

“The Black Hole” Second-by-Second Breakdown

by E.M. Welsh

0:05 - 0:13 – Title sequence. We are quickly given a peak at the world and understand it right away to be an office job. The lighting is dark and gloomy and the office is empty and depressing. Our nameless main character wears a typical shirt and tie and stands miserably front and center.

0:14 - 0:15 – We see him jab at what looks like a copy machine.

0:15 - 0:17 – The main character remains standing, then frowns. Something is wrong.

0:18 - 0:19 – He jabs at the copy machine. It seems just like another annoying problem at work.

0:19 - 0:20 – First wide shot away from our main character. We see how alone he is.

0:20 - 0:21 – Close-up of the man’s foot as it kicks at the machine, emphasizing the rundown workplace.

0:21 - 0:22 – Another shot of the man, but now the copy machine is sharing the frame with him. (What might this mean?)

0:23 - 0:25 – A close up of a sheet of white paper with an enormous, black hole.

0:25 - 0:26 – Still playing up the crappy office space, with the man sharing the frame with the copy machine.

0:27 - 0:28 – A reaction shot, close-up, of the man assessing the black hole.

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0:29 - 0:31 – A medium shot of him holding the piece of paper with a black hole on it, putting him back in the frame with the black hole. The main character puts the paper outside the frame, and therefore his mind.

0:32 - 0:33 – Still not thinking about the weird copy machine error, he tries again.

0:33 - 0:36 – But wait, that black hole was really weird. But he decides not to dwell on it.

0:36 - 0:39 – He shuts the copy machine down and therefore shuts it on the thought process again. He checks his watch, already thinking likely about when he can leave, then takes a drink of water.

0:39 - 0:40 – A new weird shot from the perspective of the black hole. This creates a very paranormal or eerie sensation for the audience, knowing that this regular office man is being watched.

0:40 - 0:41 – Back to a wider shot with the man drinking water. For the audience, we know something is up now. But he doesn't and he sets his cup down.

0:41 - 0:42 – And then something weird happens. We as the audience know it likely has to do with the cup, but we don't know what has happened so for a brief second there's a mystery.

0:42 - 0:43 – A wide shot, like the one before, only the cup is gone.

0:44 - 0:45 – Back to that weird perspective from the black hole again. Things are feeling WEIRD.

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0:46 - 0:47 – The man looks at the paper and can see that it’s flat. So can we as the audience.

0:47 - 0:51 – Another emphasis on the flatness of the paper. But this time the man gets curious and reaches forward. A strange noise happens as he does this and pulls away.

0:52 - 0:54 – Our main character is spooked now. He looks around.

0:55 - 1:00 – He boldly reaches into the hole and pulls out the cup he threw away.

1:01 - 1:03 – He assess the situation and stares at the cup.

1:03 - 1:05 – He sets the cup down. It seems he has an idea so he reaches for the paper.

1:06 - 1:10 – He and the paper are in the same shot, shown profile. He reaches through the paper and the rules of the black hole become somewhat established.

1:11 - 1:14 – Our main character is clearly spooked, but excited. We can see it in his expression. He looks around for something else to use the black hole with.

1:15 - 1:18 – Our first departure from the main office, we see a vending machine in the frame that our main character enters toting the black hole. He places the hole against the glass.

1:19 - 1:22 – He looks around. It’s clear this something he’s wanted to always do and now finally has the opportunity.

1:22 - 1:25 – He reaches into the hole. Neither he nor the audience is sure yet about the rules just yet. He the pulls something out.

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1:25 - 1:27 – Success! It’s a candy bar.

1:27 - 1:29 – Our character gleefully scarfs down the candy. He looks to his new black hole with wonder.

1:29 - 1:32 – A closer shot as the main character looks around for something new to try his black hole on.

1:33 - 1:35 – An eerie shot of a door that reads “keep out,” reminding us that this is a weird and creepy discovery and giving us that ominous feeling that he should put that black hole down.

1:35 - 1:37 – A close-up of him scarfing down what he just stole as he looks to the next thing.

1:37 - 1:38 – A brief shot of his silhouette from inside the room that says “keep out.” We as the audience start to feel very bad about this.

1:38 - 1:40 – The main character, on the other hand, does not, and sticks the black hole onto the door and unlocks it.

1:40 - 1:44 – Another creepy shot of his silhouette before he enters the room. Then he opens the door and turns the lights on, symbolically showing how this goes from being an idea he wished to execute to something actually happening now. The lights flicker and increase the sense of foreboding, but he walks forward, not noticing anything it seems.

1:45 - 1:47 – A shot from behind as he steps all the way inside this new room. He is framed by the doorway. What could this mean?

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1:47 - 1:48 – He places the paper against a safe.

1:48 - 1:49 – A brief closer shot as he pastes it against the surface, implying a deep focus.

1:49 - 1:50 – Remembering where he’s at, the man looks behind him to make sure the coast is clear.

1:51 - 1:52 – Another wide shot with him framed by the doorway, but this time bent over the safe.

1:52 - 1:57 – He reaches into the safe and pulls out a huge wad of money and admires it.

1:58 - 2:00 – He freaks out and reaches in for more.

2:00 - 2:05 – Several shots firing rapidly of him reaching in for more and more. The pacing emphasizes the urgency.

2:06 - 2:06 – Back to the wide shot again with him framed by the doorway.

2:06 - 2:07 – He takes more money.

2:07 - 2:07 – We can see he’s sweating now and becoming a bit insane.

2:07 - 2:07 – He throws down another wad of money then bends down to reach for more.

2:08 - 2:10 – A close up as he reaches for more. But he’s having trouble now.

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2:11 - 2:12 – We can see now that he’s pressing himself into the safe with no results by just reaching.

2:12 - 2:14 – He decides to crawl into the black hole.

2:14 - 2:14 – The tape holding the paper black hole to the wall shakes a little.

2:15 - 2:16 – We see that his whole body is now in the black hole with two quick shots.

2:16 - 2:18 – A wide shot of the paper on the safe, with no office worker in site. The paper falls to the ground.

2:18 - 2:26 – The same shot zooms out twice, emphasizing the man’s new place in this world and causing us to think back to the empty office at the very beginning and what it meant for this narrative.