

The Writers Block Episode 1 - "Rat Kong"

By

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INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

MAX, mid 20s, averagely attractive, sits at a desk typing on a computer. He wears pajamas and a dressing gown, and drinks a mug of tea.

The room is clean and tidy. There are shelves full of books, piles of printed paper, pens, and a waste paper basket in the corner full of thrown out pages.

MAX (V.O.)

The best thing about being a writer is that you get to spend the whole day in your bedroom, wearing your pajamas.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is fairly messy, with piles of washing up to be done and some half eaten sandwiches on the side.

A whiteboard hangs on the wall, titled "Pages Written", with four names underneath. Nobody has written more than 5 pages.

MAX (V.O.)

I mean, technically, you could spend it naked, but that makes going to the kitchen tricky when your housemates are around.

Max stands at the hob, naked, pouring dried pasta into a saucepan.

There is a cough, and Max turns to see SIMON standing in the doorway.

Max covers himself with the saucepan, spilling dried pasta all over the floor.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

MAX still sits at his desk in his pajamas.

MAX (V.O.)

What I'm trying to get at is that I haven't worn shoes for a month, and that's pretty awesome by anybody's standards.

The room becomes drab and messy. The books are open and on the floor, the piles of paper have fallen over and the waste paper basket overflowed weeks ago. There is a large poster of a half naked man stuck to the wall.

Max still wears his pajamas and dressing gown, but they now have stains down them. His hair is messy and there is chocolate on his face.

MAX (V.O.) (CONTD)

The worst thing about being a writer is that you spend the whole day in your room, wearing your pajamas. I mean, technically, I don't spend my whole day in my room, because sometimes I go to the kitchen to cook. What I'm trying to get at is that I haven't worn shoes for a month, and that's pretty shocking by anybody's standards.

ROLL TITLES

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

MAX sits in his desk chair, staring blankly at the camera.

MAX (V.O.)

Let me introduce myself. I'm Max, I'm 23, and I was promised a year living with the most creative minds in the country, rent free, all bills and food paid for, on the condition that by the end of the year we had each written one full series for the local television company.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - MAX'S FANTASY

MAX and three other people sit around a table covered in paper, discussing something and writing important looking things of a flip board, such as "character arc" and "plot development"

MAX (V.O.)

The idea was that we would spend the year learning off each other, feeding on the combined creative juices that would doubtlessly flow when four artistic souls are united under one roof.

SCRIPTWRITER

So, we are all agreed that the elephant symbolised his need to reconnect with his father?

Everyone in the room nods emphatically.

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY

The house stands on it's own, truly in the middle of nowhere. Tumbleweed rolls past.

MAX (V.O.)

The reality is that I'm stuck in a house in the middle of nowhere with three nutcases and a massive case of writers block. I'll introduce you.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

SIMON, late 20s, tall and vacant looking, stands in the kitchen with a tin of tuna. He has attached the tin opener to the top and tries to spin the tin around underneath it.

MAX (V.O.)

This is Simon. I really don't know how Simon got on to the writing course, because I'm not even 100% sure that Simon knows how to write. I mean, he's a nice enough guy, but I'm sure that if I shone a torch in his ear his eyes would twinkle.

INT. WEED'S BEDROOM - DAY

Poppy, also know as WEED, early 20s, tall, thin and dressed in hippy clothes, does complicated looking yoga in her bedroom. The room is full of incense sticks and posters of Bob Marley.

MAX (V.O.)

Then there's Poppy. At least, I think that's her real name. Ever since she was a little girl, her parents called her Weed, and it just kind of stuck. She says it's because she's tall and gangly, but I'm pretty sure it's just because it's what her parents were smoking all through her childhood. The Sixties may be over, but their spirit is well and truly alive in our Weed.

Weed tries to change yoga position and falls over, knocking over several incense sticks in the process.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

TESS, mid 20s, very attractive, stares straight at the camera. Her hair is blown around by a fan in slow motion, and she pouts and shakes her head in a sexy manner.

"Let's Get It On" by Marvin Gaye plays in the background.

MAX (V.O.)

Lastly, there is the vision of absolute loveliness that is Tess. I've pretty much been in love with Tess since the day we moved in, and, being the only male within a twenty mile radius with a post-pubescent mental age, you would think I might be in with a chance. You'd be thinking wrong. You see, I didn't exactly get off to the best start.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - ONE MONTH AGO

SUBTITLE: ONE MONTH AGO

MAX finishes setting up his hi-fi and reaches over it to turn on the power plug. He can't quite reach and almost overbalances.

