

INSIGNIFICANCE

by

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FADE IN:

TITLE: THE SCREWDRIVER

EXT. DAY - ROAD OUTSIDE LARGE SUBURBAN HOUSES

A small white van pulls up.

INT. OF VAN. DAY

Sean (forties, small to average size) is looking at the house numbers, checking the address with the information on his phone. Satisfied, he gets out of the van.

EXT. DAY - OUTSIDE THE HOUSES

Sean walks to the back of the van. He gets his toolbox out and, locking the van, walks up the drive of the house he has parked outside. He is dressed as a workman: blue polo shirt, blue work/cargo pants and safety boots. He knocks on the side door of the house. A few moments later the door opens. A large man, also dressed in work gear, answers the door. He is the customer.

THE CUSTOMER

(To Sean)

Can I help you? (a beat) Are you here to fit the thermostat?

SEAN

Hi yeah. How are you doing?

THE CUSTOMER

Come in. (Sean enters the house) I was going to fit it myself but I've got a lot on at the minute.

INT. DAY - A LARGE KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - A BIT GLOOMY; NOT MUCH NATURAL LIGHT.

Sean walks in. He sees the boiler in a cupboard with the door open above one of the kitchen work surfaces. He puts his toolbox on the floor nearby.

SEAN

I see you're a fellow tradesman?

THE CUSTOMER

Aye, I'm a sparky.

SEAN

Ah nice one.

THE CUSTOMER

Do you want a drink?

SEAN

Yeah, I'd love one mate. Tea please. Thank you.

Sean sees the smart thermostat in a box on the kitchen table.

SEAN

I see you've had the thermostat delivered.

THE CUSTOMER

(Making tea)

Aye, it came last week. Aye, last Wednesday or Thursday.

SEAN

(Opening the box and removing the equipment)

And have you downloaded the app?

THE CUSTOMER

Not yet. It's the missus that wanted it; I'm not that bothered myself.

SEAN

No, I haven't got one.

Sean moves to the work surface underneath the boiler. He looks at the boiler for a moment then bends and opens his toolbox. The inside of the toolbox is very tidy; there aren't many tools. He's been doing these specific installations for some time and knows exactly what he needs to bring to the job. He places a large orange and grey number 2 Pozidriv screwdriver on the counter. He's had this particular driver for at least fifteen years. It's a professional and expensive tool.

THE CUSTOMER

How'd you want your tea?

SEAN

Black, no sugar please.

THE CUSTOMER

Black tea?! No milk or sugar?!

SEAN

I gave up dairy when my son was little, he's allergic to it. I kind of gave it up in support.

THE CUSTOMER

I don't know how you drink it.

SEAN

(Taking his phone from
his pocket)

Ah you get used to it. I just need
to get a signature please. It's
just to say the boiler's compatible
with the thermostat and that it's
in good condition. It's all working
alright yeah?

THE CUSTOMER

Aye, it was on this morning.

The Customer signs the app on Sean's phone. Sean is looking
at the cupboard that is built around the boiler.

SEAN

I need to connect the receiver part
in the boiler, but I'm not sure I
can get the cover off with the
cupboard door on. It looks like
it's been proper built in.

THE CUSTOMER

You can take the whole cupboard
apart if you need to. It's just a
few screws.

Sean has a closer look.

SEAN

The sides have standard screws but
the door's been put on with
star-head screws. Unusual. I've got
some star-head bits in my van. I
won't be a minute.

He heads out.

EXT. DAY - DRIVEWAY

Sean heads down the drive to his van.

EXT. DAY - OUTSIDE THE HOUSES

Sean finds the tool he needs from his van and walks back up
the drive.

INT. DAY - KITCHEN

The customer is stood at his own toolbox which is on the
counter at the other side of the kitchen. We see him unroll
an expensive-looking tool roll. There are a number of
different sized screwdrivers in it, but there is a space -
an empty pocket where the largest one should be. The
screwdrivers are exactly the same make as Sean's. He rolls
up the tool roll, and reaching into his tool box, gets out a
roll of brown tape.

