

**JAM**

By

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## Characters

DAVID	Late 50's, salesman. Paunchy but still physically imposing.
TOBY	23, foppish, feather-cut, graduate trainee. Cocky, impatient.
ALVIS	Early 40's Vegas Elvis-ish. Welsh.
DIGBY	Late 60's, earnest, bespectacled, avuncular. Twinkly and tweedy.
MANDY	Early 30's, white blonde hair and shrill. Weary.
FRANK	Early 30's, mild-mannered, straight-arrow. A closet romantic.
VASCO	Mouthy eleven-year old twin with Hoxton fin hairstyle.
LEONARDO	Mouthy eleven-year old twin with Hoxton fin hairstyle.
WENNER	Early 30's, lazy, running to fat.
DAVIS	Late 20's, lean, intense.
JANE	Mid 20's, dark and willowy.
COLIN	Late 20's, brash, opinionated media type.
NORRIS	Early 50's, heavy-set Mike Reid type.
TURNIPS	Mid 40's, reddish, burly, track-suited.
TIME	The present - Bank holiday Friday afternoon
PLACE	M25. Gridlocked traffic
STAGING	Performances are set within wire-frame car outlines. Stage overall is dark; scene changes take place via spot up on individual cars.

ACT I

SCENE 1

*SFX:*

*Car Horns etc.*

*Full stage lights fade up on half-a-dozen cars on stage. These can be real or wire-frame outlines. There are no solid roofs or windscreens, just seats and steering wheels, which allows us to single out each vehicle and its occupants by means of a spotlight as the play progresses.*

*Stage lights fade down.*

*Lights fade up on DAVID and TOBY in a saloon car, centre stage.*

*(At the wheel is DAVID. In time-honoured car-salesman fashion, his suit jacket hangs on the peg over the rear seat window. There are sweat patches on his white shirt. For some reason, his tie appears to have been cut in half. His young trainee, TOBY, also in white shirt and tie, sits in the passenger seat with a map on his lap)*

DAVID:

*(Thumping the steering wheel)*

I knew it. I just bastard knew it... "Take the M25 David, it'll be quicker," he says. Why do I listen? Why?

TOBY:

I didn't say that, I said: "David, *don't* take the M25, we'll get stuck in traffic."

DAVID:

I have no idea why I listen to you, I really don't.

TOBY:

You don't. You only hear what you want to hear. You filter out everything else. There's no turnoff for another five or six miles. We're stuffed.

*(TOBY throws the map down in disgust. DAVID is not listening. He stares fixedly through the windscreen scrutinizing the traffic ahead)*

DAVID:

Maybe there's a turnoff coming up or something.

*(TOBY looks at his partner. Sighs)*

TOBY:

If, for example, I was to say, David you are a tremendous pillock, you would only hear: David, you are...tremendous. Or if I was to say....

*(DAVID turns and wags a warning finger)*

DAVID:

You're walking on very thin ice here, so don't get smart, Thompson.

TOBY:

You'd prefer stupid? That's much easier.

*(He lets his jaw drop like a Neanderthal)*

Duuuhhh...

*(A string of drool escapes from his mouth)*

DAVID:

Oy, mind the velour. I don't know where that mouth's been.

TOBY:

It's not like it's calfskin leather or anything.

DAVID:

Meaning?

TOBY:

It's just velour.

DAVID:

At Sedgwick Supplies Velour is a material of achievement...a badge of rank.

TOBY:

Like Ermine...

DAVID:

No. Not like Ermine. Nothing like Ermine. Ermine's a disease.

*(TOBY shakes his head)*

DAVID:

Don't just shake your head at me. Listen and you might learn something. Sedgwick's basic Rep's cars come with plastic upholstery, Executive Field Operatives are entitled to velour, saves your crack getting all sweaty in the summer. Plus alloy wheels and tinted windows, optional.

TOBY:

So who gets leather?

DAVID:

Leather is for directors...and poofs trousers. No offence son.

TOBY:

I'm not offended.

*(DAVID appraises his companion shrewdly)*

DAVID:

It's all right, son. I've spotted your little indent.

*(TOBY looks at him- nonplussed)*

DAVID:

You wear an earring don't you? I can see the hole in your ear lobe. It's okay. In my day we liked to wear a bit of brass around our fingers, but you know - each to his own.

TOBY:

Thank you, David, for your approval. So you wore a bit of bling in your younger days?

DAVID:

Knuckle-dusters.

TOBY:

Charming.

DAVID:

It was different back then of course. We had to fight for everything, every leg-up had to be on the back of someone else's head. There were no Graduate-Intake-Accelerated-Management-Let's-Fucking-Bypass-All-the-hard-work-Schemes then, Toby. If you wanted to get ahead, you got someone else's head and punched it. I've earned my Velour, son, with my own two hands, kicking and scratching. Look at that.

*(DAVID attempts to make a fist but his hand doesn't seem to fully close)*

DAVID:

...I bust every knuckle in my right hand literally scrapping for the accounts I've got. Punching my way into this very Velour seat that you're so happy to gob all over.

*(DAVID stretches out his hands and shrugs his shoulders)*

See, I'm crippled, can't even close my hand properly and make a decent fist.

*(DAVID suddenly jams on the brake, they both lurch)*

SFX:

*Squeal of brakes*

*(DAVID makes a complete and terrifyingly efficient threatening fist before punching the steering wheel. He sticks his head out of the window and rages at the driver in front)*

DAVID:

Watch what you're...you tosspot.

*Lights fade down on DAVID & TOBY*

**ACT I**

**SCENE 2**

*Lights fade up on the elevated driver's cab of an articulated lorry.*

*(In the driver's seat is ALVIS- an overweight, balding, Welsh, Vegas-Elvis sort-of-look-alike with nasty smoked glasses. In the passenger seat is DIGBY, a mid-sixty, balding, tweedy professor-type.*

*DIGBY produces a small Dictaphone from his jacket pocket)*

DIGBY:

You don't mind if I..?

ALVIS:

Be my guest.

DIGBY:

It's like a journal. Only saves me looking for a pen.

*(ALVIS nods. DIGBY switches on the tape. Speaks into it)*

DIGBY:

Friday afternoon. Car broken down on the M25. Forced to hitch-hike. Awful tail-back. Going nowhere.

*(Pause)*

ALVIS:

'S'pect you're regretting getting a lift with me now.

DIGBY:

By no means, my young friend.

ALVIS:

We're not movin' nor likely to for...who knows how long? M25 it's like the Bermuda Triangle. People get stuck out here so long they just disappear...

DIGBY:

By no means do I regret this novel experience; in fact I find it...

*(Takes a deep breath)*

...exhilarating.

ALVIS:

Annoying though, your car breaking down...and now this?

*(ALVIS takes a long hard look at the diminutive figure in his cab)*

ALVIS:  
Busy man like you....

DIGBY:  
Oh, you flatter me.

ALVIS:  
Probably a professional gentleman....

DIGBY:  
In that line of business certainly. And yourself? You are of course, amongst other things, a student of mankind?

ALVIS:  
I am.

DIGBY:  
...in addition to being a Knight of the Road.

ALVIS:  
Oh bloody 'ell, ha, ha, you give me too much credit.

DIGBY:  
I think not.

ALVIS:  
No, I'm just another poor sod, thinks he's Elvis. Only I've got this Welsh accent, makes me sound more like Shirley Bassie, or Tom Jones.

DIGBY:  
But who is to say that Elvis may not be Welsh?

ALVIS:  
Old Ma Presley I shouldn't wonder.

DIGBY:  
Indeed.

*(There's a silence until ALVIS reaches across into the glove compartment, pulls out a bag of mint humbugs. He offers one to DIGBY)*

ALVIS:  
Humbug?

DIGBY:

Yes, I have been called that...

ALVIS:

Oh, didn't mean anything by it.

DIGBY:

No, just my little joke...er...ah...?

*(ALVIS looks flustered. He wipes his right hand on his grubby, spangled white flares and offers it)*

ALVIS:

Alvis, they call me Alvis.

*(DIGBY shakes his hand)*

DIGBY:

Digby.

ALVIS:

Nice to meet you then, Digby.

*(In the twinkling of an eye, DIGBY pulls from his jacket pocket his own packet of boiled sweets, which he offers to ALVIS)*

DIGBY:

Cough drop?

*(ALVIS demurs. DIGBY waits for ALVIS to have one of his own Humbugs, but for some reason, he doesn't)*

Go on, Cough Candy is just the ticket for a singer of your calibre...Elvis.

ALVIS:

I'm Alvis. I do "Elvis" for birthdays, bar mitzvahs and the launch of Chinkie restaurants and the like, but I'm not actually, in actual fact, Elvis.

DIGBY:

That's a relief...

ALVIS:

*(Furious)*

No, but I bloody would 'ave been if my stupid bastard of a brother could pigging well read and write.

DIGBY:

You're saying you could have been Elvis?

ALVIS:

Why not?



DIGBY:

You're Welsh and you do sound a bit like Shirley Bassie as it happens.

*(ALVIS still holding out the packet of sweets, shakes his head in disappointment before reaching across and shoving the bag into the glove compartment. He takes a deep breath)*

ALVIS:

My name was ...Lleuwllyn Ionedd Iffan ap Grythwdd. It's hard enough to say, let alone spell. I mean anyone would want to change their name from that. So I saved up a bit to get it done by deed poll and, 'cos I was on the road, my brother fills in the forms and the twat goes and writes Alvis.

DIGBY:

Close...

ALVIS:

Not close enough to get my dues though.

*(DIGBY is beginning to look faintly alarmed here)*

DIGBY:

Your dues being?

ALVIS:

The PRS from every one of my songs from the last thirty-five years as well as the conjugal rights to Priscilla... I wouldn't mind giving Lisa Marie one 'an all.

*(DIGBY stares at ALVIS for the longest time. Finally, he switches off the Dictaphone, pockets it, and fumbles for the door handle)*

DIGBY:

I think I might get a little air.

ALVIS:

Sorry, Digby. I've gone and made you uncomfortable. Be honest, I have, haven't I?

DIGBY:

No...you...Well, perhaps a little.

ALVIS:

Don't get a lot of company on the road, see. Don't mean any harm, like.

DIGBY:

No, I don't suppose you do.

*(Lights fade down on ALVIS and DIGBY)*

**ACT I**

**SCENE 3**

*(Lights fade up on a saloon car to stage right. Inside are MANDY and FRANK. In the back seats are their two eleven year old boys: VASCO and LEONARDO)*

MANDY:

This is about what I expected from you. Three hours on the M25 instead of a holiday....

FRANK:

I didn't arrange this for you, my love.

MANDY:

I sometimes wonder...

FRANK:

Manipulating the M25 is a little beyond my abilities.

MANDY:

What abilities, Frank? Watching TV, making unhygienic smells and picking your nose don't count.

*(MANDY grins horribly. LEONARDO and VASCO giggle hysterically)*

VASCO:

Good one, Mandy.

FRANK:

I can do a bit more than that love.

MANDY:

Yes, you're also very good at leaving horrible springy black hairs all over the bathtub.

FRANK:

*(Sighs)* We're all a bit frazzled today, I can understand that.

MANDY:

And you're the World Champion toilet-seat-leaver-upper.

FRANK:

*(Weary)* I get the message, love.

MANDY:

I don't think you do, Frank. After ten years of marriage you still do it. Every day, I walk in and there it is up again.

VASCO:

Ten years...?

LEONARDO:

But we're eleven...

MANDY:

Oh belt up.

FRANK:

*(Brightening)*

Clunk click, every trip. Speaking of which, who am I? Cheer us all up.

*(Bad impersonation of Jimmy Saville)*

Now then, now then, young man, yes indeed. Lovely, lovely...?

VASCO:

*(Bored)* No idea.

LEONARDO:

A prat?

MANDY:

*(Shrieks with laughter)* He's got it, Leonardo's onto it. I'll name that prat in one.

MANDY:

No listen. Five points for a correct answer. *(Imitates Jimmy Saville's strange ululation)*

Urururururer...splendid, splendid, would you like a Fixit badge, young man? Urururururer.

VASCO:

We're not babies, Frank.

MANDY:

*(Angry suddenly)* Trust you, Frank. Trying to amuse the kids by impersonating a paedo. Who does that?

*(MANDY rummages in the bag at her feet and throws a bag of crisps at the boys while scowling at her husband)*

MANDY:

It's all right my treasures. You can have Frank's crisps instead.

*(There's a fight in the back seat for the crisps. It's like feeding time at the zoo)*

VASCO:

Gi'us 'em here.

LEONARDO:

Fuck off.

*(Crisps explode everywhere)*

MANDY:

Oy, you two. Mind your fucking language.

*(The boys gather up crisps from the floor and seat and stuff their faces giving their mother V-signs behind her back. FRANK massages his temples)*

*(Silence. MANDY scowls before checking her watch)*

MANDY:

Great. Three hours on the M25. (Putting on an accent) "Oh how did you spend your long weekend Mandy?" - In purgatory as always, thanks so much for asking.

FRANK:

I don't do this on purpose.

MANDY:

I think you do, Frank. I really do.

FRANK:

I do my best, love.

MANDY:

Funny isn't it how your best is most other people's not even bothering to try.

VASCO:

I'm thirsty.

LEONARDO:

So am I.

*(MANDY turns and looks at the boys behind fondly)*

MANDY:

Ahh... Listen to them. It's not a holiday. It's torture.

FRANK:

It's all the salt in those crisps.

*(MANDY purses her lips. She rummages in the bag and produces a can of Fanta. Which she passes over her shoulder)*

MANDY:

There you are, treasures. Share that.

*(VASCO snatches it. Again there's a struggle for the can)*

LEONARDO:

Gi'us it.

VASCO:

Gerroff.

LEONARDO:

Vasco's not sharing, Mandy.

MANDY:

You're giving me a headache the two of you. I can hardly think now.

*(turns to Frank)*

So don't be getting any ideas about tonight. If we ever get there.

FRANK:

Nothing could have been further from my mind.

*(MANDY isn't sure how to take this. She stares at FRANK for a good while. FRANK gazes fixedly ahead through the windscreen.*

*In the back VASCO'S shaken up Fanta can suddenly goes off like a grenade. Fizzy drink spurts everywhere)*

VASCO:

Mum...

*(Lights fade down on MANDY and FRANK)*

## ACT I

### SCENE 4

*(Lights fade up on uniformed Traffic PCs TONY WENNER and DES DAVIES in their patrol car. A police radio constantly crackles with the low buzz of traffic reports. WENNER takes out ready-made sandwiches from an M&S bag)*

WENNER:

*(Reading the packaging)* Ricotta and Rocket...Korma with coriander and mint? Camembert and Cranberry? What's all that about then?

DAVIES:

M & S. Deli specials. I just thought it would be nice for a change that's all. A bit of a selection.

WENNER:

I like my bacon butty

DAVIES:

I know you do, Tony, but it's a healthier choice today.

WENNER:

What's wrong with bacon?

DAVIES:

Saturated animal fat. Not good for you.

WENNER:

Bacon? Bacon's not good for you, since when?

DAVIES:

Not all the time. Have the Korma one. You love a curry.

WENNER:

After a few lagers, but not in my sandwiches. I like proper stuff in my sandwiches like bacon or cheese.

DAVIES:

*(DAVIES hands him the Camembert sandwich)* That's cheese.

WENNER:

That's not cheese. It's all runny. You're havin' a laugh.

DAVIES:

It's cheese. French cheese.

WENNER:

*(Inspecting the package gingerly)* It's got like...jam in it.

DAVIES:

Cranberry.

WENNER:

Jam.

DAVIES:

Jelly.

WENNER:

*(Incredulous)* It's got jelly in it?

DAVIES:

Not wobble-wobble jelly. Cranberry jelly. Good for the bladder.

WENNER:

*(Sniffing)* Stinks. Look, Des, M&S is for undercrackers. M&S is where you go to get your pants...so no wonder their sarnies smell like arse. All this crap, right... avocado, cranberry, coconut and mint, is the kind of stuff my bird puts in the bath. You're not supposed to eat it. It's for making you smell nice. That is why you do not get bacon bath oil, or cheese and pickle shampoo and conditioner. Those are sandwich things. It's when you start mixing them up that you run into problems.

DAVIES:

*(Exasperated)* Tell you what, there's a bag of salt 'n' vinegar chip sticks in there. Why don't you scrape off the brie and cranberry and shove a handful between the bits of bread?

WENNER:

Now you're talking.

*(WENNER slops the Camembert out of the window and makes himself a chip-stick butty)*

WENNER:

What's to drink?

DAVIES:

Elderflower or Passionfruit?

WENNER:

Oh, ha, ha...

DAVIES:

No, really.

*(Lights fade down on WENNER and DAVIES)*

ACT I

SCENE 5

*(Lights fade up on JANE and COLIN)*

*(JANE, the passenger, is in her mid-twenties, COLIN is an adman in his late twenties. COLIN is braying into his mobile phone)*

COLIN:

So I picked up a bronze award last night?

*(Mouths the word "yes" and punches the air)*

For the Kleenex ads? Great. Is that all?

*(Listens)* What? You got a gold, for that FemFresh spot? No. You have got to be...

*(Listens aghast)* Two Golds? Jesus. And you got...

*(Holds the phone away from himself- shouts)*

Sorry Robin, we're on the move, you're dropping out. I'm losing you mate...sorry...

*(COLIN stabs the disconnect button and throws the phone over his shoulder onto the back seat)*

Shit!

*(Jane gives him a sympathetic look)*

COLIN:

*(Aggressive)* What?

JANE:

Sorry.

COLIN:

Sorry about what?

JANE:

Well, that didn't sound too good for you.

COLIN:

Meaning?

JANE:

I couldn't help but overhear...

COLIN:

Do you always listen in on people's personal phone calls?

*(JANE looks around her uncomfortably)*

COLIN:

*(Reasserting himself)* Well, you may or may not have heard that Tezzer and I scored a prestigious advertising award last night. Not that I care.



JANE:

Oh...*(Looks out the window and attempts to change the subject)*  
God, this traffic's the worst, I've never...

COLIN:

A bronze actually.

JANE:

Is that good?

COLIN:

*(Ironic)* Only the London International Advertising Awards, only probably the...twelfth most prestigious creative advertising awards in the world.

JANE:

Wow...

COLIN:

Yes, wow. Did I ever tell you that my brother's a Special Needs nurse?

JANE:

I don't think so.

COLIN:

*(Gloating)* Wait 'til he hears about this. Ha! In his smug face.

JANE:

A touch of sibling rivalry then?

COLIN:

Just a bit. He reckons my job's just jingles and stuff, like what I do is not important.

JANE:

Unbelievable.

COLIN:

It's a tough profession Jane as you're beginning to realize. And a bit more satisfying than wiping some bloody drooling mong's gob for a living at any rate.

*(JANE winces before staring out of the side window)*

JANE:

You must be very proud. I should imagine that your brother will be appropriately ashen when you tell him.

COLIN:

Ashed surely? Or are you thinking of abashed?

JANE:

Ashen. I think.

COLIN:

Jane, I'm the Head of Copy here, you're the PA. He'll be abashen. And bloody green.  
(*COLIN looms over JANE*)

"Beware the green-eyed mongoose." - Shakespeare, Jane. (*beat*) ... or was it Kipling's Riki Tiki Tavis?

JANE:

I'm not familiar...

COLIN:

No, well you're just a PA. That's OK. You don't need to have consumed Kipling's oeuvre. No reason why you should.

JANE:

I've eaten a few of his cakes though.

(*COLIN turns to smirk. He attempts a bit of charm*)

COLIN:

But not too many though, from what I can see.

(*JANE looks a bit flustered*)

JANE:

Ah...congratulations on your award at any rate. I imagine Malcolm will be thrilled.

COLIN:

Pssh, Malcolm. Useless, talentless, coke-snorting mediocrity.

JANE:

But he's...

COLIN:

Our Creative Director? You know what he said about the Kleenex lavvy paper commercial when we presented it to him? You won't believe it.

JANE

(*Shrugs*) Try me.

COLIN:

Too bumly.

JANE:

Too bumly?

COLIN:

In the old days they used to have kids doing all sorts of things with the toilet tissue, making suspension bridges, tying each other up, playing Egyptian mummies. And of course, Andrex had that puppy - visual euphemisms for saying: our tissue, it won't sandpaper your bum but it won't bust at the moment of truth either. Utterly dishonest. So, Tezzer and me decided to play it straight, tell it like it is. Ergo the "Happy Arses" spot.

JANE:

A triumph, I'm sure.

COLIN:

You haven't seen it?

JANE:

I've not... had that pleasure.

COLIN:

Once we'd had underlying inspiration the rest was easy. We just shot a whole load of cracks horizontally; you know, real people's bums and digitally manipulated them so there's a bit of a smile. Chucked in a Kenneth Brannagh V.O. And the rest, as they say, is advertising award history.

JANE:

*(Nervous)* To be fair to Malcolm, it does sound a bit...bumly though.

COLIN:

I can't believe you just said that.

JANE:

Malcolm's got a point.

COLIN:

*(Passionate)* Malcolm's got no point. There is no point to Malcolm. You know why people think Malcolm's clever?

JANE:

Malcolm is clever isn't he? I mean he's your boss, the Creative Director of a major London advertising agency? People say he's a genius.

COLIN:

*(Sneers)* That's because he never says anything.

JANE:

That's true.

COLIN:

He wears, right, those black floppy Comme de Garçon suits. The latest. He's got those thick black-framed specs which he doesn't need and he never says anything in meetings or anywhere else for that matter.

JANE:

People assume he's deep.

COLIN:

Precisely. He makes it look as though he's thinking profound thoughts. Always jotting down notes. But no one ever sees what he's written.

JANE:

Actually I've seen his notepad after a big meeting. I suppose I must be one of the very few people that actually has - usually Victoria, goes through those meeting rooms like a dose of salts...

COLIN:

A whirlwind of Shake'n'Vac...

JANE:

A few weeks back Victoria had a root canal and so I cleared the room instead.

COLIN:

And?

JANE:

Malcolm's notepad...was absolutely full of the most extraordinary scribbles.

COLIN:

Words and ideas of breathtaking genius?

JANE:

Pictures of male genitalia...with wings.

*(COLIN nods sagely)*

COLIN:

The sign of the flying penis.

*(JANE is suddenly quite excited)*

JANE:

Is that significant?

COLIN:

It's just something blokes do.

JANE:  
Sketch each other's genitalia?

COLIN:  
Doodle.

JANE:  
They were quite graphic. I mean, women doodle too. But usually geometric shapes, cubes and things. Nothing like that.

*(COLIN shrugs)*

COLIN:  
Men doodle our doodles...with wings. And tits. We like to doodle tits.

*(JANE looks pained)*

COLIN:  
*(Defensively)* You asked.

JANE:  
I did. Mea Culpa.

*(COLIN wipes his wraparound sunglasses on his polo shirt before putting them back on)*

COLIN:  
Ah Bella...*(Sexily)*... D'ove si trove l'Officio Postale?

JANE:  
What?

COLIN:  
You were speaking Italiano... Linguini d'amore, the language of romance: Napolitano, Capricchiosa, Quattro formaggio...

*(JANE is thrown. She stares at him nonplussed.)*

JANE:  
Latin...

COLIN:  
*(Leering)*...Uno Cornetto Grande...

*(Lights fade down on JANE and COLIN)*

ACT I

SCENE 5

*(Lights up on NORRIS and TURNIPS. Their seats have Leopard skin print covers. NORRIS wears a horrible open collar shirt and leather coat, TURNIPS wears a tracksuit. They both smoke cigars and speak very slowly and precisely with East End accents. NORRIS, the driver, wears blue tinted glasses and looks a bit like Mike Reid. He turns off the ignition and leans back in his seat with finality)*

NORRIS:

Well, we ain't going anywhere fast today. Sit back and enjoy it I say.

TURNIPS:

*(Puffs on his cigar)* Nice to get out of the Smoke at any rate.

NORRIS:

*(Puffs)* You're so right there, Mr Turnups.

TURNIPS:

Nice change of air.

*(Companionable cigar puffing silence for a while)*

NORRIS:

Strictly speaking, it's not really a change of air though is it? I mean, even though the surrounding environment is somewhat bucolic, I would imagine that if you were to analyse the air on this stretch of road outside you would find that it would be contain significantly higher levels of lead and Carbon Monoxide than say, Tower Hamlets or almost anywhere in Central London.

TURNIPS:

You're right there, Mr Norris. Just an expression really.

NORRIS:

No harm done. It *is* a change of air, only probably not for the better. I myself, don't often get out to the countryside like this.

TURNIPS:

I wouldn't exactly call this the countryside, Mr Norris.

NORRIS:

Granted. It is not strictly speaking the countryside. But it is somewhat rural...to a couple of City dwellers.

TURNIPS:

...it's verging on the rural...

NORRIS:

On the verges of...the grass verges...

TURNIPS:

Nice to be back anyways.

NORRIS:

Oh? I didn't know you got out to this neck of the woods all that much.

TURNIPS:

Well this isn't exactly the woods, Norris...it's generally agreed that a woods would have a few more trees than this. And a forest of course, would have many, many more.

NORRIS:

I'm impressed, Mr Turnups, that you would know that.

*(TURNIPS nods and puffs away)*

TURNIPS:

I'm quite familiar with the countryside, Mr Norris.

NORRIS:

You are a man of hidden talents to be sure. A man of many parts.

TURNIPS:

There's a lot people don't know about me. I do love the countryside; it's why they call me Mr Turnips.

*(NORRIS looks at his partner, a little perplexed)*

NORRIS:

I had no idea. Here's me for the past seven years thinking you was called Mr Turnups... on account of your dress sense. *(NORRIS considers this new fact in wonderment)*  
You live and learn.

TURNIPS:

You do live and learn.

NORRIS:

I imagine that there is a pertinent reason for this unusual nomenclature.

TURNIPS:

I'm country bred, Mr Norris.

*(NORRIS coolly examines his cigar, attempts to maintain his equanimity)*

NORRIS:

I may have misheard that, Mr Turnips.

*(TURNIPS examines his own cigar)*

TURNIPS:

Born and bred up Shropshire way. Shifted to the Smoke when I was twelve.

NORRIS:

I'm with you now, Mr Turnips. For a nasty moment there I thought you might have been describing yourself as some species of Malted Granary. Ready-sliced.

TURNIPS:

I can see how you might easily have leapt to that conclusion, Mr Norris. But you needn't worry. I've not gone doo lally tap. Not yet, at any rate.

NORRIS:

That's nice to know...

*(Without warning NORRIS suddenly roars with vein-poppingly uncontrolled violence)*

Cos if you had of been, I'd have shot you down like a dog where you sit.

TURNIPS:

*(Calmly)* I respect that, Mr Norris. I'd have done the same. You can't have your partner suddenly going doo lally tap like that. Not in our profession.

NORRIS:

*(Breathing heavily still though calming now)* Our profession...toughest game there is, stress-wise.

TURNIPS:

By far.

NORRIS:

Dentists? Number one stressful job? I don't think so...pathetic. Smash a few teeth out - Oooh, I'm a bit stressed, might have to lie down, have some gas and air.

TURNIPS:

Surgeons? Slice, slice – whoops. Bollocks. Airline pilots? Oh dear we've run out of fuel and the wheels won't lock, get us a coffee, love, and another dozen of them duty-free miniatures. Shite.

No, our game is the most stressful by a factor of about ten.

NORRIS:

The figures are patently skewed because they never think to research professionals in our game.

TURNIPS:

You'd only shoot them down like dogs if they did.

NORRIS:

I would.



TURNIPS:

We don't have the luxury of nervous breakdowns. Not in our game. Which is just as it should be. You know the risks when you get into it. The rewards are there, I agree. But the risks are there too.

NORRIS:

Nobody twists your arm.

TURNIPS:

You do, sometimes.

NORRIS:

Only when strictly necessary. But how do you think I feel about it? I'm not a bad guy. Nobody is black and white like in the films. Most people are right there in the middle, in the shades of grey.

TURNIPS:

That's why it's nice to get out into the country. There's clarity out here. Primary colours.

NORRIS:

Green.

*(NORRIS considers the view outside for a moment)*

On that subject, Mr Turnups, would you mind if I asked you a question? It's something that's been bothering me for years.

TURNIPS:

Shoot.

*(NORRIS looks uneasy)*

TURNIPS:

Ask me the question, Mr Norris.

*(NORRIS is decidedly uncomfortable)*

NORRIS:

What's a glade?

TURNIPS:

Five to seven trees, some wild flowers - usually bluebells and a fairy ring, possibly a brook.

NORRIS:

I do like the sound of that. Very tranquil.

TURNIPS:

They can be, glades, also vales.

NORRIS:

I've always wondered about a dell an' all. But I never wanted to ask, because who would I ask?

TURNIPS:

I know what you mean, Mr Norris. But a dell is just a small wooded hollow - possibly with the addition of wild flowers. But not necessarily.

*(NORRIS examines his cigar)*

You should enjoy the country while we're out here. We'll probably have to stay overnight now with this traffic.

NORRIS:

*(Panicked)*

I'm not stopping overnight.

TURNIPS:

Why not? We'll find a nice country pub.

NORRIS:

I've always liked the sound of the country, not so keen on the actuality... come to think of it; I don't even like the sound of the country.

*(NORRIS makes a weird hooting noise)*

Whooo...whooo!

TURNIPS:

What's that when it's at home?

NORRIS:

Owls.

TURNIPS:

Sometimes there can be owls.

NORRIS:

I can't be doing with owls...or midgets. Give me the creeps. The way they spin their heads all the way round. Like the girl out of the Exorcist.

TURNIPS:

Linda Blair?

NORRIS:

That's the girl, spewing pea soup all over the shop. Horrible. And that's why I don't like owls.

TURNIPS:

At least owls don't spew pea soup all over you. I will say that for them.

*(TURNIPS considers this for a moment)*

Hold up. Come to think of it, they do do that.

NORRIS:

*(Disgusted)*

They do do that?

TURNIPS:

Not pea soup though.

NORRIS:

What?

TURNIP:

Mice. Parcels of mice - bones and skin and that, all packaged up.

*(NORRIS can't believe it)*

NORRIS:

Right, well that's it, I'm not stopping in any pub with owls spinning their heads round, vomming mice at me all night.

TURNIPS:

We might not even get owls and I'm pretty sure we won't get midges.

NORRIS:

Midges though...

TURNIPS:

There may well be midges.

*(Lights fade down on NORRIS and TURNIPS)*

## ACT II

### SCENE 1

*(Lights up on DAVID and TOBY)*

DAVID:

You know, Toby, in the old days a young lad like you would be queuing up to learn from an old timer like me and you'd have to pay me for the privilege.

TOBY:

I'm still here aren't I? I'm ready, willing and able to learn. What's the problem? So far, I have a whole new perspective on velour. For which I'm very grateful.

DAVID:

No you see, you're not listening properly. Everything... every word that fell from my lips would be pure gold and you'd shut up, say nothing and just listen and that's how you'd learn.

TOBY:

I'm learning. This morning's presentation in Wandsworth was spectacularly educational.

*(DAVID pointedly ignores his abbreviated tie)*

DAVID:

I got my tie caught in the projector. It could happen to anyone.

TOBY:

David, I'm prepared to bet that you are categorically the last salesman in Britain to use a Bell& Howell Super 8 projector for his presentations. What's wrong with a laptop?

DAVID:

I don't trust computers. They crash. Anyway, it's about respect. Delivering a proper well-planned professional presentation shows you respect yourself, your company and your customer.

TOBY:

So you planned to get your tie jammed in the sprockets? That was part of the show?

DAVID:

A sheer one-in-a-million mischance. The point I am trying to make is that salesmanship is essentially showmanship; you get out of a presentation what you put into it.

TOBY:

Half your tie.

DAVID:

You've got to be prepared to make sacrifices if you want a customer's business.

TOBY:

Well, I suppose you did smash up the projector in the car park...after they kicked us out.

DAVID:

This morning was an anomaly, an aberration. It doesn't undermine my point.  
*(There's a silence in the vehicle. David taps his meaty fingers on the steering wheel impatiently)*

TOBY:

And that film. It was like some kind of soft-porn thing out of the Seventies.

DAVID:

That's because it was out of the Seventies.

TOBY:

All that flickery Technicolor, fluffy sideburns, flares and Zapata moustaches...

DAVID:

Core values don't date. What you saw on that cinematic presentation is as relevant today as it always was; a testament to our corporate values. The flares are an irrelevance.

TOBY:

Old Mr Struthers watching some dolly-bird in velvet hot pants climb up a ladder and then goosing her, that was Corporate Values?

DAVID:

A jocular sketch showcasing our modern warehousing facilities. Anyway, that's not just some dolly bird, that was Babs Shawcross from finance. Mrs Shawcross to you.

TOBY:

*(Shocked)* I feel sick now.

DAVID:

It's just age, Toby. Back then she was plain Babs Bartley. Used to be a right little minx. Do anything for you. Wear anything - sussies, fishnets, minis- the lot.

TOBY:

Oh my God. Well that just shows you how dated that bloody thing was. I mean that little minx Babs Shawcross, can't even waddle her way to the cafeteria these days without eight layers of support tights. And God forbid she ever goes up a ladder again.

DAVID:

Gravity and years will do that to you Toby.

TOBY:

Where's she been living... Jupiter? Every time I go near Finance now, I'm going to have an awful vision of that gigantic old woman in a mini skirt. I may have to sue the company for trauma.

DAVID:

That's your problem Toby, your first thought is always - what can I get out of the company, not, what can I put in?

TOBY:

*(Mock rhetoric)* Ask not what you can do for your company...

DAVID:

Now you're taking the piss out of a hero. *(DAVID shakes his head)* There's no talking to you...everything has got to be mocked and spat on. Even the great JFK.

TOBY:

Your generation is just so reverential David. You think that because the 60's came along and overturned one set of outmoded values there must have been something special about you? News just in – there wasn't. We did it all again in the 80's. Then again in the 90's and 2000's; a new set of values each time and all of it meaningless. Just look at you, where's all that 70's optimism and flowers in your hair now? Erased by mortgage repayments and Grecian 2000. No, the 60's were as pointless as any other decade... although some of the music might have been better.

DAVID:

*(Shrugs)* As I said, there's no talking to you.  
*(DAVID resorts to silence and taps the wheel irritably)*

TOBY:

What is that, Morse code?

*(DAVID pointedly ignores him and continues tapping)*

So you are talking to me then?

DAVID:

No...only because we're in the jam from hell and the cassette radio's busted. No other reason.

TOBY:

Where's the CD?

DAVID:

Upper Management only.

TOBY:

Well, there's your Corporate Values, David – no CD player in your car unless you're Upper Management. Forget the fact that we...you...spend ninety nine per cent of your time on the road and Upper Management only ever use their Company cars to pick the kids up from school.

DAVID:

Don't knock it, you'll be in Upper management soon enough, son, on your accelerated-do- fuck –all – and –get - there-pronto Promotion Program.

TOBY:

Go on then David, tell me. What are these Corporate Values that I should be so respectful of? I didn't see the end of the film...*(indicates DAVID'S cut off tie)*

DAVID:

Simple things like dignity, honesty, integrity and so on. Think JFK and you've got it.

TOBY:

*(Sighs)* You're idolising a man who rigged, elections, bullshitted his electorate and publicly cheated on his wife.

DAVID:

He was a man of conviction, Toby. I like...assurance.

TOBY:

That was Kennedy's schtick all right. And Thatch too. And Blair. Democrat, Conservative, makes no difference. Exploiters of idealists with the brass neck to go with it. People like you love all that.

DAVID:

People like me...?

TOBY:

I'm sorry, I can't help myself. You're like my father.

DAVID:

*(Chuffed)* Am I?

TOBY:

No, not really. My father has a double first from Cambridge and is a partner in a legal practice employing 178 people. You're nothing like him.

DAVID:

Oh...

TOBY:

But it's that irritating moral certainty that you have in common.

DAVID:

I'd like your dad.

TOBY:

No you wouldn't. You sell office junk for a living. He'd think you were beyond the pale.

DAVID:

I'm sorry your father has such a low opinion of corporate supplies.

TOBY:

I don't think it's the staples per se. It's more the sales thing really. He thinks it's beneath me. I only took this job to annoy my father.

DAVID:

There's a thousand youngsters give their eye-teeth to be where you are.

TOBY:

I have a first in PPE from Cambridge. Great things are expected.

DAVID:

You could do a lot worse, chum. People like me have qualifications. I got mine from the college of life. I'm not ashamed of it.

TOBY:

Do you know what? I'm not going to take the piss out of that statement, I believe it, and that's what I'm doing here, learning from people like you. You're helping me decide what I'm going to do with my life. Isn't that the general idea of this graduate intake thing?

DAVID:

You're here to annoy your dad. But in fact you're only annoying me. So why don't you take your first class PPE and bugger off and become a gym teacher then?

TOBY:

It has nothing to do with gymnastics, David. Anyway, you can't get rid of me that easily. I have to be assessed by every department first.

DAVID:

Well you're going to get a zero from me. Minus in fact...

*(Lights fade down on DAVID and TOBY)*



**ACT II**

**SCENE 2**

*(Lights fade up on JANE and COLIN)*

*(JANE's shoes are bothering her. She bends to undo a strap)*

JANE:

New shoes, do you mind if I...

COLIN:

Be my guest. Feel free to take off anything you like.

JANE:

Just the shoes, Colin.

COLIN:

Speaking of which, you might like to talk me through those fuck-me stilettos you were wearing on Wednesday?

JANE:

*(Horrified)* I beg your pardon?

COLIN:

Wooh, there she goes, all coy suddenly.

JANE:

I'm sorry Colin, but the fact that you kindly offered to give me a lift to Oxford this afternoon, doesn't give you the right to speak to me like that.

COLIN:

Relax, I thought you looked good in them.

JANE:

I'm sorry?

COLIN:

The shoes. Nice...pointy.

JANE:

What is wrong with you?

COLIN:

You appear to have a problem with taking a compliment, Jane.

JANE:

And you seem to have a problem with women, Colin.

COLIN:

*(Considers)* No. I think if you ask around you'll find that's definitely not the case. I do pretty well, thank you.

JANE:

Oh for God's sake.

COLIN:

You should be flattered we noticed.

JANE:

We? We? Who's all this "we"?

COLIN:

The Department, the boys, the lads. We all did. Even Allan noticed, and he's gay. Although to be fair they sort of pointed themselves out really. Naughty. Spiky heels. Patent leather. *(Makes a slavering gesture with his tongue in the style of Hannibal Lector)* Shiny...Clarice.

JANE:

Colin, I don't want to talk about those shoes any more. Big mistake, I'll wear flatties or sandals in future.

COLIN:

It's an advertising agency, what did you expect?

JANE:

I didn't expect a barnyard full of strutting, rutting cockerels.

COLIN:

Are you really so much of an...*(overly accented)*...ingénue? Or are you just playing...la coquette?

JANE:

I don't know Colin, but when I took the job as PA in the Creative Department I expected to be dealing with artists and poets, not piss-artists and borderline rapists.

COLIN:

You have no idea what's happening at work do you?

JANE:

I would love to know.

COLIN:

*(Thinks for a moment then, tragically)* People are against me.

JANE:

*(Considers)* That's true.

COLIN:

They call me "The Iceberg" because I don't flash off, I am ninety-five per-cent talent under water, and five to ten per-cent brilliance above. But in a jealous way. It's...hard.

JANE:

They don't call you The Iceberg.

COLIN:

*(Offended)* What do you mean they don't? How would you know? How would you know what they don't call me?

JANE:

They call you Malcolm's Bitch. They don't like you because they think you try to take the credit for everyone else's ideas.

COLIN:

They do not. Anyway you've only been here two months.

JANE:

One month and twenty- three days. Don't worry, I count them.

COLIN:

*(Conciliatory)* Look, I'm like you, Jane, I feel under siege. You know, I believe that when true genius appears in this world a confederacy of dunces will arise to surround and confound him. That's how I feel.

JANE:

I think that was... Swift.

COLIN:

*(Mollified)* Thank you.

JANE:

As in Jonathan.

COLIN:

Come again?

JANE:

The writer: Jonathan Swift.

COLIN:

*(Dissappointed)* I thought it was me.

JANE:

Swift. Wrote Gulliver's Travels.

COLIN:

I know who Swift... was.

JANE:

That's encouraging.

COLIN:

Just because a person's a bit, you know, cutting edge it doesn't necessarily... You think I'm so shallow. Nothing more than a witty clothes-horse with an attractive personality. It's not easy having this face Jane.

JANE:

I imagine not.

COLIN:

People think: good looking face...chiseled. Can't have anything up top." They write you off. Buff equals shallow. That's what people think.

*(JANE can't help smiling)*

If only they could see the mind at work behind this designer exterior.

JANE:

Like an i-Mac?

COLIN:

Yes! That's it exactly. I think you understand me Jane.

JANE:

I'm beginning to.

COLIN:

See. We barely know each other but within an hour or so we're already discussing the literary greats: Swift, Shakespeare, Mr Kipling...

JANE:

Not to mention my "fuck-me" shoes...

COLIN:

I say it like I see it, Jane.

JANE:

I'm not even going to bother to try to explain to you why the height of a woman's heels bears no correlation to her desire for sex. It's pathetic to think that it does. And it's that kind of attitude that gives women the impression that you're a shallow, narcissistic git, not your clothes or an opaque skull.

COLIN:

You're right Jane, I apologise for that Shoeist expression. I'm sitting here saying: "fuck-me shoes"...but I'm thinking:... great literature and sonnets. It's like what's coming out of my mouth bears no relationship to what's really going on in my head.

JANE:

You have to wonder why.

COLIN:

*(Portentously)* That's because I'm a riddle, Jane, wrapped inside an enema...

*(Lights fade down on JANE and COLIN)*

**ACT II**

**SCENE 3**

*(Lights fade up on PC's DAVIS and WENNER)*

*(The police radio is squawking and crackling. WENNER reaches over and turns it off)*

WENNER:

Enough of that. How about some decent sounds, Des? *(Opens the glove compartment and pulls out CDs)*

DAVIS:

Ah, wait one, you've just reminded me... *(Reaches into his tunic pocket and brings out a CD)*

WENNER:

Oh no...

DAVIS:

Something me and the wife knocked up with our karaoke programme. It's just a demo, like.

WENNER:

...Whale song?

DAVIS:

*(Exasperated)* I need you to be serious here for a minute Tony, this could be our big break and you could be part of it.

WENNER:

Go on then.

DAVIS:

*(Tapping the CD)* You know how popular those exercise videos and tapes are? Cardio workout, kickboxing, yoga, The Burn an' that?

WENNER:

Ye...es?

DAVIS:

Well this is an exercise programme for people who can't actually exercise. A workout for people on the move. Commuters, planes and trains, cars. The average commuter spends three hours per day in a car or on a train. It's a vast untapped market for the right kind of fitness product.

WENNER:

I was with you, Des, right up until the "stuck in the car" bit there...

DAVIS:

Ah, but that's the beauty of this particular fitness regime. Eena came across it on the net and it's genius. It's based on the Pernille Krejsgaard Swedish-Submariners' programme which is almost exclusively reliant on buttock-centric tension. The Gluteus Maximus, largest muscle in the human body. Unbelievable how much energy it uses in a state of tension. Give yourself a good half-hour workout with the Pernille Krejsgaard, system and it's the equivalent of a three mile run. Plus, you end up with an arse on you like a cross between Kylie Minagogg and the Millennium dome. Why else do you think Swedish sailors walk the way they do?

WENNER:

I'd never given it much thought.

DAVIS:

Well, the Swedish Navy swears by it.

WENNER:

I imagine they do.

DAVIS:

We need a name, Tony. These days marketing is everything. And you did that sales course at poly, so we thought you might...

WENNER:

*(Nods sagely. He's chuffed)* Well, I suppose I could give it a go.

DAVIS:

Maybe something with a car theme?

WENNER:

*(Thinks)* Burning Rubber?

DAVIS:

Not bad.

WENNER:

Pumping gas?

DAVIS:

Not so keen on that.

WENNER:

*(Thinking out loud)* Trains, planes, cars, fitness, bum-cheeks, Swedish Navy...come on, Tony, think. There must be a connection here somewhere. *(Clicks fingers)* Take Off...Get moving...

DAVIS:

I like it, Tony, I like where you're going with this.

WENNER:

I've got it, Des - Kick Butt. And here's the really clever twist, the hook: you spell 'Kick' with a J, to give it that authentic Swedish flavour. K...J...I...C...K. Kjick Butt.

DAVIS:

Genius. Mensa, that is.

WENNER:

*(Shrugs modestly)*

I missed my true vocation... go on then, let's have a listen. Shtjick it on.

*(DAVIS puts the cassette in and turns up the volume.*

*We hear a punchy disco track. Overlaid we can hear the voice of EENA DAVIS. She has a distinctive Yorkshire accent and no idea of rhythm)*

EENA'S VOICE:

All right...let's go. Now clench them buns...squeeze together now...on the beat...ah one...two...three... now jiggle left...and jiggle right...

*(The two policemen begin to rock slightly to the beat. Their faces pucker in extreme concentration as they attempt to follow Eena's shouted instructions. This can continue for as long as it's vaguely amusing)*

*(Music fades down. Lights fade down on DAVIS and WENNER)*



**ACT II**

**SCENE 4**

*(Lights fade up on COLIN and JANE)*

*(They both stare silent and open- mouthed out of the left side window. We can still just hear the thumping bass of the disco track from the car to their left)*

*(Lights fade down on COLIN and JANE)*

ACT II

SCENE 5

*(Lights fade up on MANDY, FRANK, VASCO and LEONARDO)*

MANDY:

I don't know why we can't go on a proper holiday abroad... strike that your honour... I know exactly why not.

VASCO:

'Cos Frank doesn't make enough dosh.

MANDY:

See...out of the mouths of babes...

FRANK:

If it's coming out of their mouths, it's only because you put it there.

MANDY:

Image is important. David Tremlett seems to understand that even if you don't.

FRANK:

Now you're going to tell me exactly why David Tremlett was made Head of Department instead of me. As if I didn't already know.

MANDY:

*(Folds her arms)*

Sorry I spoke. I'll keep my mouth shut in future...*(Beat)*...even though I can see all these other, younger men overtaking you at work...

*(Beat)*

FRANK:

Enough!

*(Forced jollity)*

Look, how about a game, to pass the time? I-spy with my little eye something beginning with...F?

MANDY:

Failure.

FRANK:

Ffff...uck...

Language.

MANDY:

Was that it then?

VASCO:

What?

FRANK:

The thing beginning with F? Fuck?

VASCO:

Language.

MANDY:

Fiesta. It was a Ford Fiesta.

FRANK:

Good one, Frank. We'd never have guessed a car.

VASCO:

Be nice to get away from cars for a change.

MANDY:

Fine, next holiday we'll just stay at home.

FRANK:

You know where the Tremletts are off to, don't you?

MANDY:

Let me think...oh yes, New Zealand...I only know this because David Tremlett mentions his New Zealand trip about as often as...actually about as often as you do, which, at a conservative estimate, is at least ten times a day.

FRANK:

You don't get traffic jams in New Zealand, even on bank holidays.

MANDY:

That's because nobody lives in New Zealand.

FRANK:

Don't be ridiculous.

MANDY:

FRANK:

New Zealand's not all it's cracked up to be. I had a friend who went there for the whale-watching – Mike Molloy. Saw the biggest pod of dolphins ever. Stretched all the way from the boat to the horizon. Awe-inspiring, almost wet himself right there on the deck.

MANDY:

That's what I mean Frank, magic.

FRANK:

It turned his hair white overnight.

*(MANDY stares at him, incredulous)*

FRANK:

*(Defensively)* Must have been the excitement, I suppose.

*(MANDY shakes her head in disbelief)*

MANDY:

That is just so typical.

VASCO:

I'd like to go to New Zealand. Why can't we go to New Zealand, Frank?

MANDY:

See.

FRANK:

You know why we can't go.

MANDY:

Frank's hair might fall out if he sees an emu or something. And Frank doesn't make enough money because all those smarter young men at work are impressing the directors, getting promotions and leaving him for dust.

FRANK:

One day you'll go too far, Mandy.

MANDY:

And what? What'll you do, Frank?

FRANK:

The boys.

MANDY:

*(Mock fear)* Ooh, the boys. You're going to send the boys around? Is that it?

FRANK:

You know what I mean. These boys.

MANDY:

Don't threaten me with the twins, you pathetic excuse.

FRANK:

You're crossing a line here Mandy. I'll...I will tell them.

MANDY:

You hypocrite. You think I don't know that you're having an affair? Who is she? Some pathetic floozie in the office? I don't care, Frank, really I don't, I'm only angry that you take me for a fool.

FRANK:

An affair?

MANDY:

You talk in your sleep Frank. Often.

FRANK:

Mandy...I...she's...

MANDY:

What's her name, Frank?

FRANK:

I don't know.

MANDY:

Do you know what? I believe you. It'd be just so...so Frank to have an affair with some slut and not even manage to remember her name.

FRANK:

You're right. I do have...I have a dream.

MANDY:

You're not Martin Luther King, you're a sad little draughtsman having an affair with a stupid slut.

FRANK:

It's not an affair. Just a weird recurring dream. The same girl keeps appearing.

MANDY:

A wet dream.

FRANK:

Just a dream, the same girl keeps appearing, long dark hair in a red dress. I was going to tell you but I thought it would just...annoy you. It's only a dream, I promise you. A recurring...no, it's definitely not a nightmare, it's a dream. That's all.

*(MANDY looks at him silence for a while)*

MANDY:

You can't be bothered to come up with a better story than that? I can't say whether I'm more annoyed at the affair or that pathetic excuse for an excuse.

FRANK:

Listen to yourself, Mandy. You're actually accusing me of committing adultery with a fantasy.

MANDY:

I don't want you to hear about your fantasies if that disgusting underwear you bought me for Christmas is anything to go by. Like dental floss. You bought that stuff for your tart and then you passed it on to me. Christ Frank, second-hand underwear. Nauseating. Does that turn you on?

FRANK:

Mandy, calm down. You're out of control here. The boys...

MANDY:

You can't threaten me with the boys. The boys already know what's what. I told them years ago.

*(Beat)*

FRANK:

You...you told them?

MANDY:

Of course I told them. You don't think I'd leave myself at your mercy.

VASCO:

Told us what mum?

MANDY:

About Frank. That thing I told you never to say. Well, you can say it now.

LEONARDO:

That Frank's not our real dad?

MANDY:

Yes, love.

VASCO:

Our real dad's not a loser like Frank. He's cool, Frank.

LEONARDO:

He's Spanish.

VASCO:

Like Umbro.

LEONARDO:

With the cojones of a bull.

MANDY:

*(Smiles matter of factly)* So there you are, Frankie darling, you've got nothing on me. Nothing.

*(FRANK gapes and hyperventilates. He turns and quickly winds down his window as he takes deep breaths. As he does so we hear the bass beat of 'Kjick Ass'. EENA DAVIS's voice instructs)*

VOICE OF EENA DAVIS:

Relax those butt-cheeks. Deep breaths now...deep...breath deep now...

*(Lights fade down on FRANK and MANDY, VASCO and LEONARDO)*

**ACT III**

**SCENE 1**

*(Lights fade up on ALVIS and DIGBY)*

DIGBY:

Must get lonely, constantly on the road like this...

ALVIS:

You find things to pass the time. I like to think about all those cars rushing by.

DIGBY:

Mmmm...

ALVIS:

Sometimes I get the feeling I seen some of them come round before.

DIGBY:

Is that so?

ALVIS:

Again and again, part of a never-ending cycle. It's comforting in a way, like the Wheel of Life... or London tap water. Makes you think though, 'specially at night. So many lives flashing past; all lit up for a moment in their tiny bubble playhouses. You'd be surprised what you see from up here. The scenes you witness; split second dramas – the weary, silent couples, dysfunctional families, lovers, villains, fools, the fighters. Like a seat in the Gods.

DIGBY:

With the power of a god. In a huge rig like this you could liquidate them all with a merest flick of that wheel.

ALVIS:

You're a spiritual man then, Digby? A man of faith?

DIGBY:

I'm a medical man, a surgeon. *(Chuckles)* Some say that we're the ones playing God.

ALVIS:

You're educated, that entitles you to look down on most.

DIGBY:

And you drive a juggernaut. That entitles you to look down on everyone.

ALVIS:

*(Chuckles)* True enough.



*(DIGBY produces a small thermos from his jacket, which he uncaps. ALVIS produces a packet of sandwiches from the dashboard)*

ALVIS:

Interest you in a spot of tongue?

DIGBY:

Only if you'll imbibe a little drop of my tea.

*(ALVIS accepts the thermos cup. DIGBY accepts a sandwich. ALVIS watches intently as DIGBY takes a small bite, he makes a face and lowers the sandwich)*

ALVIS:

So how does it feel then? When you play God?

DIGBY:

*(Pained)* I make...decisions. In certain circumstances I'm often called upon to exercise the power of life or death. It takes true courage to exercise that terrible power.

*(ALVIS sips the tea. DIGBY watches intently as he does so. ALVIS makes a face as though it tastes funny)*

ALVIS:

I suppose it all comes down to how you view death.

DIGBY:

I view death...same as most people, I would imagine.

ALVIS:

I expect you see a great deal more of it than most people, being of the surgical persuasion.

DIGBY:

I witness death on a sufficiently frequent basis to find it fascinating but not so often as to render it banal. Even at my advanced age I have not developed an immunity.

ALVIS:

No-one's immune to death, Digby. The problem is, that most people don't properly understand it: they view it with horror; as something less than desirable; a terminal state of non-existence. Death has got a bum rap in my opinion.

DIGBY:

Believe me, Alvis, from what I've seen, death does tend to put a bit of a crimp in someone's day. I mean there are any number of wholesome activities which one might be precluded from enjoying: sketching, hill-walking, conjuring, ice-skating, to name but a few...

ALVIS:

Ah, but you see, Digby, I happen to believe that the soul; the mojo; vital spark; charisma; call it what you will, is a form of energy. And as you know, energy is infinite and imperishable. Recycleable, as it were.

DIGBY:

That must be a great comfort, I wish I had your faith.

ALVIS:

It is a comfort. Those decisions you refer to; Sometimes releasing that energy can be a good thing: a blessing.

DIGBY:

You're speaking of euthanasia here - an absolute ethical minefield for one in my profession.

ALVIS:

Look at Elvis in his latter years – all that beautiful mojo trapped inside a great knob of butter.

DIGBY:

I'm surprised to hear those words coming from a fan.

ALVIS:

Not a fan, a vessel.

DIGBY:

A vassal?

ALVIS:

A vessel, Digby, containing energy, just as you are. Soul energies, once released, are constantly circulating; searching for the right destination, another home. On August 16<sup>th</sup> 1977, the soul of The King left that worn-out, bloated carcass.

DIGBY:

*(Shakes his head)* Tragic.

ALVIS:

But Elvis lives...

DIGBY:

...in his music.

ALVIS:

In South Wales...although he's on the road a fair bit.

DIGBY:

You're saying...he lives in you?

ALVIS:

*(Shrugs modestly)* I've always been a bit of a magnet for good mojo. Llandudno Promenade, 1977, it was. I'd had a few at lunchtime and was on my way down the chippy when I nipped in to the Public lavvy. That's where I felt it - a hot prickling sensation at the base of me neck, like someone breathing. I'm engulfed in a kaleidoscope of light, like I'm being sucked through a cosmic vortex, or up inside one of them Slinkys. Then, suddenly, I'm back in the lavvy. Myself but not myself, if you get my meaning. Somehow I know that I've just been selected as the cosmic receptacle. I'm the one. See?

DIGBY:

You're quite convinced of this? You don't imagine you could have just blacked out or something?

ALVIS:

Digby, when the King decides to enter you, you know it.

DIGBY:

*(DIGBY pokes inside his jacket for his Dictaphone)* Do you mind if I...? This is fascinating.

ALVIS:

No, you go right ahead.

DIGBY:

*(Speaking into Dictaphone)* Subject has revealed a surprisingly robust belief system predicated on elements of a Judeo-Christian eschatology combined with an egocentric...

*(ALVIS grabs the Dictaphone and speaks into it in an Elvis voice)*

ALVIS:

Subject is not subject. Subject is King...

*(DIGBY, gingerly takes the Dictaphone back. Speaks into it)*

DIGBY:

...believes himself to be possessed by the spirit of Elvis Presley, the famous rock and roll musician...

ALVIS:

Amongst others. Elvis is what I call the dominant presence, the lead singer so to speak. I told you, I'm not actually Elvis. *(Taps his head)* Elvis is one of our residents.

DIGBY:

*(Into Dictaphone)* Subject has indicated that his consciousness is comprised of more than one personality.

ALVIS:

Many people have sat in this cab - in that very seat, Digby. They've all willingly given up their mojo to meld with the soul of the King. With dignity. Happy to do it. Most of 'em.

DIGBY:

*(Lowering Dictaphone)* You're quite serious, Alvis? You're not having me on?

*(ALVIS removes his sunglasses and rests them on the dashboard)*

ALVIS:

I'm not looking for your approval here, Digby. I know what I know.

DIGBY:

You have no fear of extinction? No fear of death. None whatsoever?

ALVIS:

The parting of the soul is just another journey. You needn't fear it, Digby. We can sense your uncertainty.

DIGBY:

I'm fascinated, Alvis. But I don't mind admitting, a little anxious.

ALVIS:

I didn't mean to frighten you, Digby. I'm telling you this because I find you sympathetic... we find you intriguing.

DIGBY:

*(Into Dictaphone)* Subject is organized and rational. Yet claims multiple personalities are fully aware and cognizant...

ALVIS:

It means a great deal that an educated man like yourself has enough respect to listen to people like us...

DIGBY:

You are quite remarkable, Alvis. This is...remarkable.

ALVIS:

I like you, Digby. I honestly believe that you'll find a wonderful home with us.

DIGBY:

*(DIGBY addresses ALVIS whilst holding up the Dictaphone)* I've been observing your eyes, since you removed those smoked glasses. I always watch the eyes. Subject's eyes displaying evidence of dilation. No doubt due to the effects of the drugs.

*(Addressing ALVIS)* This is quite normal.

ALVIS:

I removed my glasses, Digby, because the eyes are the window to the soul and I want you to familiarize yourself with your new home. I want you to be happy and at one with us, here, Digby.

DIGBY:

*(Unperturbed)* I've never done this with someone of your absolute assurance before. Usually there's panic: bodily functions and so on. I'm curious to see what happens to the eyes. Something elemental passes. No question.

ALVIS:

You need to quiet down now, Digby, and prepare yourself.

DIGBY:

Soon, you'll begin to feel a slight numbness in the lower...

ALVIS:

It's just another journey, Digby, no pain, nothing to...

DIGBY:

My God, what did you...? My hands...

*(Drops Dictaphone)*

ALVIS:

Ah, here it comes. Don't fight it, Digby.

DIGBY:

The sandwich? You doctored the sandwich?

ALVIS:

Jesu, Digby, I'm startin' to feel a bit wobbly myself. Did you put somatt in that...?

DIGBY:

...tea? Course I did, you bloody Welsh ...

*(DIGBY'S head lolls)*

*(We hear the Dictaphone tape spool and begin play in a continuous loop)*

*ALVIS'S VOICE:*

People get stuck out here so long they just disappear...just disappear...just disappear...

*(ALVIS tries to fight the effects of the drug but his own head now slowly drops forward onto the wheel)*

*(Lights fade down on ALVIS and DIGBY)*

**ACT III**

**SCENE 2**

*(Lights fade up on NORRIS and TURNIPS)*

SFX:

*(Muffled banging sounds)*

NORRIS:

Oy, Oy. Our friend in the boot has woken up.

TURNIPS:

You want me to go and shut him up?

NORRIS:

Cast your peepers three cars ahead, two lanes over, and you will clock the distinctive yellow and blue livery of a Bacon Sandwich. Traffic rozzers. Our car boot, on the other hand, contains a youngish gentleman, nekkid and tucked inside a small but expensive carpet. You know this, since it was you that rolled him up so beautifully back in Camden some four hours ago.

TURNIPS:

Like a gigantic Persian spliff. Not too tight, not too loose.

NORRIS:

That young gentleman, through no fault of his own, has become somewhat awakened and lively, whilst we, affixed, on the horns of a dilemma, are powerless to respond owing to the proximity of the Filth.

TURNIPS:

You're not going soft on our young gentleman, I hope.

NORRIS:

Not softness, Mr Turnips, consistency. Consistency of brand delivery is what I'm talking about here. We promise a thing, we should deliver a thing: If you don't pay Mr D. we come round your house, rohypnol you, strip you nekkid, roll you up in a carpet, take you out to the country and give you what for. A consistent consumer experience is paramount in today's competitive market place.

TURNIPS:

Where did you learn that, Mr Norris?

NORRIS:

I did an MBA.

TURNIPS:

I had no idea.

NORRIS:

Last Wednesday. Solo job for Mr Dodgeson. Little bastard in the City lost big on the gee-gees Gs. Came out with that whilst getting his nipples croc-clamped to a sixteen-volt car battery.

TURNUPS:

The clever ones are always the most rewarding, Mr Norris.

NORRIS:

Indeed they are. Now, our defaulting customer, instead of waking up somewhere nice and remote, looking forward to the kicking of his life, has come-to, nekkid, in the oily boot of a stationary car, wrapped in a carpet, wondering what the bloody hell is going on. Regrettably, we have failed him through an inconsistent brand experience

TURNIPS:

Might I posit that since the percussive gentleman in the boot has failed to pay up, he is not technically a customer?

NORRIS:

Not a customer? Mr Dodgeson has been supplying Malcolm –the gentleman’s name is Malcolm - with cocaine since the mid-Eighties; from the moment he began his career n a London advertising agency. And not just any advertising agency, mind - the Shake’n’Vac people.

TURNIPS:

Shake ‘n Vac, Mr Norris? I had no idea.

NORRIS:

Oh yes, Mr Turnups. The stuff of legend. And who is to say that Mr Dodgeson’s Magic Dust did not play a part in the creation of that medulla-jangling-jingle-genius?

TURNIPS:

Forgive me, Mr Norris, but I still feel that since Malcolm has not paid his bill, despite numerous reminders, he is not technically a customer and cannot rely on the kind of courtesies we would normally extend.

*(Banging sound increases in volume and intensity)*

NORRIS:

*(Considers)* Yeah. Besides that fucking racket’s seriously beginning to get on my tits.

TURNIPS:

If I’m not mistaken I do believe there’s a AA promotional screwdriver pack in the glove compartment.

NORRIS:

A shivving, Mr T.? In full view of the law? Is that wise?

TURNIPS:

A perforation, certainly. I shall take my screwdriver, Mr Norris, in full view of all and make a small, innocent mechanical adjustment to the rear of our vehicle. Punch a few little holes in the exhaust pipe and a couple of extra little holes in floor of the boot to help the fumes on their way and it's: Goodnight, Malcolm.

NORRIS:

I apologise for underestimating you, Mr Turnips. If this is what comes of country bred, I'll have a slice of that. With jam on.

*SFX: (Continuous horn blaring)*

NORRIS:

What the bloody hell now?

*(TURNIPS twists in his seat to investigate the sound coming from behind)*

TURNIPS:

It's that ruddy great juggernaut behind us. It appears that the driver of said vehicle has fallen asleep at the wheel.

NORRIS:

That's all we need.

TURNIPS:

Christ on a bike, the bloody thing's moving, Mr Norris. It's gonna...it's gonna ram us.

*SFX:*

*(Sound of huge collision. NORRIS and TURNIPS are thrown forward in their seats. Twin airbags inflate, trapping them)*

*(Lights fade down on NORRIS and TURNIPS)*



**ACT III**

**SCENE 3**

*(Lights fade up on COLIN and JANE)*

JANE:

Seriously Colin, I'd love to know a bit more about how you think, what makes you tick. I've always thought that we should be constantly learning from one another where we can.

COLIN:

Well I suppose I could coach you through a few of the Classics, you know, of an evening. If your boyfriend doesn't mind that is.

JANE:

Don't have one.

COLIN:

That's an amazing coincidence.

JANE:

What?

COLIN:

No special girl at this point in time.

JANE:

The coincidence being?

COLIN:

You're available...I'm currently unencumbered. Classic scenario. Initial hostility quickly turns to mutual respect – becomes attraction, stroke, shag. It's a classic three-act film script with a double character-arc built-in. Who can fight Hollywood?

JANE:

Every normal, decent, well-balanced, right-thinking person. Just by not paying to see their sexist, misogynistic, racist, fascist, revisionist films.

COLIN:

You're an idealist, Jane. You live in a fantasy world; a world of could be's and should be's and ought to be's But Reality has a way of chucking stun grenades into Fantasy's apartment, smashing his pink furniture to smithereens and setting fire to his collection of Spandex Unitards before kicking him in the balls. Reality's Precinct Captain is forced to log an official reprimand for the record, but we all know that he's secretly applauding.

JANE:

What the hell is wrong with you?

COLIN:

Sorry, is that not a blisteringly accurate synopsis?

JANE:

It's puerile and demented.

COLIN:

Reality has a way of finding two people who hate each other, throwing them together in an unlikely scenario.

JANE:

And which movie is this, exactly?

COLIN:

The movie of your life, Jane. No point fighting it.

JANE:

Would you be prepared to consider the notion that demeaning women is your only sexual strategy?

COLIN:

No. No wait, yes. Is this a trick question to get me into bed, you little minx?

*(Beat)*

JANE:

I'm deadly serious, Colin.

COLIN:

Don't get me wrong here. Serious has its place... I'm capable of being serious.

JANE:

These *are* serious questions. I'll be straight with you now, Colin, you deserve that at least: I'm at the tail-end of a three-month field-study focused on the evolved male-female contemporary evolutionary dynamic, with a particular focus on gender issues in the media.

COLIN:

I worry about that a lot actually. I also worry about the ozone...ice problem ...dynamic.

JANE:

Do you understand what I just told you? Your agency creative department has been the focus of my PHD thesis. It's not a flattering study. You might not like my conclusions.

You're pack-animals. You and your hideous gang of advertising agency adolescents are the core of my thesis; you are my paper, even if you'll never read it.

*(COLIN gazes at JANE for the longest time)*

COLIN:

You're writing about us?

JANE:

That's what I just said, Colin.

COLIN:

And you're going to publish this?

JANE:

It might well be published.

COLIN:

Some kind of wimmin's rights thing?

JANE:

Not exactly.

COLIN:

You snake. You sanctimonious, supercilious, frigid cow. How dare you put me under your microscope? Get the fuck out of my car. You want exposure to the contemporary male-female dynamic? Hitch, bitch.

JANE:

For God's sake, Colin...

COLIN:

Out. I mean it.

*(JANE is thrust out of the car. She exits in a twirl of Red-Dress, carrying her shoes)*

*(Lights fade down on JANE and COLIN)*

**ACT III**

**SCENE 4**

*(Lights fade up DAVID and TOBY)*

TOBY:

I will say one thing for you though.  
*( DAVID grips the wheel and stares fixedly ahead)*  
At least we can talk.  
*(Silence)*

DAVID:

I'm clenching my teeth. It's an expression of agony.

TOBY:

Ah, you're talking now.

DAVID:

I'm not talking. I've given up the struggle.

TOBY:

OK, you're listening though, which is more than my father ever does.

DAVID:

Fathers don't have to listen to their offspring. We know too much.

TOBY:

You're a dad? I never knew that.

DAVID:

That's because you never bothered to ask. You're always too busy yapping about yourself.

TOBY:

A son?

DAVID:

Daughter. About your age.

TOBY:

Wow, David, I'm impressed.

DAVID:

Don't be. Anyone can do it.



TOBY:

We've all got to live.

DAVID:

That's the point. You've got to put some bloody effort in to live.

TOBY:

Why does everything have to be on your terms?

DAVID:

It may surprise you to learn that I don't love this job. I do it because I have to. I've gone to work every morning for the past twenty-six years because each day is another tiny building block to be added to a pile that represents a marriage, a home, and a child who I've managed to put through tertiary education. Angela – sorry, Cosmia Delphinior Rainbow Sprite - has an honours degree in Business Studies.

TOBY:

A degree is not a set of shackles. We're all entitled to have our own shot at life. You think you've slaved all these years to build your dream. All you've done is build your own prison.

DAVID:

Perhaps you're right, Toby. Let's talk again in twenty years time. Better yet, never.

TOBY:

No, this has been really instructive. I want to thank you.

DAVID:

For what?

TOBY:

For helping me come to my decision.

DAVID:

You've decided to bugger off and become a P.E. teacher? Please God.

TOBY:

I'm in this band. A kind of post-punk thing with a few Arctic Monkeys, Linkin Park covers thrown in. I'm the front-man.

DAVID:

You hog the mike, in other words. Why doesn't that surprise me?

TOBY:

It's a rush up there in front of the crowd; the only time I really feel alive. The lads and me are ready to get on the road and see if we've got what it takes. They've lined up a tour,

just pubs and clubs but it's a start. I've been umming and ahing about the whole thing for a few weeks now. But I'm pretty sure this is what I was meant to do. This might be my shot.

DAVID:

You've got a first-class degree, Toby. That's your shot.

TOBY:

We both know that I'm not cut out for a career in staples.

DAVID:

It doesn't have to be at Sedgwicks. With your education you could work just about anywhere.

TOBY:

I know that. *(Beat)* Can I say something without you getting offended?

DAVID:

I don't think that's possible. But try me.

TOBY:

Listening to you for the last couple of hours has really crystallized things for me. No offence, but I don't want your life or any part of it. I feel I owe it to myself to be courageous, to take this chance now. I know that if I don't, in twenty years time I'll just be left wondering what if.

DAVID:

And you reckon this is courage?

TOBY:

Yeah, I do as a matter of fact.

DAVID:

It's not courage, Toby, it's self-indulgence. It takes courage to face responsibilities, not run away from them.

TOBY:

I have to get back to London. The band leaves tonight – with or without me. There's a gig in Lowestoft tomorrow. It's only a pub but it's a start.

DAVID:

And Sedgwick's?

TOBY:

What about them? Tell them to give my velour to someone else. Don't worry, there's an overpass fifty-yards back. I can nip over to the other side of the motorway and hitch back to London.

*(TOBY reaches down for a small overnight bag and gets out)*

DAVID:

Toby.

TOBY:

What?

DAVID:

I can't say I'm going to miss you much. But...take care, lad.

*(DAVID holds out his hand. TOBY shakes. DAVID squeezes really hard)*

TOBY:

Oww...

*(Lights go down on DAVID and TOBY)*



**ACT III**

**SCENE 5**

*(Lights up on NORRIS and TURNIPS)*

*(NORRIS and TURNIPS are still trapped in their seats by the airbags.  
A naked man runs across the stage)*

TURNIPS:

The boot's popped open.

NORRIS:

And I expect you saw our nekkid Malcolm run past in the rearview mirror.

TURNIPS:

I did see that.

NORRIS:

You shouldn't have done.

TURNUPS:

Now why is that, Mr Norris?

NORRIS:

Because it never happened, that's why.

TURNIPS:

As far as Mr Dodgeson is concerned that nekkid Malcolm never happened. My lips are sealed.

NORRIS:

Unlike the boot.

TURNIPS:

*(Nods)* Precisely, Mr Norris.

*(Lights fade down on TURNIPS and NORRIS)*

**ACT III**

**SCENE 6**

*(Lights fade up on FRANK, MANDY, VASCO and LEONARDO)*

FRANK:

Traffic's beginning to ease up, love.

MANDY:

I couldn't care. The weekend's ruined.

FRANK:

If you're not bothered I can just park up here and we can spend the next three days on the grass verge.

MANDY:

Do what you like, Frank, you always do that anyway.

FRANK:

Mandy, I'm fighting to make this work.

MANDY:

It's too late for that, Frank. Park up on the lay-by, see if I care.

VASCO:

Yeah, Frank.

FRANK:

Don't call me Frank, Vasco.

VASCO:

Why not, it's your name isn't it?

MANDY:

What are they supposed to call you then, Frank? They can hardly call you dad, can they?

FRANK:

No. They can't. Not now. I'm not their father. *(Beat)* I'm not your father either, Mandy.

MANDY:

You have no right to compare yourself to my dad, to even talk about yourself in the same breath. You didn't know him.

FRANK:

I know what he did to you, Mandy.

MANDY:

He was a real man, at least.

FRANK:

If the measure of a man is your father, I can only say that I'm happy that I don't stack up.

MANDY:

Don't go there, Frank.

FRANK:

Why? The boys? Oh, they don't want to hear about dear old Gramps?

LEONARDO:

I want to hear about Grandpa, Mum.

MANDY:

Grandpa's gone away. He's dead.

FRANK:

Dead is he?

MANDY:

Is that another threat, Frank?

FRANK:

No. It's not a threat. I have nothing to gain here. I'm sorry, Mandy, truly sorry, I thought I knew what I was taking on. I thought I could make it work. I thought there was a chance I might break through that bundle of festering scar tissue that you call a personality. But it's impossible. I see that now.

MANDY:

I know you're having an affair, Frank. This is all just self-justification.

FRANK:

I'm not having an affair, but I just can't live like this any more, Mandy.

LEONARDO:

Tosser.

FRANK:

I'm sorry, Mandy. Truly sorry.

*(FRANK gets out of the car)*

*(MANDY climbs across into the driving seat and takes the wheel)*

MANDY:

*(Shouting)* Nice one Frank. Only you could get out in a huff just as a two-hour traffic jam starts to clear. We're moving, Frank.

*(MANDY turns on the ignition and revs the engine)*

Okay, Frank. This is it. I'm going. I'm driving. You're on your own.

VASCO:

Tosser.

*(Lights fade down on MANDY, VASCO and LEONARDO)*

**ACT III**

**SCENE 7**

*(Lights fade up on WENNER and DAVIES)*

*(WENNER and DAVIES pump their hips to the driving track on their CD player. WENNER reaches over and truns it off)*

WENNER:

Jesus, I'm knackered. I reckon you might be on to something here, Craig.

DAVIS:

Told you.

WENNER:

I feel like I've just done ten-rounds with Mike Tyson... if he was punching me up the arse.

DAVIS:

I can see a difference already. You've got a right lean and hungry look on you.

WENNER:

Gi'us one of them tulip sarnies then.

*(DAVIES rummages in the M&S bag)*

DAVIS:

Ricotta and rocket with...

WENNER:

Just give us it.

*(Beat)*

DAVIES:

I don't suppose you saw that nudey bloke running across the central reservation with his bollocks flying a minute ago?

WENNER:

*(Eating)* I did as it happens, Des.

DAVIS:

So, what are we going to do about it?

WENNER:

I'm having my lunch. Besides, crime-fighting instinct tells me that a nudey-bloke with his bollocks flying, running amok on the motorway is a nut-job – Most likely the reason for this tailback in the first place. It's starting to clear now. Leave him be, it's all working itself out. That's the thing about traffic jams; they have a way of doing that.

DAVIS:

That's a good instinct. Everyone respects your instinct, Wenner. I'm glad you say that. We should conserve our energies for the Kjick-Arse marketing initiative. We are literally sitting on a gold mine here.

WENNER:

Any more of them rickety rockets then?

*(Lights fade down on WENNER and DAVIES)*

**ACT III**

**SCENE 8**

*(Lights fade up on JANE. She stands on the grass verge, buckling her heels.  
FRANK approaches)*

JANE:

Go away.

FRANK:

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to crowd you.

JANE:

You're not crowding me, you're creeping me. I'm no mood to be picked up. And, no, I have no desire to get into your car, thank you. In a moment, I'm going to stick my thumb out and hitch. I'd prefer a random encounter to some weirdo like you, who's probably been eyeing me for the last five minutes.

FRANK:

I'm sorry, I didn't mean... I can't give you a lift, I don't have a car. I don't have anything any more. Don't worry, if it's all right, I'll just...go and walk fifty yards ahead or so, so you can get the first lift.

*(FRANK walks)*

*(Beat)*

JANE:

Where are you headed anyway?

*(FRANK stops and turns)*

FRANK:

Oxford. My sister lives there.

JANE:

I'm going to Oxford.

FRANK:

That's nice. Maybe I'll see you. I'll be sure to wave...from a distance.

JANE:

I'm sorry, that wasn't fair of me. I've just lost my ride, I'm not happy about being here.

FRANK:

*(Shrugs)*

Same.

JANE:

Well, maybe we could...

FRANK:

No, I think I'd better...

JANE:

No, that's probably...

*(Beat)*

I'm Jane, by the way. In case you do decide to wave at me in Oxford.

FRANK:

Frank.

*(FRANK nods and begins to walk. He turns. They both speak at the same time)*

JANE:

I wouldn't mind if...

FRANK:

If you want, I could...

JANE:

Up to you.

*(FRANK walks back to JANE)*

FRANK:

In that case, I'll stand here with you, and wait. And if it's a pervert, it's agreed – you've got first dibs.

*(JANE grins)*

JANE:

Thanks a lot, Frank.

*(Lights fade down on JANE and FRANK)*



**ACT III**

**SCENE 9**

*(Lights fade up on TOBY)*

*(TOBY stands on the grass verge on the other side of the stage. He has his thumb out. DIGBY sidles up to him)*

DIGBY:

You don't mind if I...?

*(TOBY shrugs)*

DIGBY:

The old Hillman Hunter has given up the ghost and so I am forced to rely on the kindness of strangers and hitch. I wondered if I might impose myself on the protection of a younger, stronger man like yourself. I'm feeling a little wobbly you see. Would you object to a little aged company on your way back to London? I assume you are traveling to the metropolis?

TOBY:

Sure. We'll probably get a lift quicker together.

DIGBY:

Indeed we might. The open road is no longer so obliging to the young man on his own as it was in my day.

TOBY:

People don't know who to trust any more.

DIGBY:

Indeed. Motorways are so impersonal and dangerous now, like quicksand.

TOBY:

It's those bloody long-distance lorry-drivers you've got to watch out for. Sutcliffe and the like – psychos the lot of them.

*(DIGBY nods in affirmation)*

DIGBY:

I couldn't agree more. *(Rummages in his jacket pocket)* Tell you what, I've a nice thermos of tea here. You look as though you could use a cup. It's still warm you know.

TOBY:

Sugar and milk?

DIGBY:

Of course.

*(TOBY accepts the little cup)*

TOBY:

Cheers, ah...?

DIGBY:

Digby.

*(TOBY drinks)*

TOBY:

I'm Toby.

*(DIGBY smiles and rummages in another pocket for his Dictaphone)*

DIGBY:

You don't mind if I...? It's like a journal, you see. Saves looking for a pen.

*(TOBY shrugs)*

TOBY:

Be my guest.

DIGBY:

Friday, late afternoon. Still on the M25. Truly, a most remarkable day. Exhilarating in fact...

*(BLACKOUT)*

**END.**