He eventually manages to turn on the hi-fi and plays a CD. Meat Loafs BAT OUT OF HELL blares out of the speakers.

Max starts to play air guitar and dances along to the music. He is completely immersed.

The front door opens and TESS enters, carrying a heavy moving box of belongings. She stares at the oblivious Max.

Max starts to strut backwards towards Tess. She quickly ducks out of the way.

TESS

Whoa! Watch it Van Halen!

Startled by the noise, Max spins round and promptly falls over. He is obviously dumbstruck by Tess. Embarrassed, he quickly stands back up

TESS (CONTD)

Hi. I'm Tess.

Tess struggles to hold the box with one arm as she attempts to shake Max's hand.

TESS (CONTD)  
 Sorry, this box is kind of heavy.

MAX  
 Oh, here, let me take it for you.

Max reaches for the box, but in his haste, grabs Tess's breast instead. They both freeze in horror.

TESS  
 That's my breast.

MAX  
 I know.

TESS  
 Would you mind letting go?

The action freezes.

MAX (V.O.)  
 Now, you wouldn't think that I could make this situation any worse, but I did. I made it much, much worse.

Max quickly lets go of Tess's breast and puts his hands in his pockets awkwardly. He can't look at her.

Tess glares at him angrily.

MAX  
 I'm so sorry, I really didn't mean to...

TESS  
 (sarcastically)  
 Yeah, sure you didn't.

MAX  
 No! Really I didn't! Why would I want to touch your breasts?

Tess is offended

MAX (CONTD)  
 No, I didn't mean it like that! You're breasts are lovely! Why on earth wouldn't I want to touch your beautiful breasts!

TESS  
 Wow. Would you like a canary? That hole you're digging for yourself is looking pretty deep.

MAX

No, I just meant that I wouldn't want to touch your, admittedly lovely, breasts, because ... because ...

Tess looks at Max expectantly.

MAX (CONTD)

... because I'm gay!

The action freezes.

MAX (V.O.)

I'm not gay. It was a stupid thing to say, and I have no idea why I said it, but I did. So now the woman of my dreams thinks I'm into men.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

TESS sticks a giant poster of a half naked man to Max's wall.

MAX stands awkwardly behind her, looking on in shock.

Every time Tess looks behind her, Max fakes a smile and thumbs up, pretending he loves the poster.

Tess finishes and leaves the room.

MAX (V.O.)

And, whatever I do, I just seem to keep making it worse.

Max runs towards the poster in frustration and starts banging his arms and head against it.

Tess enters the room again to see Max with his face pressed against the poster.

She raises an eyebrow and smiles. Max waves awkwardly.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

MAX is trying to find something to swat a spider with. He grabs Tess's copy of Cosmopolitan.

MAX (V.O.)

and worse.

TESS walks in to see Max holding the magazine. She winks at him and leaves.

Max hits himself over the head with the magazine in frustration.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

SIMON climbs a ladder to get his ball out of a tree.

MAX holds the bottom of the ladder.

Simon yells something down to Max, and he looks up.

TESS walks in to see Max staring up at Simons bottom.

MAX (V.O.)  
and worse.

Tess gives Max a look and mouths "Naughty, naughty!".

As Tess leaves, Max rolls his eyes to the heavens.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

MAX still sits in his messy bedroom wearing his pajamas.

MAX (V.O.)  
So, that's my life. I live twenty  
five miles away from the nearest  
shop with two nutcases and a  
goddess who thinks I'm a  
fruitcake. And now we have the  
mother of all rats...

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

MAX, TESS, SIMON and WEED are huddled in a corner of the room, scared of the unseen rat across the room from them.

NOTE: The rat is never shown.

SIMON  
It's looking right at me. I think  
it's marked me out.

MAX  
Marked you out? Marked you for  
what?

SIMON  
Experimentation. We experiment on  
them, and now they're getting  
their own back. I know it. I can  
see it in his beady little eyes.

MAX

It's just so .. unnatural. I've never seen vermin that big. It's like the King Kong of the rat world.

TESS

We should call an exterminator.

WEED

No! Why should we exterminate another living creature? What have rats ever done to us?

TESS

Bubonic plague.

MAX

And he got in the cupboard and ate all the cheerios this morning.

WEED

It's just a rat. I think he's kind of cute actually. I'll just pick him up and take him outside.

Weed stands and walks towards the rat.

