

*Four plays
from Parc*

Closed Accounts

Forever Delayed

Recycled

Unwritten

Contents

<i>Introduction: Four plays from Parc</i>	5
<i>Closed Accounts</i>	7
<i>Forever Delayed</i>	29
<i>Recycled</i>	43
<i>Unwritten</i>	55

Introduction:

Four plays from Parc

These plays have been written by numerous combinations of prisoners I have worked with over the years in Parc prison. The first play was written for a radio station that was still to exist and the other three for a literary festival that runs yearly within the prison walls. Not facts you might immediately associate with prison life. The plays would not exist without the support and co-operation of staff in Parc. From management to education staff and operational staff who have all fostered an environment that has allowed these works to be created.

The introduction of playwright Tracy Harris elevated the workshops and introduced the real craft of stage drama into the productions and that is what these plays represent, drama. Although they have been produced by prisoners in Parc I would be misleading you to say they represent life in Parc, especially as it is now. Drama is not documentary but is a distillation of the real world. Also the prisoners have spent many years in different prisons and their writing is a culmination of experiences during their lives.

I do believe however the plays give a real sense of the tone, humour and drama that prisoners live through. As with all great drama the facts are often fictionalised but the truth in the emotions are not.

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Closed Accounts

We hold the first meeting on A wing in a room that is full of floor cleaners, broken chairs and tea packs. There are six guys. They don't know each other. We sit in a circle like some therapy session and I explain what it is I want to do. I want to write a six part radio drama. As I explain this I think to myself, why did I say six parts, six fifteen minute segments adds up to a ninety minute drama. Maybe I should have said one.

The guys are pretty quiet. I know two of them. S is an armed robber serving nine years after robbing a bank. He was caught by forensics identifying strands of fabric from his shoes left on the carpet in the bank. H is a small time drug dealer who has been visiting jail since the eighties when he came back to the UK from Afghanistan and following the hippy trail for a few years. I know these two guys can write a bit but I don't know about the others.

The idea had come after someone had mentioned there was to be a prison radio station. Nobody knew when this would happen but I thought it was useful excuse to get my first real project off the ground.

I ask the guys what they would be interested in writing about. Prison someone says. 'Fuck prison,' says another, 'let's write about being out.'

N speaks for the first time, 'Yeah, I'd rather do something about getting out of prison.' N is in for drugs as well, except he is in for conspiracy to supply, text messages recovered by the police from a drug dealers phone then his phone. As he later tells me, he was just doing a bit of driving for some extra cash to fund his own heroin habit.

The session passes with everyone chatting about possible storylines. I introduce the idea of characters and how we need

to think about what type of people inhabit our story.

At the end S stops by me as they call moves for him to return to his wing. 'That was ok,' he says, 'except we didn't really do anything.'

'Yes you did,' I try to reassure him.

The second session is more chat as we work out a possible storyline, a man released from prison who has to pay off an outstanding debt to a drug dealer. T likes this. He is getting out, he's returning to London to prepare for release. He's done three years for street robbery. A fight with a guy outside a nightclub. They had an argument in the club and continued outside. T had punched him and walked off and was then arrested. He wasn't surprised until he was told he was to be charged with robbery. Unknown to T his friend had decided to pick up a mobile phone dropped by the man T had punched.

The group decided to make the main character an armed robber who had also been a drug dealer. The storyline involved a package he had received but had been taken from him when he was arrested. He owes for the package. He had to pay off the debt without returning to prison.

The guys believe this deals with a modern aspect of crime, in the good old days when you went to prison, all bets were cancelled they lamented but not so nowadays and more guys were coming out with old debts to pay.

The atmosphere in the room was still tentative, men still reticent. I was naive it had not occurred to me that trust would be the main issue in the room. I was too new to the prison to think about the world these men lived in. It hadn't even occurred to me whether these men would even get along outside of this class. Despite this the guys worked on the main characters, including the main characters wife and family. They discussed the relationships, the complexities and stresses and strains these characters were going through

and built up their histories. They related all this to their own experiences.

We still hadn't written anything much.

The third meeting was a little slow to start. Everyone was still turning up which I judged to be a good sign. M had been quiet in the first two sessions, making the odd comment that nobody really responded too.

I pointed out that we needed to decide how much our character owed.

M leaned forward and started to talk, his face was impassive he was about six foot and had a huge chest, biceps straining at his T-shirt. He looked like the prison workout manual in flesh. He started to describe the cost of cocaine by weight, he then went methodically through the process of how you break down a kilo of coke into numerous weights to distribute and then further to street level and what you would add to dilute the coke. There is complete silence as he says all this. When he is finished he leans back with a look of satisfaction on his face.

I try to think about all this information but before I can respond S leans forward. His face is also impassive he looks M in the eye and says, 'You don't know anything about drugs, do you?'

The silence in the room takes a palpable dip. Everyone is tense. S is still looking intently at M. M shuffles his feet a little, 'what?'

S is unrelenting, 'I said you don't know anything about drugs, do you?'

I wonder what is going to happen whether I am about to be caught up in carnage.

'No, I don't,' M eventually says.

The silence continues for a split second before everyone starts to laugh. M is bewildered before he too starts to giggle.

The tension relaxes, everyone is grinning. M shrugs a little sheepishly.

'It's ok man,' S says, 'don't try to be someone you're not.'

'I just didn't think I had much to contribute,' M says.

'Course you do, you're here aren't you,' S responds, 'be yourself. You can't be anything else because jail will find you out.'

From that moment on we make rapid progress. The first episode is written in the room. Talking through scenes, reading the dialogue, rewriting. The guys are all contributing, criticising, praising, dissecting.

The sessions pass quickly. Sometimes I worry we are the only room in the jail that is laughing.

Eventually the team starts to disintegrate. People are shipped, released, some miss a session because they have a course as part of their sentence plan, a legal visit, a medical appointment. Some are down the block, nicked, then back again. I am to learn this is integral to prison life.

After six or seven weeks we have almost finished. To speed up the process the guys are dividing up the scenes to be written. Writing them on their own time then using the sessions to rewrite the episode as a group in the room.

This is a real writing team now. Not a bunch of prisoners who are writing.

I bring in a visiting playwright who has also done TV and film scripts. I had sent her the first episode before her visit.

She arrives with the script and her notes. Half an hour in she is deep in debate about a characters dialogue in the third scene and the motivation of one of the smaller characters, notes are being taken, and possibilities are chucked around the room.

Moves are called and she says her goodbyes before I take her out. We walk out the gate and she says, 'that was just like

a proper script meeting, just like you would get outside.'

I realise when she says this how odd this whole experience has become.

The final episode is written by two of the original crew. Everyone else is gone. T has been shipped to London. M is taking part in a course as part of his sentence plan to deal with his violence. He too was a street robber. H has been released. N finishes some of the scenes and we have a final meeting with S and the three of us sign off the episode. My thoughts have already turned to recruiting actors, a new group to play the parts on the radio that doesn't exist but there is a quiet sense of dissatisfaction in the room. Although the episode is complete we feel the ending doesn't hit the right note. It works as a story but something is missing.

N has been recruited to paint in the jail and is starting a new job. He is progressing nicely with less than a year left in his sentence. S seems to be progressing as well with two and a half years left to serve.

I come in later in the week and have an appointment to meet S to discuss a book he has been working on. He turns up and is visibly upset, he has been nicked for dealing on the wing. He is a smart, articulate and funny guy but also a drug dealer. He apologises to me for his nicking as though he has let me down which seems odd but I realise he is really apologising to himself. Admonishing himself for his own stupidity.

He is busted back to basic. I go see him on A wing where he has been relocated and by some strange coincidence it is the wing where our room was located. The room the writing group met.

He is housed in the bat cave, a rundown cell with marks all over the walls and a dodgy light flickering above covered in red ink to give the cell an eerie glow. I am struck by how happy he seems. Happier than I had seen him for a long time. He is laughing and joking as he makes me a cup of coffee.

We sit in the cell and he tells me he will have to leave, that he has burnt all his opportunities here and that if he moves to a different jail he can start fresh. He has started agitating for a move. I ask him how he can be sure they won't just keep him here and he tells me there are ways to get moved. Mainly by being a constant pain the arse.

'But you seem so happy,' I tell him.

This makes him laugh. 'It's the only time you feel alive,' he tells me, 'when you're battling. Them against us isn't it, although it's not as black and white as it used to be. A lot of cons talk to officers like their mates.' He says this with disbelief. 'But life in prison is so dull, so grey that you have to do something, even if it's just to break the boredom.'

He passes me a few sheets of A4. 'I wrote a scene,' he says, 'I don't know that ending always seemed wrong, maybe this will work.'

I see him one more time before he is shipped. He is in the same cell and as happy as when I saw him before. We sit and have a cup of coffee and chat and he talks about his future, how he is older now and needs to make the change or he will be back for another even longer stretch. I tell him I will see him again but I never do. He sends me a letter from his new jail to tell me he is doing fine and asks me what I thought of the scene he wrote.

The scene is a soliloquy. It is our main character three years later. He is home and living with his wife and children. He has a normal job working in a supermarket and drives a family saloon and he watches all the young guys walking past him on the way home from work, dressed for clubs and a night on illicit substances and he muses how that used to be him but now he is happy.

