

(Spare Change Me)

EXT. BUSY SIDEWALK - DAY

PEOPLE bustle along the street, occasionally stopping to observe several STREET PERFORMERS lined along the sidewalk.

JOHN DAVID, late twenties, a statue painted gold with a pointed tin-man cap, is frozen in place on top of a wooden box, also painted gold.

A BUSINESSMAN pauses to reach in his pocket and pull out a quarter, tossing it into a hat lying in front of John's makeshift platform. John breaks his stance to nod thanks to the man before freezing in a new pose.

A six year old BOY breaks free from his MOTHER's grasp and runs up to JOHN who remains still. The boy kicks John in the shin and runs off.

John bends over to rub his leg. Realizing he broke character, he quickly poses, hand on knee.

The passing people make strange sideways glances at John.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

John sits at a bare table in a folding chair. In full costume.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

Let's get started. Tell us how you got into your current line of work.

JOHN

How did I get into street performing? Well, let's see.

(remembering)

I was a drama major in college. Top seventy-five percent of my class. Real competitive class. One of the other students is on LOST now. And... I don't know. I wasn't ready for the real world.

(looking down)

Course I had all sorts of acting offers. Just... overwhelmed by them.

(to camera)

But the glitz and glamour of Hollywood didn't really appeal to me all that much, so I thought "What better way to show my dedication to performance arts than a full time acting job?"

EXT. BUSY SIDEWALK - DAY

John frozen, arms crossed.

A DOG wanders along the sidewalk.

JOHN (V.O.)

With acting you get little breaks throughout the workday, but not this. I stay fully in character the whole time I'm out there.

The dog sniffs at newspaper around John's feet.

John remains still, only moving his eyes to see what's happening.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Gotta stay motivated. It's a really underrated aspect of dramatic performance.

John shakes his leg to deter the dog. The dog lifts his leg and begins to urinate on John's feet.

JOHN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Anyway. It just seemed to fit. I love it. Maybe a little too much.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

So, you're happy with where you are right now?

JOHN

Well... yeah.

(leaning back in chair)

I'm glad I didn't do something like LOST, you know? Get to make my own hours.

He takes a deep breath. His cheeks puff out as he tightens his lips as if whistling and PWOOS it out, eyes wider than normal.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(shaking head)

Doesn't get much better than that.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)  
What advice would you offer  
aspiring street performers?

JOHN  
Stay in character all the time.  
That's the key to success.

He places his gold hands on the table. Tilts a hand to find he's leaving a mark. Tries to lessen the pressure from hands.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Several MEN drinking around the bar, shifting in their stools as they eye

John, in full costume.

JOHN (V.O.)  
You don't see rockstars going home  
and trying to pretend like they're  
normal people.

He sips his beer. Gold fingerprints on the glass.

JOHN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
(more intense)  
They go out and party like  
rockstars, you know?

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

John, gripping the edge of the table tightly.

JOHN  
(even more intense)  
Otherwise, the saying would be,  
"Party like..."  
(searching for words)  
a normal guy."

Loosens grip. Lowers hands to lap.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(calmer)  
What I mean is, staying in  
character really shows how much I  
care about my profession.

INT. JOHN'S DUPLEX - MORNING

ALARM BUZZER.

ALARM FLASHING 6:00.

John is in costume in bed. Patches of his paint have worn off. He pulls back the covers and climbs out of bed. A gold imprint remains on the sheets and pillow.

INT. JOHN'S DUPLEX - LATER

He brushes his teeth in front of the mirror.

Rinses toothbrush. Turns off water. Puts the toothbrush in a cup on the sink. Gold paint on the faucet knob and toothbrush handle.

He looks at himself in the mirror. The paint around his mouth is missing. He opens the mirror and takes out a tube of gold face paint. Reapplies.

EXT. JOHN'S DUPLEX - LATER

John is SPRAYING his body gold with a can of spray paint. He puts down the can.

EXT. JOHN'S DUPLEX - LATER

John runs behind a rusty beat up Volkswagen trying to push start it.

A NEIGHBOR pauses at his mailbox, newspaper in hand, watching John.

INT. BUS- LATER

Crowded bus. One empty seat.

John sits between a MAN and a WOMAN. He looks at the woman.

She looks uneasy.

John nods at her. Half smiles before turning and looking straight ahead.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

In costume.

JOHN

Cindy and I have been together for a few months now. Relationships are difficult to begin with, but it's been particularly difficult with Cindy. Not a big communicator. And she mocks me. I suggested couples therapy not too long ago and finally got her to go.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

John's THERAPIST, male, mid-fifties sits in a plush office, legs crossed.

