

THE A WORD

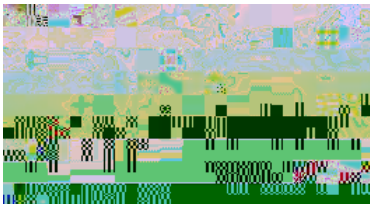
SERIES 2

Episode One

SHOOTING SCRIPT

Written by

Peter Bowker



22nd March 2017

1 EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 1. 07:30.

Close up on JOE, his headphones on, the fells behind him, he is clutching a knitted giraffe toy. He is singing along to a track on his headphones that we can also hear . . . Buzzcocks, 'Everybody's Happy Nowadays'.

JOE/BUZZCOCKS
(SINGING)
"I was so tired of being upset
Always wanting something I never
could get
Life's an illusion, love is a dream
But I don't know what it is
Everybody's Happy Nowadays
Everybody's Happy Nowadays."

So far, so familiar, except when we pull out we reveal JOE is not alone - he is walking on the side of the road and being shadowed by his Mum, ALISON, about ten yards behind, pushing a baby in a buggy. Buzzcocks plays across the following . . .

CUT TO:

2 INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 1. 12:20.

MAURICE stares at the office computer, frustrated - bashes a few keys - no response - then he throws the mouse across the room. He reaches for his phone, dials, and . . .

CUT TO:

3 INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE THEATRE. MANCHESTER. DAY 1. 12:21.

EDDIE, standing in front of two complicated diagrams about machine learning, staring at a roomful of earnest-looking geeky STUDENTS. This is a slightly different EDDIE to last series - shirt rather than jumper, slightly trendier haircut. He stares down at his throbbing phone. 'DAD' and a picture of MAURICE glowing. He sighs . . .

CUT TO:

4 INT. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 1. 12:25.

NICOLA - now a GP - sees a PATIENT out of her consulting room. We glimpse DR GRAVES walking by as she goes back inside, shuts the door, sits down, opens her diary and checks a date, then dials a number . . .

CUT TO:

5

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE THEATRE. MANCHESTER. DAY 1. 12:26.

EDDIE, still standing in front of the diagrams, STUDENTS taking notes. He stares down at his throbbing phone. 'NICOLA' with an old photo glowing. He can't quite believe this. He looks at the STUDENTS but can't help glancing back at the phone.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. ROOF/PLAYGROUND. DAY 1. 15:20.

JOE is watched by his delighted classmates and less delighted class teacher, MRS HANKIN. The caretaker - MR ELLIOT - is standing at the foot of the ladder, along with TERRY (now a LSA, but we don't know that yet) and the Head, MRS PAYNE.

PARENTS have arrived to take their CHILDREN home. A few are ushering their CHILDREN away, but most have stayed to watch. In fact it feels as though the whole Community is watching - even RALPH has drifted across from his Lollipop duty.

CHILDREN stand excitedly underneath the roof, including RAMESH and BILL who have stretched out their coats in a vague hope of enticing JOE to jump.

MAURICE, who has come to pick JOE up, rushes across the playground, half running, half walking. MRS HANKIN is talking to MAURICE.

MRS HANKIN

I went up the ladder but he just lay down and so we are keeping it calm and low key.

MAURICE

Calm and low key? It's not hostage negotiation. What are his demands? A pizza and a helicopter to Alton Towers? I'm here now. Fun time over.

MRS HANKIN

We've rung his Mum and Dad. We don't want to alarm him in case he falls.

MAURICE

Yep. I get it. Calm and low key.

MAURICE has arrived at the roof.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

(SHOUTING)

Joe! Joe! Ground Control to Major Tom. Get down here this minute!

They gaze up at the roof. JOE looks down at MAURICE, closer to the edge than he was.

MRS HANKIN

Not so close to the edge, Joe.

MAURICE

Joke's over, son. I'm counting to three and you're coming down. One. Two. Three.

(CONTINUED)

Nothing. JOE retreats. MAURICE turns to the gathered PARENTS and STAFF.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Has anyone got a bag of crisps and a big net? (TO TERRY) Why weren't you keeping an eye? I thought that was your job.

TERRY

I'm his Learning Support. I'm not with him every minute of the day.

MAURICE

Who is, then? Buzz Lightyear? Joe! Come on! That's enough now!

ALISON and PAUL arrive, ALISON pushing the baby in the buggy. She is concerned but calm.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Cancel the SWAT team. Batman and Robin's arrived.

An excited RAMESH runs towards ALISON and PAUL.

RAMESH

Mr Joe's Dad! It's Joe! It's Joe! He's doing a Joe!

PAUL

So we can see. Thanks, Ramesh.

MAURICE

Joe! Big Trouble now! Your Mum and Dad's here!

ALISON

Dad. Stop shouting. It's not helping. (TO TERRY) This is a new one. (BEAT) Did anything happen that might have upset him?

TERRY

Not that I've heard. But you can't always tell, you know . . .

CONTINUED: (2)

At the top, she peers over to JOE - she doesn't get onto the roof. She is calmer than last we saw her. More controlled. More adept at handling both JOE and his eccentricities. JOE takes off his headphones.

ALI SON

Well. This is a thing, young man.

JOE

'Everybody's Happy Nowadays.'
Buzzcocks. 1979. Written by?

ALI SON

Come down now, Joe.

JOE

'Everybody's Happy Nowadays.'
Buzzcocks. 1979. Written by?

ALI SON

Come down and I'll tell you.

JOE

Written by?

ALI SON

Nope. That isn't what happens.

JOE

What happens?

ALI SON

What happens is you come down and I'll tell you.

JOE

Is baby Emily here?

ALI SON

Baby Emily is waiting in the
playground.

ALI SON nods towards the buggy.

JOE

'Everybody's Happy Nowadays.'
Buzzcocks. 1979. Written by?

ALI SON looks at JOE and JOE looks at ALI SON. Face off. ALI SON stays neutral. JOE manoeuvres himself over to the ladder and ALI SON protects him as they descend. PAUL turns to MR ELLIOT who is aware of MRS PAYNE eyeballing him.

PAUL

How did he get hold of your
ladders?

(CONTINUED)

MR ELLIOT

I was getting a football off the roof. Not, strictly speaking, part of my job description but that's by the by . . .

PAUL

(AGITATED)

And you couldn't stop him? A seven year old?

MR ELLIOT

I didn't see him. And even if I had I couldn't have, you know, physically stopped him. Health and Safety, you see. Be the death of this country . . .

PAUL looks over as OTHER CHILDREN start to applaud as ALISON and JOE reach the ground. JOE doesn't react. ALISON turns to JOE immediately.

ALISON

Pete Shelley.

JOE nods - this is the correct answer.

JOE

Can I see baby Emily now?

ALISON

Yes. Go on.