I write to him and tell him it makes the story complete.

CLOSED ACCOUNTS

FX - Fade into the sounds you hear on the wing of a typical British nick. Doors banging, laughter, muffled shouting, officers barking instructions.

CHEF: Fish, Jacket potato, mixed veg, spotted dick.

TYRONE: *W/O* I'm sick to death of this shit. Thank fuck it's the last time I'll have to pass through this servery.

CHEF: Yo, Ty, Ty, Ty!

TYRONE: Yeah?

CHEF: Do you want food or what?

TYRONE: Yeah, sorry bruv, what am I on?

CHEF: For fucks sake. Fish, jacket potato, veg and spotted dick.

TYRONE: *(under his breath)* Prick.

CHEF: What?

TYRONE: Spotted dick.

FX - More doors banging. Footsteps on a metal landing. Voices shout out.

VOICE 1: Take it easy Ty!

VOICE 2: Don't come back mate!

VOICE 3: Yeah, don't want to see your ugly face again Ty!

FX - the footsteps stop and we can hear someone banging on a door with the palm of their hand. The voices sound flattened by the door between the speakers.

TYRONE: Yo Gavin, sort me out a spliff bruv.

GAV: Come on Ty, I've only got a bit. Can't do it.

TYRONE: I've sorted you out loads of times over the years and you can't sort out one spliff? Don't be sly and give me a spliff to share on my last night with my

padmate.

GAV: Alright. Here's a sorter. Do you for tonight. Take it easy out there yeah?

TYRONE: Yeah. Yeah.

GAV: I'll catch you later.

FX - Footsteps that become softer and flatter then stop. A final door bangs shut and a lock turns. Then silence.

TYRONE: V/O Home tomorrow. Cheer up you miserable bastard.

FX - Fade into the sound of a TV on. A door is unlocked and opened.

MR WILLS: No sosh tonight boys, not enough staff but as it's Mr Morris's last evening, I'll let you both have a shower. Hurry up.

ERNIE: Nice one, come on Ty, I can smell you from here.

TYRONE: Your nose is too close to your own armpits bruv.

FX - Sounds of shower bags and towels quickly being grabbed. But not quick enough for Mr Wills.

MR WILLS: Come on Ernie, you waste of space, get yourself together.

TYRONE: V/O Mr Wills loved to abuse the inmates and none more so than little Ernie who wouldn't hurt a fly. It was like kicking a puppy.

MR WILLS: I said shift Ernie.

ERNIE: Come on Ty.

MR WILLS: Move along Ernie. Mr Morris will be with you in a minute.

ERNIE: You alright Ty?

FX - A smack round the head followed by a gasp.

MR WILLS: Move! You've got five minutes.

FX - Footsteps moving out the cell. Mr Wills speaks quietly.

MR WILLS: I have a message for you Morris. The man you owe still expects his money 27k with interest.

FX - A punch and the inevitable gasp of pain that follows.

MR WILLS: Don't think just because your being released, you can walk free. Understand?

TYRONE: Yeah, alright, alright Mr Wills.

MR WILLS: Now you've got three minutes for that shower.

FX - A cascading shower.

ERNIE: He's a proper twat that Mr Wills in he - Thinks he owns this place just cause he brings in a bit of brown. I'd like to find out where he lives so I could send the boys round.

TYRONE: You don't know any boys Ern. Maybe a few Big Issue sellers or junkies but nobody who could really sort out Wills.

ERNIE: I know. But I wish I did. It's about time he got a taste of his own medicine. He's not just a twat, he's a sadistic twat.

TYRONE: It all catches up with us in the end Ern. But Wills is more connected than you think. He's got friends. Dangerous friends in low places.

TYRONE: Come on, let me in, he'll be back before I've even got wet.

ERNIE: Five years Ty, your last shower, sure you don't wanna join me.

TYRONE: Fuck me mate, thanks for the compliment, but no thanks.

TYRONE: Honest truth though, I hope I never see the inside of one of these shitholes ever again. I know I fucked up man. I'm not blaming anyone but me but five years is a proper long time. I really wanna be there for Claire and the kids. Tyr and

be a proper Dad.

ERNIE: You'll probably end up working in Tesco's and being obsessive about shiny tomatoes, bendy bananas and the price of beans.

TYRONE: It sounds good to me. I don't want this life anymore. I just wanna be Joe Bloggs, Mr Family man. Maybe a pipe and some slippers, sitting in my lazy man chair.

ERNIE: It's lazy boy.

TYRONE: Lazy boy then.

ERNIE: Only you can make it happen. When you get out, keep your head down and you'll be ok. You're a good bloke. I'm sure you'll catch a break sooner or later.

FX - Fade out the sounds of the shower and fade into the familiar sounds of the TV.

TYRONE: Last night Ernie, I've got a little present for you.

ERNIE: Nice one!

FX - A rollup being made and a lighter being used. One after the other both en sigh.

ERNIE: You excited?

TYRONE: Course I am. Can't wait to see everyone. Can't wait to start again.

ERNIE: I hope it works out mate. There aren't many of us worth anything in here but I think you are different, I think there might be a place in the real world for you.

FX - The TV playing and sounds of smoking.

ERNIE: Tell you what, if you leave me that radio of yours, I might have a little leaving present for you too.

TYRONE: What's mine is yours, you know that. What have

- you got. Not the one-eyed snake monster again.
- ERNIE: Well fuck off then TY if you don't want it. I'll keep it to myself.
- TYRONE: Alright, keep your vicars on. What's the score?
- ERNIE: Well, Mr Tyrone Morris, Wing Cleaner, Drug Dealer, Bank robber extraordinaire, I Ernest Reginald Smith....
- TYRONE: Reginald!
- ERNIE: Shut up! Reginald Smith of Big Issue Fame. The best skip dipper this side of the M4....
- TYRONE: You don't half drag things out sometimes mate..
- ERNIE: I said shut up! I have only gone an acquired a fistful of the finest, pure as driven snow, government issue, supersize, super strong vallys.
- TYRONE: You sneaky bastard. Nice one.
- ERNIE: After you sorted that robbing bastard Sykes out for me, it's the least I can do and anyway I thought you might need something to help you sleep... you being so excited.
- TYRONE: You know the feeling don't you, the night before?
- ERNIE: Yeah. Many times.
- TYRONE: Thanks, you're a lifesaver.

FX - The TV becomes louder until the sound distorts and fades in a long drawn out echo into the distance.

TYRONE: *V/O* Everyone knows the feeling. Yeah, there's excitement, the rush, the list of things that run through your brain about what you're going to do and who you're going to see but it's not just that. There's also the nerves, the worry, the feeling you don't admit to anyone on the inside or the outside. There's also the fear.

FX - Sounds of Tyrone wandering round packing his gear. TV playing.

TYRONE: *V/O* Clothes clean and ready for the morning. Stuff packed. Better have a shave tonight just in case there isn't any time. Time is nearly up.

ERNIE: You alright mate? You seem a little distant there.

TYRONE: Just good bruv. Just getting my shit together.

ERNIE: It's just you've been stood there with that mug of water for about twenty minutes now. It ain't gonna drink itself.

TYRONE: No bruv. I was just thinking, it's getting pretty late so I'm gonna do these blues in and get me head down.

ERNIE: You do that mate. I'll turn the TV down a bit for you.

TYRONE: Cheers.

FX - The TV dips and Tyrone swallows the Valium and necks the water.

TYRONE: *V/O* This is it. This is it. Wonder what Claire is doing? What she's thinking. Is she excited, scared.... I'll be back with her tomorrow... Back in her bed, I hope. Hope she's not too disappointed... It'll probably be a three minute wonder... In fact that should be enough time for a fag as well (*sniggers*)... The loyal wife who's waited for five years. Five ... whole ... years.

CLAIRE: I love you Tyrone. I'll be waiting babes.

TYRONE: *V/O* If only.... More like this is your last chance to stop being a fuck up. Sort it out if you ever want to see your kids again.

CLAIRE: What do you expect? A red carpet and champagne? I've had to cope on my own, I need someone to be there from now on. Someone I can rely on.

TYRONE: *V/O* Ok, ok ... I know.. Can't we have this argu-

ment tomorrow? This is my dream...

FX - Sounds of doors banging and shouting but they are a distant echo...

TYRONE: *V/O* These blues should be working by now. I can't feel a fucking think... Pure as driven, Ernie's full of it... At least Donna'll be happy to see me.

DONNA: Hi babe... I've missed you so much... I'm going to wear you thin in the next week....

TYRONE: *V/O* I've missed you too babe. Everything will be cool. As long as Claire is happy and Donna is happy and Claire never meets Donna or maybe Claire would like to meet Donna. Maybe Donna and Claire and me could all be happy (laughs) maybe they'd like to welcome me home together... Now there is a thought...

CLAIRE: Come on baby...

DONNA: We'll show you how happy we are to see you..

CLAIRE: Who the fuck are you?

DONNA: What are doing here as well?

CLAIRE: Bitch.

DONNA: Cow.

CLAIRE: Slut.

DONNA: Wench.

CLAIRE: Wench? Whore... Slag... Tramp!

FX - The two girls are fighting. Tyrone starts laughing and the fighting fades out.

