

A SLOW HORSES
Comic Relief Special Episode

'By a Nose'

by

Richard Gold

Based on Characters created by Mike Herron

This is a Spec script
not a shooting script for Comic Relief
There are no spoilers

E-mail richgoldcco@gmail.com
Phone 07956 301 517

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SLOW HORSES - THE RED NOSE DAY SPECIAL EPISODE

'BY A NOSE'

INT. COMMUNITY HALL

Amateurish icing swirls and an over compensation of dried fruit embellish a cake.

Paper plate, cake knife - cutting, cake fork.

A portion is offered up by the CAKE MAKER both sway nervously. Could this be a clip from The Great British Bake-Off?

The TASTER, MIKE has age old scars across knuckles that dwarf the fork, like an ogre eating corn on the cob.

TASTER MIKE

Well done Sam, um nice texture,
light and fluffy.
Not too sweet.
Wait is that Almanac?

The BAKER is burly, bald, the ink on the side of his neck shouts Happy Halloween 365 days a year.

BURLY BAKER

Yes, Mike with a touch of Pear
Brandy as well.

A CARING yet unkempt lady jumps at the chance.

CARING KATE

(laughing)

Ha, are you trying to get us all
tipsy? Lucky this is B.A.A not A.A.

Those nearest, standing beside their own cakes muster polite communal laughter. TASTER MIKE moves along to the next person. A tatty freezer bag produces a rounded pyramid of jam sponge rolls lazily swathed in a dark chocolate mixture. Its resemblance to a poo emoji is unmistakable, two plastic goggly eyes wedged in, leave no doubt about it.

The baker is SHIRLEY DANDER.

CARING KATE (CONT'D)

Shirley, certainly has a flare for
avant-garde design, which is
commendable.

Shirley takes the used plate from his hand and with a chipped wooden spoon dollops her cake onto it.

TASTER MIKE
(taking the smallest bite)
Rich chocolate.
It's quite dry.
Is that biscuit?

SHIRLEY
For the savoury experience.

TASTER MIKE
Almost - beefy?

SHIRLEY
Yeah that's the bone meal.

Taster Mike is trying to swallow.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Recipe said use digestives but I
was out of them plus I was dog
sitting.

TASTER MIKE
Are you fucking kidding?

SHIRLEY
Nope, those dog biscuits dipped in
Brussels Paté are better than
toast, if you are also out of
bread.

TASTER MIKE
You taking the piss out of us Dogs?

Lips on the faces of the assembled bakers, snarl.

TASTER MIKE (CONT'D)
You try eating this shit!

He steps forward bearing down on Shirley, breaking the invisible trip wire that turns on a light in her head. Across her hardening face, hundreds of memories are silhouetted like dried flies behind the faded plastic of her past, she starts to smoulder. A flicker of restraint in her eyes as she reminds herself that Violence is Not 'an expression of affection' she knows that had been a lie. But he deserves a smack, his jawline is kinda working for her after all.

He pushes a lump of the turd cake on a fork toward her face.

Caring Kate steps in between them.

CARING KATE

Mike! Remember where we are B.A.A.
This is therapy,
We Bake Away Aggression, now let it
go, let it subside like melting
marsh mellow, can you smell them
Mike, their aroma, now breath in...

TASTER MIKE

Bollocks,
(to Shirley)
you eat this shit!
Eat it, EAT IT!

He thrusts the fork forward, straight at Shirley's mouth.

Shirley side-steps taking the offending hand - fork goes flying - twisting his arm behind his back, using his own momentum to bend him over. A sharp kick on the inside of his knee, he concertinas, face slamming into the poo cake and he is down.

CARING KATE

Mike! Oh dear are you okay?

Face covered in cake. Mike feels his head, arms and legs.

TASTER MIKE

(Dazed)
Think so.

CARING KATE

Well Shirley...

We see the others in the Bake Away Aggression group. One has a neck brace and black eye, another wears a plaster cast on their arm, one is balancing on crutches.

CARING KATE (CONT'D)

...nothing broken, that is
progress! Well done Shirley! Let's
give it up for Shirley everyone!

The most reluctant applause by those whose arms aren't in slings.

Shirley's puts a finger in her poo and tastes it, she smiles.

