

One Man and His Mobile

Joe, centre-stage, is making a call on his mobile

MECHANICAL FEMALE VOICE:

Your call may be recorded for training purposes. If you wish to discuss a mortgage, press One. If you want a personal loan, press Two. If you wish to deposit money, press Three. If you wish to discuss your business account, press Four. If you wish to discuss your personal account, press Five. All our customer service advisers are busy at the moment. ‘Thank you for continuing to hold.

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE

Bloody hell! Recorded for training purposes? That means they’ll be listening to my voice for the next three hundred years. God help them! Not sure I like that. However, here we go Which one shall I press? Hang on ...

RING TONES. JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE

Hello, Mrs Preston. What’s that – your loo is leaking. It might be a little while, but I’ll be with you as soon as I can ... I must try the bank again. I’ll press Three. They’ll think I’m going to deposit money and answer more quickly.

MECHANICAL VOICE:

The following options are open to you. If you would like information about Government Bonds, please press One. if you would like information about Company Bonds, press two ...

JOE:

Oh, fuck. I just want to tell the bank manager I don’t want to borrow any more money. Now, I’ll have to dial again.

MECHANICAL VOICE:

If you wish to discuss a mortgage, press One. If you want a personal loan, press Two. If you wish to deposit money, press Three. If you wish to discuss your business account, press Four. If you wish to discuss your personal account, press Five. All our customer service advisers are busy at the moment. ‘Thank you for continuing to hold.

SOOTHING MUSIC

RING TONES. JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE AND ANSWERS INCOMING CALL

Hello, Mrs Preston. I’m just finishing up here. Yes, I know you’ve got a weak bladder – you told me that last time. Can’t you use your neighbour’s loo?. She’s out. Well, try to hold on.

JOE RE-DIALS

MECHANICAL VOICE:

Thank you for your patience. Thank you for continuing to hold. Your custom is valuable to us. Please continue to hold.

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE

Look, this is urgent. I want to talk to a human being. Hello, hello. Anybody there?

MECHANICAL VOICE

All our customer service officers are currently engaged in calls. We value your call and will answer it as soon as possible. Please hold

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE

Oh, shit! I thought for a moment that was Ellie, one of the tellers. Nice girl. Blond hair, big nose, big tits. If she had answered, I could have told her all my problems. As it is, the cunning bastards think that by showing patience and staying on line I'm showing the right qualities to borrow more money. But I don't want to borrow any more. I'd like to murder those people who keep saying: 'Ah, Joe Monaghan, plumber. He's good for paying interest for the next hundred years.' Listen, mateys, I have had enough. I don't want to spend the rest of my life paying you back. Yes, I know it's good for the economy. But this is my life. To hell with it. I don't want to borrow any more money.

MECHANICAL VOICE

All our customer service advisers are currently engaged in calls. We value your call and will answer it as soon as possible. Please hold.

RING TONES. JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE

Yes, Mrs. Preston. I know you're dying for a pee. . I'll be with you soon. Watch the telly until I come. Don't switch on any taps. The sound of running water will make it worse. Go out and pee in the garden, if necessary. You haven't got a garden. Well,. I'm coming as quickly as I can. Good bye.

MECHANICAL VOICE

All our customer service officers are currently engaged in calls. We value your call and will answer it as soon a possible. Please hold.

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE

Bloody hell. How did I get into this mess? I'm like the bloke who buys a beautiful new shirt, which makes his suit look shabby, so he goes to Savile Row and buys a new fancy suit. That makes his car look cheap, so he buys an expensive sports car. The Porsche makes his house look ridiculously small, so he buys a bigger house and goes bankrupt. And all because he took a shine to a fancy new shirt. As for me, it was my fancy new girl friend that got me into trouble. My mates always said she was a cut above me. Everything was OK till she had a baby and gave up work.

MECHANICAL VOICE:

Thank you for continuing to hold. Thank you for your patience All our customer service officers are currently engaged in calls. We value your call and will answer it as soon as possible. Please hold.

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE:

What was I saying? Yes, she won't go back to work because she says none of her posh friends work. I don't really want her to work, but it's the only way we can manage And when I say we can't afford this or that, she says just borrow more money, everyone else does. I know it's good for the economy. But fuck the Chancellor of the Exchequer. And fuck the Governor of the Bank of England. It'll take a lifetime to pay back what I owe. We can't sell the car because she needs it to take the baby to the crèche. And she goes berserk when I suggest she take a bus. How would I be able to carry the shopping? I said my mum used to carry shopping on a bus, and I got a right roasting for that. I'm not a working-class mum, she said. I'm from a professional family. My dad was a dentist. Well, he was until he became an alcoholic. But that's another story.. Here I am, up to the eyebrows in debt, and I can't even get through to ask my bank manager not to lend me any more money.