TYRONE: *V/O* Maybe not such a good idea.

MOLLY: Hello Dad.

CLAIRE: Say hello to Daddy Lucy... Lucy.

LUCY: Hi Dad.

TYRONE: *V/O* That's all that matters really is the kids. As long as I can be a Dad. Five years is most of their lives. They don't even know me and I don't know them. But it isn't too late. I just need to make sure everything works. I just need to give it time... Fucking time... Too much fucking time... *(Tyrone's voice is becoming heavy as the valium starts to work)*... Fucking time... One fucking mistake, getting caught that's a fucking mistake *(giggles)*... As long as nobody meets Trevor. Bastard.

TREVOR: Where's my money.

TYRONE: *V/O* Five years, I thought the bastard would at least have been nicked by now. Never occurred to me he'd still be out there and still waiting on his cash.

TREVOR: Twenty seven thousand pounds Tyrone. I've been a patient man. With interest, you need to pay me by the end of the week.

TYRONE: *V/O* I haven't got it. How can I get it... Beg... Borrow... Steal. Not steal. Not again.

TREVOR: I'll kill your family man.

TYRONE: *V/O* Fuck you Trevor.

TREVOR: I'll kill you.

TYRONE: *V/O* I'll kill you first... *(voice is drifting away)* I'll kill you... No Tyrone, it will all work mate. You can do it. You have too. There is no other choice... you oddball... who are you talking too... there's nobody there ... I think these Vallies are starting to work...

FX - Wing in the morning. Doors banging and lots of shouting.

MR WILLIS: Morris! RB76413 release!

TYRONE: Well this is it Ern, my time has come.

ERNIE: Good doing time with you mate. It's been a real

ball but don't hurry back.

TYRONE: I'll send you a little P.O in the post.

MR WILLIS: Come on Morris, do you want to go home or do you want to stay with us?

FX- Numerous voices shouting out louder.

VOICE: By Tyrone!

VOICE: Tell Jay, Mick Johnson said hello.

FX - Door unlocked and relocked. Footsteps in the corridor.

MR WILLIS: Sure you want to wear that jacket outside?

TYRONE: What's wrong with the jacket? It's afghan.

MR WILLIS: You look like a drug dealer.

TYRONE: I am.... Was... a drug dealer.

Mr WILLIS: How you feeling?

TYRONE: Yeah, I'm feeling alright.

MR WILLIS: Well you're not alright MATE. You should be worried. You've got a week to pay back what you owe. Don't even think for a minute this'll go away.

TYRONE: Fuck's sake, I know.

MR WILLIS: Good. By the way how are the kids? Lucy and Molly isn't it? They still in St David's primary? Shame if anything happened to them for a waste like you.

FX Door unlocked then relocked. Crowded room, voices talking in hushed tones.

MR WILLIS: Take a seat. I'll let the officers know you're here. Have a good life Mr Morris.

FX - Voices chatting in the waiting room. Names being called out.

NATHE: Alright Ty?

TYRONE: Hey Nate, where you off too?

NATHE: Court.

TYRONE: Good luck then.

NAHTE: I don't need it, I'm pleading guilty. Where you too?

TYRONE: Home.

NATHE: Good luck to you then.

TYRONE: Cheers. I think I am going to need it.

OFFICER: Morris, follow me.

FX - Door unlocking then being relocked.

OFFICER: Make sure you get your I.D card ready.

TYRONE: Yeah.

OFFICER: Ok, you know the drill, remove your clothing, trousers first, drop your boxers and squat for me.

TYRONE: I'm leaving not arriving.

FX - Tyrone follows the orders and drops his trousers.

OFFICER: Shake your socks out.

TYRONE: Are you sure this is strictly business and not just pleasure?

OFFICER: John!

FX - Door is unlocked and opened.

JOHN: Yeah, what's up?

OFFICER: Take Mr Morris back to the wing. He'll be with us a bit longer.

TYRONE: What? What's going on?

OFFICER: You just broke the conditions of your release. Insubordination to an officer.

TYRONE: But.....

OFFICER: Too much of a smart arse.

JOHN: Just looks like a hairy arse to me.

FX - Both officers laugh.

OFFICER: Ha ha... Mr Morris, you're not the only one who can make jokes but keep them to yourself until you're out the gate. Now pull your trousers up.

FX - Through to another room.

OFFICER: First let's confirm who you are. Name?

TYRONE: Tyrone Morris.

OFFICER: Date of Birth?

TYRONE: 12/07/74.

OFFICER: Next of kin?

TYRONE: Claire Anne Morris.

OFFICER: Address.

TYRONE: 106 Anderson Road. Cardiff. CF23 4AD.

OFFICER: Any scars?

TYRONE: Loads. Mental as well as physical. *(pause)* One. On my elbow, fell off my bike when I was a kid.

OFFICER: Any tattoos?

TYRONE: No.

OFFICER: Mother's maiden name?

TYRONE: Oh come on, are you being funny? You've known me over three years Guv.

OFFICER: Procedure, if you want to get out you'll answer the question.

TYRONE: Jones.

OFFICER: We've got a few things for you to sign.

TYRONE: What's that guv?

OFFICER: This is an agreement that you understand the terms of your license.

OFFICER: You also need to sign this, it's to say you understand you are banned from obtaining or being in

possession of any firearms of any kind, including replica guns and water pistols. It also covers fireworks so stay away from your kids on bonfire night.

TYRONE: I can't even light a sparkler?

OFFICER: It's not a joke Morris. (*pause*) Make sure you visit probation today before they close and reside at the address you have disclosed.

TYRONE: What time do they close?

OFFICER: I don't know. Okay your money. Sign here. Forty-five pounds.

TYRONE: Forty five pounds for five years of my life.

OFFICER: It won't go far these days either.

TYRONE: Expensive out there is it?

OFFICER: Oh yes, very expensive.

FX - A box is opened and the reception officer coughs.

OFFICER: Five years of dust on the lid. Ok possessions. One belt, leather, possibly imitation.

TYRONE: Real leather. (under breath) prick.

OFFICER: One watch. Needs a new battery. Two rings, one wedding, one cheap. One breeze block.

TYRONE: Eh?

OFFICER: Fucking hell what is that? Sorry, my mistake it's actually a phone.

TYRONE: That's top of the range that phone. It cost me over two hundred quid.

OFFICER: It's not worth fifty pence now. Technology has moved on a bit since you went away. You might want to update it when you get home. Sign for your possessions here.

FX - Tyrone signs.

OFFICER: Ok, follow me.

FX - Another gate is unlocked and relocked. They walk through a long corridor.

TYRONE: It's a long walk to freedom.

OFFICER: Yeah and a short stroll back.

TYRONE: I won't be back.

OFFICER: Don't make me laugh. You'll be in here again soon enough. People like you never fucking change.

TYRONE: What do you mean people like me?

OFFICER: Criminals. How many times have you been in? (Pause) And how many times have you told yourself it's the last? (Pause) Every single time, I bet. Yeah, yeah, I know this time it's different, you're determined to change it all around but wait until you're broke, or you want a new car or spending money and you have that choice between honest work and an easy fix. It's the easy fix every time.

TYRONE: Sometimes there isn't any choice.

OFFICER: That's what you tell yourself. There's always a choice.

FX - Door unlocked and relocked. Waiting room with people chatting.

OFFICER: Take a seat.

FX - People chattering.

TYRONE: *V/O* Ah look at the state of these two knob heads.

JUNKIE 1: As long as we make probation today everything will be hunky dory.

JUNKIE 2: I just don't want to be breached again. My probation officer last time was a right bitch.

JUNKIE 1: Don't worry Dave I've carried you the past year

and I'll carry you there if I have too. Anyway the docks are really near and there's always some Somalis around. They do twenty four seven. I mean it's deals on wheels.

TYRONE: *V/O* Deals on wheels? You need meals on wheels.

JUNKIE 2 Be tidy to have a nice head on for a change. The quality will be much better than what we've had in this place.

TYRONE: *V/O* With any luck one of you will overdose and save the taxpayer a fortune in the future.

JUNKIE 1: Yeah, at least I've never had a headache with all the paracetamol. They was cutting into it.

JUNKIE 2: And the stuff with the laxatives. I haven't been constipated in three years.

FX - The two junkies are laughing.

TYRONE: *V/O* Fucking comedians as well...

FX - Tyrone laughs.

JUNKIE 1: How much longer are we going to be stuck in here for?

JUNKIE 2: Dunno.

JUNKIE 1: You any idea mate?

TYRONE: Hang on a minute and I'll check my crystal ball... (pause).. I haven't really got a crystal ball boys.

JUNKIE 1: Thought you might have one to match your wizard's coat.

TYRONE: What's that?

JUNKIE 2: Hang on... maybe you could help us out. Save us a trip to the docks.

TYRONE: I don't think anybody can help you.

OFFICER: Morris?

TYRONE: Yeah.

OFFICER: Time to leave.

FX - Large door creaking open. Traffic shooting past outside. The hustle of civvy street.

GATE SCREW: If you have someone waiting for you, then the car park is about a hundred and fifty yards to the right and round the prison wall.

TYRONE: Thanks gov. Take it easy yeah.

GATE SCREW: You too.