EXT. DAY - DRIVEWAY

Sean walks up the drive to the door. He knocks gently and walks in.

INT. DAY - KITCHEN

The customer is stood on the counter removing the screws from the sides of the cupboard (these are regular screws). He is using Sean's screwdriver. Sean is a little taken aback that the customer is using his screwdriver without asking, especially since he now notices the customer's own toolbox is on the other kitchen counter. Was it there before? He takes this development in the spirit of the customer mucking in, however, and sets about removing the door from the cupboard while the customer removes the sides.

THE CUSTOMER

You work for yourself?

SEAN

Yeah, I mostly do this; it pays quite well, so... How about you? Are you self-employed?

THE CUSTOMER

I manage a team of electricians at the airport.

SEAN

Oh yeah?

THE CUSTOMER

I'm leaving soon. I've been offered a bigger contract in town.

SEAN

Oh okay.

They've removed the cupboard now. Sean removes the boiler cover. He is not really paying attention to what the customer is doing but picks up the part from the kitchen table and starts to mount it in the boiler. The customer is at the kitchen table looking at the instructions for the thermostat. Sean is now running a cable from the receiver into the boiler. After a short time the customer puts the instruction booklet down.

THE CUSTOMER

You got kids then?

SEAN

Yeah, two boys.

THE CUSTOMER

How old?

SEAN

Eight and Five. How about you?

THE CUSTOMER

Boy and a girl - teenagers. You wait. Ten years time - less - they won't talk to you. You won't know 'em. You'll miss 'em, the little kids they used to be. The games you used to play.

Sean, a bit embarrassed, laughs half-heartedly. He works on in a bit of an awkward silence for a time, the customer watching over his shoulder.

SEAN

There. Done.

THE CUSTOMER

I'll put the cover back on.

SEAN

Are you sure? I just need to connect it into your Wi-Fi then.

THE CUSTOMER

I can do that too. I've just been looking at the instructions. You get off. I'll even put the cupboard back together for you.

SEAN

(Not sure how to take this last remark)
Are you sure?

THE CUSTOMER

Aye.

SEAN

Okay.

He takes a few drinks from his tea and starts gathering his tools together and putting them in his toolbox.

THE CUSTOMER

(Pointing in Sean's toolbox)

Hey. Driver.

SEAN

What?

THE CUSTOMER

Driver. That's my screwdriver.

SEAN

(Shocked. Panicking) This is my screwdriver.

THE CUSTOMER

(walking over. Standing above the crouching Sean) See it's got brown tape round it. All my tools have brown tape round. Give.

SEAN

(Intimidated into handing over the driver) Well where's mine?

THE CUSTOMER

(Laughing) I don't know. You must have left it on a job.

SEAN

(standing up) That's my screwdriver.

The customer walks over to his toolbox and gets out the set of screwdrivers we saw earlier that are identical in make and design to Sean's.

THE CUSTOMER

(Pointing at the brown tape around the screwdrivers). Look: brown tape.

Sean looks at him, incredulous.

THE CUSTOMER

Oh, you think I took your driver and put brown tape around it yeah? Actually - get out! Get out of my house! I was beginning to think you were alright. Go on, get out. I'll finish the job myself. I want you out. Go on, get out.

Sean picks up his toolbox. He can hardly believe what's happening. He doesn't know what to do. He tries to maintain a professional dignity.

SEAN

Thanks for the tea (he will regret saying this).

He exits the house.

EXT. DAY - DRIVEWAY.

Sean, in shock, walks down the drive to his van.

MUSIC CUE: Ambient piano music plays

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

TITLE: FRIENDS

INT: DAY - A SUNNY LIVING ROOM IN A FLAT

Two young boys are half-playing, half-watching television. Kevin (thirties, white working-class) is stood nearby on his mobile phone, watching the children. He has his phone to his ear, listening to his wife from whom he is separated.