SHIRLEY

Right you lot, tuck in.

EXT. SUPER-SUPER MARKET

Throngs of 'payday' shoppers entering. The chorus of self - service swipes serenade CATHERINE STANDISH as she exits.

Carrying two humble tote bags neatly filled with groceries she continues past the trollies, cash machines and delivery scooters.

A Great White of a car bumper, launches onto the pavement trying to make a meal out of her shin.

Muscle memory, Standish side-steps in Irish dancing style, she looks for some gesture of apology from the driver, nothing is forthcoming, the music stops.

A couple exit their suburban symbol of success, surfaces shimmering like a nineteen seventies formica kitchen on wheels. Dressed in China-Designer knock-offs, the lady is a long way from a gym, whilst the husband hits it on the way home most nights, or so he tells her.

STANDISH

Sorry, sorry, excuse me, but you
need a Blue Badge to park here.

The Knock-off's exchange a look of WTF?

STANDISH (CONT'D)

It's a handicapped bay?

MALE KNOCK-OFF

A what?

STANDISH

This space is for handicapped. Oh,
I think that's no longer
acceptable?

FEMALE KNOCK-OFF

Disabled?

STANDISH

Sorry yes, disabled, sorry it's
hard to keep up with these things.
These spaces are for - them and
you've just taken the last one.

MALE KNOCK-OFF

We are only going to be a minute.

FEMALE KNOCK-OFF

I've got a prescription to pick up.

Standish surrenders a sigh. The Knock-offs walk away to the shopping trollies. Each selecting the largest.

Standish, appears at the sliding doors.

STANDISH

No, no, sorry but really you need
to move your car.

MALE KNOCK-OFF

What are you a cripple cop?

Standish, stops his trolley with her foot.

STANDISH

I'm just asking you so show some
common decency.

MALE KNOCK-OFF

It's not illegal.

Standish produces a small notebook from her handbag.

FEMALE KNOCK-OFF

Look out love, she has a pencil.

STANDISH

I'm taking your reg number,
because, actually, I know people.

MALE KNOCK-OFF

What you gonna report me, to who?
Some stray cats.

FEMALE KNOCK-OFF

Isn't there a field that's missing
you. Scarecrow lady?

MALE KNOCK-OFF

(laughing)

Yeah, move Scarecrow!

The Knock-offs keep on laughing at 'Scarecrow' as they swerve around Standish and into the supermarket.

It's futile but Standish takes the reg number. As she places the notebook back into her handbag she spies her shopping.

She addresses the contents of her bag.

STANDISH

Sorry my dears, I had such
wonderful plans for us.

She marches back to the obsence-mobile.

STANDISH (CONT'D)
Earl Grey and Antiques Roadshow
but...

She produces a family sized cherry fruitcake and delicately, remorsefully opening the wrapper. On tiptoes, the roof of the SUV becomes a table top buffet of cake pieces.

STANDISH (CONT'D)
...we all have to make sacrifices
for the greater good.

A plucky for its size Sparrow is first in. A nibble, a shrill squark, signals similar scavengers to swoop in. Bombardier pigeons follow, next the seagulls won't be left out.

Standish sits on a bench and watches as she pecks on what is left in the bottom of the wrapper.

STANDISH (CONT'D)
Or what kind of society will be
left behind when we are gone.

She take the last crumbs, watching her improvised bird feeder satisfying the feathered folk.

STANDISH (CONT'D)
Stray cats? Idiot.

Then comes the first poop, it catches on. Seagulls decorate the windows. A cherry red and custard coloured mosaic in the making.

STANDISH (CONT'D)
I prefer birds.

Satiated and smug Standish smiles, if her phone took pictures she would be entering this for the Turner prize. Instead it bleeps, a text.

STANDISH (CONT'D)
Damn you Lamb, I was looking
forward to hearing that fat lady
sing.

INT. COMFY OFFICE

CHLOE is getting somewhere with this one. The self written affirmations on Post-It notes she has placed between the files she is shuffling remind her it's quite the promotion to be working on the MI5 Assessments, so many above her could be sitting in his chair but 'she had won it'. Or they didn't want this one? No that's unhelpful thinking, 'go to the sensory' softness of the Pashmina and 'put negative thoughts that out of your head'.