JOE heads over to EMILY as though nothing has happened. He stares at her, fascinated, then calmly pushes the buggy towards the car. MAURICE looks at PAUL, PAUL doesn't say anything - heads towards the car. As he goes, he notices the OTHER BOYS, now no longer interested, huddling over Match Attax cards.

MAURICE turns to MRS PAYNE.

MAURICE

What you running here? A school or Fred Karno's Circus.

ALISON leaps in.

ALISON

I'm so sorry. I don't know why he'd do that.

MRS PAYNE

He's not hurt so that's the main thing. And Mr Elliot won't be making that mistake again.

ALISON passes a bunch of PARENTS including Bill's mum, SARAH, and LINDA.

ALISON

PAUL
Why did you go up there, Joe? Hey?
Were you missing Terry this
afternoon?

JOE
I was missing Terry this afternoon.

PAUL
Was it your school work? Something
too hard for you?

JOE
Was it my school work?

PAUL
Joe. Hmm?

JOE
Let me see now.

MAURICE has caught up from his car.

MAURICE
Has anyone been bullying you, Joe?
'Cos I tell you what. A lad gives
you a dig, you give them a dig
back. But ten times harder.

PAUL
Thanks, Maurice.

ALISON stops JOE, brings her face to his level.

ALISON
Okay. Let's try this. You went on
the roof because . . .

JOE
Because.

ALISON
Because?

JOE
I'm autistic.

ALISON, PAUL and MAURICE stop in their tracks.

JOE (CONT'D)

MAURICE
(TO ALISON)
Told you it was bullying.

PAUL gets out a ten pound note, hands it to MAURICE. They need him out of the way. As he does this, ALISON rushes with EMILY in the buggy towards the Scott House.

PAUL
Maurice. Go and tell Louise he won't be coming for his uke lesson today.

MAURICE
Can't you phone her?

PAUL
We owe her two weeks money and he needs his song for next week . . .

MAURICE takes the tenner.

MAURICE
Right.

11

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 15:44.

ALISON and PAUL with JOE at the table, JOE staring past them at the calender which has a photo of Rebecca on today's date and a series of crosses on the days leading up to it.

PAUL
Where didn't you find them?

JOE
Under the sink.

PAUL
Right. And where didn't you eat
them?

JOE
Under my bed . . .

PAUL slightly lost for words here.

PAUL
Okay. Well. Okay . . .

JOE leaves and they turn to each other.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Is it me or did he just do a number
on us?

ALISON
I thought you were going to ask
him? What he thinks autistic means.

PAUL
I thought you were . . . He clearly
doesn't want to talk about it, does
he?

ALISON
No. Because he thinks it's bad. Or
wrong.

PAUL
We don't know that.

ALISON
Why else would he say, "Nobody
wants that"?

PAUL
There's got to be something about
this on the internet.

ALISON
Or we could talk to actual human
beings who have been through the
same thing.

PAUL
Please not the 'Parents Support
Group.'

ALISON
How can you say that if you've never been?

PAUL
Three little words. "Parents",
"Support" and "Group."

ALISON
Three more. "Narrow", "Minded" and
"Twat". (Alternative: "Prat").

REBECCA
(SMILING)
It's like I've never been away.

ALISON and PAUL look up, surprised and delighted to see REBECCA standing in the kitchen doorway, rucksack at her feet, inter-rail shabby, and behind her a good-looking young man - JAMES - similarly shabby.

ALISON and REBECCA hug immediately. In silence. PAUL raises his eyebrows in JAMES' direction in a male solidarity gesture. ALISON finally breaks away.

ALISON
Look at you. My baby!

PAUL taps ALISON on the shoulder.

PAUL
This .012G1L tab0his .012G1L tab0his .012G1L tab0his .01G1L

One corner is dominated by a pile of plastic boxes full of Emily's toys and playthings - labelled 'Creative', 'Arts and Crafts', 'Dressing Up Clothes', 'Pre-Reading', 'Science' etc.

NICOLA

Well, this is a surprise. And you know I don't like surprises.

GRACE turns her full attention to EMILY. VINCENT goes into the kitchen and starts opening drawers and cupboards as NICOLA looks on, irritated. Tupperware tubs labelled with the days of the week. In one set of cupboards he sees neatly arranged food. On one cupboard door an Emily Timetable -

VINCENT proceeds to put the kettle on without asking.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. SCOTT HOUSE. DAY 1. 15:48.

NICOLA outside the front door, on her phone. Voice down.

NICOLA
Eddie. There's a problem. You need
to get here. Right now.

CUT TO:

14 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 1. 15:55.

JOE is sitting on his bed, headphones on. ALISON comes in,
mimes for him to take them off - which he does.

ALISON
Guess who is here?

JOE
Shrek.

ALISON
No. Not this time.

JOE looks blank. The door opens and REBECCA is standing
there. JOE smiles. REBECCA smiles. And there is an openness
in both their smiles that is rare in both of them.

REBECCA goes and sits on the bed beside JOE.

JOE
Are you back?

REBECCA
I am, yes.

JOE
You went away and you came back.

REBECCA
That's right.

JOE
I've been back all the time.

REBECCA
That's right.

They lie down on the bed. There is music coming out of JOE's
headphones - 'Something Better Change' by The Stranglers.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
'Something Better Change'.

REBECCA
The Stranglers. 1977.

JOE
Correct.

They both smile. This is the most uncomplicated relationship.

ALISON
Tell Rebecca about school.

JOE looks at ALISON.

JOE
Tell Rebecca about school.

ALISON
Joe. Tell her three things about school.

JOE
Two things.

ALISON
Three things and you get to watch Shrek.

JOE
The Cutter? (BEAT) Echo and the Bunnymen 1983.

ALISON stays neutral.

ALISON
Three things and you get to watch Shrek.

REBECCA glances at ALISON, clearly impressed by her restraint. JOE turns to REBECCA.

JOE
Terry is my helper.

ALISON raises a finger to her lips to stop REBECCA saying that in front of JOE.

ALISON
A certain young man takes in more than you think these days. Tell Rebecca a second thing.

JOE
Terry is my helper tomorrow.

REBECCA laughs.

ALISON
That's still one. Two more new things please.

JOE
I have school dinners. I went on the roof at home time.

REBECCA looks at JOE and looks at ALISON, impressed.

REBECCA
Wow! Fantastic. What were you doing on the roof?

JOE
Shrek.

JOE exits. ALISON and REBECCA exchange a look.

REBECCA
He's doing really well, yeah? He's really, really changed.

REBECCA heads out after Joe.

ALISON
(TO HERSELF ALMOST)
Yes. He really has.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. LOUISE'S HOUSE/ROAD. DAY 1. 17:30.

MAURICE reluctantly knocks at Louise's front door. LOUISE answers. She is friendly but surprised, MAURICE stiff and formal. He hands her the tenner.