KEVIN

(On phone)

Alright, yeah. I'll see you in a bit. Yeah, bye.

He puts the phone in his pocket and turns to his children.

KEVIN

We've got to go to your mum's. (Intercepting the boys' protests) Yes, I know, she was going to pick you up from here, but I'm going to help her get some stuff out of the loft. There's some stuff of mine in the garage too. Come on, get your shoes on. It's a lovely day, you can play in the garden.

They go about the process of leaving.

EXT. DAY - A SUBURBAN STREET

Kevin's estate car pulls up outside a typical semi. There is already a car parked in the drive. A woman, Jane (white, thirties, aspiring middle-class) comes out of the house to greet the boys as they exit the car. They then run round to the back garden to play.

JANE

(Tersely)

Hi.

KEVIN

Hi.

JANE

Are you alright to help me get the rest of the stuff out of the attic?

KEVIN

Yes. I said yes. That's why I'm here.

They move into the house and start up the stairs. A ladder is leaning against the landing wall.

JANE
 (Indicating the ladder)
 I got it up the stairs; I just
 didn't know how to open it up.

KEVIN
 It's fine.

JANE
 Do you want those pictures you
 painted? They're in the garage.
 I've been to the tip. There's just
 those now. The toys and everything
 else I've taken to the new house.

KEVIN
 (Climbing the stepladder
 and removing the loft
 hatch)
 I don't want them. I said I didn't
 want them. You could've just taken
 them to the tip. (A pause) Don't
 worry about it - I'll take them.
 (beat) Is it next week you're
 moving?

JANE
 Yes. The twenty fourth.
 (Beat) Do you want a cup of tea?

KEVIN
 (Climbing up into the
 loft)
 Yes, okay go on then.

Jane goes to make tea.

INT: DAY - INSIDE THE LOFT. IT IS LIT BY A SINGLE
 FLOURESCENT LIGHT. BOXES, BITS OF FURNITURE ETC. ARE NEATLY
 STORED

Kevin starts moving boxes to the hatch to pass down. They
 have children's clothes in them. They are labelled by age.

He looks inside a cardboard box. There are some photographs.
 He looks at a few of them. They are of he and Jane in
 happier times. He looks at one for a long time; fighting
 back tears. In another box are Jane's wedding shoes.

Jane returns with the tea. She passes it up to him. He
 starts passing stuff down. They do not talk. The heavier
 stuff he manhandles down the ladder himself. This clearing
 of the loft with Kevin passing stuff down to Jane continues
 for a bit. One of the last things is a large, see-through
 plastic box. Jane's wedding dress is in it.

They are both struggling to contain their emotions.

JANE
This is hard isn't it Kev?

Kevin doesn't say anything.

JANE
Well it is for me.

Kevin passes the last few things down and comes out of the loft. He turns the light off and replaces the hatch then comes down the ladder.

KEVIN
(Folding up the ladder. Not looking at Jane. He passes her the half-empty cup)
We'll always have the kids. We'll just have to make that work.

EXT. DAY - OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

We don't hear any dialogue.

MUSIC CUE: Piano music plays.

Kevin embraces his children before walking to his car.

INT. DAY - INSIDE THE HOUSE

Jane is watching him leave from the living room window.

INT. DAY/EVENING - INSIDE KEVIN'S FLAT

MONTAGE

We see Kevin making something to eat in the kitchen; having a shower; sitting watching television drinking a beer.

INT. NIGHT - INSIDE KEVIN'S FLAT

Kevin is looking out of the window.

MUSIC CUE: The music rises.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

TITLE: PAUL ON THE BUS

INT: DAY - ON A BUS

A man sits upstairs on a bus travelling through an urban landscape during morning rush hour. He is autistic. Throughout the journey we see P.O.V of the man looking out of the window. We see council estates, boarded-up houses and shops, broken toys in overgrown gardens, litter etc. We see mothers with prams, helmetless motorcyclists etc.

