

HIS OWN DEVICES

Written by Phil Hamer

BLACK SCREEN

GARETH

We've been on a long journey, we've been imprisoned by invisible forces, and now we've been reborn with an opportunity to be a better version of ourselves.

GARETHS IPAD SCREEN. FILM CLUB. CONT.

ZOOM. Three individual boxes on screen, three men each holding a beer. GARETH, 41 dark haired, puffy and dishevelled at the top. ALED, 36 below has a sharp designer beard and thick, shiny black hair. JOE, 40 is entirely bald and has a patchy beard. Aled and Joe are clearly on laptops with good backgrounds. Gareth is on his ipad, wobbly, too close and looking up his nose somewhat.

ALED

No, it's just a giant baby in space!

JOE

It's a normal sized baby, it's just close.

ALED

It is a giant baby! Everyone knows the giant baby at the end of 2001 Space Odyssey.

JOE

Al I swear, you're like the guy off Father Ted.

Gareth picks a quaver out of his packet of quavers. Holds it up.

GARETH

Aled, this is a quaver. A normal sized quaver.

He holds it up close to the camera.

GARETH

This is NOT a giant quaver. It's just close.

JOE

It's just a normal sized quaver.

ALED

Well however big the baby is, it's not humans reborn, it's just a nice baby in space. Not everything has to be complicated.

GARETH

It's not complicated! Advanced alien species helps man evolve, waits for us to invent space travel, observes us in a zoo for a while then sends us back to earth as superior beings.

JOE

Hey, what's the first rule of Film Club?

GARETH AND ALED

No one is wrong.

JOE

What's the second rule of Film Club?

GARETH AND ALED

No one is right.

GARETH

Except I AM actually right.

ALED

No you're not!

JOE

What's the third rule of Film club?

Joe is jumped on by his two kids, SCOTT and MEGAN as the others answer, then he shoos them away.

GARETH AND ALED

Do not rest until Michael Bay is imprisoned for crimes against film.

JOE

Anyway, Gareth, what's the latest with Sarah, she letting you see the kids yet?

GARETH

Nah.

ALED

Cos of the diabetes?

GARETH

Yeah, well that and the asthma. She said the kids might bring Covid over here and kill me.

JOE

Right, well listen. WE don't mind looking up your nose every Thursday but your kids might want to see your actual face... Do me a favour and get a laptop.

ALED

And either grow a beard or shave it off.

GARETH

I am growing a beard. This is me growing a beard!

ALED

No, this is you not shaving. Shave your neck at least. A beard needs defined borders. Look...

Aled pushes his trimmed, exhaustively designed beard towards the camera.

JOE

He's not going on ITV2 Al. Anyway you guys should be thankful you can grow beards. See this? Three weeks.

Gareth and Aled peer into the camera, nostrils flared, as they examine Joe's wispy, near invisible 'beard'.

ALED

Oh my god, that's three weeks?

GARETH

Joe... I'm so sorry mate.

ALED

You need a beard transplant.

JOE

Cheeky git.

Joe rubs his chin and peers at himself in the screen.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KIDS CATCH UP.

Now on a laptop, there are two boxes. Gareth in one, and his wife, SARAH, 36 and two kids GWEN, 9 and ARTHUR, 5, huddled together and smiling in the other. Sarah is petite and attractive, long mousey brown hair.

GARETH

So I bumped into Jim today.

SARAH

Jim we bought the house off?

Sarah's sister, LUCY, 32, briefly arrives in shot. Like her sister, she is petite and attractive, but has shorter hair.

LUCY

Hello Gareth!

GARETH

Hey Lucy.

LUCY

Nice beard!

Lucy disappears.

GARETH

Aye, Jim, so I got talking to him outside the Spar. He asked me whether I'd seen anything funny in the house recently.

SARAH

What do you mean?

GARETH

Well... and I wish he'd told us this before, but he said this house was built on land owned by a mean, drunk old Shepherd.

GWEN

Was it!?

GARETH

And when they were building it a hundred years ago, one Saturday lunchtime, while they were pouring the cement into the foundations, the mean old shepherd came along, drunk as a skunk, railing against his land being built on...

Sarah's face relaxes, she knows what's going on. She glances at Gwen and Arthur, who are hooked.

GARETH

...I mean it wasn't his land any more, he'd sold it. But along he comes waving his crook around in anger and he falls into the cement and drowns!

Gwen and Arthur gasp.

GARETH

Anyway, rather than waste all that cement, they decided nobody would miss the old bugger and they carried on building the house.

ARTHUR

There's a man in the floor?

GARETH

Apparently! Anyway, Jim said that sometimes, on a Saturday lunchtime, he would see the shadow of this old shepherd wandering the house, waving his crook. Vowing vengeance on those who dwell within.

Sarah glances again at the kids, who are wide-eyed.

GWEN

Our house?

GARETH

This very house.

Gwen shoots a querying look to her Mother. Sarah shrugs her shoulders.

GARETH

Anyway, I'm sure it's fine. I mean I've never seen anything. Hopefully the mean old shepherd has gone away now.

Arthur turns to Sarah.

ARTHUR

Mam, has the mean old Shepherd gone away?

SARAH

Yes, I'm sure he has lovely. Anyway, Gareth what's this fancy new screen, high res, you've bought a laptop have you?

GARETH

Yeah, well work want to have a call with us tomorrow so I thought I better get something with a decent camera.

SARAH

Ooh, do you reckon they're gonna pull you back off furlough?

GARETH

Hope so. I mean people still need car engines. And we can easy do it 2 metres apart.

SARAH

Wear a nice shirt and tie.

GARETH

Why?

SARAH

I don't know. I just want you to look... strong. Capable.

GARETH

Capable? They know I'm capable.

SARAH

Yeah, I know, but... you know.

GARETH

Aye alright I get you. Anyway, I've bought more than a laptop...

Gareth stands and walks around to the back of the settee.

GARETH

I've had a new basement installed!

Gareth performs the 'man walking down the stairs' routine behind the settee. Gwen and Sarah laugh. Arthur looks thrilled.

SARAH

What's he like.

ARTHUR

Have we got a new basement?

SARAH

No Love, Daddy's just joking.

Gareths head is still just above the settee, he looks worried.

GARETH

Shit.

SARAH

Yes, you can come back up from the basement now Daddy.

GARETH

My knee's gone.

He puts his elbow on the back of the settee, tries to stand up, there is an audible click from his knee.

SARAH

Oh no, Gareth not again.

GARETH

I'm alright...

SARAH

You're too old for all that now.

GARETH

I'm only 41! Bloody rugby. Hang on...

Gareth crawls on his hands and knees around from the back of the settee, goes out of shot, then looms up in front of the camera.

GARETH

Anyway, you like my new laptop do you?
Can you see my bogeys?

He tilts his head backwards.

GWEN AND ARTHUR

Eeeewwww!

GARETH

Yeah I got it in Asda, cut price cos
Helen works there.

SARAH

Joe's Helen?

GARETH

Aye, it's really good, it's got a... hang
on, can you hear that?

He looks around the room. All go quiet for a few seconds. Gwen starts looking uncomfortable.

GWEN

What is it Mam?