FX - The gate slams shut. The continuous stream of traffic seems almost alien to Tyrone. Horns are blaring and engines revving. Everything is loud and seems too quick for him.

TYRONE: V/O It's just fucking cars Tyrone, nothing to get excited about.

FX - The traffic quietens and Tyrone comes to a standstill. Voices shout Tyrone.

END

Forever Delayed

I start working with a guy serving an IPP sentence. An Indeterminate Sentence has no release date just a recommended minimum amount of years to serve. I have already had an indication that men serving IPP are under a different type of stress and spotlight than men serving determinate sentences. The guy is coming up for parole. He is four and a half years over his minimum tariff. The stress means he bangs himself up early every night to keep out of trouble and is having blackouts on the wing.

I and the playwright Tracy Harris decide to get a group together who are all serving IPP prisoners to write a play that reflects their experiences. The guys are recommended by wing staff and Offender Managers. At the first meeting most have them have done enough years to have crossed paths with each other at some point during their sentence. As IPP prisoners they have done numerous courses and criss-crossed the countries prison estate as not every jail offers the courses they needed to do to complete their sentence plan. Only one prisoner is under tariff.

The first workshop they write about the day of their offence and being sentenced.

Tracy and I look through their pieces and start to see a striking similarity. They write the same words that the Judge pronounced on sentencing and they all write a countdown to the moment their violence exploded. We use these moments as stepping stones in the script. The men chat about a possible storyline and the idea of waiting on a train surfaces. A common frustration that the audience can relate to. The men themselves like the idea of the play being set in a location that appears to be different to prison.

Tracy and I run a workshop where the men write what

they would say to the Judge if they could speak to him now. Again the pieces are similar, a plea that the Judge himself did not foresee men spending years beyond their recommended tariff in jail. None of the men deny they should be in prison, none protest innocence but all feel they are in a hopeless situation that they cannot see an end to.

Tracy brings in a director and actors and they work through the script. They come in to the prison and meet the writers and there is a great atmosphere as they discuss the script and the men's stories. The play is eventually performed to an audience in prison including the writers and they are moved to see their stories on stage. The play is performed in Cardiff.

I decide to record a version for the prison radio. One of the men performs his own part for the radio. He reads a very emotional piece about being in his cell and dreaming of being in the park with his children. The piece immediately follows a moment of violence. As his voice drifts away he looks at me sadly and asks, 'How can someone be so violent one minute and so gentle the next?' There is bewilderment in his voice but I don't have an answer.

FOREVER DELAYED

SCENE 1

A station platform with a row of seats. Behind the seats is a Railway Station sign but there is no name on the sign. Mikey and John sat on bench.

Station Announcer:

This is an important announcement. The Cross Country service to North Wales has been cancelled. We apologise for any inconvenience caused...

Pause.

Station Announcer:

The Arriva Trains Wales service to Cardiff Central has been delayed by approximately two hours, Please await further announcements.....

Carl enters and takes a seat, carrying a carrier bag.

Station Announcer:

This is a platform alteration, the delayed First Great Western Service to Swansea will now leave from platform four. Please mind the gap between the train and the platforms edge.

Pause.

The 5.45 train to London Paddington has been cancelled...

MIKEY: Not again.

JOHN: Seriously

CARL: There'll be another train soon...won't there?

Mikey and John Laugh.

MIKEY: Yeah.
CARL: You been waiting long?
JOHN: About seven...
CARL: Not too long....
JOHN: years.....
CARL: Shit.
MIKEY Leaves on the track,
JOHN: Security Alert
MIKEY Windscreen wiper snapped
JOHN: 'Wrong kind of sun.' There's always a reason, it doesn't come
MIKEY: and we're stuck here.
CARL: How did you get here?
JOHN: I've told that story a million times?
MIKEY: Doesn't matter, we've got nothing better to do and he doesn't know. Go on...

John takes an apple out of his pocket.

JOHN: It was just a normal Tuesday ...

Phone rings-He answers it.

Yeah Chris, what's happening lad?

Mikey as caller.

MIKEY I've got a postie lined up in North Wales. The drop off is at 10:45, can you make it?
JOHN: Yeah mate, I'm in Llandudno now. Where is he?
MIKEY: Just outside Wrexham? A place called Llan...
JOHN: LLanammon.
MIKEY: You know it?
JOHN: Yeah it's a fucking shit hole with not many ways out.

I'll check it out. Phone you in an hour lad.

He takes a bite of the apple.

Station Announcer:

An hour passes

JOHN: Lad it's me. I can get this one- easy.
What time does the van drop off again?
10:45. ok lad phone you when it's done.

Station Announcer:

11:45

JOHN: Got it.
Hold on the bag's just fucking split all over the
floor of the car.
Shit...gotta go, cops and jacks everywhere.

He throws the apple.

Don't want to be getting ragged with all this dow
in the car.

Station Announcer:

3 weeks later

JOHN: Hi Love it's me. I'm in St Anne's station, been
done for a robbery, got me on DNA on a fucking
apple.
Can you believe this shit?

Station announcer:

Three months later...

JOHN: Hi Love it's me, just escaped from court girl,
make sure everything's sorted and I'll be with
you next week.

Station announcer:

One hour later

JOHN: Hi love it's me, just coming out of Asda. Some-

one's recognised me and called the cops. Shit I'm being chased now.

Look If I don't make it, book a visit next week.

CARL: Did she visit?

JOHN: Yeah course she did- She's a good girl

MIKEY: Don't talk to me about girls.

JOHN: Here we go...

MIKEY: They make you weak. You put everything in to them and they break your heart. They wouldn't act like they do if you were on the out. You come in with one, go out without one but my day will come...her loss

Pause.

JOHN: You're a little biased mate,
It's because of women you're in here isn't it?

Pause.

'Mikey it's kicking off outside.'

MIKEY: It's just a normal Saturday night. We're in a pub, in a local area, where all different people from different parts of Cardiff go most of us on cocaine and alcohol.

I go outside to see what's happening.

A mate of mine is fighting with someone I know
'Fuck sake' he says, 'help me split it up.'

So I try and break it up, intervene, but then a group of women start to attack me.

One of them goes too far, scrambling my face.

She's the guy I knows wife! Right Mouthy bitch
Fight Stops.

But I'm not happy.

I head butt the guy – he falls to the floor.

Get on top of him and at that moment someone claws.

At me from behind and my chain comes off over my head. I turn around and it's her- the wife. She has it in her hand.

'I'm giving you 5 seconds to give my chain back'

1,

2,

3,

4,

5.

I lose it. Punch her off her feet, knocking her unconscious.

Everything's on camera.

Station announcer:

This is an important announcement. Your crime would normally warrant a Sentence of five years imprisonment with time served two and a half years. However, there is a new sentence available to me, and you will go to prison for a minimum 2 and a half years under an Indeterminate, public protection order.

I fully expect that should you fulfil your sentence plan, undertake the necessary rehabilitation courses, that you will be released at the earliest opportunity.

MIKEY: Seven years later

JOHN: Still no sign

CARL: but there will be...won't there?

JOHN: Will there?

MIKEY: I was 21 years old, had a promising boxing career

ahead of me.

I'm not saying I didn't deserve to go to jail. It was my fault.

Station Announcer:

You will be released at the earliest opportunity

CARL: That's the sentence for Rapists

JOHN: Paedophiles

CARL: Repeat sexual and violent offenders

JOHN: Severe risks to the public

MIKEY: I was just a stupid young lad who got in to a stupid drunken fight on a Saturday night, but you basically gave me a life sentence.

Carl gets out an apple starts eating it. Offers one around...

CARL: Anyone want one?

JOHN: You taking the piss or what?

Pause.

Station announcer:

This is an important announcement. Your crime would normally warrant a Sentence of eight years imprisonment with time served four and a half years. However, There is a new sentence available to me, and you will go to prison for a minimum 4 and a half years under an Indeterminate, public protection order.

I fully expect that should you fulfil your sentence plan, undertake the necessary rehabilitation courses, that you will be released at the earliest opportunity.

JOHN: Four and a half years IPP, the sentence you have passed to me has ruined my life. I would have liked a date to focus on, but I got to make do with

what I got. If you didn't understand like I didn't understand, you should have spoken out.

Station Announcer:

You are a severe risk to the public

JOHN: No. My first violent offence. Previous- fraud 14 years ago.

I told you why I did it, I was under stress-the debts and the threats.

That's nothing compared to the stress I feel now

Pause.

You know what family think?

When the judge said 4 and a half years he meant 4 and a half years.

CARL: That's what I thought

MIKEY You'll learn.

- Family are doing the sentence with you.

They don't understand why you're not coming home.

- think you've done something wrong.

You've lied to them on the out.

They'll think you're lying again.

JOHN: They believe in justice

MIKEY: I hate not having answers for my loved ones

CARL: My biggest achievement is my wife and kids...

Molly, 7 Sarah, 5

Pause.

I had dealings with my Neighbour for dealing from his flat.

People coming and going back and forth.

My children won't come and see me from school

cos people are hanging around outside.

When I ask him;

'Look mate, for my children's sake, can you just... but his punters don't understand, they just want their fix.

Pause.

It was just a normal Friday.

I'd spent the day in town trying to raise money for my next fix of heroin.