A man comes up the stairs having just got on the bus.

MAN

(To autistic man)

Happy New Year Paul.

PAUL

Happy New Year.

Paul gets his phone out, it is ringing.

PAUL

Hi Janice, Hi, Hi.

(Listens)

Yeah I'm going to the café yeah yeah. Market café yeah yeah yeah. I'm meeting Cath at the Market Café yeah yeah.

(Listens)

On the bus, yeah yeah. Number four, number four, yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens)

Five to ten yeah. Going to meet Cath at the market cafe, market cafe at five to ten yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens)

Full works. Going to get full works, full-works breakfast with chips. They do chips with the full-works breakfast, yeah yeah yeah. Cath gets mega breakfast, mega breakfast yeah yeah. They don't do chips with mega breakfast though. Cath gets a mega breakfast yeah yeah.

(Listens)

Tea, no milk, two sugars. No milk, no milk now yeah yeah. No milk, two sugars now yeah yeah yeah. Two sugars.

(Listens)

Going to go to Primark yeah yeah yeah. Cath wants a coat. She's gonna get a coat. Going to go to Primark to get a coat.

(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)

(Listens)

Yeah yeah I might get a coat. Yeah yeah. My dad gave me some money for Christmas yeah yeah. Might get a coat yeah yeah.

(Listens)

Yeah I've got some money. I've got it yeah.

(Listens)

I'll look after it yeah. Cath will look after me, yeah, yeah. She's nice Cath, she's nice yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens)

MUSIC CUE:(ambient music starts)

PAUL

(Continued)

I am yeah. I keep my door locked where I live. I don't bother with people much. I keep my door locked most of the time Janice yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens)

Tommy comes round sometimes yeah.

(Listens)

He's nice sometimes. He gives me a can sometimes. He brings cans round sometimes.

(Listens)

I don't get drunk Janice. I just have two cans.

(Listens)

I know you support me. You're my support worker yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens)

He doesn't know where I keep my money when he goes to the toilet.

(Listens)

I know he's a bad 'un, but he - yeah but I don't bother, I don't bother with people much anyway. I don't bother with people. I keep my door locked most of the time anyway yeah, yeah, yeah.

(Listens)

I know. Yeah some people are nice, some people are nice yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens)

Yeah, you and Cath, and my dad at the weekend. I see my dad at the weekend yeah yeah. You and Cath and dad at the weekend.

(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)

(Listens)

Yeah I know, but he's nice
sometimes. Sometimes he's nice.

(Listens)

I know you are. It's nice, it's nice
to be supported, yeah yeah. Be
supported yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens)

Yeah I'll keep my door locked,
okay, yeah yeah yeah, okay.

(Listens)

It's in my pocket. Money's in my
pocket yeah yeah yeah.

(Listens. Puts his finger
to his lips.

Sarcastically)

SHHH! SHHH! SHHH!

(Listens)

I will, I'll be careful. Cath'll
look after me. Bye yeah bye. Bye bye
bye bye bye.

He hangs up the phone.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

TITLE: GOOD COP, BAD COP

INT: DAY - A GARAGE

Two forensic detectives, D.I. Lawrence (male, fifty-ish) and D.C. Adams (male, thirty-ish) are taking fingerprints and forensic evidence from an old saloon car (it could belong to Jay, from 'Insignificance'). They are wearing gloves and masks.

D.C. ADAMS

All I'm saying is that's the trouble with old cars; they're easier to nick.

D.I. LAWRENCE

So it's a civilian's public duty to own and drive a vehicle no older than...what? In what year did cars become un-nickable? Because I'm sure we had two thousand cars nicked last year.

D.C. ADAMS

But how many of those were old cars?

D.I. LAWRENCE

So you're saying if everybody drove around in brand new cars, there'd be no more car theft?