As Gareth looks around the room, a crook slides into shot behind his neck. Gwen and Arthur scream.

GWEN AND ARTHUR

AAAAAHHHH!

The crook hooks around Gareth's neck and he is yanked out of shot, wide-eyed.

GWEN AND ARTHUR

AAAAAHHHH!

ARTHUR

(Nearly sobbing)
Daddy!

SARAH

Oh honey, it's alright he's only joking.
Daddy! That's enough!

Gareth appears in shot again, beaming.

GARETH

Ah! I had you!

Arthur smiles through newly forming tears. Gwen is exhilarated but cross.

GWEN

Daaaad!

SARAH

Right, kids go and get the collages to show your father. They're up on the landing cupboard.

The kids race off. Sarah smiles at Gareth.

SARAH

They'll be terrified to come back now!

Gareth's expression changes from mischief to hope.

GARETH

Come back? What, you're coming back?

SARAH

Well, you know... After covid when they can visit.

GARETH

Oh.

SARAH

But, I don't know, let's see...

Gareth looks behind Sarah to make sure the kids are not within earshot. He speaks quietly.

GARETH

Sarah, I told you, I was hammered.

SARAH

That's not the point.

GARETH

It was only a kiss.

SARAH

Only a kiss... Gar, a kiss is such an intimate thing.

GARETH

I would never have gone further.

SARAH

In a way it's more intimate than sex. I mean sex is like a carnal mechanism, kissing is... you really make an emotional choice to kiss someone.

She looks down to hide the fact she is welling up.

GARETH

What do I need to do?

SARAH

Nothing. It's me. I need to have complete confidence that you won't kiss someone again next time you get drunk.

GARETH

I'll stop drinking. Full on tea total.

SARAH

Don't be daft. There's nothing wrong with a couple of beers.

GARETH

Sarah, I'll do anything. I need you back. I need you all back.

SARAH

I know you do. It's just... time.

Gareth senses it's time to back off. He resets, smiles.

GARETH

How's the home schooling going?

SARAH

Oh don't. It's hell.

GARETH

Is it?

SARAH

You just can't keep their attention for a second.

GARETH

I was reading it's impossible for a child to associate home with work. Cos its where they play.

SARAH

Exactly! Home is where they play. I can't keep Arthur sat down for ten minutes. I just can't hold their attention like you can...

There is a long pause. Sarah and Gareth look at each other. There is longing on both sides. Then, Sarah looks sheepish.

SARAH

I've just had them watching videos since Tuesday.

GARETH

Videos? Haha!

SARAH

Educational videos!

GARETH

Like what?

SARAH

Home Alone?

GARETH

Home alone!

SARAH

Practical skills! DIY. You know. Personal security.

GARETH

Haha course, yeah.

SARAH

'Up'. That was the um... sociology.

GARETH

And Geography really...

SARAH

Oh yeah... And then yesterday they watched The Matrix, which is, obviously...

GARETH

Computer programming.

SARAH

Aye! And don't forget, all of them are language lessons really, cos they're learning how people all over the world speak.

GARETH

Well, America anyway.

Gareth and Sarah's love for each other shines through in their smiles.

SARAH

Thank you for entertaining the kids today Gar, they've been so bored. This is just what they needed.

GARETH

It's just what I needed too, believe me.

SARAH

You're just so good at it.

Gwen and Arthur thump back into the room and race to the camera with their collages. The screen is filled with Gwens first, then Arthur bumps his sister out of the way and the screen is filled with his.

GWEN

MINE'S A CAT AND IT'S MADE OF PICTURES
OF CAT'S AND LOOK IT'S THE OVERALL SHAPE
OF A CAT OI ARTHUR!!!

ARTHUR

MINE'S CARS AND IT'S A PONTIAC TRANS AM
GWEN GET OFF!!!

GARETH

Ooh, that's good, wow yeah that's
amazing..

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. WORK MEETING.

On the screen, the words 'Please wait, the meeting host will let you in soon.' Then, a beep, and we hear one sentence.

DONALD (O.S)

Bloody hell Karen!

Now Gareth appears with two colleagues in separate boxes. DAVE, 54 is thick-necked with thinning brown hair, BLEDDYN, 53, red haired with a full bushy beard. The backgrounds include a clothes horse and an ironing board. The person speaking always becomes the large centre image and the others are in boxes around the outside of the screen.

DAVE

Gareth, look at you with your shirt and tie on!

GARETH

My missus told me to wear it. Blod, what the fuck is that?

BLEDDYN

What?

GARETH

Behind you, is that your shower?

BLEDDYN

Yeah, so what?

DAVE

Bloody hell Blod, are you sat on the shitter?

BLEDDYN

No! Well yes, but I'm not... you know. It's the only place in the house the little bastards can't get to me.

TONY, 29, appears on screen. A dark haired Londoner, settled in South Wales. Witty and gregarious.

TONY

Oi Oi! Here they are, Last of The Summer wine!

BLEDDYN

Cheeky fucker.

TONY

I can't believe you've got computers! Did you get your grand kids to switch them on for you?

GARETH

I'm only 41, don't mix me in with these old codgers.

TONY

Everyone over 40 is ancient to me Gar.

DAVE

What's this all about anyway, are they pulling us back off furlough?

TONY

Hope so.

BLEDDYN

I don't even know if I'm allowed to come back to work with my asthma.

GARETH

I was thinking that with mine, and my diabetes. I don't even know if I'm allowed to go back.

TONY

What does it say on the internet?

GARETH

It says about fifty different things.

DAVE

Is it just us in this meeting?

BLEDDYN

Looks like it. Must just be chief engineers.

GARETH

What would they need to say to us that they can't to say to the others?

TONY

At least they're not closing the plant then, it would be everybody if they were doing that. Hey up, the boss is here. Alright gaffer!

Line manager DONALD, 62, has just appeared on screen.

DONALD

Alright lads. I was in here first but had to go out. Karen walked in with her nightie on.

TONY

WAHEEY!

DAVE

Don't worry, Blods on the shitter.

Gareth notices that there is a black box at the bottom of the screen with the white initials AT on it.

GARETH

Hang on lads... Mr Thomas, is that you?

TONY

Shit.

The black box now becomes the ominous large centre image as MR THOMAS, 61 speaks.

MR THOMAS

Andrew, please. Yes, morning everyone, I'm sorry I can't get this blasted camera to work. Oh hang on, what's this, start video...

Mr Thomas appears. Bespectacled, smart suit. Bookcase in the background.

MR THOMAS

Ah! There we go. Now, thank you for coming everyone, I'm going to keep this short.

His microphone is set very low, but no-one is brave enough to tell him. The five faces around the outside of the screen lean in.

MR THOMAS

Now, as Tony quite rightly said, we are NOT closing the plant. There are no plans whatsoever to shut down the plant. But, we are a very agile company, in a volatile industry, and as such we will need to.. reorganise our resources.

The loud sound of a toilet being flushed. Bleddyn becomes the centre image.

BLEDDYN

Shit. I'm sorry, I was just resting my arm on the flush!

There is silence for several seconds.

BLEDDYN

I've been telling Sandra it's too...
honestly, I was just resting on it!