I'd been using the shit for 14 years, a bad habit that I'd picked up in prison.

I raise the money I need to keep me going for the rest of day and go back to my flat which looks more like a cave than a home, but it's mine, all the same and it helps keep the weather out.

I wake up there's a loud banging on my door and stumble to find out who it is. I hear my neighbour's voice;

JOHN: 'You got some foil'

CARL: 'You're having a fucking laugh. It's 2:00 in the morning'

Which he confirms when I ask him the time;

'Yeah I got foil, but for waking me up you better get me a £10 bag you prick.

JOHN: 'Give me five minutes.

CARL: I wait

MIKEY: 1,2,3,4,5,

CARL: Five minutes pass and no sign of this prick with my gear I'm up knocking at his door.

He comes up the passage.

JOHN: 'Who is it?

CARL: 'it's me. Sort it out.

JOHN: I told you five minutes and I'll be there

MIKEY: 1

CARL: I'm winding myself up now.

MIKEY: 2

CARL: He's taking the piss

MIKEY: 3

CARL: I'm probably looking like a cartoon character-
steam coming out my ears

MIKEY: 4

CARL: I grab my bat and sort him out

MIKEY: 5

CARL: Red mist comes up

Pause.

CARL: When my cell door is banged up at night and the
day is over I think about my family.

I relax, close my eyes and picture myself in
Cyfartha Park in the summer sunbathing in the
warm sun, surrounded by flowers and the noise
of bees working.

The sound of my children playing.

Their laughter puts a smile on my face and I'm
content with life.

Station Announcer:

This is an important announcement. The cross
country service to North Wales has been can-
celled. We do apologise for any inconvenience
this has caused.

CARL: Sometimes my children ask; 'When are you com-
ing home, Dad? and I say 'I don't know.'

It makes me really sad because they think I don't

want to come home, don't want to be part of their lives anymore.

MIKEY: When my cell door is banged up at night, I start to think I'm never getting out. I start to say to myself; 'You're never getting out'

I close my eyes and it's there, pressure bearing down on me, suffocating me.

You're never getting out'

JOHN: I've done the courses

CARL: Done my sentence plan.

MIKEY: I been having these dreams- I'm out, living my life, being happy but then I wake up, and there isn't life, there's just IPP.

Station Announcer:

The 6:15 train to London Paddington has been cancelled..

JOHN: Not again.

MIKEY: Seriously

CARL: There has to be another one

John and Mikey laugh.

MIKEY: Yeah. You been waiting long?

CARL: About two...

JOHN: Not too long....

CARL: years.....

MIKEY: Yeah that's not long

CARL: Shit.

MIKEY: Leaves on the track,

JOHN: Security Alert

MIKEY: Windscreen wiper snapped

JOHN: 'Wrong kind of sun.'

There's always a reason, it doesn't come
MIKEY: and we're stuck here.
CARL: How did you get here again?
JOHN: I've told you a million times
MIKEY: It doesn't matter, got nothing better to do. Go
on...

Pause. John gets the apple out of his pocket.

JOHN: It was just a normal Tuesday ...

RECYCLED

There is to be another play but what is it to be about? I have several chats with men in the VP Unit. Some I work with individually, some as part of a regular creative writing group. A recurring theme is the difficulty they will have when released. Due to the nature of their offences many feel they will be ostracised or victimised by their communities when they leave the sanctuary that prison offers. Although they do not see it as a sanctuary it is in some ways the safest place for men who have committed sexual offences.

Over the years I encounter men who have been recalled or committed further offences to get back into prison partly because they have found it impossible to live on the outside.

Tracy and I discuss the possibility of a play that addresses this issue. We have a meeting with the writing group on VP and they are interested in taking part in writing a play based on this subject. We follow the pattern of the previous play, some writing workshops and then a draft of a script and further rewriting workshops until we have a viable draft to bring in actors and a director.

The play is based around a recycling centre where a new worker chats to an old hand and they discover some common ground until the new worker reveals he has been in prison. The play charts their conversation until the point the new worker admits he was in prison for a sexual offence.

The director and actors read and rehearse the script. They come into the prison to have a look around. I explain the play was written by a group of prisoners who are in for sexual offences. I ask the crew if they want to meet the writers and they all look very uncomfortable. I offer instead to take them round the main adult population and they agree.

Once on the wings they are very excited by the exotic

nature of wing life, barbers cutting hair, men asking who they are, steel doors and shouting and banging, the servery queue. The crew are really fascinated by all this. We visit another wing and by this time they are really enjoying seeing jail. I ask them again if they want to see the writers and this time they agree.

We enter the VP unit and I take them over to the education suite and introduce them to three of the writers of the play and they stand and chat for about twenty minutes. They discuss the script and characters and it is an in-depth conversation. We have to leave and everyone says their goodbyes.

I take the crew outside, as I am locking the door behind me one of the actors looks dazed and I ask him if he is alright.

'It's amazing isn't it,' he says.

'What is?' I ask.

'They look just like everybody else.' is his reply.

RECYCLED

A council tip. Two guys Terry and Alan sat on deckchairs sitting on the forecourt. There is a table between the chairs that both face out. A portable radio quietly playing.

Terry stands up and points into the distance.

TERRY: Wood goes in wood, mate. Not in household waste. Jesus

He sits back down.

ALAN: Thick as...

He stands up and points again.

TERRY: Wood. Do you see the big sign. It says Wood! It's a hint.

Pause. He sits back down.

ALAN: Some People...

TERRY: Should've seen what fat Jones got last night, proper 24 inch plasma, boxed n everything. Some bloke drives up in a 4 by 4...

ALAN: That can't be right

TERRY: No, really ... parks the van, opens the doors, asks Jonesy to give him a hand, and there inside 800 quids worth of telly. Christmas bonus! Yeah recycled it back to his house as quick as he could

ALAN: Lucky Bastard. I been here six weeks and all I've got is this... Flask.

Pause. He reads paper.

TERRY: City's going up

ALAN: Yeah, can't wait, The promised land

TERRY: It's been a long time coming

ALAN: You catch many games?

TERRY: I use to...used to go every week, home and away but not now what with the kids and that....

Pause.

Terry stands up.

TERRY: Tyres. We don't take tyres mate.... No sorry... You'll have to take them to a scrappy... dunno mate? look in yellow pages....

He sits back down.

ALAN: He'll be back again, trying later. When we're out of sight.

TERRY: Don't I know it.

ALAN: Human nature isn't it... To bend the rules.....

Pause.

Alan squints up into the sun.

ALAN: Beautiful day. Supposed to last all weekend as well.

TERRY: Yep, I've got the barbecue all fired up and ready to go. Half a ton of sausages and burgers, three crates of Stella and the Happy Mondays on the stereo for old times sake.

ALAN: Having a party?

TERRY: Yeah, well having the neighbours round...wife's idea. Community spirit, get people together. Get to know each other better. We've got a couple of new neighbours moved in two doors down. They've got a daughter about the same age as our Kerry.

Pause.

You up to much?

ALAN: No.

TERRY: Come along then, should be a laugh.

ALAN: No, you're alright.

TERRY: Come on, you only have to bring a bottle.

ALAN: I'm sure your wife doesn't expect to see me..

TERRY: She'll be fine. She asked the other day what the new guy was like and was he ok to work with and that

ALAN: What did you say?

TERRY: The truth. I told her you were a total....

Terry stands up.

TERRY: Polestyrene! Household waste. Jesus, what a load of polestyrene....

Terry sits back down.

Did you know that they build roads on polestyrene in Sweden?

ALAN: What?

TERRY: Yeah, they put the polystyrene underneath and tarmac on top and it lasts for about 100 years.

ALAN: Fascinating that.

TERRY: Yeah it's to do with frost protection, its provides insulation so that when the temperature drops

ALAN: Yeah really fascinating....and you wonder why I don't wanna come to your BBQ.

Pause - they laugh. Alan picks up the paper.

ALAN: Look at this, says here we're signing Kenwyn Jones for 25 million.

TERRY: Not worth 25 quid, if you ask me.. Not reading any of that shit.

I believe it when I see it.

ALAN: Good to see who might be coming though. Can't wait for this season.

What you reckon about the Swans game?. It's gonna be mental. Gotta be there for that surely.

TERRY: Nah

ALAN: The wife'll have the kids won't she?

TERRY: Last one was enough

ALAN: What you mean?

TERRY: They lifted me.

ALAN: The police?

TERRY: Yeah, was one game too far.

Had it coming, had to happen sooner or later

We used to love it. Meet up on a Saturday, few pints down the Canton pump up the energy, ready for action.

Not like it was easy, after the 80's. We had to plan it all, had to all get together and plan it.

We wouldn't just hit anybody. We had our crew. They had theirs.

We'd go along and we'd fight. What's so wrong with that? Its tradition, guys letting off steam.

ALAN: Guess so.

TERRY: Look at football now. Its' not about football, it's all about money and sponsorship and bringing the fucking family along- that's not football.

Football's not football unless you hate someone else. That' s football. I hadn't done anything I hadn't done 100 times, it's just times have changed.

Can't go back.

ALAN: What ever?

TERRY: Life sentence mate. Banned from every football stadium in the UK.

Pause.

