

Hitmakers - Episode 1: There's A Place

by

Christian Ward

christian.ward@gmail.com

INT. LEWISHAM ODEON, AUDITORIUM - NIGHT.

MARCH 1963. Silence. Underneath one of the Odeon seats, framed by two skinny legs: a drip drip drip of urine pooling on the floor.

A ROAR begins - increasing in volume until it sounds like a jet engine.

The owner of those legs is a 15 YEAR OLD GIRL, her face contorted in lust, desire, fear. She screams along with the other TEENS in the room: scores of faces, wet with tears of sexual frustration.

Beneath the screams comes the throb of the Beatles - impossible to make out what they're playing.

AT THE BACK OF THE HALL

BRIAN EPSTEIN (28), urbane, perfect hair, stands watching the stage. Next to him - ANDREW LOOG OLDHAM (19), a skinny hipster in a tight suit.

Brian stares ahead, transfixed by the band. Andrew surveys the hysterical teens - he's never seen anything like it. He turns to Brian.

ANDREW

What have you started?

But Brian's oblivious, totally absorbed by the Beatles, just like the girls.

INT. LEWISHAM ODEON, BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER.

Backstage dressing room. Brian's in the corridor beyond, with the PROMOTER of the gig. Andrew watches as Brian takes a bulging brown paper bag from him. They shake hands and then the promoter heads off.

Brian comes into the room, sees Andrew's keen-eyed interest.

BRIAN

(re: the bag)

This way it goes to the boys, not the taxman.

Brian takes a couple of notes from the bag, puts them in Andrew's jacket pocket.

BRIAN

For Record Mirror. There's more where that came from if you keep getting us press.

The sound of running from beyond. Brian and Andrew turn to see the four BEATLES rush past.

Seconds later, NEIL ASPINALL (23), the Beatles road manager, comes stumbling down the corridor holding on to a TEEN GIRL, who's desperately trying to escape his grip and run after the band.

In her hand she holds the ripped sleeve of a suit jacket. Neil pins her against the wall.

BRIAN
(re: the sleeve)
What's that?

NEIL
What's left of John. Better get going Bri.

BRIAN
(to Andrew)
I'll be at the Cromwellian --
let's talk.

Brian darts off in the direction of the Beatles. Neil shoves the teen into the dressing room.

NEIL
(to Andrew)
Keep her entertained, will you?

Neil pulls the door shut. The teen gazes around her.

TEEN
Were they in here?

ANDREW
All three of them.

The teen rolls her eyes. She goes over to the dressing table, with its makeup mirror and bright glaring bulbs. She finds a bunch of black hairs. Immediately drops the jacket sleeve and picks them up.

TEEN
Do you think it's one of theirs?

ANDREW
I know for a fact it's Ringo's.

The girl's dumbfounded.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - DAY

FLASH FORWARD. A WOMAN (50s) sits on a chair amongst a crowd of PEOPLE bidding for items in a modern day auction house. Next to her is a SLIGHTLY OLDER WOMAN (late 50s).

TITLE CARD: 40 years later.

AUCTIONEER

(O/S)

Next lot, a lock of Ringo Starr's hair, dated March 1963. Original Beatle hair, who'll start me at two hundred pounds? Do I hear - I have two hundred pounds, two twenty...

As this continues, the two women hold hands. A sad smile plays across the first woman's face.

TEEN

(prelap)

Who are you?

INT. LEWISHAM ODEON, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT.

Back at the Odeon, the teen girl is eyeing Andrew suspiciously.

ANDREW

Andrew Loog Oldham. I'm the Beatles' publicist.

TEEN

What does that mean?

ANDREW

I make people famous.

TEEN

Could you make me famous?

Andrew gives her a sly grin.

ANDREW

Depends how much you want it.

INT. PUBLIC TOILET, LONDON - LATER.

Brian descends the stairs of a grimy public toilet. It looks deserted. He glances back to make sure no one's following, then moves towards a cubicle.