MR THOMAS

It's ok Bleddyn, I know, you were just
trying to find a quiet room. And I
appreciate that. Anyway, as I was
saying...

He looks down at papers on his desk.

MR THOMAS

...yes, reorganising our resources. And
with that in mind, we have decided to...

Mr Thomas's face freezes. For several seconds the rest think
he is just pondering his next words carefully. Tony is the
first to twig.

TONY

His internets gone down.

DONALD

Andrew?

TONY

His fucking internets gone down, oh my
God.

Gareth is white faced and silent.

DAVE

We have decided to what??

TONY

Fuck sake.

Mr Thomas is suddenly re-animated.

MR THOMAS

...guaranteed interview for vacancies
elsewhere as soon as they arise.

DONALD

Woah, I'm sorry Andrew, we lost you
then.

GARETH

(Quietly)
Oh God.

MR THOMAS

Did you? Where did I get to?

TONY

We have decided to...

MR THOMAS

Oh, sorry chaps. My God, these computers. Right... We have decided to scale down on a couple of layers within the company, but everyone within those layers will have a guaranteed interview for vacancies elsewhere as soon as they arise.

DONALD

You're getting rid of Chief Engineers aren't you.

MR THOMAS

'Getting rid' is not how I would describe it. But we've been aware for a while that you chaps have done such a fantastic job mentoring the standard engineers that they've become almost entirely self-reliant.

TONY

He didn't just say that.

MR THOMAS

Look, we're actually CREATING two new positions in standard. And we're not even going to advertise for them. We've already got a short list of five.

There is a period of silence as the five angry men strain to hold their tongues.

MR THOMAS

As in, you gentlemen... You ARE the shortlist!

DAVE

This is unbelievable.

Gareth rubs his temples, eyes closed.

TONY

He wants us to be happy.

DONALD

Tony! Right, Andrew, what you're saying is we've lost our jobs...

MR THOMAS

That's not a wording...

DONALD

We've lost our jobs, but the five of us are going to be interviewed for two positions in Standard Engineering.

MR THOMAS

We couldn't have predicted this dreadful...

DONALD

Which is around fifteen thousand a year less than our current salary.

MR THOMAS

What we are saying is that, as an agile company...

Mr Thomas looks down. Not at his papers. He takes a deep breath. He looks back up at the camera with water in his eyes. The silence is deafening. His mouth tries to form words.

MR THOMAS

Guys...

A deafeningly loud flushing toilet.

BLEDDYN

Shit!

TONY

Fucking hell Blod, get out of the shitter will you!

BLEDDYN

I'm sorry! Oh my God, this flush is ridiculous...

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KIDS CATCH UP.

Two boxes. Gareth in one, Gwen and Arthur in the other. No sign of Sarah. Gareth and Arthur are each holding a copy of Roald Dahl's BFG. Gwen is scribbling on a pad.

ARTHUR

(Slowly)
Sophie couldn't sleep. A brilliant moonbeam was slanting through a gap in the curtains. It was shining right onto her pillow. The other children in the dor... in the dor...

GARETH

Speak it out.

ARTHUR

D-O-R-M-I-T-OR-Y Dormitory! The other children in the dormitory had been asleep for hours.

GARETH

Sophie closed her eyes and lay quite still. She tried very hard to doze off. It was no good. The moonbeam was like a silver blade slicing through the room onto her face

GWEN

Dad, this ones too hard.

Gareth picks up his copy of the test he has written out for Gwen.

GARETH

Which question?

GWEN

Four. Its three sums in one go.

GARETH

Right, what's that word I told you.

GWEN

Um... Bodmas.

GARETH

And what does that stand for?

GWEN

Brackets, something, division,
multiplication, addition, subtraction.

GARETH

Right, so...

Sarah rushes past in the background. Gareth peers into the screen to try and see where she's gone.

GARETH

There she is. Sarah! Be nice for your
mam to show her face today.

GWEN

She's getting ready.

GARETH

Ready for what?

GWEN

I don't know.

GARETH

Anyway, you know bodmas, so do the sums
in that order.

GWEN

Oh! So I do the 9 divided by 3 first...

Gwen starts writing. Sarah appears and plonks herself down on the settee next to Gwen. She has heavy make up on, and a low cut top.

GARETH

There she is! Where've you been?

SARAH

Kids, sorry but you're going to Grannies
now.

GWEN AND ARTHUR

Aaawww!

GARETH

What do you mean?

SARAH

They can call you from Grannies iPad.

GARETH

Oh, ok. I suppose. Do I have to talk to Granny?

SARAH

Well you could say hello Gareth.

GARETH

You look nice.

SARAH

Oh no, this is just...

GARETH

You going out? Hang on, how can you go out?

SARAH

No, I'm not going out.

GARETH

(Smiling)
You wore that top on our first date.

SARAH

Did I?

Gareth smiles at the memory.

GARETH

I spent the entire time trying to keep my eyes up on your face.

SARAH

Aye, and failing.

Gareth smiles at Sarah, who struggles to hold eye contact. His smile suddenly fades and a look of deep concern spreads across his face.

GARETH

Hang on. Why are you wearing that if you're not going out?

SARAH

Come on kids! I said wrap it up. You can call Daddy from Grannies iPad.

GARETH

Why can't they just take the laptop?

SARAH

I need it.

GARETH

What for?

SARAH

Arthur, shoes.

GARETH

Sarah...

ARTHUR

Can I take my book?

SARAH

Yes, you can take your book.

GARETH

Sarah, please...

SARAH

I'm sorry Gar, I've got to go or I'll never get them moving. I'll speak to you soon ok?

Sarah reaches toward the screen. 'Call Ended'

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. FILM CLUB.

Three individual boxes on screen. Gareth at the top, Aled and Joe below. All have a beer. Joe has bandaging under his chin.

JOE

Best black hole ever put on film.

GARETH

Aye, can't argue with that.

ALED

I didn't really get why Romilly was an old man when they got back up to the spaceship.

GARETH

Cos they were closer to a strong gravitational field on the water planet, so time moved way slower for them.

JOE

Yeah, if Romilly had an amazing telescope where he could have watched Matthew McConaughey and Ann Hathaway down on the planet, they would have been moving in extreme slow motion.

GARETH

He would have seen them walking along in the water SIXTY THOUSAND times slower than normal.

ALED

(Squeezing his temples)
Whaaaat?

JOE

Proper slow.

GARETH

Have you seen Joe trying to run recently?

ALED

Oh yeah...

GARETH

THAT slow.

ALED

Blimey.

JOE

Even slower than Gareth walking to the bar when it's his round.

GARETH

Aw... walking to the bar. Remember that?

JOE

That's why the stuff they did on the planet ended up taking twenty three years for Romilly.

ALED

Ok, yeah I got it.

JOE

Just a brilliant film.

GARETH

Best one yet for me.

ALED

Nah, The Martian for me.

GARETH

Hang on, every film we've done since lockdown started has been a sci-fi set in space, or in another world.

JOE

Has it?

GARETH

You know why we've been choosing films from another world don't you?

JOE

To escape this one!

GARETH

That's why nerds like sci-fi!

JOE

Cos it takes you away from your own reality.