The others make looks of shock and surprise. Tess winces and hides behind Max's shoulder. Simon puts his hands over his eyes. Shrieks and squeaks are heard.

Weed hurriedly runs back to the group and sits down again, covered in scratches.

WEED (CONTD)

Second thoughts, lets call the exterminator.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

An open telephone directory lies on the table.

MAX has just finished talking on the phone. TESS, SIMON and WEED look on expectantly.

MAX

He can't come for three days

TESS

Three days? You mean we have to live in the same house as Rat Kong for three whole days!

WEED

It shouldn't be a problem to live in harmony with one of nature's creatures. I think it's horrible that we even considered trying to kill the poor thing.

MAX

You were all up for killing it last night!

WEED

That was before I understood it properly.

Max and Tess look at each other, confused.

WEED (CONTD)

I invaded it's personal space. It was perfectly within it's rights to attack me. The key to understanding is mutual respect.

Weed leaves the room.

MAX

I wish I had the key to understanding her.

TESS

Drugs. Lots and lots of drugs.

Simon has been standing silent the whole time. Suddenly,

SIMON

I've got an idea.

Simon hurriedly exits the room.

TESS

That doesn't sound promising.

MAX

Yeah, I put his last idea out with a fire extinguisher.

Max moves closer to Tess, awkwardly.

MAX (CONTD)

Listen, Tess. I know this whole rat situation is pretty scary, and I wanted to let you know that if at any point, say, when you're alone in your room at night, if you're scared, you just come and find me. OK?

TESS

Oh Max, that's so sweet.

Max smiles, embarrassed.

TESS (CONTD)

Actually, why don't I just spend the night in your room? We could make a whole night of it! I mean, if that's OK with you.

Max gets excited.

MAX

Of course! Absolutely! I cannot think of a single reason why that would not be OK with me. Please feel free to spend as much time alone with me in my bedroom as you want.

TESS

This is going to be so fun! We could make pink martini's, and watch Footloose!

Max's look of excitement switches to one of pure dread. He smiles reluctantly.

MAX

Sure. That would be ... swell.

There is a sudden CRASH and a YELL from the kitchen.

Tess and Max glance at each other. Max shrugs.

MAX (CONTD)

I'll get it.

Max leaves for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

SIMON sucks his finger and hops around in pain. On the floor is a mouse trap.

There are several other mouse traps on the kitchen counter, as well as a bag of boiled sweets.

MAX enters, and patiently waits for Simon to stop hopping around.

Simon finally takes his finger out of his mouth and looks annoyed.

SIMON

Ow. You could really hurt somebody with those things.

MAX

I think that's kind of the point. Care to explain what you were doing?

SIMON

I was trying to catch the rat.

MAX

Oh really? I didn't know that's what rodent traps were for.

SIMON

Really? It's kind of in the...

Max gives him a look

SIMON (CONTD)

... oh, sarcasm, I get it. Very funny.

MAX

So, care to explain what you were doing with the rat traps?

SIMON

Baiting them.

Max looks around for bait. He see's nothing.

MAX

With what?

SIMON

Boiled sweets.

Simon looks proud of himself. Max looks as though he should be shocked, yet isn't in the slightest.

MAX

Explain?

SIMON

Well, I was thinking ...

MAX

Careful.

SIMON

I was thinking. If I was a rat, what would tempt me to go into a giant scary looking trap. And I really like boiled sweets, so I

(MORE)

SIMON (cont'd)  
 figured that if there was a giant  
 boiled sweet inside a big scary  
 trap, I would probably use my  
 little ratty legs to crawl right  
 in to the trap and try and get  
 the sweet.

MAX  
 Right. I'm pretty sure you're  
 meant to use cheese.

SIMON  
 Eurgh! I hate cheese! Why would I  
 crawl in to a trap to get cheese?

Simon leaves the room, glaring at Max as though he is a  
 complete idiot.

Max sighs and shrugs.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MAX and TESS are both sat in Max's bed, under the covers,  
 wearing their pajamas.

They are watching 'Footloose' on a television at the end  
 of the bed, and both hold half empty glasses of pink  
 martini. A half eaten bowl of popcorn lies between them.

Tess is thoroughly enjoying herself. Max tries hard to hide  
 the fact that he isn't, and tries even harder not to look  
 down Tess's pajama top.

TESS  
 This is so much fun! We should do  
 this more often.

Tess squeezes Max's knee. He lets out a surprised squeal,  
 but Tess doesn't notice.