TERRY: Fridge, no sorry mate. We don't take fridges.

ALAN: I didn't know that.

TERRY: Electrical, white goods- no good. Chemical waste-banned ...boats...bodies.

They're all on the list.

ALAN: What list?

TERRY: Pinned to the wall in the porta cabin by the kettle.

Pause.

TERRY: So you fancy it on Saturday or wha?

ALAN: Don't think so, but thanks for asking

TERRY: Is it cos of what I just said?

ALAN: No mate.

TERRY: I'm not like that now.

ALAN: I know. It's nothing to do with that..

TERRY: So what is it?

ALAN: Nothing.

TERRY: Must be something?

ALAN: Nothing. I told you it's nothing.

TERRY: If it's nothing you'd be there.

ALAN: I know

TERRY: And you got nothing on.

ALAN: No.

TERRY: No.

ALAN: I can't

TERRY: What you mean you can't. You won't?.

You don't have to bullshit me.

Pause.

What is it? You don't want to meet my family.

ALAN: Don't be stupid.

TERRY: Then why don't you just come...bring the wife and kids

ALAN: I don't have a wife anymore.

Pause.

TERRY: Oh right, I thought you mentioned your kids and that

ALAN: Yeah I got kids. We split up 6 years ago. Don't see them anymore

TERRY: Ah sorry mate.

ALAN: Look it's alright.

TERRY: No my fault, I shouldn't have pushed it. I feel like a right dick now.
I just assumed...

ALAN: Yeah we didn't get on, she met someone else and that was that.

TERRY: You don't have to explain. It's just one of those...

ALAN: Look it's alright. I said it's alright.

TERRY: Alright. There's no need to

ALAN: You're making a big deal out of it

TERRY: I'm not

ALAN: You are. You keep..

TERRY: What? Keep what? All I'm doing is asking a work colleague if he wants to come over to mine for a drink on a Saturday?

ALAN: Shut the fuck up....alright?

Pause. Both shocked.

ALAN: Can we just change the subject?

Pause with tea.

ALAN: I was in prison...
Just didn't think you and your wife would want
an ex con turning up with some beefburgers and
a bottle of bud.

TERRY: Nah it'd be alright.

ALAN: Really? What about your wife?

TERRY: She'll be fine.....just don't tell her

They laugh.

TERRY: Sometimes I think I was lucky not to end up
inside.

All the trouble I got into in the past.

Were you in long?

ALAN: 4 and a half years. Got out three months ago.

TERRY: Must've been glad to get out.

ALAN: Yeah. I just want to put it all behind me if I can.

TERRY: Must've been hard though?

ALAN: Sometimes- yeah?

TERRY: My mate, Dan was in, did 18 months inside
Wasn't as lucky as me after the Swans match.

ALAN: Right.

TERRY: Could've been any of us.

Dan said it was kicking off all the time in there.

He said it took a while but he got used to it.

He said he wouldn't want to go back though.

ALAN: No-one does.

TERRY: Is it as bad as they show it on tv?

ALAN: Nothing like that.

Shit...Skips need emptying.

TERRY: Can wait , nearly five now. New shift be in soon.

Pause.

Do you mind if I ask, what were you in for?

ALAN: Yeah I do.

TERRY: Why?

ALAN: Because I don't

TERRY: What?

ALAN: You're starting again

TERRY: Starting what?

ALAN: Going on. BBQ's, BBQ's fucking BBQ's.

Now Prison, Prison, Fucking Prison.

What's the big fascination with Prison?

TERRY: It's interesting

ALAN: To you.

TERRY: I told you what happened to me.

ALAN: We're not playing a 'I told you, you tell me game'

TERRY: Alright. I was only asking.

ALAN: Asking too much. Going on and on even when I told you to stop.

I don't want to talk about it. I told you that. Why don't you fucking Listen.

TERRY: Must've been something bad then?

ALAN: What? For me not to talk about it. I did my time. I want to put it behind me.

TERRY: I didn't mean that. I was just being curious. What was it?

ALAN: That's the point, Everyone's curious, everyone wants to know. Until you tell them, then they dont want to know.

TERRY: I don't know what you mean.

ALAN: You think your wife would be ok with me coming round? Maybe she would if I was a shop lifter, robber or even a drug dealer, but I'm not. I'm not the type of offender your wife would be happy inviting to a BBQ.

TERRY: I don't get it.

ALAN: And if I did come. I'd have to bring someone with me

TERRY: That's ok

ALAN: And they'd have to speak to you and your wife and your neighbours and everyone else who'd be there and they would tell them exactly what I did. And then, nobody would want me there.

Is that clear enough for you?

TERRY: Shut the fuck up.

Pause. Both shocked.

TERRY: Can we just change the subject?

Pause.

ALAN: Skips need emptying

TERRY: A ton of aluminium is worth £600 quid. A ton of plastic is worth 400 quid.

ALAN: What about wood?

When I empty the wood skip, sometimes I think about where it started off, as a tree, in a forest, till it got, chopped down, cut in to planks used to make floor boards until it rots, then it's lifted, brought here, abandoned and no longer any use. Until one day, we take it on the back of the lorry to a plant and it's pulped, shredded and made in to paper, something different, but essentially it still goes back to that tree.

Pause.

TERRY: 5 o'clock. Clocking off time. You can still come on Saturday if you want to?

ALAN: I can't make it

TERRY: I understand.

Unwritten

The last two plays have been produced for the annual Hay in the Parc festival. This is a festival run in conjunction with the Hay Literary Festival and the plays have been used to open the festival of visiting writers in the prison. This year there is an idea to produce another play but Tracy and I have also been contemplating using the workshop process and professional actors to produce and stage a full length play to be performed both inside and outside of prison.

There has been a lot of expansion in the prison over the past year and therefore a lot of movement and this has highlighted a universal prison issue, two-ing up. How do you deal with sharing your living space with a complete stranger? Tracy and I agree this could be a good subject to produce a longer piece.

We put together a group of experienced and inexperienced prisoners and over a series of workshops ask them to write sketches of different prisoners they have shared cells with. The results are both funny sad and illuminating on the way two men negotiate the space they live in but something else starts to emerge. We are going through huge changes in prison, a smoking ban that has fundamentally changed the nature of the environment in ways that we are just beginning to see. The closure of older inner city prisons and the build of new larger estates.

The play charts the journey of one man through the system. A man who has never served time before. He has to navigate his way round prison life and learn the rules of prison. Not the rules that are laid down by the system but the rules that are made by the prisoners. This after all is a world that has two split personalities. The world that I and the staff know and the world that exists amongst the prisoners themselves.

The main character in the play is at a disadvantage because as he discovers the rules are no longer in existence because the changing world of prison life has meant that they are no longer adhered to and as yet the new rules are waiting to be written.

The play has become a seventy minute draft and Tracy is in the process of finding a director and a cast of actors.

Unwritten captures a moment in time that sees the old giving way to the new.

UNWRITTEN

SCENE 1

A cell on the induction wing of a typical British prison. Martin, a repeat offender and Shaw: a first time offender are being led into the cell by an officer.

OFFICER: Alright, boys you've both got your compacts, if there's anything you need, let me know.

MARTIN: Cheers guv.

SHAW: Excuse me, have you got a pillow?

OFFICER: I'll see what I can do.

The heavy thud of the cell door being closed.

MARTIN: That's the last you'll see of him.

SHAW: Really?

MARTIN: And won't see that pillow today mate. Be lucky to get one before we're out on the wings.

SHAW: Call that a mattress! It looks more like a fucking yoga mat.

MARTIN: Give it a few months and it'll be a shit fucking yoga mat.

Pause.

So where you from?

SHAW: Cardiff.

MARTIN: Oh yeah, which part?

SHAW: Ely.

MARTIN: Do you know Ebbo?

SHAW: Nah.

MARTIN: Bennet?

SHAW: Nah.

MARTIN: What about Johnny Evans?

SHAW: No mate.

MARTIN: Right.

Pause.

Cup of tea?

SHAW: Yeah, thanks.

Martin gets up, picks up the kettle and starts to fill it. Shaw is looking through his stuff. He takes out a photograph and is looking at it.

MARTIN: That your missus?

SHAW: Yeah.

He holds out the photograph for Martin to look at.

MARTIN: Nice.

SHAW: I'd stick it on the wall except I didn't take any glue to court with me.

MARTIN: Yeah, it's not something you'd think you'd need in advance.

He looks in his bag and chucks Shaw a small tube of toothpaste.

MARTIN: There you go... Prison glue mate. Just don't stick it anywhere near your teeth.

The kettle is starting to boil.

MARTIN: Milk? Sugar?

SHAW: Just milk thanks.

MARTIN: Anyway, I wouldn't bother. This is just induction. We'll be on the mains next

Martin makes the tea and hands a cup to Shaw.

MARTIN: Then you'll have plenty of time to get settled in.

SHAW: Yeah, plenty of time.

SCENE 2

Martin and Shaw's door is opened.

SHAW: They letting us out?

MARTIN: Soc.

A man appears at their door and stares at Shaw who is on his way out.

GRAFTER 1: Gis a burn?

SHAW: A burn?

GRAFTER 1: Yeah, you know, a smoke like.

SHAW: Yeh, ok, here you go.