GARETH

Lockdown has taken us into the world of the nerd. Sub-consciously longing to escape the pain of our real existence.

ALED

Speak for yourselves. I'd rather watch a rom-com than these impenetrable sci-fi's.

JOE

Overruled.

ALED

I know you boys like your silly space films, but I wouldn't mind choosing one soon. Mind you, I've been getting my romance fix online...

JOE

How do you mean?

ALED

Zoom dating!

A shadow of worry over Gareth's face.

JOE

Bloody hell now it's zoom dating as well. Fucking zoom, devouring the market.

ALED

It's just like a normal date really, except obviously you can't touch.

GARETH

Oh no.

ALED

You both have a bottle of wine, you chat... you can get your meals delivered at the same time so it's like a virtual romantic meal.

GARETH

Oh fuck.

JOE

What's the matter Gar?

GARETH

Sarah, the other day. I was on a call with the kids and she turns up all dressed up, loads of make-up. She couldn't get rid of me quick enough.

ALED

Oh Gareth.

GARETH

She was packing the kids off to her mums too.

JOE

That could be anything, Job interview?

GARETH

She had her sexy top on. The one she wore on our first date.

ALED

Oh fucking hell.

JOE

Nah, you're jumping to conclusions mate. Helens always having virtual piss ups with her friends.

GARETH

Sarah doesn't wear that top with her friends though...

JOE

Right. Worst case scenario, she went on a zoom date. You can't connect with someone through a computer screen. Not on any deep level.

ALED

That's true actually. It's nothing like being sat physically next to them.

JOE

She won't be able to MEET anyone for ages yet. Look, you've got all this spare time at the moment. Why don't you get pro-active, get in shape. There's loads of fitness classes online.

GARETH

Yeah, I've been meaning to get fit.

JOE

You can borrow my kettle bells. I've got a ten and a sixteen. And a fitness mat. Shall I drop them round?

GARETH

Yeah you could do.

ALED

I know a brilliant kettle bells class on zoom. Dafydd Evans, he used to play for Neath.

JOE

Oh I remember him! Flanker.

ALED

He's fucking gorgeous. But he's brilliant too apparently.

GARETH

Aye, go on then. I've got my interview in a couple of weeks too. Couldn't hurt to get my confidence up a bit.

JOE

Right, done deal. Project 'Get Sarah Back'!

ALED

And 'Get Job Back'!

GARETH

Cheers guys. About time I pulled my socks up.

ALED

And sort that beard out will you, ya great hairy beast!

RING ACTIVATED DOORBELL VIDEO. DAY.

Black screen. A computerised chime, then a word appears in white font in the centre of the screen 'Activated'. In a good quality, wide angled shot, we see Joe stepping back from the doorbell then placing two kettle bells and a fitness mat on the floor in front of the front door. He moves back a few metres. Gareth opens the door wearing an old Wales rugby jersey.

GARETH

Joseph as I live and breathe.

JOE

Bloody hell Gar, you look homeless.

GARETH

Lovely to see you too.

JOE

Be careful now, they're heavy. Make sure you bend your knees.

GARETH

They don't look much.

JOE

Serious Gareth, your body won't be used to them.

Gareth bends to pick up the sixteen with straight legs. He freezes.

GARETH

Ahhh! Fuck.

JOE

Piss off.

GARETH

Serious. My back. I can't move... Fucking hell.

JOE

Really?

GARETH

You'll have to carry me in.

JOE

What? I can't! Social distancing!

GARETH

You'll have to carry me in and... oop, I've just shit myself. You'll have to wipe my arse too and then carry me to bed.

JOE

Twat.

GARETH

Feed me with a fucking straw.

Gareth gathers up the fitness mat and the kettle bells.

GARETH

I can pick up a couple of kettle bells
Joe, I was a second row forward. You
were the one fannyng around on the wing
chatting up the mothers.

JOE

Alright, but just make sure you warm up.

GARETH

I will. Listen, thanks for dropping
these around.

JOE

No worries.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KETTLEBELLS CLASS.

Six boxes on screen. In one, Dafydd Evans, recently retired professional rugby player, is powering through a set of press ups with his hands on two kettle bells. In four others, a man and three women are doing the same. In the last, Gareth, wearing his old Wales jersey, is in the press up position but his arms are quivering wildly and he is unable to go into another press up.

DAFYDD

If you can't do the press ups, at least
stay in the upright position and keep
your knees off the floor until the end
of the minute. Ok, four, three, two...

A loud beep. Gareth collapses to the floor.

DAFYDD

Straight into the snatch!

Dafydd and the four others stand and start immediately on the one arm snatch. Gareth, hair plastered down with sweat, puce, takes an age to stand up.

DAFYDD

Gareth, you alright?

GARETH

(Wheezing)
Yep.

DAFYDD

Switch to the ten mate.

GARETH

No. I'm fine.

Gareth attempts a snatch with the sixteen but cannot get it past his shoulders. While the others rhythmically pound out reps, he tries again, gets it past his head but not to full extension, then it almost hits his head on the way down.

GARETH

I'll switch to the ten.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. RE-INTERVIEW.

Two boxes. Mr Thomas in one, and Gareth in the other. Gareth is in shirt and tie but has undone the top button and looks harassed, uncomfortable.

MR THOMAS

What would you say are your main strengths?

Gareth strains to keep his tone respectful.

GARETH

You know my main strengths. I've worked here for twenty four years.

MR THOMAS

Imagine I don't know you.

GARETH

Accuracy. I rarely make errors. I've only had one come back down in the last nine years.

MR THOMAS

Would you say it's accuracy to the detriment of speed Gareth?

GARETH

No, I wouldn't. I hit my targets on speed. Anyway, I'm mentoring now too, so I was under the impression that's taken into account in the figures.

MR THOMAS

I have to say Gareth, Tony and Bleddyn have achieved superior numbers in each of the past four years.

Gareth shakes his head. He is conflicted.

GARETH

I know, but... Look you're putting me in a situation here. I don't want to bad mouth my friends.

MR THOMAS

For the purposes of this interview they are not your friends, they are your competitors.

GARETH

Well, Blod.. I mean, the standards don't tend to go to him cos he's..

MR THOMAS

Yes?

GARETH

Well he's a bit... I mean I don't need to tell you Mr Thomas.

MR THOMAS

Imagine I don't know any of you.

GARETH

He's a bit grumpy.

Gareth immediately flinches and shakes his head. He hates himself.

MR THOMAS

Grumpy. Are you saying he's unapproachable and so he receives less queries from the standard engineers?

GARETH

No, he's not unapproachable exactly. It's just his demeanour. I don't think he even realises.

MR THOMAS

And that's why his numbers are higher?

GARETH

Look, I can't do this.

MR THOMAS

And how about Tony? He's 4% up on you over the past four years.

GARETH

I can't sit here and slag off my friends.

MR THOMAS

Competitors! How about Tony?

GARETH

You've got access to the error reports, I don't need to tell you about that.

Mr Thomas rifles through paperwork for a few seconds.

MR THOMAS

Ah! Yes, you're right. I hadn't noticed that. Tony's had, let's see... two, five, eight, twelve come back to him in the past four years.