RODDY HO sits across from her, subtly scrolling Reddit whilst she shuffles. 'How many rules or laws even, get broken when a shrink sleeps with a patient?' Spying that she's is stroking her scarf over her breasts again. Roddy smirks, she's signalling for sure - It's Game On.

CHLOE continues.

CHLOE

The concept of the Rorschach Test, sorry I shouldn't say Test as before all the flawed and diluted misinterpretations, the original study was a psychometric evaluation which through a complex set of algorithms gave a meaningful interpretation on the nebulous stimulus that...

HO

Stimulus, yah I hear you.

CHLOE

...in short there are no wrong answers.

HO

Shame I like *wrong* answers.

He chuckles as his eyes divert to her cleavage. Chloe wraps her Pashmina tighter across her chest.

CHLOE

The Rorschach interprets a person's perception...

HO

My *perception* techniques are on point.

Chloe raises up the pile of papers, so that she can show the Rorschach images to Ho, in turn.

CHLOE

Do you recall, from the last session, what you said about these?

The first is.

HO

Two girls holding glasses of champagne.

Next.

HO (CONT'D)

Three girls in bikinis holding glasses of champagne.

Next.

HO (CONT'D)

Same three girls in bikinis in a hot tub.

Next.

HO (CONT'D)

Me holding a bottle of champagne, with the three girls in bikinis in a hot tub.

Next.

CHLOE

Do any of these women have a name?

HO

Names? Names? Yeah Hot-Rodders.

CHLOE

That would be a collective noun, what about individually? Describe your ideal woman, one you would imagine as a girlfriend?

HO

Girlfriend?
Can I let you in on a secret?

Here comes the breakthrough.

HO (CONT'D)

The Roddy doesn't try to fill his passenger seat, he just fills the passengers.

A spasm in her eye lid as a muscle snaps by her temple, painful, but Chloe is so close now, it's worth it.

CHLOE
The passenger seat, in your car?

HO
Yeah.

CHLOE
Is it nice to drive?

HO
Yeah sweet as.

CHLOE
Reliable?

HO
She purrs every time I turn her on.

CHLOE
You said she, does she have a name?

HO
I don't know, maybe.

CHLOE
And if you lost her how would that make you feel?

Roddy's body language tells her she is very close.

HO
I - I - I -

CHLOE
Close your eyes for me Roddy.
Imagine that she's in the crusher
at the breakers yard.

HO
(eyes closed)
Aaarrrrrr!

CHLOE
Being crushed into a block of
metal.

HO
Jesus - aaarrrrr!

CHLOE
The block is now a piece of
granite.
It's in a graveyard
It's a head stone.
Whose name is on it?

HO
(deep sigh)
It's.
My mum's name?

CHLOE
Your mother?

HO
Yes.

CHLOE
She passed away when you were?

HO
Eleven.

CHLOE
The same time you started excelling
in computers and coding?

HO
It kept me busy.

CHLOE
And was it online where you first
discovered girls?

HO
(shy)
Maybe.

CHLOE
Now open our eyes.

Chloe opens the pile of Rorschachs again, repeating the same
images in the same order.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
I would like you to tell me what
you see in this?

HO
That's a Birthday cake with
candles.

Next.

HO (CONT'D)
The Birthday cake, it's a kids
party. I'm there.

Next.

HO (CONT'D)
The party, me and there is a woman
holding the cake.

Next, Roddy leans in.

CHLOE
And who is the woman?

Roddy jumps forward.

HO
That's, that's incredible,
how did you do that?

Eureka Chloe Eureka, glee across her face!

CHLOE
Who is the woman?

HO
I don't know who she is, but now
her tits are covered in whipped
cream!

INT. SECRET BASEMENT LEVEL

A THIN MAN, so well turned-out that he might spend an
obsessive amount of time grooming, when he should be eating.
He leads DIANA TAVENER into.

A steel walled room, filled only with glass tanks and carbon
fibre cages holding the world's most exotic animals. Albino
Snakes, monstrous arachnoids and lethal looking underwater
people eaters. It is not a place to seek shelter during an
earthquake.

THIN MAN
She is over here.