(pause)

Didn't you used to be in Diversity?

D.C. ADAMS

(Defensively)

Yes.

D.I. LAWRENCE

So you're used to dealing with people, real people. You're used to dealing with context.

(Indicating the car they're in with a sweep of his hand)

This shit doesn't happen in a bubble D.C. Adams.

D.C. ADAMS

Yes, but I'm just saying.

There is a pause. The two men continue what they were doing.

D.I. LAWRENCE

Have you done the steering column?

D.C.ADAMS

Yes, done.

D.I.LAWRENCE

And the column floor?

D.C.ADAMS

Yes, I've done it.

There is another pause.

D.I.LAWRENCE

How did you find the Hate-Crime
Division?

D.C.ADAMS

It was interesting.

D.I.LAWRENCE

Don't you just spend a lot of your
time phoning up dumped husbands to
reprimand them for sending
'fuck-you-bitch' texts to their
ex-wives?

D.C.ADAMS

Yes, that is a part of the job;
malicious communications.

D.I.LAWRENCE

Are you married?

D.C.ADAMS

(pause)

Divorced.

D.I.LAWRENCE

(stops what he's doing)

So you know what I'm talking about.

D.C.ADAMS

(pause)

Did you check the bonnet?

D.I.LAWRENCE

The bonnet? Why?

D.C.ADAMS

I think you've got a bee in there.

D.I.LAWRENCE

(laughs)

Good one. You got me there. I've
been divorced twenty years. If you
get to fifty with the same
woman, you know you married your
best friend.

D.C.ADAMS

So the Detective Inspector has a soft underbelly?

D.I.LAWRENCE

I'm actually all heart D.C Adams.
(offering his hand)
Peter.

D.C.ADAMS

Sebastian. Seb.

They shake gloved hands.

D.I.LAWRENCE

Talking about the The diversity and hate-crime department. Years ago, I was on a bender in Amsterdam and a dwarf came up to me in the street, asking for money.

D.C.ADAMS

You mean like a beggar?

D.I.LAWRENCE

Yeah, but a dwarf. No big deal. But when I got back home I was telling my sister about my weekend, and my nephew, who was about seven at the time asks me if I'd seen any Netherland Dwarves.

D.C.ADAMS

The fuck you say.

D.I.LAWRENCE

Yeah, I know. So I'm thinking what the fuck does a seven-year-old know about Holland that I don't know? Is this a thing? Was there something about Dutch dwarves on Newsround? So I said to him, "How do you know about that?" And he says, "I've got one - Fluffy is a Netherland Dwarf".

D.C.ADAMS

Fluffy?

D.I.LAWRENCE

His pet rabbit. It turns out the Netherland Dwarf is a breed of rabbit, and he's got one. His pet rabbit is a fucking Netherland Dwarf.

D.C.ADAMS

Ha! What are the chances?

They laugh and do a bit more of what is now really the pretence of work. D.I.Lawrence lowers his mask. D.C. Adams follows suit.

D.I.LAWRENCE

(continued)

So you worked in diversity, hate crimes, malicious comms, whatever you want to call it. Why did you leave?

D.C.ADAMS

I wanted to be a detective, always have.

D.I.LAWRENCE

You think you'll make a good one?

D.C.ADAMS

I hope so.

There is a short pause.

D.I.LAWRENCE

Talking about diversity and dwarves.

(They laugh)

D.I.LAWRENCE

(continued)

My sons, when they were young, told me about a museum they'd been to with their mum. They said it was a museum for dwarves.

D.C.ADAMS

A museum for dwarves?

D.I.LAWRENCE

That's what I said. They said it was some kind of art gallery, but that all the staff were dwarves. I wondered if it was some kind of performance thing, but they said they had uniforms.

D.C.ADAMS

Uniforms?

D.I.LAWRENCE

Like, staff uniforms. So then I thought, if all the staff were black in a predominantly black community, or Asian in an Asian community, or white? It would be unremarkable wouldn't it?