Gareth rests his forehead on his hand and closes his eyes. Mr Thomas scribbles furiously.

MR THOMAS

That's not ideal at all.

GARETH

I mean, it's coming down though. It's getting lower every year. He's learning from his mistakes.

MR THOMAS

Ok, I believe that covers everything.

GARETH

And Blod's not grumpy. The youngsters think he is, but he's just really straightforward.

MR THOMAS

Do you have any questions for me Gareth?

GARETH

Um... What are the noises from head office about the plant staying open?

MR THOMAS

Well, they've always budgeted for a rainy day. The front end of next year looks like a write-off, and there'll be a tight squeeze toward the back end...

GARETH

Said the bishop to the choirboy...

Gareth flinches again, he has spent too long on the factory floor. Mr Thomas looks blankly at him.

GARETH

God, I'm sorry.

MR THOMAS

Yes, well...

GARETH

I'm nervous. This is just so surreal.

MR THOMAS

The bottom line is they are cautiously optimistic, provided the vaccine rollout is embraced fully by governments and their populations.

GARETH

Ok... Thank you.

Mr Thomas scribbles on his pad.

MR THOMAS

Ok, I think that's everything. Thank you for your time Gareth, we will be contacting all candidates by the end of the week.

GARETH

Ok, cheers.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KIDS CATCH UP.

Two boxes. Gareth in one, holding up a hand drawn picture of Europe with the individual countries delineated. He looks a little ragged. Gwen and Arthur in the other. No sign of Sarah. Arthur is upside down on the settee, playing on his tablet. Gareth points to Germany.

GWEN

Germany.

GARETH

Correct.

GWEN

Greece.

GARETH

Well done.

GWEN

Portugal.

GARETH

Harder one now.

GWEN

Ummm... Czech Republic?

GARETH

Ooh, close, that's Austria.

Arthur rests his tablet on the settee and looks interestedly at Gareth.

ARTHUR

Dad, your face is wrinkly.

GARETH

Is it? What, more than before?

ARTHUR

Yeah.

GARETH

Oh.

Gareth feels his face and looks at himself on the computer screen. Upside down, Arthur continues analysing Gareth's face.

GWEN

Do we have to do this Dad?

GARETH

I thought you liked doing countries?

GWEN

Yeah, sometimes. I'm a bit bored now though.

GARETH

Oh. Well...

ARTHUR

Is your skin getting bigger or are you getting smaller?

GARETH

Eh? Oh, I don't know. I suppose my skin's getting bigger.

GWEN

I can do countries on my tablet, there's an app for it.

GARETH

I know love, but it's nice for us to do it isn't it?

GWEN

I suppose.

GARETH

Especially as we don't get to see each other properly at the moment.

GWEN

Ok.

ARTHUR

Dad, when corona is finished can we go to Oakwood Park?

GARETH

Maybe butty, depends if we've got a car.

ARTHUR

We've got one!

GARETH

I've had to sell it I'm afraid.

GWEN

You sold the car?

GARETH

Look, I'll buy another one as soon as I get a job.

GWEN

Aw, I can't believe you sold the car!

GARETH

Right, this is another hard one.

GWEN

San Marino.

GARETH

That's Ukraine love, San Marino's nowhere near the Ukraine, you know that.

GWEN

Sorry.

Arthur puts his iPad down, slides his feet down onto the settee, then gets up and walks away.

GARETH

It's alright. How about this one.

GWEN

Sweden?

GARETH

Ooh close! Norway. Right...

GWEN

Finland?

GARETH

No, *that's* Sweden! Remember, Sweden and Norway are the big droopy bit!

GWEN

Oh, I can't remember.

Gwen shifts in her seat, she's restless and bored. The 20th Century Fox ident is heard offscreen.

GARETH

What's that? Is Arthur watching a film?

GWEN

He's watching Mrs Doubtfire again.

GARETH

Mrs Doubtfire?

GWEN

Mam bought it. She said it would be good for us to watch. Arthur!

GARETH

Did she?

GWEN

I'll go and get him.

Gwen gets up and walks toward the TV. Gareth is processing, confused.

GARETH

(Quietly)
Good for us to watch?

We hear Robin Williams singing 'Figaro' in the opening shots of Mrs Doubtfire but the settee remains empty.

GARETH

Gwen?

Offscreen, the quiet laughter of both Gwen and Arthur.

GARETH

Kids?

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. CALL WITH JOE.

Joe in one box, with a strangely red, raw beard area. Gareth in the other. Gareth is very pale, dark patches under his eyes.

JOE

That's just kids, mate. One minute they love you, next minute you don't exist.

GARETH

It's this fucking computer screen. It's impossible to connect with them. My entire life is on this computer screen. I need people Joe. I'm going fucking mad.

JOE

I know. But this is temporary.

GARETH

We were saying that a year ago.

Joe calls out to his wife downstairs.

JOE

Hang on! I'm on the computer with Gareth.

GARETH

I'm not doing too well Joe, to be honest.

JOE

You'll find another job soon mate, look at your CV!

GARETH

I mean, I've had tough times before. You know, with Mum.

JOE

That was worse if anything.

GARETH

Yes, but I was able to go and watch the Ponty matches with you and Al. We'd have a few beers.

JOE

Yeah.

GARETH

I had coping mechanisms. But they've all been taken away from me.

JOE

You're doing that fitness class, that's a coping mechanism. And Film Club! That's keeping me sane.

GARETH

Yeah, I know. But... There's something missing. I always felt like my brain had been rinsed out after going to the rugby, or down the pub. That's not happening with all these zoom things.

JOE

You're right, it's about being with people isn't it.

GARETH

It's like there's something sort of... insidious, building up inside me.

Joe calls out again.

JOE

Alright!

GARETH

Look, if you have to go it's ok mate.

JOE

No! Stay there, its fine honestly. It's nice to get a break from them to be honest.

GARETH

You sure?

JOE

Gar, let's go out for a socially distanced walk. That'll be alright I'm sure.

GARETH

I don't even know if it is. I just can't get a handle on all the rules and..

Joe's bedroom door bursts open and we hear Joes wife HELEN, 38, and his two kids Scott and Megan singing.

JOE

Oh no.

HELEN, SCOTT AND MEGAN

Happy Birthday to you!
Happy Birthday to you!

GARETH

Oh shit, it's your birthday.

HELEN, SCOTT AND MEGAN

Happy Birthday dear Daddy..
Happy Birthday to you!

GARETH

Oh God, Joe I'm so sorry, I totally forgot.

Joe's family appear in shot, Megan is carrying a birthday cake.

MEGAN

Me and Scott made it.

JOE

What are you guys like!

Helen appears in shot, smiles at the screen.

HELEN

Hello Gareth!

GARETH

Hi Helen, wow that cake looks amazing!

HELEN

Megan and Scott made it. Pass it to me sweetie.

Megan passes it to Helen, then Megan and Scott jump on their Daddy and smother him. Gareth looks on with a smile.

JOE

Aaaaahh!

GARETH

Oop, they got you, haha!

HELEN

Sorry for barging in, I hope we haven't interrupted any important rugby talk?

GARETH

Nah, I was off anyway.