John sits across from him. CINDY, thirty, dressed as a mime, feigns suicide with an imaginary pistol.

JOHN

(to therapist)

She has this real drive, to stay in character, which I'm into. It's just...

(deep exhalation)

We've never spoken. Well, she hasn't.

The THERAPIST nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)

There are other things. Sometimes she acts like she's three.

Cindy places her thumb on the tip of her nose and wiggles her fingers, making a funny face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That.

He points at her while maintaining eye contact with the therapist. He looks over at Cindy.

She balls up her hands and moves them at the corners of her eyes, mock crying and pouty faced.

John jumps to his feet.

JOHN (CONT'D)

See! This is why I'm so frustrated!

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

John is in costume.

JOHN  
Cindy and I split up.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)  
What happened with that?

JOHN  
I guess we're just both so career  
oriented. Led to communication  
problems.

INT. JOHN'S DUPLEX - NIGHT

John and Cindy, both in costume, stand a few feet apart.

JOHN  
(yelling)  
Will you just say a word?!

Holds up pointer finger.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
One word.

Cindy holds up her finger and studies it from all angles.  
Uses it to pick her nose. Nods in excitement about the  
discovery.

John opens his eyes wider.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(exploding)  
You're driving me crazy! I can't  
take it anymore!

He is thrashing his arms in the air.

Cindy copies him, exaggerating his motions, mock laughing.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(out of control)  
You're not even good! You're just  
a mediocre mime at best.

Cindy stops. She shakes her head, hurt. She walks for the  
door. Silently sobbing.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

John is not in his costume. He wears a coat and tie, hair neatly combed and slightly tinted yellow.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)  
Can you tell us what changed for  
you?

EXT. BUSY SIDEWALK - DAY

John is in costume, standing still.

Cindy, dressed as a gold statue approaches. She turns to face John, replicates his stance exactly, and doesn't move.

John tries to ignore her.

A CROWD gathers.

JOHN (V.O.)  
I don't know. Just gave up the  
dream. Not acting. The statue  
work. Not for me.

John changes position. Cindy mimics. John moves again.  
Cindy follows.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)  
So it's not because you fear you  
may not be the best?

JOHN (V.O.)  
What? No. Where'd you get that?

A MAN from the crowd has stepped closer. Turns to his WIFE.  
Points at John and Cindy.

MAN  
Now *that's* funny.

John face tenses up and he walks over to the man and punches him.

JOHN (V.O.)  
There's just too few criteria for  
judging, you know? I decided I'll  
wait for that breakthrough role on  
the stage. Leave street performing  
to the amateurs.

John waves the scene off in frustration and walks away.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

John in coat and tie.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)  
What are you doing while you wait  
for your break?

JOHN  
Working here and there. You know.  
Odd jobs.

EXT. BACKYARD BIRTHDAY PARTY - DAY

A group of seven year old CHILDREN are gathered, cross legged, in the yard.

John is dressed as a clown, trying unsuccessfully to make balloon animals.

A LITTLE BOY, wearing a hat that reads Birthday Boy.

LITTLE BOY  
You suck, Bozo.  
(facing away)  
MOM! I want magic tricks!

INT. BED, BATH AND BEYOND - DAY

John, khakis, white button down and a tie, is talking to his MANAGER.

MANAGER  
This is a business. You have to  
wear your name tag.

JOHN  
But if I pretend to be just another customer, it really allows for some legroom. Gives me another angle to approach potential sales.

INT. BED, BATH AND BEYOND - EARLIER

A COUPLE stands next to a bed.

HUSBAND  
...make a lot of noise if you get up at night?

John is nearby, without his name tag. Approaches.

JOHN

Excellent back support. Really comfortable. I had sex on that same model last night. Didn't creak once.

The disgusted couple walks away silently.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

JOHN

The variety in my work choices really gives me more room for improv. Sometimes I won't say a word.

INT. BED, BATH AND BEYOND

JOHN (V.O.)

It forces me to get across intent with my body language.

COUPLE 2 stands in the towel section, watching

John mock drying his body with a red towel.

INT. JOHN DAVID INTERVIEW

JOHN

It's great practice.

Looks down at the table.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

So would you say things worked out for the best?

John looks up. Smiles. A beat.

JOHN

Oh. Absolutely. I couldn't be happier.

EXT. STREET - DAY

John is heavily bearded, still with traces of gold in his hair, tattered T-shirt, empty McDonalds cup in hand. Change CLINKS.