GRAFTER 1: Thanks mate.

There is shouting in the distance. Five minutes! Five minutes! Behind your doors!

Shaw enters the cell closely followed by Grafters 1 and a companion Grafters 2.

GRAFTER 1: Sorry to bother you mate. Gis a burn for bang up.

SHAW: Ehm, here you go.

GRAFTER 1: Safe, you're a good man you are.

GRAFTER 2: Have you got a burn for me?

SHAW: Come on man, give me a break. I'm a bit low myself now.

GRAFTER 2: You had a smoker's pack when you got in didn't you?

SHAW: Yeah, but it has to last to Friday.

GRAFTER 2: Just a skinny burn. I'll sort you out on the weekend. I've got two ounces coming.

SHAW: Go on then.

Shaw starts to sort out the burn. He hands it over. Martin appears in the doorway unnoticed by the grafters.

GRAFTER 1: Yo mate, have you seen the three man lift?

MARTIN: Yeah, he has. You two fuck off out. It's getting a bit fucking crowded in here.

The grafters head out the door and Martin bangs the door shut.

SHAW: What's that about, three man lift?

MARTIN: Don't get suckered into that. Someone will bet you a Mars bar he can lift 3 men. Then he'll get you to lie on the floor, put your arms out and two boys will sit on your arms. One each arm. You think he's going to lift you, but he'll just drop his keks and rub his arse in your face.

SHAW: Fucking hell.

MARTIN: Yeah, fucking great isn't it.

Pause.

It's your first time isn't it?

SHAW: It's that obvious?

MARTIN: You're gonna have to say no to the grafters pal. Otherwise they'll be on you all the time, then you'll have their mates round and before you know it there's a queue at your door all the time. Stand up for yourself. Say no. They will literally leave you with nothing.

SHAW: Ok.

MARTIN: You've got to learn the rules.

SHAW: I've got the rules they're in the compact.

MARTIN: Oh fuck the compact. Look, have you ever seen Toy Story?

SHAW: The film? Yeah.

MARTIN: All the toys come to life when the people go out the room. This place is the same. Everything happens when the screws walk out the door. It all

comes to life. What's the first rule in the compact?

SHAW: Everyone has the right to be safe.

MARTIN: Nooooo, everyone has the right to be safe as long as they pay they're debts. Rule number one, always pay your debts.

SHAW: So what's rule number two?

MARTIN: Don't grass and stand by your mates. Rule three, always trade up to cheese and onion.

SHAW: What?

MARTIN: I'll tell you the reason later but they're the only crisp in here with any flavour and for some reason there's never enough of them. So any chance you get trade up.

SHAW: Rule number four?

MARTIN: Don't worry about that. You'll learn the rest as you go mate.

Beat.

MARTIN: What you in for?

SHAW: Defending my missus. What any bloke would do. We were out on the town and I came back from the bog and saw this guy feeling her up like, grabbing her arse. I went over and the next thing he's swinging at me. We had a bit of a scrap but unbeknown to me he was a bouncer on his night off.

MARTIN: Picked a fight with a bouncer?

SHAW: I know. They gave me a right kicking outside as well. I wake up in hospital and I'm the one facing charges. One of the bouncers was cut over the eye so it was wounding with intent.

MARTIN: Stitch up. What you get?

SHAW: Six years.

MARTIN: Harsh, heavy for a first offence.

Pause.

MARTIN: I didn't think you was a criminal.

SHAW: Oh yeah, why's that?

MARTIN: Well if you're from Ely and you don't know Ebbo, then you're into nothing mate and I mean nothing.

SHAW: What are you in for?

MARTIN: Drugs. Dealing. Second strike. Six years. They didn't have nothing on me mind.

SHAW: No?

MARTIN: Well, maybe they had enough.

SCENE 3

Shaw walks into the cell, Martin is lying on his bed, smoking and reading The Sun.

SHAW: Just got my tests.

MARTIN: That's awesome. What your Hep tests?

SHAW: No Basic skills. Got level 1 English, level 2 maths

MARTIN: You'll have the pick of the jobs with them scores.

SHAW: Yeah, what sort of jobs? I've got an industry induction tomorrow.

MARTIN: I'm going for staff canteen or gardens. Good pay, good perks.

SHAW: Perks?

MARTIN: Most of the jobs have perks, except the workshops, especially tea packing. Avoid tea packing. In the canteen you get decent food, better than the servery shit.

SHAW: That sounds good.

MARTIN: Or the gardens. Lots of fresh air and in the winter you just sit in the shed and drink tea and eat toast. That's why I'm down for them.

SHAW: I like the sound of that too. I'll go for that I reckon.

MARTIN: Yeah, well you won't get it...not for six months.

SHAW: Why's that?

MARTIN: Cause you don't know anyone. It's your first time innit. You'll just have to join the bottom of a long waiting list. I know the screws in charge so one of them will swing it for me. They know I won't fuck around or be a risk. If your face fits you're sound here.

SHAW: Is that a rule?

MARTIN: No, that's just the way is.

SHAW: And if you face doesn't fit?

MARTIN: Then you're fucked. If they find your sister's dog has been carrying on with someone you'll be on closed visits quicker than you can say Jack Robinson.

Pause.

SHAW: What should I do then?

MARTIN: Best bet education and get your level 2 in English. At least that way you'll avoid the workshops. Education is a fucking doss, you spend half your day playing games and taking it easy while you wait for your name to come up for the good jobs. You'll make a few contacts too and with your scores you might even land a peer partner job.

SHAW: Peer partner?

MARTIN: Like a teaching assistant but you do fuck all.

MARTIN: Cup of tea?

SHAW: Aye, go on then.

MARTIN: Then you've got reception. That's got perks. The boys down there get the tobacco confiscated from the new arrivals. Then there's recycling, sounds a bit like dirty work but it's not really. Shorter waiting list than the gardens and there's loads of food.

SHAW: Food? I'm not raking through bins like a tramp.

MARTIN: Nah mate, not left overs, special triple-wrapped parcels, on the bins, for the boys by the boys.

SHAW: Nooo, I'm not keen.

MARTIN: Trust me, they get all sorts of stuff that's been confiscated and dumped.

Martin stirs the tea and passes Shaw a cup.

SHAW: How much does it pay?

MARTIN: You can see all the rates, on the wall by the office.

SHAW: Nah, I'm still not keen. Mitch downstairs said a wing job is good, said he might be able to swing me a laundry job.

MARTIN: You wouldn't catch me doing that. Its long hours for little reward. Most of the time you're facing down the moaners complaining because you haven't put fabric softener in with their socks.

SHAW: There must be some perks.

MARTIN: An extra gym session or two and your door open all day. Some boys charge a milk or chocolate for extra loads or you make money like Mitch by ticking out burn.

SHAW: Ticking out burn?

MARTIN: Fucking hell mate you've got a lot to learn about prison. Ticking, lending, double bubble. You lend an ounce out and get two back the following canteen.

SHAW: That's steep.

MARTIN: Standard rate.

SHAW: There's a lot of profit in that game.

MARTIN: Yeah and wait til the smoking ban kicks in.

SHAW: Smoking ban?

MARTIN: Coming in next year, even more profits for the vultures like Mitch but you have to be prepared to deal with the bastards who don't pay up.

SHAW: What does Mitch do?

MARTIN: He doesn't do their fucking washing.

SHAW: That's not much of a threat.

MARTIN: Yeah, well if they don't take the hint he batters them senseless. Black eyes all round boys.

Pause.

Yeah. It's not a game for ladies mate.

SHAW: Maybe I'll stick to education.

MARTIN: Probably wise.

SCENE 4

Shaw is on the phone.

SHAW: Nothing's wrong mum, I just,
I swear I'm fine
There's nothing.
I dunno,
I tried mum.
no it's pointless, no-one listens,
A little bit yeah
I'm ok, I feel settled, I feel ... ok,

It's just hard mum, I haven't shared a room since I was 12...

The bloke I am in with is sound but I'll have to go in with someone else soon...

I know you lived with me an dad but it's hardly the ...

No mum, I haven't spoken to Beth. I'm still trying to settle...

I don't know what's going on.

Why? Have you spoken to her?

Beep beep.

Oh shit the credit's going. I'll call you later mum!

SCENE 5

Door of the cell opens and Shaw walks in. He notices stuff is missing. He turns to the officer who has opened the door but he is gone. Grafter 1 appears.

GRAFTER 1: Gis a burn mate.

SHAW: No.

GRAFTER 1: Oh C'mon

Shaw steps closer to him.

SHAW: I said no.

There is a moment's pause then the Grafter leaves. Shaw looks round the cell. He is now on his own. The door bangs shut. He sits on the edge of the bunk then gets up and switches on the TV but there is no signal. Confused, he fiddles with the controls but still no picture. Then he realises what has happened.

SHAW: Martin, twat.

Shaw presses the emergency button on the wall.

OFFICER: What is your medical emergency?

SHAW: Can you get me an aerial? My padmate's gone and taken it with him.

OFFICER: Are you aware that the cell button should only be used in a medical emergency?

SHAW: No, sorry.

OFFICER: If you misuse the button it's a written warning.

SHAW: Nobody told me.

OFFICER: Well now you know.

