

INT. RECORDING STUDIO- DAY.

The studio is spacious with high ceilings, large dark rectangular sound baffles on the wall.

There is a grand piano, a drum-set, various guitars on stands beside amplifiers and microphones on stands as well, interspersed around the space and pointing every which way.

In the studio are two well-dressed men, RINGO at the drums and JOHN at the piano: silk pastel shirts, well-tailored jackets, paisley ties, and shining black shoes. They both have mustaches and large noses.

Through the window to the control room, GEORGE MARTIN, a middle-aged man is seen at the desk. He is simply and sharply dressed in a white shirt and black tie.

John at the piano wears round glasses and has an intense stare, directed to Ringo sitting at the drums who has longer hair, is playing a simple shuffle beat with cymbal accents and nods his head in rhythm.

He stops and John straightens and ashes his cigarette in the ashtray to the left of the piano keys. He takes a drag.

MAN AT PIANO

(exhaling)

Well done, well done. Now, can you play it without moving your head?

Ringo rolls his eyes.

DRUMMER

You should have said that seven years ago, John.

JOHN

Oh, cheer up, dear Ringo.

He stubs the cigarette out and pats the space next to him on the piano bench.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(in a grandfatherly accent)

Come 'ave a seat, lad.

Ringo puts his sticks down on the snare, steps out from behind the kit and walks over to the piano.

John turns to face the keys and plays a chord with his right hand.

Ringo pats him on the shoulder and John shifts over to let him sit down.

John turns his head to him and plays the chord again.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(singing)
What would you think...

He changes chords.

JOHN (CONT'D)
... if I sang out of tune...

Another chord.

JOHN (CONT'D)
... Would you stand up and walk out
on me?

Ringo starts to get up from the bench and this prompts a laugh from John who pulls at his sleeve and Ringo smiles and sits back down.

John puts the other hand to the keys and the intercom from the control booth clicks on.

GEORGE MARTIN
George is here.

In through a door beside the window to the control booth, a similarly dressed man walks in, with darker eyes and features. He holds up a hand.

GEORGE
I know... I know.

John looks to the man through the window.

JOHN
Thank you, George.

John faces George.

JOHN (CONT'D)
George?

GEORGE
Sorry, there were a few
photographers 'round the back way
and they wanted to know this and
that about the album.

JOHN

Ah, was Harry there? How's the wife?

George laughs.

RINGO

You should have told them the title... they would never have believed it.

(mock cockney accent)

Sgt. who?

JOHN

Aye aye. I dare say.

GEORGE

I'll put the kettle on, shall I? I take it that hasn't been done?

Ringo sharply looks at George and hits a dissonant chord.

RINGO

Oi! We've been working here and on time to boot! John just played me a lovely new ditty.

John plays a melody line on the piano.

JOHN

You best like it. You're going to be the one singing it.

Ringo turns back to him.

RINGO

Wha?!

John grins like a cheshire cat.

GEORGE

Well, then let's get started, shall we?

He takes his jacket off.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

After a cup of tea.

JOHN

We can't just yet. Paul's not here.

Ringo gets up from the piano bench.

GEORGE

Really?

RINGO

Truly.

John plays the two notes from 'The Twilight Zone' theme a few times.

George smiles looks faraway for a moment and John, noticing this, let's his hands fall from the keys. He shifts around to sit on the other side of the bench, facing George and screws his eyes narrowly and points a finger.

JOHN

Hold on... do you know where he is?
I saw that look. Was it her? That strumpet socialite?

(mock fear)
Or worse! Was it that high-class hussy?

He puts his hands to his head and throws it back, pulling them down his grimaced face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Noooooooo! The album is cancelled and we already paid for the orchestraaaa!

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Mal Evans comes in the door to the control room. He is pale.

His eyes dart to the desk, George Martin, the three in the studio and finally back to George turning to face him.

MAL EVANS

(clearing his throat)

Hullo, George.

George takes his headphones off and puts them on the mixing board.

GEORGE

Oh, hullo, Mal. You alright, mate?
You look a bit peaking.

MAL EVANS

(nodding quickly)

Oh, fine... fine.

He looks out the window where the three are talking and laughing.

GEORGE
We're just waiting on Paul.

George Martin checks his watch.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Not like him to not call or send word.

MAL EVANS
(nodding)
Yeah.

He looks at George.

MAL EVANS (CONT'D)
Mind if I talk to them for a moment, George?

George nods.

GEORGE
Certainly, Mal.

He leans forward in his chair and clicks the intercom button, the static sound makes the three look over.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Mal's here. Wants to have a word.

The three strike scared poses in sync, search left and right for hiding spots.

Ringo runs and ducks behind his drums, John jumps behind the piano bench and George crouches and covers his head.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'd say they're as ready as ever.

George Martin smiles wanly and puts the headphones back on.

Mal swallows and turns the knob, walks in to the studio and closes the door behind him.

He walks to the middle of the frame of the window. They relax and approach with smiles.

Mal puts his hand on John's shoulder who looks at him blankly. Mal's head drops and his other hand covers his mouth.

He heaves, sobbing. John puts a hand on his shoulder.

George Martin sees this and presses the intercom button, opens his mouth to say something.

MAL EVANS
(over intercom)
He's dead... Paul's dead,

Each of their faces wipe clean.

George Harrison shakes his head, steps back.

John's arms drops from Mal's shoulder and his eyes grow wide.

Ringo looks to both of the others.

John turns and put his hands up to his head, lets them drop and puts his hands up again.

He leans down heavy on the piano keys and makes a booming sound. He stays there and lets it ring for a good while. The others watch and don't move.

Finally, John looks to his left, heaves himself off the piano and grabs the nearest guitar and hefts it over his head in a high arc bringing it down on the piano with a heavy and ugly crashing sound.

George Martin takes his hand off the intercom and the scene goes silent. He shoots up to his feet, takes three steps to the door and opens it and rushes in to the studio just as the others duck as John brings the half-split guitar up once more and down again on the piano.

There is no sound, simple pieces flying, people shielding their face as the guitar snaps and John tosses it to the side and collapses to his knees, holding his face in his hands.

INT. STUDIO ROOM

John's glasses lie cracked beside him.

George Harrison kneels down, puts out a hand, touches his shaking shoulder and embraces him.

On the ground, further away are the pieces of what was once the Hofner violin bass that Paul McCartney played.