HELEN

Stay there!

Joe sits up and starts to protest but is immediately smothered again.

JOE

Gareth, honestly mate... oof!

GARETH

I'll buzz you tomorrow mate, nice to see you Helen, have a good one!

HELEN

Bye Gareth!

For a second before clicking off, Gareth observes the scene. Joe being smothered by Scott and Megan, with Helen clambering on to join in the bundle. Gareth clicks off. The screen is black. For the first time, we can see a faint reflection of Gareth in the computer screen. He sits, hollow, empty, sightlessly gazing at the screen.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KETTLEBELLS CLASS.

Six boxes on screen. In one, Dafydd Evans is powering through a set of press ups with his hands on two kettle bells. Although his arms are shaking slightly, Gareth is now completing competent press ups along with the other four.

DAFYDD

Ok, four, three, two...

A loud beep. Gareth dismounts from the kettlebells and stands up behind the larger of them, the sixteen.

DAFYDD

Straight into the snatch!

Gareth starts the one arm snatch, good form, full extension. He rhythmically pounds through his reps.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. YOUTUBE VIDEO.

A grainy video. A stout man wearing jeans, a checked shirt and a large toolbelt is standing in a garage and tapping the final few nails into the base of a bookcase which lies on its side on the worktop. He speaks in a gentle Alabama accent.

BRICK THUDMAN JR

Just a gentle little tap. Tappity tap.
These guys might not look important, but
you know what I say about short cuts in
woodwork...

He moves to the far side. Taps a few nails there.

BRICK THUDMAN JR

All short cuts are a path to the fiery
ravages of hell...

He stands up, smiles at the camera. Soothing.

BRICK THUDMAN JR

After all, much better to finish the job
properly than have this thing come down
and kill your children.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KETTLEBELLS CLASS.

Six boxes on screen. In one, Dafydd Evans is doing a double
kettlebell press up to two arm snatch. An advanced exercise.
Gareth, slimmer and more toned now, is in the box next to him
and matching him for tempo. A couple of the others are now the
ones struggling.

DAFYDD

Awesome guys! Gareth, I take it back
what I said about Ponty boys...

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. YOUTUBE VIDEO.

High quality video. A good looking, magnificently bearded man,
user name Beardy Weirdy, is delivering a tutorial on beard
trimming and maintenance. He holds chrome beard clippers.

BEARDY WEIRDY

I would suggest the following solution.
Tilt your head back, keep your eyes in a
straight line in the mirror, and drive
back towards the neck from the front.

He trims the bottom few millimetres off the beard. The video
then speeds up while he covers the whole bottom of the beard.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KETTLEBELLS CLASS.

Six boxes. In the two boxes on the left, Dafydd and Gareth are
furiously performing burpees. The other four are cheering them
on.

TINA

Woo, go on Gareth! Do it for Ponty!

SIMON

Come on Daf, Neath is counting on you!

There is a loud beep. Dafydd and Gareth collapse to the floor.

TINA

How many guys?

SUSIE

Right, I've got 36 for Dafydd

RHIANNON

And for Gareth I've got... 38!

Gareth gets up to his knees, raises his arms aloft. Dafydd shakes his head. Clambers to his knees.

DAFYDD

Fair do's Gar. Virtual high five.

Dafydd and Gareth do a virtual high five. Then Gareth collapses back to the floor.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. JOB INTERVIEW.

Gareth is onscreen wearing a slim fitting shirt, open at the neck. His new toned physique is clear. He has a full, well-groomed beard and he is sitting in front of a stylish, well populated bookcase. A smart suited woman, Elena Pereira, is in a second box.

ELENA PEREIRA

Your achievements leap off the page, but also your personality. And really, with the culture here at PGS, personality is as important to us as technical skill.

An opportunity for Gareth to deliver one of his many googled notes, which he does with practiced aplomb.

GARETH

I agree with that, I mean a strong culture can improve business performance by motivating employees and coordinating their behaviour towards a collective vision.

Elena's smile is wide and very impressed.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. JOB INTERVIEW. A LITTLE LATER.

Another button has come undone on Gareth's shirt.

GARETH

In the modern engineering arena, communication skills and analytical thinking are just as important as knowing how a combustion engine works.

ELENA

And can you give me an example of when you've seen how a lack of those soft skills has led to poor results?

GARETH

Well, I had a colleague, Blod.. um, Tommy, who was a gifted engineer. I mean not just in work, you could lock him in your garage and half hour later he'd burst through your garage door in an armoured tank.

Warm laughter from Elena.

GARETH

But he was an old fashioned soul, and he didn't like to be bothered while he was working. Course, as a chief engineer you have to help the standard engineers.

ELENA

Of course!

GARETH

But his demeanour meant the standards would always go to the other chief engineers, causing their stats to drop..

ELENA

...causing some conflict across the team.

GARETH

Exactly. Now, conflict CAN be healthy, as sometimes compromise can lead to sub-optimal solutions being executed, but on the other hand, conflict can be a stressor which leads to a downturn in productivity..

Elena nods along approvingly.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. JOB INTERVIEW. A LITTLE LATER.

Gareth has his sleeves rolled up to the elbow in the 'I mean business' way of modern politicians. Elena puts her pen down.

ELENA

There's no harm in telling you that you are one of only two people who made it through the application stage and the Myers Briggs, and you are both exceptional candidates. I'm very lucky to have such a wonderful pair available to me.

Gareth's right eye twitches.

GARETH

That's very kind.

ELENA

I'm even in dialogue with management about making a second position available, but they are pushing back slightly. Either way, I'll contact you within 7 days for a follow up and we will go from there! Have a lovely day.

GARETH

You too Elena, and thank you for your time.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. KIDS CATCH UP.

Two boxes. Gareth in one, with a chess set in front of him. Sarah, Gwen and Arthur huddled together in the other with a chess set in front of them. Gwen is studying the board.

SARAH

Oh, that sounds promising!

GARETH

Do you think?

SARAH

She wouldn't have said that unless there was a good chance of it being agreed.

GARETH

Yeah, well I'm not counting my chickens.

Gwen moves a chess piece.

GWEN

Knight to B3.

Gareth moves the piece on his board.

SARAH

We're doing that are we?

GWEN

Yeah, why not?

GARETH

If I get the job I'll pay your father back straight away, and we can get some clothes for these rugrats.

SARAH

There's no rush for my Dad love.

ARTHUR

I'm not a rugrat!

GARETH

And I'll buy a car.

ARTHUR

Yay! Can we go to Oakwood Park?

GARETH

Of course we can.

GWEN

Mam, will you come to Oakwood Park?

Gareth watches Sarah's reaction.

SARAH

Course I will, I'm not letting you three have all the fun!

GWEN

Dad, do you remember when Mam was sick on Vertigo?

GARETH

Do I remember? Some of it went in my eye!

GWEN AND ARTHUR

Eeewww!

SARAH

Alright, alright, we'll forget about me winning the mini golf then?

GARETH

I still had sick in my eye, I couldn't see properly.

GWEN

Rematch!

GARETH

Definitely a rematch, but BEFORE we go on Vertigo this time.

SARAH

I'm not going on that monstrosity again, I'll hold the drinks.