D.C.ADAMS

(chuckling,wondering
where this is going)

Right. So the museum was in a dwarf
community?

D.I.LAWRENCE

Not exactly.But let's say a person,
who happens to be a dwarf, gets a
job at the art gallery. After a
time, another vacancy comes up, and
they tell their friend,who is also
a dwarf. Because where, or rather
with whom are dwarves going to feel
most comfortable?

D.C.ADAMS

With other dwarves?

D.I.LAWRENCE

Exactly.So that dwarf applies and
gets the job, and in time the
entire staff of the art gallery are
dwarves. What other explanation can
there be?

D.C.ADAMS

I'm stumped.
(They laugh)

D.I.LAWRENCE

Now,in terms of diversity,people
with dwarfism are unusual. They're
different, not because of their
race or their culture, nor does
religion or sexual orientation play
a part. And,notwithstanding any
effect their appearance might have,
they generally live perfectly
normal lives. And they're not what
you could call disabled. In fact I
imagine to do so would be
considered offensive. They simply
look different.

D.C.ADAMS

So what's your point Peter?

D.I.LAWRENCE

(He puts down his
checklist and
pen,removes his mask and
gloves and puts them on
the seat)

I want you to consider the
following scenario, as if you were
still a police officer in the
Diversity Team. You've received a

(MORE)

D.I.LAWRENCE (cont'd)
complaint from a person with
dwarfism who tells you that he is
being bullied by a work
colleague. This person has been
saying things like "Bloody dwarves
- coming here, taking our jobs". How
do you deal with this situation?

D.C.ADAMS
(laughs, then seeing D.I.
Lawrence is serious)

I--

D.I.LAWRENCE
--Finish up here D.C Adams. Make
sure you get everything to the NFD
and NAFIS, and have a full report on
my desk in the morning.

He exits the vehicle and leaves the garage.

MUSIC CUE: ambient music rises.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

TITLE: GRANDAD'S BOOTS

INT. NIGHT - THE LIVING ROOM OF A SMALL BUT TASTEFULLY
DECORATED AND TIDY FLAT

Kevin, a white man in his late thirties is drinking from a can of lager and rolling a spliff - it could be Kevin from 'Friends'. Ambient music plays on his sound system. He picks up his phone and finds the number of a prostitute called Caz. He has 'used' her before. He dials the number. After several seconds Caz answers.

CAZ

Hello?

KEVIN

(A bit sheepish)

Hi, is that Caz?

CAZ

Yeah, who's this?

KEVIN

My name's Kevin, I er, I used you before. You came round to my flat above the shop on Broadgate Lane? Next to the hairdressers?

CAZ

Oh yeah, I remember. Do you want me to come round?

KEVIN

Yeah,yeah.Is that alright?

CAZ

I've just got to go and drop off grandad's boots.Is that okay? I'll be about half an hour?

KEVIN

(Slightly puzzled for a moment)

Ah Yeah,sure, yeah. That's great, thanks.

CAZ

What's your address again.

KEVIN

It's 163 Broadgate Lane. Above the shop, the newsagents yeah?

CAZ
Yeah, yeah, above the hairdressers.
I'll see you soon yeah?

KEVIN
That's great, thanks. Yeah, See you
soon.

CAZ
Bye.

KEVIN
Bye.

INT. NIGHT - KEVIN'S BATHROOM

Kevin is having a pee. Afterwards he takes off his shirt and looks at himself in the mirror. He's not sure if he likes what he sees. There is a tattoo on his chest - 'Jane'. He picks up some deoderant and sprays his armpits.

INT.NIGHT - KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM

Kevin has changed his shirt. He is drinking another can of lager. Ambient music is still playing. The doorbell rings. He gets up and looks out of the window. There is a figure getting out of a car in the street below. He exits the flat.