Arriving at the centerpiece, glass tank, a glowing heat lamp
above a primordial, spectacularly banded lizard the size of a
lounging house cat.

TAVENER
You rather undersold me on how
magnificent she is.
(MORE)

TAVENER (CONT'D)

You are completely confident about her succession?

THIN MAN

Her natural habitat, completely deforested, nothing but scorched earth. My trappers tell me that have not seen her species in at least a decade. She is almost definitely the last of her kind.

TAVENER

The colouring is quite remarkable, not a blemish, not a scratch - no one dared take you on did they? Or if they did, did you make them your dinner dear girl?

THIN MAN

A fine addition to your collection?

TAVENER

Indeed.

THIN MAN

Might I make a suggestion?

TAVENER

Be my guest.

THIN MAN

She is large enough, for a pair of elegant ankle boots, perhaps with a block heel of rainforest wood to compliment the theme?

Tavener ponders.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Her teeth could subtly embellish around a stiletto toe tip, where it meets the sole?

TAVENER

You certainly know how to please a lady. Consider her sold and for the lining?

He produces some swatches of different soft skins, Taverner caresses.

THIN MAN

This is baby seal, or some newly acquired Orca and here is Panda, a popular one for the autumn season.

TAVENER

The Panda, the Orca seem a little over-kill, although how much Orca do you have? I am on the hunt for a Windbreaker.

THIN MAN

For your perfect frame, enough.

He looks her up and down.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

I believe your measurements are the same.

TAVENER

It's quite disconcerting when you look at me like.

THIN MAN

I do apologise, don't you miss those post 911 days.

TAVENER

It was a different time.

Her phone buzzes. She inspects a message.

TAVENER (CONT'D)

Time to whip some horses.

Tavener leaves the Lizard, as its long tongue picks up a cricket from the floor of its tank. Unbeknownst that this is the last meal for the last of its kind.

INT. TOTAL DARKNESS.

SOUND of an electric screw driver.

Cracks of light as a panel is removed, revealing RIVER CARTWRIGHT'S head, a small flashlight in his mouth, probing up into the cabinet.

Inside is a Frankenstein's lab of multicoloured wires, shinny springs, menacing microprocessors and steampunk style electromagnetic tubes.

Cartwright's face is as usual, uncomfortably squashed.

RIVER
Shite, it looked bigger on the
outside.

His ear pods flashes as he talks to a female voice who you
might recognise.

FEMALE VOICE
Can you see it?

River grunts, he repositions himself, the flashlight landing
on a red LED clock face, reading 0000100.

RIVER
(gritting the flashlight)
Uh huh. Seems dormant.

He squeezes his hand past his face and reaches toward it.

FEMALE VOICE
Whatever you do...

River touches the clock and it immediately starts flashing a
count down, 0000099, 0000098, 0000097 quickly.

FEMALE VOICE (CONT'D)
...don't touch it.

RIVER
Right and if that ship has sailed.

FEMALE VOICE
Classic Cartwright!

RIVER
If I don't stop this...

FEMALE VOICE
...London will be destroyed
followed by an invasion, yeah you
said that already, more than once.

The clock is counting down.

FEMALE VOICE (CONT'D)
You have the wire cutters?

RIVER
Right here.

FEMALE VOICE

That's something then, you've got
less than a minute or it's game
over! Can you see a yellow box with
two wire ports?

He squeezes his head further inside amongst the wires.

RIVER

I see it.

FEMALE VOICE

Do exactly as I say or goodbye
Great Britain, again!

River grunts, a second hand appears with wire cutters.

FEMALE VOICE (CONT'D)

Cut the two wires.

RIVER

There are four wires.

FEMALE VOICE

Shit, it's probably been booby
trapped.

The clock counts down.

RIVER

Time's running out.

FEMALE VOICE

Shit, shit, shit...Okay, are they
in a straight line?

RIVER

Yes.

FEMALE VOICE

Cut all four.

RIVER

Are you sure?

SID

What have you got to lose?

Grimacing River cuts them clip, clip, clip, clip.

FEMALE VOICE

Take the inner two and place them
in your mouth.

RIVER

What???

FEMALE VOICE

You need to make a circuit, then
reverse the outer ones and put them
back in.