MAURICE
Joe won't make it today. And they wanted you to have this.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Thank you. He's not still on the school roof, is he? Ralph mentioned it.

MAURICE

No.

LOUISE

Wait there. I've got next week's music for him.

LOUISE retreats inside. RALPH passes into the hall, nods at MAURICE who nods back. LOUISE reappears with the music.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Tricky chord change from G to F.

MAURICE

Right. Thank you.

MAURICE doesn't move. Doesn't say anything. Then . . .

MAURICE (CONT'D)

G to F, you say? G to F.

LOUISE

Yes.

MAURICE nods. Still doesn't move.

MAURICE

You all right. Keeping busy?

LOUISE

(BEMUSED)

Yes. Thank you.

MAURICE

Just children you're teaching now, is it? No adults? No Men? Or Women for that matter? At all?

LOUISE

(PUZZLED/IRRITATED)

No. Not at the moment. But thanks for the interest . . .

MAURICE retreats - steps into the road only to jerk back at the sound of a car horn and screech of brakes. He turns to wave apologies but then sees it is EDDIE driving and doesn't bother. He immediately turns to see if Louise has seen but the door is just closing. He goes round to EDDIE.

EDDIE

(SMILING)

So close. I was so close.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Give me a lift up to the brewery
and you can take a look at that
computer shit again. It's no good.
You must have put it in wrong.

EDDIE

It's you. Not the programme. And I
can't. Nicola needs me.

MAURICE

Oh, yeah. Lightbulb need changing,
does it?

EDDIE doesn't laugh as he drives on, leaving MAURICE on the
pavement.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. SWINGS. DAY 1. 17:40.

NICOLA with EMILY on the swing. She sees Eddie's car driving
past and turning at the end of the road to park.

NICOLA

There's Daddy.

NICOLA gets up, EMILY in her arms, and walks towards the car.
Then speeds up as she sees that GRACE has come out of the
house and is heading for EDDIE.

GRACE

Hi ya, Eddie, we were wondering when
you'd finish work. Vincent! Eddie's
here!

NICOLA overtakes GRACE and reaches EDDIE just as VINCENT is
coming out of the house behind her.

NICOLA

How was the drive?

EDDIE

(NOT PLEASED)

Very, very fast.

NICOLA

(FIXED SMILE)

Just keep pretending.

EDDIE

I am pretending.

A switch from EDDIE's grim face to a cheery smile to his 'in-
laws' and we . . .

CUT TO:

PAUL serves up starters.

GRACE
Now. Doesn't this look wonderful.

PAUL
Thank you, Grace. You can come again.

GRACE
Nicola said it was a little gloomy but I think it's very atmospheric.

PAUL moves down the table, fixed smile in place.

VINCENT
(STARING AT HIS PLATE)
Who would have thought that offal could ever find its way into a salad.

MAURICE
It's the modern way, Vincent. Nothing is what it seems anymore.

A dirty look from EDDIE. MAURICE pours a beer for VINCENT, casually handing the empties to PAUL as he tries to move away. They carry on talking as EDDIE turns to REBECCA.

REBECCA is watching JOE who is now playing happily with EMILY by showing her a series of objects with which she seems delighted. A spoon, a plate, a fork, etc.

REBECCA
(ENTHUSIASTIC)
Like before I went away he would never have done any of this.

JAMES
Before you went away you might not have noticed. You know, it's like, Africa, it's kind of, you know, opened our mind to things we didn't see before.

REBECCA
You're so right. You should go, Uncle Eddie? It's unbelievable.

EDDIE
Me? Africa. I can barely get to Manchester without being pulled back here at a moment's notice.

JAMES
It's all about personal growth, Eddie.

REBECCA

James was like, really young before he went there. And now, it's like, after the challenges we faced, he's come back a man.

REBECCA squeezes JAMES' arm and he nods in agreement.

EDDIE

Isn't that actually the plot of Lion King 2?

REBECCA laughs a bit too much as EDDIE's joke falls flat. Back with MAURICE . . .

MAURICE

I mean, you know better than anyone in your line of work that marriage has its ups and downs, hey, Vincent.

EDDIE looks at MAURICE, he can't believe this.

VINCENT

(TENSE)

It's a long and winding road, that's for sure.

GRACE

Amen to that.

VINCENT raises his glass to GRACE but she ignores him and looks over at JOE and EMILY instead.

CUT TO:

19 OMITTED

20 INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 1. 18:35.

Main courses. JOE has finished eating, so has EMILY. JOE is hopping around the table in a large circle, headphones on. EMILY watches him, hypnotised. At some stage JOE gives her the knitted giraffe he was carrying in Scene 1.

PAUL perches between NICOLA and ALISON in a conspiratorial huddle, occasionally picking food off ALISON's plate, glancing round at JOE.

ALISON

He's using the word autistic. We should have been ready for that. And we weren't. And worse than that, he clearly thinks it's a bad thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

You boxed. Really? I didn't know that.

GRACE

Neither did he till he heard it coming out of his mouth, Maurice.

CUT TO:

20A EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. NIGHT 1. 19:14.

Night time. The lights of the gastropub shining brightly and inside the sound of a busy restaurant.

CUT TO:

21 INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. NIGHT 1. 19:15.

Pudding. JOE is sitting next to EMILY, his pudding plate empty. He has collected all the spare spoons he can reach and lines them up in front of EMILY who seems delighted by this. ALISON has moved her chair close to REBECCA and JAMES at the

GRACE turns to where JOE is continuing to entertain EMILY by giving her all the spoons he can sneak off neighbouring tables. MAURICE notices VINCENT noticing JOE . . .

MAURICE

Always been full of beans. Lining stuff up. Our Eddie was the same. His mam's shoes in his case so, you know, we've all got our crosses to bear. No offence.

VINCENT

None taken.

GRACE

Do you like having a baby cousin, Joe?

ALISON mimes to JOE to remove his headphones. JOE turns and looks at GRACE. Silence.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Baby Emily. Do you like her?

JOE

I like Baby Emily.

GRACE

Good practice for when you have a baby sister or brother of your own one day, hey?

JOE

22 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. NIGHT 1. 22:00.

Bedroom lights on in both houses.

CUT TO:

23 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 22:05.

PAUL gets into bed beside ALISON who has a pile of papers on the bed and is working her way through some official looking letters . . .

ALISON

What if James has got a point?

PAUL

About what?

ALISON

That we're cowards, for not talking to Joe about his autism.

PAUL

Are you sure that's what he said?

ALISON

He didn't have to . . . and I think maybe he's right.

PAUL

What did Nicola say we should do?

ALISON

Try and talk to each other like we'd talk to Joe. If he could understand.

PAUL

I think you'd better start and I'll join in at the chorus.

ALISON is thinking, hard.