INT. NIGHT - COMMUNAL STAIRS DOWN TO COMMUNAL ENTRANCE TO FLATS

Kevin walks down the stairs to the door.

INT. NIGHT - COMMUNAL FOYER

Kevin opens the door. There is a young woman there, nineteen, maybe early twenties. She is casually dressed, not glamorous. This is Caz, the prostitute.

KEVIN
Hi.

CAZ
Hi.

KEVIN
Come in.

INT.NIGHT - KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM

Kevin leads Caz into his flat. She puts her bag down on the floor next to the sofa.

CAZ
Um,do you mind if I just go pay my
driver so he doesn't have to wait?
He's just outside.

KEVIN
(Noticing the bag)
Oh, yeah, sure.
(He takes the money from
his pocket)
I, er..

CAZ
It's forty.

KEVIN
Okay. Um, here.
(Handing Caz the money)
You might as well take it all. It
was eighty wasn't it?

CAZ
(Taking the money)
Yeah, thanks.
(She heads out the door,
taking a concerned,
backward glance at her
bag which is still on
the floor. Kevin notices
this)
I won't be long.

She exits the flat. Kevin sits and takes a drink from his can of lager. He smells under his armpits then rubs at his crotch. He is horny. A few moments pass. He looks down at Caz's bag. She should be back by now shouldn't she? Something isn't right. He notices that the bag looks brand new, but it's made of cheap PVC. Something like panic is rising in him. He opens the bag to find nothing but a pair of old boots. He rushes to the window and looks out on the empty street.

KEVIN
(Putting his head in his
hands)
No. No, no, no. Fuck!

MUSIC CUE: the music rises.

FADE OUT.

TITLE: INSIGNIFICANCE

EXT: DUSK - OUTSIDE A HIP CAFE BAR. A SIGN ON THE DOOR SAYS 'WRITERS' GROUP HERE'.

A man in his late twenties, early thirties (TOM) stands outside. He is waiting for JAY who comes trotting up. Jay is also thirty-ish. They are meeting their writing group.

JAY

Sorry I'm late, I had to spend some time thinking up a decent excuse for being late.

TOM

You idiot. At least you're here. Did you hear from the cops? Did you get your car back?

They move inside the cafe. It is thronging. Lots of people are on laptops, some have pens and notebooks.

JAY

I've just got it back now. That's (really)why I'm late. Why didn't you wait inside? You could have written a short story by now.

TOM

Because I don't want to be the guy waiting for someone on the inside - you're supposed to do that on the outside. And because it's your turn to get cake you freak. Flapjack please. Moist.

JAY

(To the barista)

Hiya. A flat white and a black tea please.

(To Tom)

Do you wanna go upstairs? It's busy down here.

(To the barista)

And two flapjacks please. Moist.

TOM

Yeah man.

Jay pays for their stuff and they move upstairs to a smaller room where there is a large table. Other, mostly young writers sit around, engaged in animated conversations or tapping on laptops. At one end, away from the others and next

to whom are the only two free seats, sits an older man with his laptop. He looks like a rock star. He is drinking from a beer bottle and laughing to himself; he might be a bit drunk. Some of the group, on making eye contact with Tom and Jay, raise eyebrows in the man's direction.

TOM
(To the drunk man)
Are we okay to sit here?

NORMAN
(Late forties, faded
rock-star flamboyance)
I don't know, are you?

Tom and Jay hem and haw, a bit embarrassed.

NORMAN
(Continued)
I'm joking, sit down, sit down.

They put their stuff on the table and sit.

TOM
(To Jay)
You should write about your car. I can't believe it was used in a robbery. Was there any damage?

JAY
NO, it's absolutely fine. It could do with a clean though. It's covered in fingerprint dust.

TOM
Fucking cops. Anyway, that's what you get for having an old banger; easy to nick.

JAY
I might be able to claim something for loss of earnings, inconvenience and that. Anyway, I've got an idea to run by you, not about the car; that could be another story.

TOM
Go on then.