Spitting out the torch, River warily places the wires on to his tongue, to his relief nothing happens. He pushes the other two into the box.

ZZZZAAAPPPP. River is electrocuted, face juddering, throat gurgling but he holds on despite the pain.

A Chinese Brass Band of metallic clicks and bells start chiming, it is familiar sound. The LED clock numbers start counting UP quickly 0000099, 0000199, 0000299. River spits out the wires.

RIVER

It's RESETTING!

The clock stops at 1000000. He climbs out from under the contraption, as it comes to life.

Standing before the vintage 'Dr Who and the Daleks' Pinball machine.

RIVER (CONT'D)

(in disbelief)

We did it!

FEMALE VOICE

I'm as surprised as you are, given
how rubbish you are with your
fingers!

RIVER

I can save the planet!

FEMALE VOICE

You be you, I'm going back to sleep
it's very late here.

His phone buzzes with a text.

RIVER

Bugger, the Master is on one!

FEMALE VOICE

Oh, did you get shocked?

RIVER
 (tongue swollen)
 Badly... hey hang on, was that
 really necessary?

The phone goes dead.

RIVER (CONT'D)
 Hello, hello?

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

The meeting is running behind. The last to arrive, swooping in over the pier length table, like a seagull after everyone's chips is HARVEY. He squarks on about how he was unavoidably delayed due to his keen eye for spotting the errors of underlings. He fluffs on about how fortunately his swift actions have taken their ship off of a collision course with catastrophe. Harvey comes to perch far from the water jug, it's a rightful request that one of his equals serve him a glass.

LOUISA GUY rides the wave of loathing but exhales it as she pours herself a coffee from the table by the window. Covertly, she whispers into her voice recording pen. Harvey's pantomime is chapter one in the Interrogation Handbook, 'citing superiority through slight of fact and twist of tongue'. How would he fair if she took him through chapter six? There is prize if you get them to puddle themselves. His tiny sip of water begs the question, had Harvey been a teenage bedwetter?

Has the SILVER FOX at the top swallowed it, probably not, had the other two, possibly not.

SILVER FOX
 (scrolling on his iPad)
 As we were saying, we have all read
 this and unanimously agree that the
 way you describe Jackson Lamb is
 too distasteful.

LOUISA
 (with humour)
 Huh, 'Distasteful' could be his
 middle name.

HARVEY
 He is the hero, and you could add
 some redeeming qualities, instead
 he's completely repulsive.
 (reading notes)
 (MORE)

HARVEY (CONT'D)

*he left behind his odour similar
to rotting food, fermenting in a
discarded fridge, left baking under
the sun, in the centre of a
landfill?*

LOUISA

That's as close as I could get.

BIFOCAL FEMALE

Couldn't you describe him as fit,
flat stomached, six packed even?

PICKLED MALE

A six pack bullets would bounce
off. I see him like Daniel Craig,
dripping wet, striding out of the
sea.

LOUISA

You see Jackson Lamb, in tight
swimming trunks!

BIFOCAL FEMALE

You know the phrase. Men want to be
him and...

LOUISA

...Dolphins want to fuck him?

HARVEY

Seriously, he is our hero.

LOUISA

I wouldn't say he was the hero, he
is just the one in charge. It's
kind of a mix bag, of box of
chocolates.

PICKLED MALE

Oh I like that as a tag line,
'Spies are like a box of chocolates
you never know what they're gonna
find?'

Deafening silence all round. Then after a deep sigh.

SILVER FOX

Louisa, this is MI5, Spies, Special
agents, Top Secrets and it should
also be a little saucy.

(MORE)

SILVER FOX (CONT'D)

I ask you, who would want to aspire to, emulate, an agent who smokes, and washes 'their privates' in sink!

LOUISA

Uh Huh, right, swap out his cigarettes for carrot sticks?

SILVER FOX

Good start, you need to develop Lamb's character, his actions, his world into a place that people want to visit.

LOUISA

I get it. Take them running over some roof tops - see Lamb jumping between buildings? Perhaps in slow-motion, wind in his hair?

(a slow-mo flick)

HARVEY

You aren't taking this quite as seriously as I think you might, given that our book deal for your '*Memoirs of an MI5 Misfit*' could be lucrative, for you, for everyone!