A man - 20s, muscular, let's call him DOUGIE - emerges. Brian is momentarily startled. He tries his best to hide his fear.

DOUGIE

You got it?

Brian pauses, half scared, half thrilled. He reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out the a wad of cash.

BRIAN

(with forced authority)

This settles everything.

Dougie takes the money, riffles through.

DOUGIE
This ain't what we agreed.

BRIAN
You'll get no more. I'm not what
you think I am.

Dougie approaches Brian, menacingly.

DOUGIE
I'll get exactly what I asked for.
Or there's a copper pal of mine,
very interested to hear about you
I reckon.

BRIAN
And he'd believe a -- a reprobate
over me, would he?

DOUGIE
Want to find out?

Dougie's right up in Brian's face now. Brian's on a knife
edge, but he can't risk it.

DOUGIE
You'll be paying me the same
again, every month --

BRIAN
I will not --!

DOUGIE
-- starting tonight. Midnight.
Back here.

Dougie runs his hand down Brian's lapel.

DOUGIE
Or it's goodbye to all this.

Overcome, Brian tries to kiss him. Dougie pushes him hard
against the wall, then moves past.

MAN
Pathetic.

Off Brian, shamed and humiliated -

EXT. THE KLEIN HOUSE - NIGHT.

An impressive house in West Hampstead. Andrew stands outside
looking up at a top floor window. He picks up some stones and
throws them up. The window opens and SHEILA KLEIN (17) looks
out.

ANDREW

Let me in.

INT. THE KLEIN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER.

Sheila creeps down the stairs and carefully opens the front door. Andrew sidles in past her.

SHEILA

What are you doing?

Andrew goes to a door leading off the hallway.

ANDREW

Is this where he works?

SHEILA

You can't go in.

From his jacket pocket, Andrew pulls a gun. He holds it up like he's James Bond. He pushes the door open, and points the pistol at an unseen assailant within.

SHEILA

Andy!

ANDREW

(cod American accent)

Hey Dr Klein -- analyse this!

He looks back at Sheila with a grin. She laughs. He grabs her by the arm and pulls her into the room.

INT. DR KLEIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS.

Sheila scrabbles around for the light switch. Once illuminated, we see the room is a psychiatrist's office - leather reclining couch, shelves full of textbooks lining the walls.

Andrew kisses Sheila, then she pushes him playfully away.

SHEILA

Shh! He'll kill you if he finds us.

ANDREW

(re: the gun)

Not if I kill him first.

SHEILA

It's a starting pistol.

ANDREW

So I'll send him running.

Andrew goes over and lies down on the couch.

ANDREW

Doctor, I've got a terrible case of the Beatles. What can you prescribe?

SHEILA

This sounds serious. You should take your girlfriend to St Tropez immediately. It's the only known cure.

ANDREW

Have you ever had sex on this couch?

SHEILA

No.

(beat)

Do you want to? Have sex?

Andrew points his pistol at her.

ANDREW

I already have, baby.

SHEILA

(re: the pistol)

Put it away.

(suddenly realising)

What do you mean, you already have?

Andrew jumps up, excited.

ANDREW

We all did. We prostrated ourselves at the feet of the Beatles, and let them have their way with us. By the end the seats were soaked through with the elixir of teenage desire.

Sheila's not impressed.

SHEILA

Stop it.

ANDREW

It can't be stopped.

He puts his pistol away and holds her. Sheila looks away, saddened.

ANDREW

What's the matter?

SHEILA

I never see you. And when I do we're sneaking around.

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)
We need a place of our own.

ANDREW
I'll find us a place.
(starts singing)
There's a place / Where I can go /
When I feel sad / When I feel
blue / And it's my --

INT. DRAB OFFICE - DAY.

Two modern-day LAWYERS sit at a desk in a poky office.

TITLE CARD: Lawyers.

LAWYER ONE
What is that?

Lawyer Two consults some papers.

