

Psst

For one person - playing the character PAT

dedicated to Catherine Ring

Paul Burnell

Optional lighting - full lights at beginning, slowly reducing to single spot at the end.

PAT walks quickly and noisily in heavy boots and casual clothes from offstage and continues to walk off the other side. Midway looks briefly at audience but continues and exits.

PAT walks slowly back onstage, one hand in pocket, looking at a fixed point in the audience, slows pace even more, audibly dragging feet, and stops centre stage but not at front.

As if loitering, PAT looks down, rubbing one foot noisily on the floor. Sucks air in through teeth very slowly and deliberately, ending in a 'tut'. Looks up at the audience, moves tongue to upper lip. Moves tongue back and forth slowly across lip twice whilst humming on a monotone in throat. Stops humming, puts tongue back inside mouth. Very short intake of breath through nose. Looks slightly offstage but moves eyes to front and says - psst.

Moves head to front, raises eyebrows, says psst more loudly.

Coughs into fist then puts fist to side of hip.

Looks ahead, raises eyebrows, says psst very loudly, simultaneously moving hip hand to audience in 'handgun' gesture.

(Confused) Looks down at 'gun' and examines it - it is as if the hands have a life of their own. Looks up at audience and silently and exaggeratedly mouths the word "bang".

Moves both palms up into light-hearted 'ok forget it' gesture. Gesture quickly turns into surprised action of being held up; i.e. moves hands (fingers together) above head with long drawn-out whistle - high to low pitch with a breathy fade. Relaxes into bored posture.

Whilst hands still above head, separates fingers of one hand, then the other, then of both. Turns both hands side-on. Looks up at one hand and snaps fingers (a single click). Looks up at other hand, another finger click. React as if the hands have a life of their own. Looks forward to audience and makes rapid tongue clicking sound slowing to a doubled finger click in both hands.

PAT performs the following body percussion section:

Each time augment the elements of the first phrase: starting with clicks, then add clap, then add thump chest, slap belly, stamp, voice

finger clicks clap chest belly stamp speak (loud) Repeat ad lib. Repeat ad lib. and get faster

1. ----- please rub belly and stamp (one foot) (two feet)

2. -----

3. ----- etc.

cont.

Foot stamping stops, rapid belly rubbing continues, then changes to rubbing of chest, scratching back of head, rubbing head hair, then frantically all over body, turning full circle, ending with rapid rubbing of arm whilst silently inhaling. (Embarrassed) Arm rubbing slows whilst simultaneously adding a slow loud exhale of breath through slightly closed lips. Ends with a 'large arm-wipe gesture and moves hands back above head into bored 'stick up' gesture.

Says psst, with both hands above head switching to 'handguns' gesture, and scrunching eyes shut. Silently mouths the word "bang", then opens eyes and looks up to both 'handguns'. Smiles. Moves 'guns' down to waist level as if feeling the weight of them. Moves the 'guns' up and down several times, then 'firing' them wildly at audience with all gestures accompanied by loud vocal 'sssh' and 'pissh' sounds. As gestures come to an end, still making the same vocal sounds, moves forward to stage front. Brings 'guns' to face level, turns 'barrels' into each other. Extends all fingers so that hands cover mouth, with eyes looking out, as if looking over a fence or through a letterbox.

Brings hands down to reveal mouth, raises eyebrows, says psst. Hands up to cover mouth.

Hands down to reveal mouth again - raises eyebrows, and slowly and deliberately speaks

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PAT: (Loudly and exaggerating the 'p' 's' and 't' sounds) Please, take me out.*

Then either :

lights down to black with or without gunshot sound effect.

or :

PAT pauses for several seconds, brings hands down into a hand-cuffed position and walks off stage, briefly looking back to fixed point in audience. Optional gunshot effect once off stage.