LOUISA

Can I leave in his farting?

BIFOCAL FEMALE

We do have an issue with his flatulence, as it never quite comes off the page -- so hard to visualise. In the bigger picture it doesn't gel for us - although maybe it does for audio-books.

LOUISA

Take out his farting, is that what you are saying?

HARVEY

You have to think about the wider audience. Think a series for books, then a TV option even.

LOUISA

Bigger. Longer. Wider. All words that should get someone excited. Just, here's the thing.

(MORE)

LOUISA (CONT'D)

I see it as you are trying to shape
this into something that appeals to
- what's the expression?

PICKLED MALE

Lowest common denominator?

SILVER FOX

Shut up!

PICKLED MALE

Sorry Dad!

LOUISA

- a one size fits all Strap On.

HARVEY

Excuse me!

LOUISA

You know what I mean? Something
that pleases some of the people,
some of the time.
But is either painful or pathetic
to everyone else, all of the time.

HARVEY

(to the others)

You see what I'm saying, that's a
red flag right there!

LOUISA

Really Harvey, you see a red flag
from that side of the table. From
here I see a bloody Chinese
military parade.

Louisa's phone buzzes, she glances at a text, cusses.

LOUISA (CONT'D)

Harvey, I'm pretty sure you need to
wee by now. So why don't you show
me out.

INT. ON A SHABBY LOW STAGE - DAY

MOIRA pulls up her thin black tie towards her white shirt collar. Fingers grip the buttons on her black suit but they fail to reach the slit on the opposite side. Checking herself in full length mirror, yes she could lose a few pounds, she knows that, but why throw in the towel this late in the game.

Besides her occasional late-night callers don't object, in fact they know something about Moira the slow horses don't, this girl's got rhythm.

Just as soon as her fellow performer dons their matching scant-brim fedora and black Ray-Bans, the audience will know it too. Moira presses the buttons on her mobile phone.

From a pair of Bluetooth speakers, sat on chairs on a well-worn carpeted 'stage' the intro begins. *"Please welcome on stage, all the way from Chicago, for your entertainment, the one, the two, the only, all female Blues Brothers!"* A stadium eruption of applause and adoration, from the speakers.

Ray Charles starts to sing, 'Shake your Tail Feather', Moira and partner burst on to the stage and give it some, dancing in Blues Brother's style.

The audience are real children in a Children's Hospital that benefit from the Red Nose Day, Comic Relief fund raising.

Moria's phone buzzes, it's connected to the speakers. An automated voice speaks, cutting the music.

BOT VOICE

*You have a text. From Contact LAMB
FUCKWIT. It reads..*

Moria pulls the power from the speaker. The kids snigger, the medical staff scowl.

INT. SLOUGH HOUSE STAIRCASE - DAY

RIVER is running, up the stairs.

INT. LAMB'S OFFICE - DAY

The slow horses are assembled, SHIRLEY, LOUSIA, MOIRA, RODDY HO, STANDISH, even TAVENER. Holding court is JACKSON LAMB.

River enters, panting.

LAMB

You're late.

RIVER

What, how can I be late to a message that said 'Get here now'?

LAMB

You're the last, so by default, late.

RIVER
(shrugs then sees Tavener)
Looks like someone's been naughty?
(he double takes Moira)
Sunglasses?

LAMB
Take a pew, and I'll get started if
that's alright with you?

The group shrink into their seats.

LAMB (CONT'D)
Bit of history, back in the day, if
you got caught by the KGB, they'd
put you up in box where the only
break from the boredom was the
chiroprapist popping by to take out
your toe nails. And if dear'ol MI5
found out where you were you'd be
lucky if they sent you a pudding
come Christmas.

He holds up a brown folder, official looking.

LAMB (CONT'D)
Now they gone all warm and fuzzy.
With these assessments about our
'wellness', physicals,
cholesterols, piles, testicles and
Mentals.

HO
They weren't my mum's tits covered
in whipped cream!

LAMB
Fuck me Ho, I don't know what's
more disturbing, what just came out
of your gob or that none of your
coshirkers seem the slightest bit
shocked. Calm down, this is my
medical.

MOIRA
I told you he wasn't looking well.

LOUISA
When's he ever looked well?

RIVER
(to Lamb)
Are you going to suffer?

SHIRLEY

Have they told you how long you
have left?

LAMB

Christ, I'd be smiling from ear-to-
ear if I knew how long I'd have
left with you cretins. I'd be
counting the days.

TAVENER

We all would.

LAMB

Thank you Diana, no doubt you have
a memorial lamp picked out for me?

TAVENER

On my the reading table by the
fire, fitting as it will constantly
remind me of your final
destination.

LAMB

Oh, not anymore Diana, haven't you
heard? They're implementing a new
Inclusivity initiative upstairs.

STANDISH

Sorry, why are we here, didn't your
doctor give you a clean bill of
health nine weeks ago?

LAMB

He did, but it appears
(groans a little in pain)
he has been shroffed for sending
MI5 exactly the same results for
the last five years.

STANDISH

Oh dear he might get struck off for
that?

LAMB

I don't think he's too bothered,
he's been dead for four.

STANDISH

(disproving)
Jackson really.

LAMB

Relax, I sent flowers.

(groans in pain)

The new doctor has given me three choices if I'm going to continue running this abattoir of all hope.

(reading)

Stop smoking,
spend a hour a day in a Gym
or take a three month cruise on His Majesty's shilling.

LOUISA

Really? You dragged me over here to help you decide on a holiday.

LAMB

(wily)

Someone needs to take notes.

Louisa, knows what he means but acts bemused.

MOIRA

Could you sail around Scotland?

LAMB

Scotland? A place that is so miserable even the lamp posts are trying leave. Clearly I don't like any of the choices, so as two minds are better than one, I thought collectively you lot can help me decide.

RIVER

If you stop smoking you'll have a hard time explaining why these walls are this colour.

LAMB

Agreed, I've always said you are my sharpest crayon.

RIVER

Thanks.

LAMB

It's not a complement given the competition Cartwright. What about the Gym?

HO

I could train you, but you wouldn't be able to handle the weights I do.

LAMB

I know your weights Ho, I've been carrying you day-in-day out.

Tavener chuckles.

STANDISH

Some of the new Gym's do smoothies that would be good for you.

Lamb groans again, holding is stomach.

LAMB

I've already got a smoothie ruminating down here.

RIVER

Open the windows someone.

LAMB

Good point, it would have to have windows.

HO

Then you can watch the world from the treadmill?

LAMB

So I can smoke.

SHIRLEY

You can't smoke in Gyms.

LAMB

Do they serve pints?

TAVENER

Not anymore.

LAMB

Why not, proffessional Footballers all have a fag and pint at half-time?

TAVENER

Not anymore.

LAMB

Well that explains that.

RIVER

Explains what?

LAMB

Why England haven't won the World Cup in sixty years.

Nods of agreement all round.

LAMB (CONT'D)

Thoughts on a cruise anyone?

STANDISH

If they do an Eighties one, you could pass as eighty.

TAVENER

I have no doubt, if Jackson Lamb set foot on a Cruise ship, it would be hijacked by terrorists before he made it to the duty free shop.

LOUISA

I can see him now, down in the engine room wearing his stained singlet, trying to out wit Hans Gruber.

HO

Yippee Ki Yay, movverfucker!

SHIRLEY

(leaning towards Ho)
Or, Whippy Ki Yay Mother fucker.

HO

They weren't my mum's tits!

Lamb moans again, he doubles up slightly.

LAMB

Aaahhhhhggg.

SHIRLEY

Lamb what is really wrong with you?

LAMB

Aaahhhhhggg.

MOIRA

It looks terminal to me.

LAMB

Gggghhhhaaa.

RIVER

Definitely going to suffer.

STANDISH

Lamb seriously what did the medical find?

LAMB

(taking a seat)

They found...

LOUSIA

I would say a lump, but then where would you start?

LAMB

No lump, nothing, this is just some leftover takeaway that's lost its sense of direction.

HO

(points to a table)

Wait, you got that takeaway nearly a week ago. And you had prawns.

LAMB

There was a tang to them.

STANDISH

Off prawns can kill!

LAMB

(groaning)

There are worse was to go than Sweet and Sour battered balls.

MOIRA

Oh yes, a Curdling Quiche Lorraine for one.

LOUISA

A Forest Foraged Mushroom Risotto.

RIVER

The Classic Salmon Mousse, on special offer.

TAVENER

A Frangipane.

HO

A fran-a-what-a-thang?

STANDISH

(leaning in to Ho)

An Apple and Almond tart, whose flavour masks the taste of cyanide.

SHIRLEY
 (to Tavener)
 Nice, top tip ta.

TAVENER
 Pleasure.

MOIRA
 Lamb!

They turn their attention back to Jackson Lamb who has reclined back into his chair, arms hanging from his sides, eyes closed, extremely pale and totally motionless.

STANDISH
 Oh lord.

TAVENER
 Is he breathing.

LOUISA
 (to Shirley)
 We should check his pulse?

SHIRLEY
 Why are you looking at me, I'm not touching him.

They all move slowly, reluctantly toward him, expect for Tavener who appears to be taking a selfie with the deceased Lamb in the back of her shot. She rarely smiles.

The group move around the desk reaching the chair

RRRRAAAAAASSSSSSSSPPPPPP! The loudest of rumbling farts breaks the silence.

The group scatter.

RIVER
 Get to the windows!

Lamb lifts his head, colour returning to all his cheeks.

LAMB
 Ahhhh, there you go. Lamb One,
 Prawns Nil. Handy little meditation
 technique I picked up in the
 Himalayas before the Monks where
 wiped out.
 (smiling)
 It's all about the breathing.

The rest of the room have their noses and mouths covered with hands, clothing anything they could find.

LAMB (CONT'D)

On that note, I've been doing some
sniffing around China Town
following the scent of a rumour
Diana put me on to.

He breaths in deeply again.

LAMB (CONT'D)

Boy, that one really glues the
nostril hairs.

The rest of the room are in disgust, but also intrigued. Lamb
looks over at Tavener.

LAMB (CONT'D)

Do you want to tell him?

TAVENER

(to Ho)

Your mother was a spy for MSS.

HO

For Marks & Spencers?

STANDISH

The Chinese Secret Service!

HO

A spy? Hah, nah My mum was a
cleaner.

TAVENER

Cleaning Embassies in London, even
you can appreciate the access that
gave her.

SHIRLEY

To whipped cream?

LAMB

(firmly))

Enough Shirley, she whom throws the
first scone.

TAVENER

We managed to turn your mother, the
deal was simple, if anything ever
happened to her we agreed to take
you under our wing. Both of which
are rather regrettable.

LAMB

Ho, everyone thought she was dead,
there was even a funeral, but now I
believe she is being held in
Chinese black site.

HO

She's alive?

TAVENER

(nods)

She may also have answers to some
questions regarding the recruitment
of students as assets, people who
have now burrowed their way up,

LAMB

The backside,

TAVENER

Or rather, our government and we
suspect our intelligence services.

LAMB

YOUR intelligence service,

TAVENER

Given, that such people may well
have eyes and ears inside MI5, this
operation needs to be dealt with,
by outsiders.

RIVER

You are sanctioning an Op, for us?

LAMB

'Sanctioning' would mean paper work
River, think off-book, like digital
only blank.

RIVER

What's the Op then?

LAMB

We are going to break her out.

MOIRA

'We' oh my goodness, you're putting
the band back together.

HO

(still computing)

My mum's alive.

LAMB

It's looking favourable, although given who has been assigned to rescue her, those odds just took a Titanic drop down the Mariana.

LOUISA

Where is the black site?

LAMB

There my dear lays the old rubber -
- and why I will be taking a cruise for 'health reasons'.

He produces fake passports for everyone.

MOIRA

Gracious me, does 'it' have a code name?

LAMB

Fair point.
What was that Brad Pitt, Redford film where they go to China, anyone?

TAVERNER

Spy Game?

LAMB

That's it. What code name did they have?

RIVER

Oh, I know, 'Dinner Out'.

Lamb pulls a greasy half smoked cigarette from over his ear and goes to light it.

LAMB

That's it, so we'll call this,

He farts.

LAMB (CONT'D)

'Better Out'.

END