen - at the last words he's written. The cursor blinks back at him.

He yawns again. Finally, his eyes drift to a close.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Jack lies asleep at his desk.

Sunlight pours in. Birds sing.

The doorbell rings.

Jack jolts awake - his head hits the lamp.

JACK

Ow!

His hand bumps the mouse and keyboard to reveal the last words he typed.

He rubs his head - looks to the clock - 7:30 a.m.

A glum look as he stretches then wanders out of the room.

FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The doorbell rings again - just as he gets closer to it.

He opens the door. Sunlight hits his face - obscuring for a moment the hulking intimidating Figure on his doorstep.

The Man stares back at Jack. He wears scruffy clothes and a big bad toothy smile - this is KEN - in his early forties.

JACK

Yes?

KEN

I believe I was summoned...

Ken speaks slowly but with confidence.

JACK  
What? Who are you?

KEN  
Not before time, I might add.

Ken takes a step forward. Jack frowns.

Ken's smile wanes a little.

KEN  
You know who I am, Jack.

JACK  
How do you...? You do look  
kinda... What do you want?

KEN  
C'mon old man. You brought me  
here, remember? Can I come in?  
It's cold out here.

Ken steps forward again but Jack bars his way with his arm.

KEN  
That's not very nice. And I  
thought we'd play nice with each  
other.

Ken pulls a gun out with speed.

He shoves the barrel up one of Jack's nostrils - pushes  
Jack up the hallway. Jack raises his hands.

INT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack backs into the room with his hands still in the air  
and Ken's gun up his nose. Ken grins and uses his gun to  
drive Ken back.

Ken pushes Jack onto the sofa - takes a seat opposite him.

KEN  
Good. This is much better. More  
private. Now we can talk.

JACK  
Talk about what?

KEN  
Put your hands down Jack. Makes  
you look like a damn coward.  
Funny, always thought you'd have  
more balls.

Jack lowers his hands. Ken grabs his own balls - like Michael Jackson used to do.

JACK  
Who the hell are you?

KEN  
You know who I am.

Ken gestures with the gun to the computer office.

KEN  
'The door bell rings.' No? And I'm at the door.

Jack still puzzles.

KEN  
You put your house in the script, had me, the bad guy, turn up. So, here I am.

JACK  
Wait a minute. You think you're...?

He smiles, laughs. Closes his eyes tightly.

JACK  
This is a dream. In a minute I'm gonna wake up. I fell asleep and I'm still dreaming.  
(playful)  
You're not real.

He opens his eyes a little, grins and points at Ken - who's not amused at all.

KEN  
Think I'm not real?

JACK  
You're just...

Ken aims the gun at Jack, who still smirks a little - but not for long.

Ken pulls the trigger. BANG.

The bullet clips Jack's ear. He cries out in pain and shock.

JACK  
Jesus Christ!

Instinctively he puts a hand to his ear. Blood drips down his arm and onto his shirt.

KEN

How's that for real, author boy?

Ken reaches into his pocket - pulls out a handkerchief.  
Throws it to Jack.

KEN

Here. You can stop your imaginary  
blood ruining your imaginary  
shirt with that. Now then, where  
was I?

He sneers at Jack's distress.

KEN

Stop whimpering, ya big baby.  
Artists are supposed to suffer.  
Part of the deal. Ain't it?

JACK

(raised voice)

What the hell do you want?

KEN

Finally, a good question. I'm  
glad you asked, John. Writer?  
Huh, my arse you are.

Ken slaps his own arse then leans forward - waves the gun  
about haphazardly.

KEN

Thing is, you've got me as this  
type of bad guy who's not nice to  
people, which is... fine, really.  
I can live with that. In fact I  
kinda like it. It's far better  
than being a wimpy hack like you,  
Jack. But...

JACK

But?

Ken stands, looks down at his scuffed shoes and tracksuit  
pants. He pats his pudgy belly.

KEN

I'm far from happy with the way  
you wrote me. Look at this... the  
hair, the waistline. These  
horrible shoes.