GARETH

Rook to G1... which I BELIEVE...

GWEN

Oh no, Maaam!

SARAH

Don't Mam me, it's your blimmin fault!

Gareth stands up, turns around and starts shaking his ass.

GARETH

Gimme some of that check mate baby, yeah...

GWEN

It's not my fault! It's your fault.

Gareth turns back around and starts doing his oft practiced version of the macarena.

GARETH

Dalla too burpo ford allegry macarena
Kaytoo burpo fell allegry cosa breena
Dalla too burpo ford allegry macarena
Hey macarena!

ARTHUR

Rematch!

By the time Gareth has finished his victory dance, Sarah and Gwen are laughing.

SARAH

Mind you Gar, them kettle bells are working their magic.

GARETH

You think so?

SARAH

You look like you did when you were playing rugby!

GARETH

I wouldn't go that far.

SARAH

Better if anything. I've never seen your chest stick out further than your belly!

GWEN

Can we show Daddy our pictures?

SARAH

Yes, go and get them.

Gwen and Arthur rush off.

SARAH

They did paintings of you the other day.

GARETH

Of me?

SARAH

Yeah, I did an art class.

GARETH

Oh, well done! Are you getting to grips with it a bit more now?

SARAH

Yeah, I'm not as good as you but I'm getting better.

A moment of quiet as they smile at each other.

SARAH

You're looking fantastic Gareth, honestly. And that bookcase is lush, can't believe you made that yourself!

GARETH

You haven't seen the bathroom cabinet yet.

SARAH

Blimey. You're like the thinking woman's Nick Knowles!

Gareth laughs, then takes a deep breath.

GARETH

Sarah, I miss you so much.

SARAH

Gareth...

Sarah's doorbell rings loudly. Sarah looks slightly panicked. She checks her watch then looks back towards the door.

GARETH

Oh, are you expecting someone? I can go now if you like.

Lucy walks across in the background and opens the door.

LUCY

Oh hi Kevin.

SARAH

Oh, um...

Footsteps thunder down the stairs, Gwen and Arthur, with paintings in hand, run across the room toward the door. They drop their paintings in order to give Kevin a hug.

GWEN AND ARTHUR

Keveeein!!

GARETH

Who's that?

Sarah is flustered.

SARAH

He wasn't supposed to be...

A tall man with dark hair walks into the room in the background. Gwen and Arthur buzz around him. He gives Sarah a wave, then Lucy ushers him towards the kitchen.

LUCY

Come and have a cup of tea in here, she won't be long.

ARTHUR

Kevin are you coming to Oakwood Park with us?

The four of them disappear into the kitchen. Sarah looks at Gareth, her face is filled with guilt. Gareth is pale.

SARAH

He wasn't supposed to be here til two.

Gareth tries to form words but cannot.

SARAH

I was going to tell you. I was literally just about to.

Gareth's gaze has settled on the floor at his feet.

SARAH

He's in my bubble.

Gareth looks up and gazes out of his living room window with damp eyes. His world has crashed down. Sarah gives him time to say something. He cannot.

SARAH

I've had to carry on living Gar...

GARETH

I understand.

Gareth reaches to the keyboard. 'Call ended'.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. JOB INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP.

Two boxes, a tired Gareth in one, Elena Pereira in the other. There is a desperation behind Gareth's polite smile. He really needs this job.

ELENA

...so I told the management that I had never had the pleasure of interviewing two such strong candidates. I mean, in terms of yourself, not only do your hard skills tick every box, but you clearly have that mixture of theoretical and emotional intelligence that would make you a real asset to any team.

Gareth is trying to deduce what's coming.

GARETH

Well, I very much enjoyed the interview. I feel entirely aligned with PGS in terms of its culture and its focus on accuracy.

ELENA

And that really came through! And as I say, I approached management to ask if we could take on both candidates...

GARETH

Ok...

There is a pause. Elena looks down at her papers.

ELENA

Unfortunately...

Gareth closes his eyes for two seconds. A hammer blow.

INT: LUCY'S HOUSE - DAY. [MEMORY/IMAGINATION]

Gwen and Arthur run to Kevin, dropping their forgotten paintings of Gareth as they reach to hug him.

GWEN AND ARTHUR

Keviiiiin!

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. JOB INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP. CONT.

ELENA

They advised it would be a risk to do more than replace retiree's at the moment, as there is still so much uncertainty.

GARETH

I understand.

EXT: OAKWOOD PARK - DAY. [IMAGINATION]

Sarah, Kevin and the kids walk along hand in hand, away from the Vertigo ride. Sarah looks nauseous. Arthur, on the end and holding Kevin's hand, is gabbling non-stop up at him.

GWEN

Mam, you're such a wuss!

ARTHUR

And the worst one is Fleshlumpeater, but then the BFG gives him some snozzcumber and he goes bleurgh, and then you wouldn't believe this..

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. JOB INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP. CONT.

ELENA

And I'm afraid the other candidate JUST came out on top, on account of the fact he already has management experience.

GARETH

Ah, I see, well that's..

INT: BEDROOM - NIGHT. [IMAGINATION]

With the bedside lamp on, Kevin is making love to Sarah, hard. Sarah's mouth is doing the thing it does. Where the right upper lip curls up slightly.

SARAH

Oh God, oh God..

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. JOB INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP. CONT.

GARETH

...that's understandable.

ELENA

Gareth, I would implore you to keep an eye on our vacancies page. When all this blows over we will be looking to really grow into the UK market.

GARETH

I will most certainly do that.

ELENA

It was really nice meeting you Gareth.

GARETH

You too. Thank you Elena.

ELENA

Bye!

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. FILM CLUB.

Two boxes. Gareth and Aled. Gareth looks unusually vacant.

ALED

We've only had three dates and he's already sent me a card, check it out...

Aled holds the card up to the camera for Gareth to see. It reads 'Dear Aled, I want you in my bubble', with a drawing of two people kissing inside a large bubble. Joe pops up on the screen. He has a thick, black designer beard high up his cheeks.

ALED

Here he is, Brian Blessed.

JOE

Alright boys.

ALED

Right come on then, Crazy, Stupid Love. Don't tell me you didn't enjoy it.

JOE

It was bollocks.

ALED

You liar!

JOE

I didn't laugh once.

ALED

What? The fight scene!

JOE

Didn't believe it.

ALED

The parent teacher meeting?

JOE

Didn't believe it.

ALED

The graduation!

JOE

Oh please.

ALED

Oh my god, you've actually died inside.

JOE

You have to BELIEVE the characters and the dialogue to really enjoy a film.

ALED

What? Your favourite film is Back to the Future. It's about time travel!

JOE

But you believe it all. Because the characters are well observed and all of their actions are true to who they are.

ALED

Oh, it must be so gloomy inside your head.

JOE

That dude Cal, THAT guy would not get out of a moving car.

ALED

His wife just told him she wants a divorce!

JOE

The 17 year old girl would not give a load of nude selfies to a 13 year old high school kid.

ALED

But a Delorean can travel back in time if it reaches 88 miles per hour?

JOE

It can with plutonium.