MECHANICAL VOICE:

Thank you for continuing to hold. Thank you for your patience. All our customer service officers are currently engaged in calls. We value your call and will answer it as soon as possible. Please hold.

RING TONES. JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE

Mrs. Preston, I can't get there any quicker. I have a spare loo in my van. I'll be with you as soon as possible. The loo cracked when your old man dropped a full bottle of vodka on it! What a waste!

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE

My wife, is a super optimist. She always says something will turn up. We could win the Lottery, she says. . A long-lost relative could leave us an inheritance. And I reminded her, we could also be struck by lightning. I've thought of taking out life insurance and jumping off Hammersmith Bridge. But I'll put that idea out of my mind for the moment. I'm never going to get through to the bank at this rate. I've lost an hour's work as it is. The bank says it values your custom but won't even talk to you. I'll switch the bloody thing off.

JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE

Yeah, hello, Mrs. Preston. I'm on the way,. Yes, I know its' those pills that give you the runs. You told me last time I came. Why don't you use a bucket. You don't have a bucket! Well a flower pot. A saucepan. Anything. I'm coming as fast as I can. Can't talk any more.... Stupid woman! I can't get through to the bank, so I'll try that number a pal gave me

JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE

Hello, is that DebtCrunchers? I believe you can consolidate all my debts, so I can pay them off over a longer period of time. What's the rate of interest? It all depends? Depends on what? You can't tell me over the phone. You can extend the period of the loan for two-hundred years, if necessary! But I'll be dead by then. Do I have issue? Issue? What's issue? Yes, I have a baby son So his children and his grandchildren can pay off the debt. Get fucking lost!

MOBILE RINGS.

JOE

Hello, darling. What! You've got a job! What sort of job? Yeah, that's just up your street. That's twice as much as I earn. You could pay a nanny out of that money. Of course you're excited. Who wouldn't be! Where's the company? Richmond. Well, that's just across the road. You could walk to work. Oh, Richmond, Virginia. Still, that's great. I bet they need plumbers in American. OK. I'll ring the American Embassy about getting American visas.

JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE

MECHANICAL VOICE

If you wish to apply for a visa, press one. If you wish to discuss commerce, press two. If you wish to discuss security, press three.... All our staff are engaged at the moment ...

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE FIDDLES WITH MOBILE

Hazel, I can't get through to the Embassy. I'll call you later. Richmond, Virginia That's a long way away. What'll happen to the dog? I'll miss my football. And my mates at the pub. Still, they have pubs over there, don't they, they call them bars. Same thing. But no football. Only that game where they wear helmets and look like padded skyscrapers. Looks like I'll be paying off my debts in dollars. Gotta go. I want to talk to the bank.

Fiddles with mobile.

MECHANICAL VOICE: All our advisers are busy at the moment.

SOOTHING MUSIC

JOE

They've changed the music. Have I dialled the wrong bank? Hell, I've dialled the embassy by mistake. Is that the visa department? .

MECHANICAL VOICE

All our embassy staff are busy at the moment. Your application is in a queue. Please wait until our security staff have vetted your call.

JOE

Oh, bloody hell. Hello, Mrs. Preston. Are you all right? Why don't you do it in the bath? You can't because of your arthritis? Then do it on the bathroom floor. You can wipe up afterwards. Why don't you ring your daughter. She'll bring you a bucket. She's in Newcastle. Well, I'll be along as quickly as possible. But the traffic is very busy this morning. Yes, I'll bring a bucket. Are you still there, Mrs. Preston? Mrs. Preston, are you still there? Mrs. Preston! Mrs. Preston!

I'd better ring 999 and tell them there's an old lady dying for a piss. Hello, hello. Is that Emergency Services? Bloody hell, I've got through to bloody Debt-Crunchers again? No, I don't want your fucking money at five-hundred per cent. Hello, is that you, Hazel?. One of my customers can't use the toilet because it's broken. She doesn't answer and I'm trying to ring 999 but I can't get through. I keep getting the bank. Not our regular bank - the one where they let you pay off your debts over two-hundred years. What's wrong with that? A helluva lot. Will you ring this number and see if the old lady is still alive. It's 0020010. Yes, ring it and if she answers ring me back. If not, ring 999 and tell them there's an old lady there who was dying for a piss and may have died. No, I'm not joking. Goodbye. Hello, National Eastern Bank? Is that Jill, the teller with the nice figure. I want to cancel all my credit cards. I'm going to America.

RING TONES. JOE

Oh, hello, Mrs. Preston. I thought you had died. Your neighbour came back and let you use her loo. That's good. I'm very relieved and I bet you are, too.

MECHANICAL VOICE

All our customer service officers are currently engaged in calls. We value your call and will answer it as soon as possible.

SFX: SOOTHING MUSIC FADES AWAY.

END