LAWYER TWO
"There's A Place", released on the
Please Please Me LP, 1963.

LAWYER ONE
And what's that going to cost us?

LAWYER TWO
Licence for a Beatles song for TV
is currently around a hundred and
fifty thousand pounds.

LAWYER ONE
We can't afford that. Cut that
scene.

LAWYER TWO
It's not important that he sings
it.

LAWYER ONE
No?

LAWYER TWO
No. It's used as a rather lazy way
of signposting how he retreats
into his head.

LAWYER ONE
Can they find another way of
showing that?

LAWYER TWO
They'll do what we tell them to
do.

INT. INT. DR KLEIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

Back to Andrew and Sheila.

ANDREW

I'll find somewhere. A penthouse,
with a TV in the bathroom and
lights that come on when you clap.

He claps his hands. Rather too loudly.

SHEILA

Ssh!

The sound of feet on the stairs. A man's voice from without.

DR KLEIN

(O/S)

Sheila? Is that you?

SHEILA

Great. You've woken him up.

She folds her arms and gives Andrew a withering look. We hear Klein padding around upstairs.

SHEILA

What are you going to do now,
bigshot?

Andrew approaches and touches her face.

ANDREW

I'll tell him about all the people
we murdered. About how you made me
do it. How they're all buried in
the garden.

SHEILA

Except for that one we hid in the
cupboard under the stairs.

They kiss.

SHEILA

Better jump out the window.

ANDREW

Don't be daft --

SHEILA

(shouting)

In your office, daddy.

Sounds of Klein makes his way downstairs. Sheila grins at Andrew.

SHEILA
Running out of time.

Andrew darts over to the window, lifts it up. They're excited by the danger - they're Belmondo and Seberg.

ANDREW
Like a thief in the night.

The door handle turns as Klein prepares to enter.

SHEILA
Get me out of here, bigshot.

Andrew jumps out into -

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS.

The light in the office goes off, leaving him in darkness - just the glow of the moon above.

He picks his way across the lawn until he reaches a fence. Just as he's about to climb over, he hears a noise behind.

He looks back - and finds himself face to face with a sleek black PANTHER. Andrew's transfixed. The panther looks at him, like it's staring straight into his soul, then turns and pads away into the night. Andrew can't believe what he's seeing.

EXT. CROMWELLIAN CLUB - NIGHT.

The Cromwellian, a posh member's bar and gambling den housed in a smart Edwardian house on Cromwell Road. Besuited society rakes sip brandy with wives and girlfriends in pearls and heavy make-up. London's not Swinging just yet.

Brian and Neil are drinking at the bar. Neil looks uncomfortable, out of place.

NEIL
They all look like they're hanging around waiting for daddy to die.

BRIAN
Back to Liverpool tomorrow. We must start planning these routes better.

NEIL
We've got to play wherever they take 'em.

BRIAN
Everyone will want them soon. Then I decide where they play.

NEIL
(he's heard all this before)
I know Bri -- the Palladium. Then
Carnegie Hall. Then was is it --
the moon?

Brian smiles. Neil finishes his drink.

NEIL
I'll make sure they're tucked in.

Neil pauses. He's expecting something from Brian.

NEIL
Cough up Bri, John needs a new
jacket.

BRIAN
(brusque)
Tomorrow.

Neil's a bit taken aback.

NEIL
Alright, but petrol money at least
-- and John's nagging me about the
baby carriage --

BRIAN
(angry)
Tomorrow!

Brian stares him down.

NEIL
Tomorrow then.

Neil heads off.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM, LIVERPOOL SEFTON HOSPITAL - NIGHT.

CYNTHIA LENNON (24) lies in a hospital bed, her MOTHER by her side. She's doing the about-to-give birth breathing thing, clutching her mother's hand.

MOTHER
Won't be long now.

CYNTHIA
I want John. Where is he, the git?

MOTHER
Don't be silly gal, you'll be
fine. Didn't have anybody with me
when you were born. Certainly
didn't get me own private room.