ALED

Why can't you just sit back and let the film wash over you, without analysing whether this character would have said this, or that character would have done that.

JOE

I don't sit there analysing every line, but when something doesn't ring true this big klaxon goes off in my head.. AHOOOOGA! AHOOOOGA! And that's it for me. Film over.

ALED

Gareth, help me out will you.

It is a real effort for Gareth to speak. He shifts in his seat, he is not looking into the camera and he somehow looks physically smaller than usual.

GARETH

Um... I don't know. I mean there are some funny bits.

ALED

Ha!

GARETH

And some parts that just don't resonate.

JOE

Yeah, only two parts though. The first half and the second half.

GARETH

The story itself doesn't resonate. I'm tired of that story. Just because a couple get together young, it doesn't mean they have to end up sexless, loveless and complacent.

JOE

Yes! It's a tired cliché.

GARETH

Sarah and I got together young. But we cottoned on early that if you work hard at the relationship, you can keep enough of that spark.

Gareth's voice is quiet. Joe and Aled both sense that he is a reduced version of himself at the moment. They back off and let him speak.

GARETH

Like, eat your dinner at the table facing each other. Go to bed at nine and read or have sex for an hour or two. Don't just sit there dribbling in front of the tele til eleven o'clock.

JOE

Amen.

GARETH

Get out into the world together as much as possible, walk everywhere. You'll connect ten times more walking up a mountain than you will wandering around some monstrous shopping centre.

ALED

So true.

GARETH

Me and Sarah walk up The Garth mountain every month when her mam has the kids. Well... we used to. There's a little meadow down behind it, you've got to climb over a fence, no-one knows about it. Total privacy.

EXT: MEADOW - DAY. [IMAGINATION]

Sarah leads Kevin over a fence into a meadow under a blazing sun. She starts lifting up his t-shirt to take it off.

SARAH

Honestly, we've got the whole place to ourselves!

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. FILM CLUB. CONT.

Gareth looks down for a couple of seconds, when he looks back up he has damp eyes.

JOE

Gareth, are you alright mate?

GARETH

Yeah...

ALED

Ooh, I'm gonna look for that meadow.

GARETH

And don't just plonk the kids in front of the x-box all weekend.

JOE

To be fair, that's easier said than done.

GARETH

Well I know, but at least have one special evening where you do something as a family. Fridays it was for us. Board game night, monopoly usually. It's amazing what that game can teach a kid.

ALED

I love that game.

GARETH

One week they'll be flipping the board over in a rage cos they gotta pay you rent. The next week they're pleading with you to play it again.

JOE

It's all a bit capitalist for me, that one.

ALED

Alright Jeremy Corbyn. You'd have everyone given a free train station and all the hotels turned into homeless shelters!

INT: KITCHEN - DAY. [IMAGINATION]

Sarah, Kevin, Gwen and Arthur sat around the table playing monopoly. Arthur moves his piece.

GWEN

That's four hundred pounds please.

ARTHUR

Oh that's not fair!

GWEN

Come on, hand it over.

ARTHUR

NO! IT'S NOT FAIR!

Arthur flips the board over, starts crying and runs off. Kevin smiles at Sarah, stands up and whispers.

KEVIN

I'll go and have a word.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. FILM CLUB. CONT.

Gareth is staring into space. Aled and Joe are off again.

JOE

Well, what sort of message does that game send out to youngsters? Just make as much money as possible, and while you're at it make sure you bankrupt everyone else!

ALED

Oh my giddy aunt, it's just a game! Bloody hell Joe, you're a right barrel of laughs today aren't you.

JOE

I prefer board games that help you develop, like scrabble, rather than games that teach you to make everyone else homeless.

Gareth is now resting his head on his hands, working his temples with his fingertips.

EXT: ARTHURS BEDROOM - DAY. [IMAGINATION]

Kevin is sat next to Arthur on his bed.

KEVIN

...but you know you're a real big boy when you're able to ignore that anger inside you, and just stay calm when you lose.

Arthur, tear stained, leans into Kevin.

KEVIN

Shall we go back downstairs and say sorry?

ARTHUR

Yes.

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. FILM CLUB. CONT.

ALED

Poor Helen must be bored shitless watching philosophical films with subtitles all the time and playing educational board games.

JOE

Not at all.

ALED

I hope you're good in the sack.

JOE

Never had any complaints.

ALED

Yeah, but has she ever said you're good?

JOE

Um... perfectly adequate was the phrase she used.

ALED

Adequate?

JOE

Well, it's the 'perfectly' that I choose
to focus on.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT. [IMAGINATION]

With the bedside lamp on, Kevin is making love to Sarah, hard. Sarah's mouth is doing the thing it does. Where the right upper lip curls up slightly.

SARAH

Oh God, Oh God...

GARETHS COMPUTER SCREEN. FILM CLUB. CONT.

Gareth is now looking blankly into the screen while Aled and Joe bicker. The emotion has left his face.

JOE

I am fulfilling all conjugal
responsibilities to a satisfactory
standard..

ALED

Christ...

RING ACTIVATED DOORBELL VIDEO. DAY.

Black screen. A computerised chime, 'Activated'. Joe is standing outside the front door. He waits for a while, rings again. He stands back and looks up at the bedroom windows.

JOE

GARETH!

He rings the bell one more time. He dials a number on his mobile and walks away with the phone to his ear.

'Video Ended'.

RING ACTIVATED DOORBELL VIDEO. DAY.

Black screen, computerised chime, 'Activated'. Joe is standing with Sarah.

JOE

He's probably just gone for a long walk.

SARAH

Is he allowed?

JOE

No idea. Can't see why not though?

Sarah rings the bell again.

SARAH

Gareth! Are you still in bed you lazy git?

JOE

I'm sure he's gone for a walk. He's been desperate for fresh air.

SARAH

Yeah, I suppose.

JOE

How's things with the new chap, Kevin?

SARAH

Oh, he's gone.

JOE

Really?

SARAH

Yeah, once we started meeting up in the flesh it was crap.

JOE

Oh, sorry to hear that.

SARAH

And you could tell he hates kids, he didn't want to know them. It was all wrong basically.

Joe spots something through the living room window.

JOE

Hang on, his laptop's on.

He peers into the living room. Sarah joins him.

JOE

Gareth!

SARAH

Gareth, it's Sarah!

'Video Ended'.

RING ACTIVATED DOORBELL VIDEO. DAY.

Black screen, computerised chime, 'Activated'. A police officer stands back from the bell, and another is standing by the door with a red battering ram. Sarah and Joe are standing behind them, Sarah is slightly frantic.

SARAH

This isn't right. This isn't right.

JOE

Gareth! We just need to know you're ok!

POLICE OFFICER #1

Shall we go in?

SARAH

This isn't right.

JOE

Yes, go on.

The second officer draws back the battering ram and slams it into the door once. And again. On the third ram the door swings open. For a moment, all four of them are frozen. Then Joe and the two officers sprint into the house.

Sarah slumps slightly, then sways to the left. She places her hands on her knees for support, then stumbles to the left and falls flat onto her front. She is frozen there, barely supporting herself on her elbows, staring at the floor.

The low wail from deep inside her rises in volume and pitch.

'Video Ended'.