Ken waves his foot at Jack's head who leans back to avoid it.

KEN

And what is it with that tin-can  
of a car you gimme?

INSERT: Shot of an old bomb of a car - parked at the kerb.

JACK

It's inconspicuous.

KEN

It's bloody ridiculous, is what it is. And while we're at it, I gotta be better looking. A sharper dresser. And, I'd really like a lady, a damn good one ... or two. A proper one, I mean. What is with the all the hookers, pervy?

Jack pulls an embarrassed expression then hides it - badly.

KEN

I want a proper sexy lady who likes me, sort of. At least one that doesn't run away on me. Again. So, we're gonna go over there.

Ken points at the computer.

KEN

And, we're going to start typing. Proper. Improve things. Yeah?

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Jack types at the computer. Ken stands nearby - with a grin and completely transformed.

His hair is darker and slicked back. His clothes are expensive - Italian leather shoes and jacket, or close to.

He still holds the gun - gestures with it as he speaks and stares intently at the computer screen.

Nearby - a printer churns out pages. Jack wears an oversized bandage over his ear. Blood seeps through it. Occasionally he reaches up - touches it tentatively.

Ken smiles broadly - reveals gleaming white teeth. He gives Jack a good natured thump on the shoulder.

KEN

Okay, all very good. Much better. Keep it going.

He continues to read what Jack types, notices something he doesn't like - grimaces.

KEN

Oh jeepers Jack, hang on.

A booming baritone voice sounds above them.

MOVIE-MAN MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
The killer stood still,  
contemplating the words on the  
pages in front of h...

Ken and Jack glance up and around, as if following a fly.  
Jack looks a little sheepish. Ken just nods his head.

KEN  
Oh c'mon. You gotta lose that  
voice over. It's really annoying.

Jack clears his throat, moves uncomfortably in his seat.

JACK  
I gotta go to the toilet.

KEN  
What? You serious?  
(off Jack's expression)  
Yeah? Hurry it up then. We gotta  
finish this off. And soon.

Jack gets up, grabs the printed pages as he passes.

He's almost into the bathroom when...

KEN  
What are you doing with those?

JACK  
I'm just gonna go through them as  
I... you know. It helps me go.

KEN  
Uugh. That's disgusting.  
(stares)  
Yeah, alright. Just make sure you  
wash your hands properly. You  
dirty old git.

Jack takes the pages into...

INT. BATHROOM

Jack searches through the bathroom drawer. Finds an eyebrow  
pencil.

He sits on the toilet, flicks through the pages. Scribbles  
with speed on the pages.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ken drops the gun. He coughs - his face drops with pain. He clutches at his chest with one hand. More coughs.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack writes with the eyebrow pencil: 'Clutches at his chest with pain.'

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ken grabs at his chest with both hands. Falls down. He breathes out - then lies still.

The bathroom door opens.

Jack peeks out like a naughty child. Spots Ken seemingly dead on the floor near the gun.

He tiptoes over to him. With two fingers he nervously checks for a pulse on Ken's neck.

JACK

Oh thank God.

He sits at the computer. His eyes narrow at the screen. On it he reads:

EPILOGUE - "Ken lies on da floor, apparantly ded. Jack sit reedin at compoota ohbliveehus. Oh arse. The fu"

At first he doesn't notice the words below this in childish scrawl:

"Kens hand reeches for da gun."

ON THE FLOOR

Ken's hand moves to pick up the gun.

Jack whips his head around to see Ken sitting up, a smirk on his face - the gun points straight at his face.

KEN

You oblivious idiot. I just knew you'd do something naughty, you daft twat. So I did too. Now, whatever will...

Jack grows angry. Launches himself with a roar at Ken on the floor.

They roll around fighting over the gun like schoolkids.

The door bell rings. They stop fighting, look at each other, then look to the door.

Who's that?                   KEN

Who's that?                   JACK

FREEZE FRAME

The door bell rings again.

FADE OUT: