

FOUR STOPS

An Anthology

by

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Written by Adam C. Hughes  
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Written by Kerrie Mulhall  
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Written by Alex Quinn  
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CHARACTER LIST:

**STRAWBERRY CHARDONNAY**

ERVING - Gigolo. Jaded. Bad back.

THE CASANOVAS - Erving's three housemates. Also gigolos. Lacking in personal boundaries and braincells.

FRANK - Erving's old mentor.

RAYMOND - Erving's supposed client for the night.

ELENA - Raymond's wife. Sick of his shit. Sick of all this.

WASTEMAN - A wasteman. Maybe the one honest person at the party?

**THE ROCKSTAR**

MACK - Singer in Cram Panic. Has completely bought into the rock and roll myth. Loves his Apple Watch and Paul Weller

CLOVER - Mack's long-suffering girlfriend.

JOHNNY - The band's lead guitarist and second in command.

PAUL - The band's rhythm guitarist

CONNOR - The band's drummer.

JAY - The band's stoic bassist.

MARK - Mack's replacement (among other things).

**THE PHOTOGRAPHER**

LAUREN - A young photographer and assistant to Hugo.

JADE - Hugo's other assistant. Slightly more ambitious than Lauren.

HUGO - Lauren's boss. Bit of a dick

THE MODEL - A model.

**THE ROBOTS**

JON - Sensible, level-headed.

RON - Also sensible and level-headed, gives less of a shit about showing it.

FRANCIS - Permanently a few pints deep.

JIM - Retail worker. Hates being a retail worker.

Basically, if you've ever seen Seinfeld, Jon is Jerry, Ron is Elaine, Francis is Kramer and Jim is George. The characters were written as gender neutral, the names are just to help differentiate rather than call them One, Two, etc.

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: STRAWBERRY CHARDONNAY

INT. CASANOVA BATHROOM - EARLY EVENING

"Solitude" by Billie Holiday plays, distorted by the muffle of water.

ERV lies in the tub with his ears submerged, drowning out the music and chatter of the boys - THE CASANOVAS - outside the room.

The door flings open. CASANOVA #1 bursts through in a rush. He briefly acknowledges Erv, whose head has flung up in shock.

CASANOVA #1

Sorry lad.

He advances straight upon the toilet, undoes his trousers, and pisses straight into the bowl as Erv frowns in the tub.

INT. CASANOVA LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Two other Casanovas sit at the kitchen table, playing whopper.

CASANOVA #2

Seven.

CASANOVA #3

Lower?

CASANOVA #2

Lower.

Erv emerges from the bathroom in his towel. The boys turn to him.

CASANOVA #3

There he is. Had a nice soak, lad? Thought you were gonna grow scales there.

CASANOVA #2

Little Merman and that.

ERV

Yeah, I would've been in there longer. We really need to talk about about boundary issues

CASANOVA #1  
 (From the bathroom)  
 Shut the door, lad.

Erv scowls.

CASANOVA #2  
 Why'd you take so long?

ERV  
 Privacy. I need me-time in the  
 bath, I'm like a ma.

CASANOVA #2  
 Ah well, you've got somewhere to  
 be anyway...

ERV  
 I know... I told you I had a bad  
 back.

Erv reaches over the breakfast counter and switches on  
 the kettle.

CASANOVA #3  
 And we told you, we're not  
 covering your bookings. We need  
 nights off. We like long baths and  
 privacy too.

CASANOVA #2  
 Even more so! You're getting jobs  
 in Crosby, Allerton... you know  
 where I was working last night?  
 The fucking Adelphi!

CASANOVA #3  
 If that's not a man who needs a  
 long bath, then who is?

Erv frowns at the pair of them and turns back into the  
 bathroom, to Casanova #1's dismay.

CASANOVA #1  
 Wah-

ERV  
 You can't say a fucking word!

The door slams shut.

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - EVENING

Erv smokes on the balcony with a coffee, in his robe.  
 There's a roughly knotted bowtie in tangles on the ledge.  
 Casanova #3 comes out to join him.

CASANOVA #3

Having trouble with that bowtie?

ERV

I'm not wearing it. The tuxedo act is long passed. We need to modernise in our line of work. Rebrand.

CASANOVA #3

Well, I'll leave that to you.

Casanova #3 takes a smoke from Erv's packet and lights up.

CASANOVA #3

Tonight could be good for you. These artist gaffs are always a fun time. Kooky people up to weird things. You're booked in for a couple you know?

ERV

Yeah. Still not a selling point... I have a -

CASANOVA #3

Bad back, yeah. Well if all that fails to get you in the mood, there's always this.

He holds out a silver baggie with a cartoon strawberry on it.

CASANOVA #3

They call it "Strawberry Chardonnay"; brings everything together. It'll make you see your truth, free yourself of ego, and then make some fucking wonga.

ERV

Yeah but what actually is it?

CASANOVA #3

No idea.

ERV

You messing? So you're offering me some miscellaneous drug in a pretty bag with ambiguous side effects as some kind of shitty plot device? I know I'm going to this party, I'm already paid for.

Erv snorts and heads back in.

## CASANOVA #3

Atta boy.

## INT. TAXI - NIGHT

A slow jazz piano plays from the radio, as Erv, in a tuxedo without a bowtie, lies in the back seat looking out onto the city. He's wearing eye makeup and yellow shades.

He practises, in mime form, the act of "socialising": shaking invisible hands, exchanging pleasant smiles, polite inaudible conversation. He then practices his flirtatious persona, much to the cabby's dismay.

## EXT. OUTSIDE FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

The house is grand and appears to be in New Brighton, but Erv cannot tell. He realises he hadn't paid any attention on the journey. He searches his pockets for the invitation as he approaches toward the house, from where the sounds of a full-swing party bop through the walls.

The front door swings open, as the BUTLER of the house comes flinging a WASTEMAN down the steps. They tussle like Looney Tunes and the fray leads out onto the yard.

BUTLER

You've been told before, you  
little cunt!

Erv shrugs and walks right on in.

## INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The party is chaos; a hazy, sensual mess. Some guests wear masks, all are unhinged. Cocaine travels in sandstorms through each room. Bodies are flung at each other as Erv passes through the corridor. Some offer him fruit, others, champagne; he accepts both.

Attempting to enter a room, he bumps into MACK PULLEN, who's off his nut.

MACK

Sorry, mate.

He pats Erv on the shoulder and feeds him someone else's bump of cocaine.

ERV

Cheers. You didn't order a gigolo  
did you?

MACK

Pardon?

ERV

Nevermind. I lost my invitation, see? I'm not sure who I'm here for.

MACK

We're all here for everyone. It's a free for all!

ERV

Could you point me to the host?

MACK

Sure. Actually he's right there - hey Frank!

He points to an older man dressed to the nines emerging from a room. FRANK turns to see Erv with seething eyes.

ERV

Ah bollocks.

Frank approaches the pair.

MACK

Frankie, this is - uh...

FRANK

Erving. Didn't expect this.

ERV

Me neither...

A silence ensues. Uncomfortably, Mack pretends to spot a friend of his, waving ostentatiously.

MAC

Paul? Paul, is that you?

He looks to the others to see if they've noticed. They just stare at him awkwardly. He saunters off, leaving them to it.

FRANK

What're you doing for work?

ERV

Oh me? Ah... painter and decorator...

FRANK

What a waste of talent.

ERV

Oh, come off it.

FRANK

I'm serious. You had so much potential.

ERV

To be someone I didn't wanna be.

FRANK

I took you under my wing, like I did for all these cunts. Only difference is you actually had a chance-

ERV

I really don't wanna do this.

FRANK

So why are you here?

ERV

I'm meeting someone.

FRANK

Who?

ERV

I'm yet to find out.

FRANK

Always keeping everything in there, aren't you? Never a straight answer.

ERV

If you want me gone, just say the word.

Someone walks past with champagne. Frank takes two glasses.

FRANK

No. Stay. Meet people, see what you could've been.

He passes a glass to Erv and disappears.

Erv looks down to a party patron pastied on the floor.

ERV

"What I could've been"...



EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

In a long tracking shot, Erv wanders out onto the terrace. He passes LAUREN, who's standing eagerly to a side, camera in hand, observing. He gives her a considering glance, then moves further down, past a man arguing with a woman who scolds him, into the garden.

A FIREBREATHER dances in the garden to an audience of grass-sitting stoners. They gaze in astonishment. To the left of the firebreather is a couple of GENTLEMEN BRUISERS sparring old-style with 10oz gloves.

Erv ambles up leisurely to the firebreather, cigarette in mouth.

ERV

You got a flame?

The firebreather looks at him scornfully. Erv heads back up onto the terrace decking.

Passing the couple again, Erv notices the man (who has now surrendered his side of the argument, and accepts willingly the barrage of scorn) is smoking. He sidles up to him.

ERV

Haven't got a light, have you?

The man, RAYMOND, dressed in camp evening attire, and speaking with a fallen aristocrat's voice, smiles for relief of distraction.

RAYMOND

Sure thing, pal.

He lights his cigarette.

RAYMOND

In fact, maybe you can settle something for us.

Erv is hesitant as Raymond gestures towards his partner.

RAYMOND

Elena-

ELENA, a well-dressed lady in a large hat, cuts him off before he gets the chance.

ELENA

You don't get a word I say, do you? I'm not on your fucking stage, Ray!

She walks away in defiance, leaving Erv swaying awkwardly as Raymond shakes his head.

RAYMOND

She tells me I lack effort. Thinks all these parties and events I take her to aren't good enough for her tastes, whatever they are. I tell you, half the world would kill for the opportunities I give her.

ERV

And what about the other half? Not everyone craves the same thing.

RAYMOND

Well she could show a little gratitude.

ERV

For what? This isn't your party. You're both guests. You seem to see relationships transactionally, you know? Favour-for-favour. Do away with that shit man, it's not healthy.

Raymond is dumfounded by this immediate analysis.

RAYMOND

Wow. Are you a marriage counsellor?

ERV

Christ, my line of work is a far cry from that. But I do work with a lot of married people... unfortunately. On occasion you pick a few gems of wisdom up.

RAYMOND

Really? Well I had something special planned for Elena and I, but he's late.

ERV

Beg your pardon?

RAYMOND

Listen, you're wise-

ERV

Well-

RAYMOND  
Maybe you can help me. I've  
ordered a gigolo, see?

ERV  
Oh you have?

RAYMOND  
She's bored. I thought an extra  
man might spice things up a bit.  
But he hasn't turned up.

ERV  
How rude..

RAYMOND  
I just need her to believe in me  
again, man.

ERV  
And you think this is the way  
forward?

RAYMOND  
How the fuck should I know? Any  
conversation I try to have ends in  
tears.

ERV  
Yours or hers?

Raymond laughs bitterly, but gives no firm answer.

ERV  
Can I ask you something?

RAYMOND  
Sure.

ERV  
Why do you want some other man to  
fuck her? What does that solve?

RAYMOND  
No, God no. I want him to fuck us.  
It's really a spiritual thing.

Erv sighs. He turns to see Frank making the rounds  
through the party inside.

ERV  
Well look, how about I go find  
this gigolo for you?

RAYMOND  
You'd do that? Oh thank you! Thank  
you! Here take this.

Raymond fishes a green pebble from his pocket and forces it into Erv's hand.

ERV

I mean, I'd rather not...

RAYMOND

You're doing me a great service, friend. This pebble will protect you from negative energy. A gift from me to you.

He takes his leave and enters the fray out in the garden. Erv shakes his head.

ERV

Freaks. Absolute freaks.

EXT. OUTSIDE FRANK'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Erv smokes in solitude by the front steps of the house. The party rages on inside. From the shadows of the night, The Wasteman can be heard:

WASTEMAN

Got a bifta?

Erv looks to the shadows.

ERV

Sure... come into the light.

The Wasteman emerges. He takes rest shakily beside Erv, who passes him a cigarette.

ERV

Hope you've got your own flame though...

WASTEMAN

Yeah. Yeah. I've got a match.

He withdraws a box of matches, which fall to the ground in tatters. The Wasteman stutters and stalls. Erv, taking pity, collects them and lights his cigarette for him.

WASTEMAN

It's not the same in Cancun, is it? Ground's dryer.

ERV

Sure.

WASTEMAN

There's times I worry if anyone  
will wake up. Keep the home fires  
burning. No one waits.

ERV

Waits for what?

The Wasteman stares at him intensely.

WASTEMAN

My brother, he's still in Nairobi.  
Trapped, you know.

ERV

What do you mean?

Two new guests arrive. They smile at Erv as he passes,  
but frown at the sight of The Wasteman. They knock at the  
front door, having to linger awkwardly beside.

ERV

Evening...

The Doorman opens up, accepts the pair's invitation, then  
glances outside to see that The Wasteman is gone, to  
Erv's surprise as well. When the door closes, he re-  
emerges.

WASTEMAN

He can't last out there. It's too  
much pressure. He needs rescuing.

A silence ensues, which Erv spends contemplating.  
Finally, he speaks.

ERV

You want a job?

WASTEMAN

Had one... no more... doing what?

ERV

Honestly? If I dress you up, will  
you fuck a man and a woman for me?

The Wasteman looks up with furious eyes.

WASTEMAN

How much?

Erv considers. He has no money on him.

A spark of inspiration comes. Erv fishes out the green  
pebble passed onto him by Raymond.

ERV  
Well, you see this?

WASTEMAN  
A pebble?

ERV  
No! This, my friend, is the rarest  
drug on the planet.

WASTEMAN  
Drug?

ERV  
They call it "Strawberry  
Chardonnay". Brings everything  
together.

WASTEMAN  
Why's it green?

Erv pauses for a moment.

ERV  
It's not ripe.

The Wasteman reaches for the pebble, but Erv holds it  
away.

ERV  
We got a deal?

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

"When I Get Low, I Get High" by Man Overboard Quintet  
plays from a live band in one of the main rooms, at the  
door of which crowds gather to watch.

The guests are drunker, less attention is paid. Chaos  
still rules. The Wasteman is pushed quickly through the  
corridor by Erv, into a private room. After a few beats,  
Erv emerges from the room. He finds Raymond at the end of  
the hallway, standing with Elena amongst the crowd,  
watching the band. He motions to him, and he approaches.

ERV  
Your man for the evening awaits  
you both in that room. Bottom  
left.

RAYMOND  
Friend, I can't thank you enough!

ERV

No problem. Enjoy your night, and leave a good review with the company.

Erv attempts to leave.

RAYMOND

Wait, wait! I need one more favour. Will you keep Elena occupied for me?

ERV

What do you mean?

RAYMOND

Just for fifteen minutes. I want some alone time with him, just to warm us up and lay down a couple of ground rules.

ERV

Ground rules? Ah man, I don't know.

RAYMOND

Please? Then you can send her in and that's that.

Erv looks over to Elena amongst the crowd. She turns and sees Erv nod reluctantly as Raymond disappears. She frowns and walks out into the garden.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Wasteman, dressed in a suit that just doesn't look right, is babbling to himself in the mirror with his pebble in hand. He swallows it.

WASTEMAN

Nairobi... Gotta get him back...

The door flings open and closed as Raymond enters the bedroom, unbuttoning his trousers.

RAYMOND

Okay sunshine, no need for introductions since you're already late. My girl will be joining us shortly, so best behaviour with you. Right?

The Wasteman licks his lips like a hungry dog.

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

Elena sits at a bench on the terrace, watching The Firebreather let loose into the nighttime air. Erv joins her.

ELENA

It never takes Raymond long to make friends.

ERV

I wouldn't call us friends. I didn't even know his name until now.

ELENA

But he sent you here, to keep me busy?

ERV

He did.

ELENA

Another surprise for me...

ERV

You seem thrilled.

ELENA

His idea of a surprise never really hits the mark.

ERV

He means well, but you're right. I can tell this isn't your vibe. Truth be told it isn't mine either...

ELENA

I'm tired of this. I'm bored.

ERV

He knows. He wants to "spice things up".

ELENA

What an idiot... I don't want spice.

ERV

No?

ELENA

Every weekend, we go out. We see his friends. We live this big, brazen, avant-garde life... and I can't fucking stand it. I mean,



have you seen these people? They live a constant lie. They feed their egos with compliments and cocaine, and will just as soon stab each other in the back. Do you know the host?

ERV

Frank? I do. He was my mentor.

ELENA

He's everyone's mentor. Raymond's too. But he's the emptiest of them all. He holds these parties, leeches from the energy of the room, then fucks you off as soon as he feels content. For all the drugs and decoration, no one here stands for anything real. Just an artifice on fire.

ERV

So why not walk away? I did.

ELENA

I love Raymond. His happiness is important to me. But his intentions are misguided. He seems oblivious to who I really am.

They are interrupted by a piercing scream from within the house, which cuts off the music. Elena recognises the tone.

ELENA

Raymond?

She hurries in, with Erv catching up behind her.

INT. ARTIST'S HOUSE, MAIN ROOM.

Raymond screams as he runs through the room, being frantically chased by the half-naked Wasteman. All guests have turned their attention to the event.

RAYMOND

Cut your fucking nails, you cunt!  
I think it's bleeding!

WASTEMAN

Nairobi! One of you better buy my ticket. I need to get to Nairobi!

Elena and Erv step inside.

The Wasteman grabs a whip and lunges for Raymond, but The

Doorman appears and makes a grab for him.

Enticed, the Gentlemen Bruisers join the fray and an all-out scrap drags on into the hallway, leaving Elena to confront Raymond.

ELENA

This was your idea of a surprise?

RAYMOND

Elena...

ELENA

You're actually lost...

RAYMOND

Well something has to fucking please you!

Erv interjects, throwing himself between the two.

ERV

Both of you just stop. Just for a second. Neither of you are getting anywhere like this, you've been at it all night. Raymond, you need to stop assuming that you need some grandiose performance to make a romantic gesture. Elena, you need to speak up and stop smiling through these freak-shows. Both of you, just flat out, lay your cards down and say what you both want.

ELENA

Well, I-

ERV

Oh Jesus but not here! Not with this masked degenerate audience hungry for muses.

By this point, Frank has entered the room. He watches silently, unnoticed by Erv.

ERV

Go home, dickheads. Put the kettle on, talk it out. Christ, you didn't need to hire me to tell you this.

RAYMOND

What do you mean, hire you?

Erv sways, looks around, and lets loose.

ERV

Oh fuck off. I'm not doing a big Scooby-Doo reveal. Yeah I'm your guy. I didn't know it was you because I lost my invitation.

RAYMOND

But I literally told you-

ERV

I have a bad back! I kept saying, I didn't wanna work today. And now I'm here. At a party in a world that I escaped from. A world where nothing was secure, where everyone sucked up to you then spat venom in your face.

FRANK

Is that so?

Erv turns to him scornfully.

ERV

You. Give me one second.

He turns back to Raymond and Elena.

ERV

Go home.

Raymond steps forward.

RAYMOND

You bastard, I want my money back!

ERV

Cunt, you take my advice and it'll be you that owes me. Fuck off.

They linger, then, looking at each other, they decide to leave. Erv turns back to Frank.

FRANK

So... the Gigolo then?

ERV

I'm luckier than most who do my job. Other fellas are shackled up in smelly hotels, or waiting on street corners, constantly getting tested for god-knows-what. I make money, got a good home to come back to at night. And I won't be scorned for it. Not by you, or anyone here.

FRANK

You were living a prince's life  
under my community.

ERV

Community? It was all false. I may  
be living with a bunch of dopes  
now but at least I know where I  
stand with them. Poor hygiene and  
spatial boundaries mean less to me  
than lies. You live in pure  
fiction, Frank. None of this will  
last.

FRANK

You slimy cunt, get the fuck out  
of my house.

Erv takes a bottle and heads to the door.

ERV

We drink together tonight and  
watch the fire, but we all die  
cold and alone. So long!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is far less busy now. But messy. A number of  
items are broken. Some guests sleep on the floor. Others  
are whispering or caressing in corners. Few pass from  
room to room.

Erv enters the hallway. An instant low has dropped from  
the high. He is bitter and numb. He travels the corridor  
slowly, leading to the top where a man weeps at the  
record player with a bottle of brandy. It plays classical  
music at a low volume.

Erv stares for a while then turns to the exit, crashing  
into Mack Pullen as he does, who has just emerged from  
another room. He is far gone into the night and delivers  
a goofy smile to Erv, who leaves through the door.

Mack forwards on through the corridor. He stops at a room  
with a closed door, to which he angles his ear, hearing a  
collection of moans. He smiles, then forwards on to the  
orgy, stumbling through the door.

BLACKOUT.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: NICE TIME

*"To be someone must be a wonderful thing..."* drifts eerily in the darkness.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - MORNING

A bell TOLLS and morphs into a grandfather clock CHIME.

MACK PULLEN gasps awake in amongst a pile of partially clothed bodies all moaning and snoring equally. A thin veil of smoke surrounds the breathing corpses, perfuming the air with yesterday's promise. Various taxidermy covers the walls, each with a shocked, disgusted expression. They've bore witness to a lot of fucked up shit.

MACK

'Scuse me.

Mack spots a blue pill in a man's belly button, he picks it up as it rises.

MACK

Oooo. Don't mind if I do.

This startles awake MARK

MARK

Here's my number, big boy.

MACK

Mmhmm.

MARK

Call me.

Mark winks at Mack.

MACK

Oh. Y-yeah. Sure. D-did we...?

MARK

Oh yes.

MACK.

Well, huh, that's new.

MARK

See you later.

MACK

Yep. Mmhmm.

(Under his breath)

Shite.

Mack un-peels himself from the mix and takes Mark's number. Heads for the door and scrunches it into a ball. He picks up his olive green parka and kisses the tips of his fingers and places them on a portrait of Paul Weller next to a stuffed pheasant.

EXT. NEWBO STREET - MORNING

Mack stumbles out of the house. He dresses himself as he walks down the street. "To Be Someone" by The Jam plays. Mack throws the blue pill up in the air and catches it in his mouth. He stops by a car window, removes his sunglasses and checks out his reflection. A blood-shot state. Mack mouths the lyrics to the song and puts his sunglasses on.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE STREET - MORNING

A kid with a 99 flake stares open mouthed at Mack, who snatches the ice cream from the kid, takes the flake out, eats it and tosses the ice cream over his shoulder without breaking stride. It lands on the pavement with a splat.

INT. MUSIC VENUE - THE NIGHT BEFORE

A drumstick smashes a snare. Guitar strums. Performance facials.

EXT. EVEN FURTHER DOWN THE STREET - MORNING

A plastic bag drifts in the wind and catches Mack in the face.

INT. MUSIC VENUE - THE NIGHT BEFORE

A brassiere is thrown at Mack's head. He lifts it off with a grin and looks at JOHNNY.

EXT. EVEN FURTHER DOWN THE STREET - MORNING

Mack stumbles onwards with a bit more haste. Cars flash past, beeping their horns at him as he throws akimbo gun fingers right back with a wink and half smile.

INT. NEW BRIGHTON STATION

All trains are off. Mack looks at his smart watch. 39 missed calls from Johnny.

MACK

Send a message to Clover: Yes  
girl, cor you missed a belter last  
night. Where'd you get off to? Got  
band practise that started a good  
our ago

(Sing-song voice)

Am I in trouble?

(Normal voice)

Ha! Hey, we still on for later,  
sexy cheeks? Kiss kiss.

EXT. NEW BRIGHTON PROMENADE - MORNING

Two lovers holding a red balloon pass by Mack. He pops the balloon, and is confronted by one of the lovers. Mack pushes him over a nearby wall and sprints off. At a safe distance away, he stops to catch his breath.

INT. PUB - THE NIGHT BEFORE

Mack and the band after their set. Clover is sat in the corner, silent. Chaos descends. Smashed glasses. Fooling around with various people. Pints thrown. Bar fights. Mack gets a pool cue broken over his back.

EXT. MERSEY FERRY TERMINAL - MID MORNING

The song briefly stops. Mack sits and waits for the Ferry, tapping his foot. He looks at his watch. The silence is deafening. He struggles to put in his AirPods. The song resumes.

INT. PUB - THE NIGHT BEFORE

A raging argument between Clover and Mack ensues. Mack pushes Clover.

INT. MUSIC VENUE - THE NIGHT BEFORE

The band is going full welly for the chorus. "Didn't we have a nice time!?"

EXT. MERSEY FERRY - DAY

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - THE NIGHT BEFORE

Mack takes in the passing of the Mersey. It's a beautiful day. He looks like a speck on the waves. In the haze, Mack grins and slips into another flashback.

## EXT. NIGHT CLUB - THE NIGHT BEFORE

Mack stands outside the nightclub, off his rocker. "To Be Someone" continues to play muffled through the walls of the venue. He types a number into his phone and raises it to his ear. We can't figure out what he's saying but he looks on the verge of desperation. The phone doesn't connect and he throws it against the wall, smashing it. He curls into a ball on the pavement.

## EXT. MERSEY FERRY TERMINAL - DAY

Mack wakes with a startle as the ferry docks on the other side of the Mersey. He plods up the ramp and sees some friendly faces in a group of old mods nursing their Vespas and Lambrettas. Asks one for a lift. They give it to him as a favour

## EXT. STREETS OF LIVERPOOL - DAY

On the way to the recording studio. Mack enjoys the breeze while holding onto dear life clung to the back of a particularly large Mod on a Vespa. He closes his eyes.

## INT. PUB - THE NIGHT BEFORE

The band continue to play their sweaty set.

## EXT/INT. MONTAGE - NIGHT BEFORE

All events of the night before flash rapidly before Mack's eyes as we hear "didn't we have a nice time". Finally, outside the pub, Mack punches Clover in front of the band.

## INT. REHEARSAL/RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

The band are midway through rehearsing a song. Mack enters the room like a cannonball. Band members wearily look up from their instruments.

MACK

Mornin' ya wee dafties! Let's get this show on the road, boys. Might be a little scunnered today, like. Gig were fuckin stoater.

JOHNNY

You're late.



MACK

Aye, but only fashionably, Johnny Boy! We've still got half a day to pump out some quality tunes. Use tha momentum from last night, push us fuckin' forward.

Mack stumbles into the drum kit.

PAUL

You're still pissed.

MACK

Aye, just a wee bit bacchic', but am on an even keel now. Got a decent level going on here, boys. I feel focused. I'm ready. What we starting on? You got "All Mod Cons" down yet, Connor?

CONNOR

Nah man.

JOHNNY

We're not doing covers no more. Mack, listen we need to chat.

MACK

Okay, one: they're not covers, they're re-imaginings, fucken' masterpieces remastered by my master-fucken'-mind. And two: you love 'em Johnny, get over yourself! Connor, mate, what ya been doin'? We said we'd get that one down. Didn't we, eh?

CONNOR

We ain't doing them no more.

MACK

You silly, silly sausage. Me old pal. It's my band in't it? Yeah. So we'll do what I want to play right? It's got us this far.

CONNOR

Playing Jam covers at pub open mics?

MACK

Again, not covers. You fucken' love The Jam, Connor. C'mon man, everyone does.

CONNOR

Everybody over 50, yeah. Paul Weller's not even all that.

MACK

Don't you ever disrespect The Modfather in front of me again. You seem to think this is a democracy. It's not, so don't cover up your laziness with this defamation cuz you more than anyone else need to get up to scratch cuz last night, bud, I can't lie, you were sloppy. Like all-over-the-place sloppy.

CONNOR

I was all over the place?

MACK

Yeah, you.

Mack points at Connor threateningly.

JOHNNY

Con, don't bother. Mack... last night...

A moment of recognition between the two.

MACK

Yeah, yeah, you're right. A little debrief would sort us out, get our heads together as a collective. I'm gauging a little frostiness radiating from the boys here. Let's get it all out in the open. Right I'll start with Paul. Mate, you need to sort your timing out, you're supposed to be rhythm right. Yeah? So find some.

PAUL

Fuck off!

MACK

Whassat? Don't like the critique mate? Do you wanna be the best band in the world or what?

PAUL

I do.

MACK

Well learn some humility my friend. It will send you far.

(Turning his  
attention to Jay)  
Jay, darling, smashed it, plucked  
them fat strings like a weapon.  
Truly strong, silent and sexy. You  
got rhythm, just learn to loosen  
up a bit yeah? Get them hips  
moving. When was the last  
time ye had a wank?

Jay doesn't reply

MACK

Stroked the holy toad? Pillaged  
the pickle village? Ripened the  
sweaty tripe? Tickled the saintly  
taint?

Jay doesn't reply.

MACK

Ahhh psshhh, silent treatment is  
it. Ah well, I'll get ye one day  
you old slime bag ye.

(Turning to Connor)

Connor, ooft. Connor, Connor,  
Connor. Mate, where do I start?  
Ye drum fills were weak. You need  
a bit more gusto, thrust into it  
like. Do you need a bigger kit or  
what? Ye gotta properly smash  
those bits, mate. We need to end  
with more of a bang. A  
catastrophe. Smash your shit up  
lad. Don't be afraid tae.

CONNOR

And what, you're gonna pay for  
another kit are ya?

MACK

Nah, nah, course not, our  
manager's got it covered. Just  
stick it on expenses. The label  
will have it covered. It's  
showmanship.

CONNOR

What label, Mack? What fucking  
manager?

MACK

The one that we get once we get  
some fucken rockstar acclaim.  
Mate, all I'm saying is just  
you're drumming a bit like Charlie

Watts. Yeah? Just without the style.

Mack does an impression of Charlie Watts drumming

MACK (CONT'D)

Just little 'plink plonk, tip tap'. If you're gonna be out of time at least smack something like Keith Moon. It's all the same. Little 'tap tap' like you're silently tea spooning at your aunty's tea party.

Connor gets up to square up to Mack.

MACK (CONT'D)

Wee little tap tap. Where was your fucken' energy man? You're lazy, mate. No graft. No balls. You're fucken' weak, man.

CONNOR

I'll take your eyes out.

JOHNNY

LEAVE IT! Look, Mack, we need to talk.

MACK

Yeah. we should. \*We\* really should. You, buddy boy. My oldest chum. We've been plugging away at this for sometime now ain't we? Have ye lost the love for it or what? Where's your creativity huh? Where's your fucken' panache? Last night you had the showmanship of a mackerel. Where's your spunk? Eh? I remember our lead guitarist, "Johnny the Sex God"! I didnae see you shagging your guitar last night, man. Just a floppy strum.

Mack turns and sees someone else in his space in front of the mic. Someone he recognises

MACK

Who the fuck is that?

JOHNNY

Mack...

MACK

No, no. Who the fuck are you? This the new tea caddy? I could do wae a brew.

Mack SNAPS his fingers.

MARK

I ain't no tea caddy, sweetie.

MACK

Sweetie? Oooooo! That's fighting talk. Well then, what are ye, ye fucken' bawbag? And what are ye doin' in ma spot?

MARK

I'm...

JOHNNY

Mack, we should talk in private.

MACK

No, no, I want it in the open. Tell me, we got a backing vocalist or what?

JOHNNY

No, Mack...

MACK

We starting doing some choral shite are we?

CONNOR

He's your replacement, you wifebeater.

MACK

What'd you call me?

MARK

(Indicating Mack)

Johnny, what's he doing here? You said you told him.

JOHNNY

I did tell him, last night.

MACK

What'd ya tell me?

JOHNNY

Of course. You don't remember.

MACK

Ye, well if ya didn't notice, I was a wee bit inebriated last night.

JOHNNY  
Christ, well Mack you're...

MACK  
Spit it out.

CONNOR  
You're out of the band, man.  
You're done.

MACK  
I'm sorry!? Is this true, Johnny?

Johnny nods.

JOHNNY  
We're headed in a different  
direction, mate. It's an artistic  
choice.

Mack LAUGHS.

MACK  
A different direction. You're  
fucken' joking me. And this twat's  
my replacement is he, this, what's  
your name?

MARK  
Mark.

MACK  
Mark. For fuck's sake, you gotta  
be joking. Fucken' Mark!

MARK  
Yeah, you were screaming it last  
night.

MACK  
I don't know what you're talking  
about.

MARK  
You should.

MACK  
Oh shite. Wait how the fuck did  
you get here before me?

MARK  
I'm magic.

CONNOR  
Do you guys know each other or  
something.

MARK

Yes.

MACK

No, no, we fucken' don't. You're not a fucken' rockstar. You're just a...

MARK

Say it.

MACK

No. Nope.

MARK

Go on, disgrace yourself further.

MACK

You're just not a rockstar! Look at you!

MARK

Mmhmm. Yeah, and you're pretty fucking rockstar with your smartwatch there.

MACK

Paul Weller's got a fucken' smartwatch!

PAUL

Paul Weller does not have a smartwatch!

MACK

He fucken' does! I bet he does! Why, Johnny, why you ambushing me like this? After our best gig to date?

JOHNNY

Don't remember that either, huh? Let me remind you then. Clover's currently in hospital, Mack.

MACK

Wha? What's she doing there, what's happened to her?!

JAY

You beat her to a fucking pulp. She was spitting teeth.

MACK

No no. Impossible, I would never...

CONNOR

Yeah, there we go. Coming back to you now is it, wifebeater?

JOHNNY

Misogynists aren't hot right now, Mack. It's nothing personal.

MACK

No, no, Johnny, you can't! Come on, man. We're best mates, ride or dies! Don't take this away from me!

JOHNNY

It's over, Mack.

MACK

Oh fuck...

PAUL

Piss off, you scumbag.

Mack starts to tear up.

MACK

Oh come on, guys. OK, I messed up but come on, we've got something special here. We're a team, we're The Jam. We're The Who. We're The Kinks, man! Come on, we're just starting to hit our stride. Don't mess up the formula.

CONNOR

Is he deaf? Get out. You're not wanted.

MACK

Please, I'm begging you, this is all I have.

JOHNNY

"We are what we repeatedly do." ...  
goodbye, Mack.

Johnny points to the exit. Mack's tears stream down his face.

MACK

Fine, fuck all of yous! See if I give a shite. You're probably gonna end up doing some fucken' Genesis shite! Fucken' unprofessional losers!



Mack gives a two fingered salute and slams the door behind him.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE REHEARSAL/RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Mack struggles to hold back tears as he walks down the street.

MACK

You fucking idiot. Fucking IDIOT!

Mack strides down the street, head down in shame. He brushes past LAUREN who carries prints and film rolls. They make prolonged eye contact. Lauren recognises Mack and turns her head to face the pavement in front of her.

TITLE CARD: THE PHOTOGRAPHER

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - EVENING

As the work day draws to a close, studio owner HUGO is capturing the final shots of his portrait photography shoot. The set is staged with a large white backdrop rolling over the bleach wooden floor. Two studio lights are placed in a basic three-point set-up around THE MODEL.

Behind Hugo sits LAUREN, his assistant, wearing a long sleeved black turtleneck, flowing black trousers, and glasses which reflect the computer screen in front of her. Mostly just notes on each photo being taken.

HUGO

Ah yes. My vision! Oh yeah, that's it. Just like that! Ugh, YES!

Hugo's passionate expressions bring a disturbed look to Lauren's face as she raises her head to fully see what's happening. Even the Model begins to show discomfort.

HUGO

Fuck!

He drops his arms.

HUGO

Lighting needs changing. Lauren, get on this.

Hugo clicks his fingers and walks away to go on his phone, leaving the camera on a side table.

Lauren gets up from the desk and swiftly makes her way to the lights. She changes their positioning to a short lighting set-up.

She picks up the camera Hugo left. Her eyes make quick stops from the cameras, to the Model, to Hugo, and to the lights.

LAUREN

Can you relax your face, please?

The Model does so. Lauren takes a photo. The sudden flash grabs Hugo's attention away from his phone. He makes his way back over to the set.

HUGO

What are you trying to do?

LAUREN

(nervously)

Uh, just... short lighting. Using harsher shadows. Give the subject a darker composition.

Hugo looks at the photo Lauren had taken, invading Lauren's personal space. He adjusts the lights' brightness settings up and then back down, landing just one level above Lauren's.

HUGO

Lift your chin up just the tiniest.

The Model follows his instructions.

HUGO

Stop! Good, good.

He takes the shot and hastily moves back to Lauren's desk, plugging in the camera's SD card and pulling up their photos. Lauren and the Model follow.

HUGO

I see what you were trying to do. It's a cute attempt... for an amateur. But here, with my subtly complex adjustments, I completely expose the subject's tainted aura. The harsh-yet-gentle passage from the darkness into light truly reflects how we cannot escape our disconsolate selves.

SILENCE... The photographs are practically identical to the naked eye. To the trained eye, Lauren's is the more compelling photo. Hugo takes a deep sigh.

HUGO  
 It's hard being a genius  
 photographer. All of that...  
 (gesturing to the  
 studio space)  
 it just came so naturally.

He looks at his digital watch and makes one obnoxiously  
 loud clap, startling Lauren.

HUGO  
 Anyway that's a wrap for today.  
 Lauren, make sure to exchange  
 details with thingy.

Hugo starts putting his camera and equipment in bags to  
 leave.

HUGO  
 Also I want those photographs from  
 the Pullen gig on my desk  
 tomorrow.

He finishes zipping up his bags and throws his jacket  
 over his shoulder

HUGO  
 Oh and Lauren, go home for  
 Christ's sake! I don't want to  
 catch you in the red room after  
 hours again.

Hugo exits. There's another awkward silence.

MODEL  
 I thought your photo was better by  
 the way.

LAUREN  
 Thank you.

MODEL  
 Didn't know I could look edgy like  
 that. Like I know that side of me  
 but wow!

LAUREN  
 We all have multiple versions of  
 ourselves. Sometimes you can be  
 bubbly and free-spirited.  
 (pause)  
 But there's always a darker side.

More silence.

MODEL

Haha, you arty lot get so deep  
sometimes!

The Model leaves without saying goodbye. Lauren digs in her bag and pulls out her own little DSLR camera and a small purse. Sitting back at the desk, she pops the SD card into the computer and goes through her photographs of MACK PULLEN's latest gig. We see shots of the band onstage and of the audience. From the purse she takes out another SD card and swaps it.

Like before, she clicks through the photographs but this time we do not see the computer screen. Her face completely neutral.

Just then, JADE - Hugo's other assistant and Lauren's long-time friend - enters the studio, interrupting the intense stare. Flustered, Lauren swaps the SD cards just before Jade places one of the cups on the desk.

JADE

Ugh! You will not believe the day  
I have had! Went to that Little  
Bean place on Hold On Street. I  
ordered my usual; double caramel  
decaf coffee with soy milk and a  
shaving of nutmeg. Easy as Sunday,  
right?

Jade begins to take her coat off and makes herself comfortable on the couch next to the desk.

JADE

They suggested I try it iced but I  
said "um no, this is what I want".  
Then, when they handed it to me,  
they gave me a bunch of  
instructions like "careful it's  
hot" and "make sure you don't  
snort the nutmeg". Like, no shit,  
a hot drink's hot! People can just  
be so condescending nowadays.

LAUREN

(unimpressed)  
Yeah... totally.

JADE

Where's Mr "My Vision" anyways

Jade looks at Lauren. Lauren shrugs her shoulders.

JADE

He's gone, isn't he? Went through  
all that and that LA wannabe

doesn't even wait for his drink.  
Fuck it, more for me and you.

She raises her cup as if she is making a toast then takes a sip. Jade shoots forward and fans her mouth. The coffee was indeed hot. Lauren giggles.

JADE

Bitch.

Lauren rests the camera on the desk and walks over to the set. She starts taking it down.

JADE

So today, I've been organising this convention thing for Hugo to mix with some freelancers next week. You should totally come, and not as a photographer! As a guest!

Lauren shakes her head while evading eye contact.

LAUREN

No, those aren't really my thing.

Jades gets up and walks closer to Lauren.

JADE

C'mon, it's a chance to socialise and get your work out there!

LAUREN

I told you, I don't like mingling or showing my own work.

JADE

What's the point of going to these events if you never live them yourself!

Lauren ignores Jade and starts to packing up her own equipment. Frustrated by this, Jade walks over to the desk.

JADE

You're always sneaking around. Keeping in the shadows! All you do is build your portfolio, which might I add, no one ever sees because you only work for other people. Like, fuck! When was the last time someone took a photo of you? Let alone one of you being happy and enjoying life?

Lauren freezes. Jade breathes a sigh having released all her anger. She realises she's hit a nerve.

JADE

I'm sorry.

LAUREN

It's fine.

It's not.

Lauren picks up some bags and moves them to the couch near the desk.

LAUREN

I'm over it now.

Pause.

JADE

...have you done any gigs lately?

LAUREN

Yeah. Took some photos of that Mack Pullen gig and-

JADE

No fucking way!

Jade bursts out laughing and sprints to the computer and begins going through the photos.

JADE

This is amazing! Agh! He's such a fitty. Massive fuck-off loser I know but ugh, the things I'd let him do-

As Jade continues to click through the photos, Lauren tries to take the camera back.

LAUREN

Jade, stop! They're confidential!

JADE

Aw, some of these are actually really good! Yikes, he's let himself go a bit, haha!

Jade stops for a moment. Her brow furrows as she looks closer at the screen.

JADE

Lauren, what's this?

Jade turns to look at Lauren then continues going through the photographs on the camera. The pair become more and more disturbed by what they see on screen. Lauren seems less surprised. We the audience never see any of these photographs.

JADE

What the fuck? What are these even for!?

LAUREN

Umm, work? I was being paid to take photos of a gig which led to a party, because of course this big hotshot just wants to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants.

Jade and Lauren tensely stare at one another for a brief moment. Lauren, unsure how to end things, suddenly pulls the SD card out of the computer, puts it back in her camera, and walks over to her bag to put it away.

LAUREN

They're just some photos.

JADE

Uh yeah, just some photos of some fucking mad shit, Lauren! I've counted at least four crimes. Probably more!

Lauren has her back to Jade, who's has a revelation

JADE

Either way this is a scandal waiting to be published!

LAUREN

No!

Lauren turns to face Jade. For once she is defending herself, her work. In this tense moment, a wave of conflict trickles over her as her face relaxes into perplexity.

JADE

I just see this as an opportunity for you. You could sell this to the tabloids. You could afford your own studio.

LAUREN

(Sheepishly)

No.

JADE

Okay, then give it to the police.

LAUREN

No! That would ruin his career!

JADE

What career!? The man is a has-been that never even was! You'd be clearing the streets of a dodgy cokehead orgy addict. Or at least making the streets aware of an dodgy cokehead orgy addict.

Lauren moves back to her desk, still holding her camera. She takes out the SD card and slides it back into the computer. We - and Jade - see the extent of the party in full 4K retina display.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE, LATE EVENING.

A red light bathes the printed version of Lauren's controversial photographs. We see her pinning one of the photos of Mack to her wall.

The camera moves out to reveal a sinister collection of photographs of other people in similar states covering the wall.

CROSSFADE TO:

INT. THE PUB - AFTERNOON

LAUREN stands at the bar in a sparsely-populated pub, staring dead ahead, lost somewhere in her mind. A scattering of day-drinkers huddle around their tables behind her.

Next to her is JON, who is paying for a pint of Guinness.

JON

That's some nice gear you've got.

Lauren snaps back to reality.

LAUREN

Huh?

JON

Sorry, I was just saying, your camera's boss.

LAUREN

Oh, um, thank you.



JON

What do you use it for? I mean,  
photos obviously, but what kind of  
stuff?

LAUREN

Erm..

Lauren considers giving the honest answer for a second.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Just life, I guess. The things I  
see.

JON

I'd be impressed if you took  
photos of things you didn't see!  
Anyways, have a good one.

Jon takes his pint and makes his way over to his table.  
Lauren turns, looks at them and takes the lens cap off  
her camera.

Jon sits down across from his two friends, RON and  
FRANCIS. Ron is absent-mindedly scrolling on his phone,  
Francis is in some other dimension, struggling to stay  
upright. Neither is particularly acknowledging the other.  
Jon takes the first sip of his pint. There's a  
comfortable silence for a moment before Francis suddenly  
speaks.

FRANCIS

(slurring his speech  
throughout)

D'ya think there'll ever be  
robots?

Jon gives Francis a confused look.

**TITLE CARD: THE ROBOTS**

RON doesn't look up from his phone.

RON

Hm?

FRANCIS

Will there ever be robots?

JON

What do you mean?

FRANCIS

I dunno! Just, fuckin'... robots!

At this, Ron finally puts down his phone.

RON

There already are robots. Robots are absolutely a thing.

FRANCIS

No, no, I mean proper robots.

JON

What constitutes a proper robot then?

FRANCIS

You know, like the Terminator or R2D2 or something.

RON

Two very different interpretations of the whole robot idea.

FRANCIS

Y'know what I mean, standing and walking!

JON

Again, those robots definitely exist.

FRANCIS

No no no no, if they were real, there'd be one here, right now, serving us pints.

JON

Of course.

RON

So that's your one requirement for humanity's greatest achievement; we create artificial life and you want it to help get you pissed faster?

Francis considers this for a moment.

FRANCIS

...well, yeah.

Ron and Jon share a knowing look. They've been part of many conversations like this before. Ron motions to Jon that he's got a foam moustache from his pint.

FRANCIS

Like you'd say no to a nice lil' robo-pint.

JON

To be fair, that might be the only way to get a good Guinness in here.

RON

Behave! They do a good one! Sure, it's probably not up to Irish standards, but it's a very delicate process.

Jon slides his pint over to Ron and smugly gestures for him to take a sip.

Ron gladly picks up the pint and downs a large gulp.

RON

(after a beat)  
...yeah, not good.

FRANCIS

See what I mean. Robot butler, perfect pint every time.

JON

Are they a butler if they're working in a pub?

RON

Not really buttling anything, are they?

JON

What is buttling anyway?

Francis gesticulates at the other two, annoyed that they're taking the piss.

RON

Seriously though, the end goal of all the time and effort and money poured into technology over the last century or two is purely to make your drinking even easier?

JON

Isn't that the point of technology though?

Francis points and nods at Jon; validation!

RON

If you wanna be obtuse, sure.

JON

Nah, c'mon, what's the point of technology if it's not to give us

more time to do the important things.

RON

And the important things are...

Ron stops to count the empty glasses in front of Francis.

RON (CONT'D)

...three, four, five McEwans in the space of an hour?

Francis nods a very unsober nod and smiles a very wonky smile. He sees this as an achievement.

FRANCIS

I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy.

RON

Well they're not bottles so I say go with the lobotomy.

FRANCIS

Oh, here he is!

Into the pub comes JIM, with a face like depressed thunder, clothes ruffled, walking with purpose.

RON

You alright, ma-

Jim cuts him off with a stern "wait" finger, before striding to the bar. The others in the booth crane their necks towards their friend.

Jim returns to the table and places down two pints.

He goes back to the bar.

He comes back to the table. Another two pints

Back to the bar.

Back to the table. Two glasses of whiskey

Back to the bar.

Back to the table with two shots.

Back to the bar.

And finally back to the table with... a glass of water.

RON

Good day at work then?

JIM

The general public need locking up.

FRANCIS

This is what I've been saying!

JIM

Why do we as a society, as a *species*, need to shop? Why does Linda, with her little trolley and her cataracts, need to have that one hideous nylon blouse today right at this second?

JON

Ah, the world of retail. I almost miss it.

RON

Maybe it-

JIM

(cutting them off)

The internet is a thing y'know! It's literally everywhere! In your phone, in your watch, probably in your pints.

Francis' eyes widen. He stares at his collection of pint glasses, nervous at this realisation.

JIM

They can get whatever their cold, grey heart desires with a few clicks, but noooo.

JON

No.

RON

Nope.

JIM

They have to strut into the shop, leaving half-eaten sausage rolls wherever they please, launching the shit they don't want across the room, letting their stupid ugly boring kids use it as a playground and then have the gall - *the temerity* - to ask me questions!

RON

The nerve of these people.

FRANCIS  
 (genuinely  
 sympathetic)  
 Are you okay?

JIM  
 (Mocking tone)  
 "Do you work here?"  
 (Normal voice)  
 Nah, I just love spending all my  
 free time tidying up shitty  
 sweatshop clothes.  
 (Mocking tone)  
 "Where's the fitting rooms, mate?"  
 (Normal voice)  
 You see that massive queue of  
 people standing below a sign that  
 says fitting rooms? Definitely not  
 there.  
 (Mocking tone)  
 "Thought that was half price? I  
 found it in the sale"  
 (Normal voice)  
 Yeah, sure, but I could find ET in  
 my back garden, doesn't make him a  
 Scouser.

JON  
 So if I'm hearing you correctly -  
 and I think I do - you really love  
 your job?

JIM  
 The people of Great Britain have  
 one brain cell between them, and  
 they all left it at home today.

FRANCIS  
 See, this is where the robots come  
 in.

A beat as Jim looks at Ron and Jon in bafflement.

JIM  
 Robots?

JON  
 It's a whole thing.

RON  
 He thinks the sole purpose of  
 actual, sentient robots is to make  
 it easier to get a pint.

FRANCIS  
 No, no, no... well sometimes, but  
 no.

Jim finishes one of his many drinks with a gulp.

JIM

Bring it on, I say.

RON

Really? You want to be replaced by a robot?

JIM

If anyone - or any thing - wants my job, they can take it. Who am I to deprive them of gainful employment?

JON

And what will you do while they're out there folding the same t-shirt for eight hours?

JIM

Whatever I want! I'll go frolic in a meadow or something. Whatever humanity did before capitalism.

RON

Pretty sure we mostly just worshipped people richer than us, caught diseases, and died at 32 years old.

FRANCIS

See, nothing's changed.

RON

I know you're aiming for it, but personally I'm not planning on dying that early.

FRANCIS

Coward.

RON

To be fair, robots don't need food or breaks or sleep. You could have a high street open 24/7.

JON

What kind of maniac needs to buy clothes at all hours of the day?

JIM

Trust me, there's some wrong'uns who'd love nothing more than being able to dilly-dally around a shop at 4am.

FRANCIS

That would be so cool.

JIM

Point proven.

JON

Think of the side effects though. Not only do you have to power our soon-to-be robot overlords, you've gotta have the lights on constantly. You'd be using twice as much energy. You'll get besieged by moths.

JIM

And that's another thing! That's how I know we're doomed. If these reprobates can't pick up after themselves when it comes to shite they actually want, they're not gonna do it for plastics or toxic waste or that island of garbage in the Pacific.

Francis' ears prick up at this

FRANCIS

(to himself, like a  
scheme is forming)

Garbage island?

RON

I don't think that's exactly public responsibility, mate.

JIM

I don't care! We're fucked! We're going to die horrible fiery deaths in some desert wasteland, fighting over bottles of Evian, and we absolutely deserve it, because no one thinks about anything other than themselves. We're a disease with shoes.

With this, Jim finishes the last of his many drinks.

RON

You taking them back to the bar?

JIM

Nah, that's his job.

Jim motions towards THE BARTENDER who has just arrived at the table to clear the empties. They pick up the glasses, give a disdainful look to Jim and leave.



There's another silence as the group considers the conversation.

FRANCIS  
...d'you think there'll ever be  
lightsabers?

RON  
Okay, I'm done.

Ron finishes the dregs of his drink and leaves.

CUT TO END CREDITS

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