JAY
Okay, so it's a modern take on The Watermelon Man, that kind of theme, except a privileged white man wakes up as a black woman.

TOM
So you're exploring gender as well as race and class? Good one.

JAY

It's not an original idea, but I think it's as relevant as ever.

TOM

Doesn't have to be original. I don't think agents or publishers are looking for originality anyway. Whenever an original idea does come along, everybody just copies it and milks it for the market.

JAY

They can milk my shite all day long.

TOM

Yeah, you could buy a new car, you loser.

NORMAN

That's exactly what happened to me.

TOM

You what mate?

NORMAN

I had an original idea for a screenplay and I had it stolen. It's now a popular television show.

Tom and Jay exchange glances.

NORMAN

Hear me out. Like you say, originality or an original idea (he indicates speech marks in the air with his fingers) is just when two or more - but usually two - already established but disparate ideas are combined, simple as that. When it happens, so too does its theft or, if you like, its appropriation. It's a natural law.

JAY

Go on.

NORMAN

Look at Banksy. He's targeting culture and politics and shit, but who isn't? But Banksy took stencilling and a different style of art to the streets. Before him, street art was the wall-tagging graffiti we're used to seeing. Now his style is routinely copied. You

(MORE)

NORMAN (cont'd)
see it everywhere. And that's on
the streets. Think of it in the
context of the multi-million dollar
entertainment and advertising
industry.

TOM
You said you had an idea nicked?

NORMAN
You've seen Insignificance right?

JAY
The TV show? The sketch show? Not
the Nic Roeg movie?

NORMAN
No, yes - the TV show.

TOM
You wrote that? You wrote
Insignificance?

NORMAN
It was my idea. Look at this.

He hands Tom his laptop.

NORMAN
(Continued)
Read the email. Look at when I sent
it to the agents. Then look at the
attached screenplay.

Tom begins to read.

JAY
So why didn't you sue? Who stole
it? Who stole your idea?

NORMAN
Presumably one of the agents I sent
it to. Under British copyright law,
you can't claim ownership of an
idea, so it's fair game. But if
you've seen the show, you'll know
it's a series of short sketches,
similar in structure to a
comedy-sketch show, but with
dramatic rather than comedic
content.

JAY
Ah ha.

NORMAN

And each sketch is linked by
downbeat or ambient music. I
outline all this in my synopsis.

Jay looks at Tom who makes a face to indicate that it looks
like Norman is telling the truth.

NORMAN

(Continued)

Look at the dates. I wrote that two
years ago.

TOM

I love the dramatic-sketch
formula, the slice-of-life stuff; the
little, insignificant bits of
ordinary lives.

JAY

Especially with the piano music
linking everything.

NORMAN

(Pointing to his laptop.
To Tom)

Read that one.

Tom reads.

JAY

You don't seem that bothered that
they stole your idea. I'd be
destroyed.

NORMAN

If it starts to eat at me, I can
take comfort from the fact that I
can pretty much prove it was my
idea (He gesticulates to his
laptop). The truth is, if you have
an idea nicked, it's the thought
that someone else is making a shit
load of money from it that hurts.
And maybe the fame you missed out
on.

JAY

Are there any other reasons to do
it?

NORMAN

When all's said and done it's just
storytelling isn't it? And anyone
can do that.

Tom is furrowing his brow as he reads, and beginning to look confused, maybe a bit agitated.

NORMAN

(Continued)

In this game, at the top of the tree you just end up rewriting Sherlock Holmes or Dracula, or a new take on the history of the Vikings. And anyway, how do you know I didn't steal the idea?

AMBIENT MUSIC BEGINS

TOM

(Looking up from the laptop. To Norman)

How did you do this? How?

Tom's mind is blown.

JAY

What is it? Do what?

TOM

It's this. I mean he's written us. He's written this.

NORMAN

(Getting up)

Can I get you boys anything? A flat white? Black tea is it?

FADE OUT.