Music starts playing in the film and Tess dances along in  
 the bed. Max tries desperately not to stare at her breasts  
 as she jiggles up and down.

MAX  
 (to himself)  
 Jesus Christ

TESS  
 What was that?

MAX  
 Err... I said 'Dianne Wiest'! I  
 didn't realise she was in this.  
 Great actress. Loved her in  
 Practical Magic.

TESS

Right...

They continue to watch in awkward silence.

TESS (CONTD)

You know what.

MAX

What?

TESS

How awesome would it be if real  
life was like films?

MAX

What. Ninety minutes long?

Tess giggles.

TESS

No. You know what I mean.

MAX

Rentable from Blockbuster?

TESS

No.

MAX

Best when they feature Samuel L.  
Jackson?

TESS

Shut up. I just mean, like,  
everybody is happy all the time.  
(pause)  
and sometimes large groups of  
people spontaneously break in to  
song and dance.

MAX

That would be pretty cool.

(to himself)

Actually, that would be totally  
awesome...

Max drifts into a daydream

FADE TO:

EXT. LARGE BUILDING - DAY - MAX'S DAYDREAM

MAX walks across a paved area in front of a large building. LOTS OF EXTRAS walk around him.

The theme from FOOTLOOSE by Kenny Loggins starts to play.

As the lyrics start, Max mouths along.

The camera then moves from Max to various extras, all of which are also mouthing the lyrics.

Three women wearing SAMUEL L JACKSON masks walk past and give Max a thumbs up.

This builds to become an elaborate song and dance sequence, filmed in one take, similar to a University LipDub.

FADE TO:

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MAX is still singing along to the Footloose theme.

TESS stares at him in amusement.

Max suddenly realises what he is doing and abruptly stops. He stares at Tess in embarrassment.

The awkward moment is interrupted by a loud CRASH and YELL from downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The lights are all out, and a shadowy figure can be seen standing next to the counter.

MAX and TESS enter the kitchen and flip the lights on.

SIMON stands in the middle of the kitchen with a rat trap attached to his hand, which holds a small boiled sweet.

Max and Tess stare at each other in amazement, then look at Simon.

Simon smiles and shrugs his shoulders in embarrassment.

SIMON

Sorry guys. I got the munchies.

Max removes the trap from Simons hand as WEED enters the kitchen. She walks straight past the others and grabs a first aid kit from the cupboard.

She starts to plaster each one of her fingers individually.

Max coughs to get her attention.

WEED  
(without looking up)  
Blisters.

The others look confused.

MAX  
What have you been doing?

Weed finishes plastering her fingers and turns to face the rest of the kitchen.

WEED  
Writing. Ya'know, like we're meant to be doing.

TESS  
I thought you were just as stuck as the rest of us?

Tess points to the whiteboard on the wall. Simon tops the tally of pages written, with seven.

WEED  
I was. But now I'm not. You two lovebirds were keeping me awake...

TESS  
Oh come on Weed. I don't think I'm Max's type!

Tess giggles and elbows Max, who laughs nervously.

WEED  
Yeah. So anyway, then I got punched.

MAX  
Punched?

WEED  
By 'it'.

Awkward silence.

MAX  
You mean, 'then it hit me'?

WEED  
Yeah, anyway, I had a great idea, so I wrote it all down. Almost done now!

Weed walks to the whiteboard and changes her tally from three to 56, then leaves the room.

Simon looks confused.

SIMON  
I must do typing wrong. I've never got blisters on the sides of my fingers before.

Simon mimes typing on a keyboard with the sides of his fingers.

Tess bursts out laughing.

TESS  
She hand writes it all. Apparently, she doesn't 'believe' in computers.

SIMON  
Why not? They definitely exist. I've got one.

Max rolls his eyes.

SIMON (CONTD)  
They do exist don't they? Oh, don't tell me I imagined that as well!

Simon leaves in a panic to check on the reality of his computer.

MAX  
Come on Tess, lets get back to the film.  
(sarcastically)  
I just can't wait to find out whether the town lets Kevin Bacon dance or not.

INT. WEED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

WEED puts the finishing touches to the last page of her script. She has her tongue sticking out as she concentrates.

She reads the last line aloud as she writes it.

WEED  
And that was the last of midget Elvis.

She adds it to a large pile of handwritten manuscript.

She removes a bobble-head Jesus Christ from a shoe box and places him on top of the pile of paper.

WEED (CONTD)

Now, Jesus. Look after this. Very important! Do you understand?