ALISON

So, Joe. You know that word you used?

PAUL

Are you being you now? Or are you being me? Because I wouldn't open with that . . .

ALISON

Stop messing about. If we're going to do this . . .

(CONTINUED)

PAUL
Sorry. Sorry. Go on.

ALISON tries to focus again and is about to speak when they both hear the unmistakable sound of bed springs from next door.

ALISON
Is that what I think it is . . .

PAUL
Yes. But I'm afraid to say it out loud.

Both of them find themselves listening to the sound of the bed springs. They can't help themselves. The slow rhythm.

ALISON
We should have got her that futon she wanted.

ALISON wants to laugh. PAUL warns her with a look.

CUT TO:

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 22:10.

EMILY asleep in her cot.

EDDIE
(OF EMILY)
She's gone straight off. Good as gold.

NICOLA starts to undress, EDDIE turns away.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
This is mad.

NICOLA
I realise it's a difficult situation but I think now the subterfuge has begun it would be even worse if we told them the truth.

EDDIE
So I have to cancel Tai Chi and then humiliate myself to save you from feelings of embarrassment?

NICOLA
Thank you for understanding.

EDDIE turns but NICOLA is still getting undressed, so he turns back again - self-conscious.

NICOLA (CONT'D)
Strange, isn't it. You have seen me undress a thousand times and I have seen you undress a thousand times. But this is uncomfortable because a previous intimacy has now been abandoned.

EDDIE
Just so we're clear. You saying 'undress' over and over again isn't really helping much.

NICOLA is feeling the air in the air bed hopefully and throwing a sheet on top.

NICOLA
You have watched me defecate while giving birth. I pretty much think we have nothing left to hide.

EDDIE
I saw you defecate. I didn't 'watch'. There is a crucial difference.

NICOLA lies on the air bed. EDDIE lies beside her, fully dressed on top of the sheets. On his back staring up at the ceiling.

NICOLA
The point remains that we have
nothing to hide from each other.

EDDIE shuts his eyes tightly and we hear the faintest sound of air escaping from the air bed . . .

CUT TO:

28 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 1. 01:58.

PAUL arrives in the kitchen - he is wearing a Stone Roses T-shirt and pants. A very buff JAMES, wearing only boxer shorts, is grazing in the fridge . . .

PAUL
I'll have to give you bigger
portions next time.

JAMES looks at PAUL, puzzled.

PAUL (CONT'D)
At the gastropub. You still got an
appetite. For food. I mean.

JAMES
No. Just thirsty.

PAUL
I'll bet.

JAMES
(PUZZLED)
What?

PAUL
Help yourself.

JAMES seems quite at ease half-naked in PAUL's kitchen. PAUL less so - conscious of his Stone Roses T-shirt and pants.

JAMES
You don't have any energy drinks or
anything like that.

PAUL
Not energy drinks, no. There's
plenty of milk though. Make
yourself a Horlicks if you like.
Although you might want to put some
clothes on before you do. Hot milk
and bell ends are an accident
waiting to happen . . .

(CONTINUED)

JAMES nods, PAUL takes in his buff body and a tattoo of a heart with 'Becky' on the scroll across it . . .

CUT TO:

29 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 02:02.

PAUL comes back into the bedroom, starts doing a few press-ups. ALISON sits up.

ALISON
Anyone I know?

PAUL laughs and collapses on the floor.

ALISON (CONT'D)
What are you doing? It's two o'clock in the morning.

PAUL
Nervous tension. He's got a tattoo with Becky's name on it.

ALISON
Is it spelt right?

PAUL gets back into bed, but self-consciously feeling his own bicep as he does so.

PAUL
I don't think he's got much of a sense of humour.

ALISON
Because he doesn't laugh at your jokes?

PAUL
No further questions, your honour.

ALISON laughs and curls into him.

CUT TO:

30 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. REBECCA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 02:04.

JAMES returns to the bedroom, drinking milk from the carton, to find that JOE is lying on the bed next to REBECCA.

REBECCA
(AMUSED)
Sorry. You don't mind, do you.

JAMES
No. Course not. Course not.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES clearly does as he turns to leave . . .

CUT TO:

31 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 02:18.

PAUL and ALISON both lie awake, eyes open, preoccupied.

PAUL
Are you awake?

ALISON
Yeah.

CUT TO:

32 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 02:20.

PAUL and ALISON sitting bolt upright in bed. Lights on. Looking at each other, trying to be serious.

ALISON
When you said "autistic", Joe. What do you think that word means?

PAUL
What do you think it means?

ALISON
Come on, Paul. Stop dicking about.

PAUL
I'm not. That's what he's going to say, isn't it? Because he doesn't know what it means. Neither does anybody.

ALISON
Okay. Okay. Fair enough. Can you just, say what you think he might say . . .

PAUL
Okay. I don't know what it means. But people keep using it about me. So I think it's got something to do with me. It might mean I don't play football like the other kids, and I go and play my music anytime I can,

33A EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 2. 07:32.

JOE is marching along the road, headphones on. PAUL following behind on his bike.

CUT TO:

33B EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 2. 07:33.

MAURICE leaving his house on an early morning run. A few token stretches, he sets his watch . . . and away.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 2. 07:34.

JOE now singing along to 'Brassneck'. PAUL still following.

JOE/WEDDING PRESENT
(SINGING)
"But it's hard to be engaging
When the things you love keep
changing
Brassneck! Brassneck!"

JOE
Manchester United.

PAUL
No. That's your favourite team. Who
is your favourite player? Hey?

PAUL pushes the card towards him. There is an intensity about

JOE appears at the door, his sweatshirt on back to front,

EDDIE
(SIGHS)
Shall we settle on misleading . . .

NICOLA
Go on.

EDDIE
Whatever your reasons, we can't go on like this. Not least because this one will be able to talk soon and when she does she might mention the fact that Mummy and Daddy live in separate houses . . . in separate cities.

NICOLA
She might be a late talker.

EDDIE
We sit down and tell them. Now. For our sake. For her sake. Agreed?

NICOLA
Agreed.

NICOLA sits, reluctantly, puts her work things down and . . .

CUT TO:

38 INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. 08:20.

EDDIE and NICOLA sit opposite VINCENT and GRACE at the table. EMILY is sitting on the floor, happily playing.

VINCENT
Your mother and I. We have some news for you.

NICOLA
Typical.

NICOLA shakes her head and smiles to herself.

GRACE
How did you guess?

EDDIE
Guess what?

GRACE
You both smiled. As though you've guessed.

NICOLA
What's the news?

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT
You tell us. You've clearly
guessed.

EDDIE
Nobody's guessed. The reason Nicola
was looking at you like that is
that we have some news of our own.

GRACE
We're splitting up.

VINCENT
A trial separation.

GRACE
It's permanent.

VINCENT
It's mutual.

GRACE
I'm leaving him.

VINCENT
There's nobody else.

GRACE
He had an affair.

VINCENT
It's amicable.

GRACE
I hate him.

VINCENT
We just got to the end of the road.

GRACE
He ran out of alibis.

GRACE smiles. VINCENT shrugs. On EDDIE and NICOLA, stunned.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 2. 08:45.

JOE
Marcus Rashford.

PAUL
Who does he play for?

JOE
Manchester United.

PAUL
Brilliant. Brilliant.

PAUL leans down and puts the picture cards in JOE's pocket.

PAUL (CONT'D)
So if any of the lads ask you about
football, that's what you say. Okay
top lad?

JOE
Top lad. Hair set to handsome.

PAUL smooths JOE's hair down.

PAUL
Hair set to handsome. Off you go,
mucker.

JOE goes to TERRY at the door. He tries to wait to be last in
but TERRY doesn't move. JOE does the 'door thing' then goes
in. TERRY turns to PAUL and nods, smiles. PAUL smiles back
and we . . .

CUT TO:

40 INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. BREWHOUSE. DAY 2. 10:35.

DAVID and PAVEL are working but can see EDDIE in the office,
on the computer, while MAURICE looks in a baffled way over
his shoulder. The lads speak in Polish; English subtitles on
screen.

DAVID
Wzruszajace, ze Eddie wraca
tak czesto, zeby probowac
niemozliwego.

DAVID
It is touching that Eddie
comes back so often to
attempt the impossible.

PAVEL
Eddie wyjaśnia, a Maurice nie
słucha – jedyny sposób, żeby
Ojciec i Syn mogli wyrazić
swoją miłość.

PAVEL
Eddie explaining and Maurice
not listening is the only way
Father and Son can express
their love.

DAVID nods in agreement and they carry on . . .

CUT TO:

41 INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 2. 10:35.

Through the glass we see DAVID and PAVEL working and keeping an eye.

EDDIE is on MAURICE's computer, MAURICE looking over his shoulder, puzzled. EDDIE is trying to work the mouse which has been taped back together by MAURICE.

MAURICE

I can see that Vincent might be a bit of a handful but it's a big decision to make at their age.

EDDIE

Surprising, certainly. Did somebody throw this?

MAURICE

Big decision to make at any age come to that.

EDDIE

Indeed. Which is why I appreciate you being supportive of my indecision over the years.

MAURICE

That's what you're calling it, is it? You two have had more reunions than Take That.

EDDIE

No more.

MAURICE

So why lie to her Mum and Dad?

EDDIE

Because last time they gave her so much grief . . .

MAURICE

Don't you see? Wake up and smell the laundry. Nicola doesn't want to admit to herself that it's over.

EDDIE

Dad. I have a new life in Manchester.

MAURICE

New maybe. I doubt it's a life.

Both men turn, surprised to see that RALPH is standing there.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Hello, Ralph. How you doing?

(CONTINUED)

RALPH
Is that job still going?

MAURICE
Brewery Assistant? Yep.

RALPH
Can I apply?

MAURICE turns this over, then looks to EDDIE who shrugs - no big deal.

EDDIE
'Course you can. 'Course you can.
I'll just get the application form.

MAURICE
No need to look so nervous.

EDDIE
Don't worry, Ralph. He makes me
nervous too.

EDDIE hands RALPH an application form.

RALPH
Don't tell my Mum about this.

MAURICE
(LAUGHS)
Fat chance of me having a
conversation with your Mum. No.
Course not. Not if you don't want
me to. (BEAT) Has she said she
doesn't want you working for me?
Has she said she has a problem with
that? With me, like?

RALPH
No. But she's not good with change.

RALPH exits. MAURICE sees EDDIE smiling to himself.

MAURICE
What?

EDDIE
"Has your Mum said anything about
me? Does she talk about me at all?"
(SINGING) "Want You Back, Want You
Back, Want You Back for Good."

MAURICE
What? Give over. I'm just looking
out for Ralph.

EDDIE
"Perhaps you don't want to admit to
yourself that it's over."

EDDIE pats MAURICE on the back and exits.

CUT TO:

42 INT. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. RECEPTION. DAY 2. 12:05.

NICOLA is sitting in the empty reception area with GRACE.
Both are eating cake from a huge tupperware box. DR GRAVES is

DR GRAVES
To be fair, I knew too. (A GLANCE
FROM NICOLA) Sorry. Sorry.

The door opens and VINCENT wanders in.

DR GRAVES (CONT' D)
Welcome. Welcome one and all.

GRACE
Did you follow me?

VINCENT
I just wanted to tell my daughter
that I don't want this.

GRACE

DR GRAVES
Don't blame me. I have tried to
challenge her dedication at every
juncture but it's almost as if she
enjoys the job . . .

Out on NICOLA as DR GRAVES shrugs and walks away.

CUT TO:

43

INT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. CLASSROOM. DAY 2. 12:10.

CONTINUED:

MRS HANKIN waits for a response from JOE. Then realises he isn't going to respond, turns to another table which includes BILL and RAMESH.

MRS HANKIN
Ramesh?

RAMESH
A car. Probably diesel because of the sound of the engine.

MRS HANKIN
A car. Very good. Ramesh's table can go.

MRS HANKIN turns to JOE's table.

MRS HANKIN (CONT'D)
Joe?

JOE doesn't say anything. The other children at his table, OLLY, SAM, ELLA and HARRY have their hands up with their "Pick Me" faces on.

TERRY
(HALF WHISPERING)
What sound did you hear, Joe? Can you remember? Hey?

JOE looks at TERRY, then MRS HANKIN. OLLY, not malicious but impatient, turns to JOE who now has his hands up to his eyes and is peeping through the gaps in his fingers.

OLLY
What did you hear, Joe?! Just tell Miss! Tell her.

OLLY, SAM, HARRY and ELLA, hands up, rising off their seats.

TERRY
Can you think of anything?

OLLY mimes crashing the heel of his hand into his forehead in a comedy gesture of exasperation. SAM smiles.

SAM
Miss! Miss!

ELLA turns to JOE.

ELLA
Was it a lamb bleating, Joe?

JOE does a tiny nod from behind his hands but says nothing.

MRS HANKIN
"A lamb bleating." "Bleating". Good word, Ella. Joe's table can go.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Marty.

OLLY and the other BOYS look a bit confused, not piss-taking but not really interested.

JOE (CONT'D)

Marty the Zebra. Madagascar.

OLLY gives JOE his cards back. The BOYS are back in a huddle, their conversation too fast and fanatical to penetrate.

OLLY

Eden Hazard.

SAM

I gave you that yesterday.

OLLY

Didn't. Anyway. Harry Kane is better.

HARRY

My Dad says he isn't . . .

JOE drifts away, clutching the cards. Then he turns and looks back at the boys and looks at the cards and . . .

CUT TO:

45 EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. ROOF. DAY 2. 14:45.

JOE on the flat roof, headphones on. We hear the song - The La's, 'There She Goes'.

JOE/THE LA'S

(SINGING)

"There she goes
There she goes again
Racing through my brain
And I just can't contain
This feelin' that remains."

As we pull out we see that BILL is on the roof with JOE, staring down at the playground. The song carries on playing over the following sequence . . .

CUT TO:

46 EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 2. 14:50.

PAUL and GARY unloading a delivery from a van. ALISON exits the gastropub on her phone, grabs PAUL, and they rush towards her car.

CUT TO:

SARAH has the wet wipes out and is wiping BILL down.

SARAH

Well, I daresay he'll need an anti-histamine after all the excitement and dust of course but that's not your concern . . .

ALISON

You're all right, aren't you, Bill? Tough as old boots!

SARAH

(FLUSTERED)

I know you mean well, Alison, but I am sorry to say that is very much not the point. (ANGRY NOW) He could have fallen. And hit his head. They both could. And I don't know how to say this because Joe is a lovely boy but . . .

ALISON

But what?

SARAH

(ANGRY)

But when things like this happen. It's always Joe that they're happening to, isn't it? Really?

ALISON

I see. I didn't know you felt like that.

SARAH

I don't feel like that. I just. . . No other parent would be different. I'm sorry.

A smattering of PARENTS start to arrive in the playground for pick up now - including LINDA. ALISON aware of her watching.

We go up the ladder to find PAUL with JOE who is facing away from him, refusing to engage.

PAUL

Joe. I know it's good up here, mate, but this has to stop.

JOE finally turns, walks towards PAUL, and hands him the one Match Attax card he has hung on to.

JOE

Marcus Rashford, Manchester United.

PAUL stares at the card and stares back at JOE.

CUT TO:

48 INT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. CLASSROOM. DAY 2. 15:30.

MRS PAYNE, MRS HANKIN, TERRY, PAUL and ALISON are sitting around on small chairs. All serious stuff. If possible, we can see JOE in a separate room, sitting at a table, waiting, maybe on his Dad's phone.

MRS PAYNE

I can only apologise that this has been allowed to happen again. Mr Elliot has conceded that he is not temperamentally suited to the role of School Caretaker.

TERRY

Really? When was this?

MRS PAYNE

Later today after we've spoken.

PAUL

At least Joe had a mate with him this time, so it's kind of progress, isn't it?

MRS PAYNE

I know we all like to see the light side but he did set his mind on going up there again and found a way. I worry about what he might do next.

PAUL

How do we know Bill didn't suggest it?

TERRY

In the end there was no harm done. Bill was fine. His classmates were okay. He isn't the only kid who has the odd bad day.

MRS PAYNE

His bad days used to be once a term, then once a week, and now they're every other day.

MRS HANKIN

It's a funny age, seven. A lot of shuffling of the pack. Socially, I mean, as well as academically.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS HANKIN (CONT'D)

The gap between Joe and the other kids is growing. He's different. And they've started to notice that.

ALISON

Joe has noticed he's different too.

MRS PAYNE

We've talked about this before. We love Joe and we can handle Joe. The question is whether Joe can handle this school anymore.

TERRY

Hang on, if we are worried about him feeling different then isn't it better he stays where he knows everyone and everyone knows him?

MRS PAYNE

I do think some of the children get upset by some of Joe's behaviour, so that doesn't help him integrate.

ALISON

The children have told you this? Have they?

MRS PAYNE

We've had feedback from some of the parents.

ALISON

I think I can guess which ones.

MRS PAYNE

The best place for Joe is where you are happy for him to be and where Joe is happy. I'll support you in whatever you decide is best.

ALISON

I'll come in and talk to the parents. Reassure them they've got nothing to worry about. Paul and I are happy to do that.

TERRY looks at PAUL and ALISON, reassured and we . . .

CUT TO:

49 INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 2. 16:00.

JOE is in the back of the car wearing headphones. PAUL is about to get out of the car, being dropped off at the gastropub by ALISON.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

What are we going to say to the parents?

ALISON

I haven't a clue. Which is why we're going to talk to people at the support group.

PAUL shakes his head.

PAUL

I don't know if I can get cover tonight.

ALISON

Come on. It's just people in the same boat as us. People who have been through this.

PAUL

And not a Fred Perry T-shirt between them.

ALISON

What?

PAUL

You know. Groups like that. It's always a bit hand-knitted and cords.

ALISON

Are you serious?

PAUL

I'm sorry, it's the group thing. I just don't like groups.

ALISON

But you're perfectly happy to go to Old Trafford with 65,000 strangers and chant inanely for two hours. I'll see you there. 7.30.

ALISON kisses him. PAUL gets out and heads up to the gastropub. ALISON drives away and we . . .

CUT TO:

50 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. SWINGS. DAY 2. 17:30.

REBECCA and JAMES stand by the swings. JOE is there too, headphones on. Running his finger along the stone wall as though this is a task of great importance.

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA

Tomorrow?

JAMES

We said a few days. It's been . . .

REBECCA

Two days. Why are you so keen to
get away?

REBECCA
You were making fun of him.

JAMES
No, I wasn't . . .

REBECCA
It felt like you were.

JAMES
Well, I wasn't.

REBECCA steers JOE off the swing and he walks back towards the house. They both watch him and REBECCA speaks as they go.

REBECCA
Look, I know it was only meant to be a couple of days but this stuff with Joe. And the school and everything . . .

JAMES
All kids get in trouble at school.

REBECCA
It's different for Joe.

JAMES
(SARCASTIC)
Of course it is.

REBECCA
My brother is autistic. I told you he was autistic when we were in Uganda. And you said you were cool with it.

JAMES
We were in the same sleeping bag in Uganda. I'd have said anything.

REBECCA
Nice.

JAMES
I'm joking.

REBECCA
No, you're not.

REBECCA turns away. Then they both spot VINCENT and GRACE outside the Scott House, pulling at the same suitcase as a taxi waits.

GRACE
After forty years of marriage I think the very least you owe me is a suitcase!

CONTINUED: (3)

REBECCA
They're not blood relatives.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. SCOTT HOUSE. DAY 2. 17:32.

GRACE is giving EMILY a big kiss.

GRACE
Granny will be back to see you
very, very soon . . .

NICOLA gives GRACE a light kiss on the cheek.

NICOLA
Look after yourself, Mum.

GRACE
You too. Your father is a liar. He
can't help it.

NICOLA
I know.

GRACE gets into the taxi. They watch it drive away.

EDDIE
Do you want me to order you your
own taxi, Vincent? Or have you
arranged that yourself.

VINCENT
No. No. I feel I should stay a few
days.

EDDIE
What?

NICOLA
Sorry, Dad. That isn't convenient.

VINCENT
Why? Because you and Eddie will
have to pretend you are still
together until I go. Is that what's
bothering you? (BEAT) I'm not
stupid, Nicola.

NICOLA and EDDIE look at each other, VINCENT heading back
into the house before either of them can reply.

CUT TO:

52 INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/CHURCH HALL. DUSK 2. 19:32.

PAUL sits outside the church hall, watching a PARENT arrive with his/her TEENAGE DAUGHTER - JAN - who is on the autism spectrum. He sits watching this but doesn't get out of his car.

CUT TO:

53 INT. CHURCH HALL. DUSK 2. 19:38.

The Autism Support Group. A group of PARENTS of various ages.

This is mainly a social support group so there will be small groups discussing issues from schooling to care packages or just chatting - sharing stories.

Maybe a poster on the wall advertising upcoming events.

One of the parents, SOPHIE, the same age as ALISON, is with her teenage son - MARK. The girl we saw outside, JAN, sits, withdrawn. MARK is pacing back and forth. SOPHIE talking to ALISON. ALISON has a pile of papers on a small table in front of them.

SOPHIE

Thanks for this, Alison. My brain just goes to mush when I have to fill in a form.

ALISON

No problem. I actually enjoy it. I was that girl at school who colour coded her notes.

SOPHIE

Really? I'd never have guessed.
(OFF ALISON'S LOOK) Bet you ironed your pants as well.

ALISON laughs, but SOPHIE is distracted by MARK who is growing agitated. She crosses to him.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I need to talk to Alison. You sit with Jan. We have tea and biscuits. We go home on the bus.

MARK replies, almost talking to himself, no eye contact, his hoodie up.

MARK

You need to talk. I sit with Jan. We have tea and biscuits. We go home on the bus.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE
Yep. Correct. Right?

MARK
It's all right.

MARK sits next to JAN, no interaction between them but they prefer it that way. SOPHIE crosses to ALISON who has

He's been up on the roof, under the table, up on the roof again . . . Isn't that what you should be worrying about?

ALISON

I am worrying about it.

SOPHIE

What's Joe trying to tell you? Apart from the fact he wants a parachute? Cos it doesn't seem like the behaviour of a kid who is happy at the school he's at.

ALISON

We don't have much choice there. I've looked at primaries with autism bases and the nearest one with a space is Manchester.

SOPHIE

So?

ALISON

We always said he'd go mainstream and local. (ALISON POINTS TO THE PAPERWORK) We're doing all this to get your Mark back into mainstream.

SOPHIE

Because that's what Mark wants. It's what he tells me he wants. And he's 16. And six foot tall.

ALISON laughs. The door opens, ALISON looks up in anticipation but it is a couple of PARENTS. ALISON looks disappointed, then turns back to SOPHIE . . . refers back to the pile of papers on the table.

54 INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/CHURCH HALL. NIGHT 2. 21:23.

PAUL waiting as some PARENTS along with ALISON, MARK and SOPHIE come out. SOPHIE now clutching the pile of papers. PAUL nods, "Hello".

ALISON
Sophie, this is Paul, my husband.
Paul, this is Mark.

PAUL
Hi. Hi, Mark.

PAUL shakes hands with SOPHIE and goes to shake hands with MARK. MARK touches the top of PAUL's hand and looks away.

MARK
Hello, hello.

ALISON
And this is Sophie, your new waitress.

SOPHIE
What?

ALISON
You need a part-time job. Paul needs help. Because as you can see he can't even get to one meeting on time . . .

SOPHIE
Wow. Thanks. I don't know what hours I can do -

ALISON
Paul'll sort it out. He's flexible like that.

SOPHIE
She's a hard woman to say 'No' to.

PAUL
I'm aware of that.

ALISON
And Sophie's looking for someone to drive her and Mark to gigs now and then so I thought you'd be up for that.

SOPHIE
You don't have to, if you don't want to . . .

ALI SON

'Course he wants to. Mark is into indie.

PAUL

Is he? Which bands do you like?

MARK looks down at the floor.

SOPHIE

I can't drive, you see, so it makes things difficult. And Mark loves a live band.

PAUL

How's your waitressing?

SOPHIE

Worse than my driving. (TO ALI SON)
Thank you.

SOPHIE and MARK walk away. MARK, his back to them, holds one hand up in a 'Goodbye' gesture.

PAUL knows he is in the doghouse but also feels slightly pissed off.

PAUL

It just went mad at the Fellside. I tried to get away earlier but . . .

ALI SON

No, you didn't Paul. You sat outside for two hours. In the car. Not coming in. I saw you.

PAUL

Oh. Right. So that's what the Sophie stuff was about. Stitching me up by giving her a job.

PAUL and ALISON in the car now. PAUL starts the engine and they drive off.

CUT TO:

55 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 2. 21:35.

PAUL and ALISON enter in silence, then PAUL turns to ALISON.

PAUL

Okay. Right. Let's say Joe understands what autistic means. Except he doesn't. Not really. 'Cos none of us do. But let's say he sees some other kids, you know, more severely autistic than him. Does he think that's what autistic means? Does he think that's how the world sees him? How we see him?

ALISON

Better that than he thinks it's a bad thing. It might at least give him a sense of who he is. An identity.

PAUL

Club Autistic. I bet that's got quite a waiting list.

ALISON

If it helps give him a feeling of belonging and support then why not?

PAUL

What about our club? What about me, you, Rebecca and Joe? Isn't that enough?

ALISON

Not anymore, no. We thought we were doing all right and it turns out we weren't. We need other people. We've always needed other people. You saw that before I did . . .

PAUL

I know. But I want to be the one with the magic touch.

ALISON

What?

PAUL

Joe. I could always handle him. I could always get through to him in the end.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

It was a struggle but I could do it. And it felt, well, it felt better that way. No. That's not true. It made me feel better that way. And these last few months I feel like I'm losing that. I feel like I'm losing my boy.

ALISON turns to PAUL. She nods. She gets it.

CUT TO:

56

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 2. 01:30.

Close up on JOE's empty bed. ALISON looking at it. He is under the bed, fast asleep. ALISON kneels down, reaches under the bed to coax JOE out from under the bed but he turns in his sleep and is tighter against the wall.

CUT TO:

LINDA

Nobody minds him being here at all.

ALISON

No? Another way of thinking about
that is that it's good for your

ALISON smiles at TERRY. TERRY looks away.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. YARD. DAY 3. 16:48.

MAURICE and PAUL are loading some crates of beer into the back of Paul's car.

MAURICE

A special school? I thought you didn't want him going to a special school.

PAUL

It won't be a special school. It'll be an autism unit in an ordinary school.

MAURICE

But you're still taking him out of the school he knows?

PAUL

Something needs to be done. We've made the right decision.

MAURICE

Great. Good for you. So why are you talking to me about it?

PAUL

Well, you've always got an opinion.

MAURICE

You've never asked to hear it before.

PAUL

Well, I am asking for it now.

MAURICE looks up to see LOUISE walking into the yard.

MAURICE

I think my opinion giving days might be behind me, Paul.

PAUL looks puzzled and turns to see LOUISE.

CUT TO:

64 INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 3. 16:50.

MAURICE and LOUISE sit, awkward.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

This job. That Ralph has applied for with you.

MAURICE

What job?

LOUISE

He left the application form out, Maurice, so don't mess about. Has he got any chance of getting it?

MAURICE

Yeah. He's a grafter. He's got a good job record. We get on . . .

LOUISE

Good. Good. That's good to hear.

MAURICE

He's got a good chance and he'll get it on merit if he does get it.

LOUISE

Great. Well. That's great. Just make sure he doesn't. All right?

MAURICE

What?

LOUISE

Let him do the interview. But please, Maurice, don't give him the job.

MAURICE

What? Why not?

LOUISE

I can't tell you that. I just need you to promise me you'll let him come close but not get the job in the end . . .

MAURICE

He's a grown man. He makes his own decisions. I don't - (make them for him and neither do you)

LOUISE

(INTERRUPTING)

I've got my reasons, Maurice, I just don't want to go in to them with you!

MAURICE

Oh I get it. Don't go taking it out on Ralph because you've still got a problem with me.

LOUISE

A problem with you? My God. The view from your ego must be breathtaking. (BEAT) Hard as it must be for you to believe, it isn't about you, Maurice. It's about me. And if what we had or didn't have means anything to you then that should be enough for you to do what I ask.

LOUISE virtually shouts this last. MAURICE shaken by her vehemence.

MAURICE

Okay. Okay. Okay. I get the message. He won't get the job. I promise.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. YARD. DAY 3. 16:52.

MAURICE comes out, exhales, turning this one over as he watches LOUISE walk away. What was that about?

CUT TO:

66 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 3. 18:12.

ALISON on the computer, PAUL brewing up. REBECCA enters.

REBECCA

Hi ya. What you up to?

REBECCA sits down next to ALISON. ALISON doesn't quite expect this but is happy for her to be there.

ALISON

Where's James?

REBECCA

He's packing.

ALISON

Packing? What? You're not heading off already, are you?

REBECCA

Not me. Just James.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON and PAUL both turn to REBECCA. We hear the front door bang and . . .

CUT TO:

67 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 3. 18:14.

JAMES leaving the house with rucksack. JOE, swinging on the gate, watches him go. At the bottom of the drive JAMES turns and looks back at JOE. An almost invisible nod.

CUT TO:

68 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 3. 18:15.

PAUL and ALISON with REBECCA.

ALISON
Do you love him?

REBECCA
Of course I love him. We had tattoos done and everything.

PAUL
"We"? Oh, wonderful.

RE thm? ALISON
Paul . . . In fairness to James, it must have been hard to come here and meet your family all in one go. You'd had all that freedom and then

ALISON

Clearly. Stop trying to second guess what James is feeling and go and talk to him before it's too late. Go on.

REBECCA

Since when did you think talking about feelings was a good idea?

ALISON

I don't really. I just do it to annoy your Dad.

PAUL cracks a smile at this.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Go on! Get after him. He might be the love of your life or he might not but you need to find out and whatever happens we're here for you. If you're happy, we're happy.

REBECCA

(GETTING UP)

You're becoming all right, you know!

REBECCA exits.

ALISON

Can I have that in writing?

The door slams. A silence.

PAUL

Just to be clear. That was the old, "We just want you to be happy but please God, dump him" tactic you

REBECCA (CONT'D)
You didn't get on.

JAMES
It wasn't my bus. (BEAT) You came
after me.

REBECCA
I was going to the shops.
They half smile at each other and . . .

CUT TO:

69A INT. SCOTT HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 3. 18:30.

VINCENT sits and watches as EDDIE enters with EMILY - still in the buggy, asleep. EDDIE puts his finger to his lips to indicate she is sleeping. NICOLA, home from work, nods towards the sofa where EDDIE sees VINCENT still sitting, reading a book. He has no dog collar - just an open shirt.

EDDIE
You still here, Vincent? Is there a
rail strike I don't know about.

VINCENT
I just need a little time.

NICOLA
You've had a little time.

EDDIE
(INDICATING LACK OF DOG
COLLAR)
Off duty today? Or Undercover?

VINCENT half laughs.

NICOLA
Won't your congregation be missing
you?

VINCENT
I've got a new curate. He's
stepping in. He works out and says
things like "Jesus has bare love."
They won't even notice I'm gone.

VINCENT sinks back into his depression.

NICOLA
You'll have to go back and face the
truth some time.

EDDIE
Nicola's right, Vincent.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Perhaps I'll give it two years like you two did.

NICOLA

I didn't lie by the way. About my marriage. I just didn't tell you the truth.

VINCENT

You didn't feel you could tell your own Mum and Dad?

NICOLA

No, I didn't. Because the last time I told you, I got nothing but judgement from you. No support. No sympathy. Nothing.

VINCENT

It wasn't like that. You're exaggerating.

NICOLA

I don't exaggerate. But now I realise your response was partly projection of your own guilt on to my adultery. Now it makes sense. I'm right, aren't I, Eddie.

EDDIE nods in half-hearted agreement. VINCENT smiles. He has a plan.

VINCENT

I've been thinking. And praying. And this time it is going to be different.

NICOLA

I'm glad to hear it.

VINCENT

I am going to redeem myself with
12 t3

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM. DAY 3. 18:40.

ALI SON

e.

JOE

Madagascar 2.

PAUL

know. "The good news is we'll be
landing immediately. The bad news
is we're crash landing."

and turns to PAUL.

JOE

is not the same.

PAUL

body is same.

PAUL
It won't. You know that.

ALISON
And from time to time you might
need a bit more help.

A look between ALISON and PAUL.

ALISON (CONT'D)
But that's okay.

JOE looks at ALISON but doesn't respond.

PAUL
What do you think.

JOE
I don't want to talk about autistic
anymore.

ALISON and PAUL exchange a look.

ALISON
Me neither, I love . . . me neither.

ALISON gives JOE a hug. PAUL too. Then they let him go . . . he
puts on his headphones, takes a mini chocolate from the

71 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 3. 18:44.

JOE with his headphones on. The Wedding Present playing. JOE eating a chocolate that doesn't seem to have gone mouldy, staring back at his house as though trying to puzzle something out.

THE WEDDING PRESENT
"Get along, get along, get out
Get along, get along, get out of
here."

END OF EPISODE