Jesus's bobble-head bobs up and down.

WEED (CONTD)

Good.

There is a loud squeak from the corner of the room.

Weed turns to see the rat glaring at her.

WEED (CONTD)

Hello there Mr Ratty. I'm sorry about yesterday. It was very rude of me to invade your personal space like that.

She reaches behinds her, grabs the shoebox and moves slowly towards the rat.

WEED (CONTD)

And I know you're not going to like this much, but it's for your own good.

Weed slams the shoebox down on top of the rat, trapping it.

WEED (CONTD)

Now stay there whilst I go and find some shoes so I can take you outside. Its much nicer out there that in here. You might even find a nice lady rat.

(pause)

or a man rat. If you're that way inclined.

Weed leaves the room.

FADE THROUGH BLACK:

INT. WEED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

WEED enters her room carrying a pair of pink striped wellington boots.

Upon seeing the state of the room, she shrieks and drops the wellington boots on the floor.

Tiny scraps of paper cover the room. The pile of script pages has been nibbled to pieces and the Jesus Christ bobble-head lies nodding on the floor.

The shoebox in the corner has a large hole gnawed in it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

WEED parades in front of MAX, TESS and SIMON like a military commander. She wears a colander on her head as a helmet and has a marker pen mustache.

The others have obviously been woken early and against their will. They all wear pajamas and have scruffy hair.

WEED

At 2300 hours last night, the target, codename Rat Kong, escaped captivity and committed the crime. The targets current whereabouts are unknown, but our current intelligence...

Weed holds up a chewed cereal box.

WEED (CONTD)

...suggests that it is still in the area. Are there any questions?

Everyone looks sleepy and mildly annoyed.

TESS

Why can't we just wait for the exterminator to come tomorrow?

MAX

How exactly do you plan for us to catch it anyway?

SIMON

Why have you got a colander on your head?

WEED

No more questions! Go, go, go!

Weed motions for everyone to leave the room quickly, and everybody begrudgingly shuffles out.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

TESS lies on the floor, putting the finishing touches to a trap that consists of a saucepan being held up by a ruler, with a large block of cheese underneath it.

MAX (V.O.)

So, Weed forced us all in to  
wasting our morning trying to  
catch the rat.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

SIMON has drawn a sexy rat with large lips, wearing a bikini, and is trying to put the drawing into a rat trap.

MAX (V.O.)

Some of the plans were slightly  
off the wall.

INT. WEED'S BEDROOM - DAY

WEED wears a balaclava and is dressed all in black. She sits in the corner of her room, armed with a paintball gun.

MAX (V.O.)

And some of the plans were just  
downright ridiculous.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

TESS shrieks as the saucepan falls.

Gingerly, she lifts it to peek underneath. She sighs and lifts it completely to reveal that the cheese is missing, but the rat was not caught.

MAX (V.O.)

But none of them worked.

INT. WEED'S BEDROOM - DAY

WEED fires her paintball gun at the wall, yelling loudly.

There is a rat shaped silhouette in the mess of paint left on the wall.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

MAX lies in bed, asleep, with his bare feet sticking out of the end of the duvet.

MAX (V.O.)  
My plan was to go back to bed.

Max snores loudly.

RAT P.O.V.

The rat scurries around the floor and then looks up to see Max's feet sticking out of the end of the duvet.

MAX (V.O.) (CONTD)  
Remember what I said earlier  
about not wearing shoes for a  
month?

The rat climbs the side of the bed and gets closer to Max's feet.

MAX (V.O.) (CONTD)  
Turns out that constantly  
aerating your feet doesn't  
necessarily help with the cheesy  
odour.

Max sits bolts upright and screams. He glares at his feet, and frantically searches for something on his bedside table to hit the rat with.

He grabs the 'Footloose' DVD case and uses it to hit the rat repeatedly.

FADE THROUGH BLACK:

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

MAX, TESS, SIMON and WEED peer over the body of the dead rat. Weed still wears the colander and marker pen mustache.

WEED  
I can't get over how huge it is.

SIMON  
Are you sure it's definitely  
dead?

TESS  
Well Max managed to spill it's  
guts all over his bedsheet, so  
yeah, I'd say it's definitely  
dead.

SIMON  
Yeah, but still. Are you sure?

TESS  
Yes Simon. Max got him.

Max holds up the 'Footloose' DVD box

MAX  
Oh no. It wasn't me. It was Bacon  
killed the beast.

END