SHAW: Yeah, any chance of an aerial?

OFFICER: I'll see what I can do.

Fifteen minutes passes and Martin is back at the buzzer. He looks at it a long time before eventually pressing it.

OFFICER: What is your medical emergency?

SHAW: It's me again.... I asked for an aerial.

OFFICER: And?

SHAW: It's been awhile and Scrum Five's on in half an hour.

OFFICER: Really.

SHAW: Yeah and also I think my padmate took the remote as well, any chance of one?

OFFICER: I did tell you about misuse of the buzzer didn't I?

SHAW: Yeah, I know but you said you'd get me the aerial.

OFFICER: I did didn't I, I'll be there in ten minutes.

SHAW: Aw, thanks.

Ten minutes later a slip of paper slides under the door. It says Written Warning across the top.

Shaw picks it up.

SHAW: Shit, written warning.

Beat

SHAW: Rule number four, if they say don't press the buzzer, don't press the fucking buzzer.

SCENE 6

Loud banging on the cell door.

OFFICER: Pack ya kit, ya moving sometime today.

SHAW: What?... guv!...guuuuv! Boss! Boooosss!! Shit.

Shaw starts to pack his kit. A Grafter appears at the door.

GRAFTER 3: Alright.

SHAW: Yeah, thanks.

GRAFTER 3: My names Jones.

SHAW: Shaw.

GRAFTER 3: You might have heard of me Ray Jones.

SHAW: Lot'sa Jones's in Wales mate.

GRAFTER 3: Ray Jones motors, I got garages all over the South, second-hand cars, limo trade. On the out I got a staff of eighty-five. That and a few house rentals. When I get out of here my wife is going to pick me up in my Ferrari, 458, ever seen a 458?

Shaw shrugs.

Beautiful car, smooth as ice on the road.

SHAW: What you doing here?

GRAFTER 3: Tax. HMRC biggest criminals in the country. Still I gotta a crack legal team, I'll be out in a few weeks on appeal.

SHAW: Oh right, good for you.

GRAFTER 3: You know when I get out I'll be looking to hire people, lots of people in here who shouldn't be.

I'll have lots of jobs for lads from here.

Grafter is searching his pockets.

GRAFTER 3: Shit, left my burn in the cell. You couldn't roll me a burn could you.

SHAW: Yeah, sure.

He starts to roll some burn.

GRAFTER 3: Means I'll have to go to work without any burn. Listen if you drop me an ounce I'll bring it over before bang up when I'm back from work.

SHAW: I'm moving today.

GRAFTER 3: That's alright, Alan's moving you.

SHAW: Who?

GRAFTER 3: Officer Richards, he'll pass it for me.

SHAW: Oh, ok.

GRAFTER 3: Yeah, it's a killer in the workshops leaves you dry, I could do with a drop of coffee too if you have any spare.

Shaw stops in his tracks. He moves close to Jones.

SHAW: You should have been here two days ago.

GRAFTER 3: Why?

SHAW: Because I was green enough to fall for all that shit, now fuck off.

GRAFTER 3: Eh? What d'you....

SHAW: Fuck off.

Grafter 3 walks away.

Shaw shakes his head in disbelief and looks at the roll up he had made for the grafter then lights it for himself.

SCENE 7

Shaw arrives in his new cell. The jingle of keys and the door opens. He walks in with his kit and the door slams behind him. His new padmate D is sitting in a chair staring at the TV.

SHAW: Alright?

D just grunts and doesn't look away from the TV.

SHAW: Shaw

D: D

SHAW: What you in for?

D: Beating a cellmate for talking too much.

SHAW: Oh.

D: Don't mean to be rude but I just ain't in the mood.

SHAW: What's up?

D: What's up! ... What's up! I'll tell you what's fucking up. I've been telling these people for God knows how long I don't do cell mates. I ain't a nice person. I got trial in two weeks, my head's in the shed. I told the mental health nurse I'm afraid what might happen if I'm two'd up. I mean...

D stands up.

D: I ain't a small guy am I? Six foot four and sixteen stone, angry, depressed. They're playing with your life pal. But it ain't my fault I have warned them.

SHAW: I see.

Shaw sits on the edge of the bed as D sits back down. D picks up a bible.

D: I've been looking at this lately.

SHAW: Oh yeah, religious are you?

D: No, but I heard a rumour it holds all the answers.

At night if I'm feeling low, depressed, when I feel like ending it, I like to walk up and down reciting it. Passages that are helpful. The mental health nurse told me to do it.

SHAW: I guess if it helps.

D: But I don't like to be interrupted – ok?

D paces up and down reciting passages from the bible.

SHAW: Yeah, sure.

D: So what are you in for?

SHAW: Section 18 with intent. I beat up a bouncer.

D looks a little impressed.

D: Safe.

SCENE 8

It is morning. Shaw has just woken up. D is sitting in the chair watching TV. He is naked.

SHAW: Whoaaa... Where's your clothes?

D: I like being naked. It makes me feel free. Doesn't bother you does it?

SHAW: No. I guess not.

Shaw gets up and goes into the toilet. After a minute we hear flushing. He comes out.

D: Did you just take a dump?

SHAW: Ehhhm, yeah, why?

D: No, no, no, no, no, no, no dumping in cell, even if it's an emergency. Perfectly good carsey out there mate.

SHAW: Sorry, I didn't know.

D: Yeah well you do now. Don't let it happen again.

Shaw grabs his stuff and gets into the toilet. We hear the taps being pressed as he washes himself. D is getting dressed. Shaw comes out drying himself with his towel.

D: Did you just use all the water?

SHAW: What?

D: You just used all the water!

SHAW: What d'you mean?

D: We get six presses of the tap an hour here mate so that's three each.

SHAW: Are you serious?

D: Do I look serious?

SHAW: Sorry, I didn't know.

D: Yeah and it's me who has to suffer. Spray some talc and open that door wider, I don't fancy tasting your arse in my cornflakes. I'm going down the wing for a wash.

D stomps off as Shaw looks on.

SCENE 9

Shaw is making a phonecall.

SHAW: Mum, mum, I don't know what to do my pad-mate is absolutely insane.

Mum he's massive quotes from the bible, jumps around the cell naked and everything I do is wrong.

Yeah, right, I can't go to the screws

It's not something you do

Alright I will...I doubt they'd listen anyway.

I know...

No mum, you don't need to call Beth.

We're trying to arrange a visit.
I'll talk to her.
Course I love her.....

(beep – beep).

Mum. Shit. my credit going...

Shaw is sitting in the cell and D has returned from the shower.

SHAW: So where do you work mate?

D: It smells like a gerbils cage in here. Boil a kettle and stick some shampoo in the sink, it's nasty. And don't make a mess while I'm at work.

SHAW: Course.

D: And watch out for the damn dust blowing in here. Drives me nuts. Wrap a towel and put it in the front of the door.

D walks out the door. Shaw looks on at the empty door.

SCENE 10

Total darkness.

D: Let there be light.

The light in the cell flashes on. D is standing in the middle of the cell while Shaw is in bed.

SHAW: Shit what time is it?

D: 3.30 mate. Need to have a read of the good book.

SHAW: Right.

D: I never got that.

SHAW: What?

D: You know, on the seventh day the Lord said, 'Let there be light'.

- SHAW: What are you on about man, go to sleep.
- D: Yeah, the Lord made all these amazing things, created life, the seven wonders etc, it's quite amazing really but more than that, he did it in the dark. I mean if I go to Ikea I don't come home and try to build my flat pack in the dark, do I? Nope.
- SHAW: You've lost me.
- D: You know, in the good book, God made this and that and on the seventh day he says 'Let there be light', gets me thinking, surely he would have turned the bloody light on earlier... Don't you think?
- SHAW: I can't say I've given it much thought, especially at stupid o'clock in the morning.
- D: Not religious then?
- SHAW: Not anymore.
- D: I'm not sure what I believe in but it's always good to hedge your bets don't ya think? Don't wanna end up at the pearly gates and not be allowed in. Know what I mean?
- SHAW: I guess. A bit fucking early for these big thoughts.
- D: Yeah, well what I'm saying is you need to say sorry for the bad things you've done in the past and the bad things you are going to do in the future. Cause we're all going to do bad things in the future, aren't we. I mean, I know I am.
- SHAW: Yeah.
- D: 'For God shall bring every work into judgement with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.' Ecclesiastes 12:14.

Beat.

D: Anyway, lights out, I need my sleep now.

The lights go out.

SCENE 11

*The cell door opens and an officer comes in to do fabric checks.
(AFC's)*

OFFICER: Morning, everything working?

SHAW: I think so.

The officer walks round banging on the walls and window.

SHAW: Eh, can I have a word mate?

OFFICER: I'm not your mate, either john, boss, guv whatever, but not mate.

SHAW: Sorry, Guv.

OFFICER: What is it then?

SHAW: It's about my cellmate.

OFFICER: Who, Cartwright?

SHAW: Yeah.

OFFICER: He's quiet enough isn't he, keeps himself to himself.

SHAW: He's ok, I guess, but I don't think he likes me.

OFFICER: That's not on our list of priorities Shaw.

SHAW: I know, I get that but... he doesn't sleep, I'm shattered. Every night he's up and about reading the bible.

OFFICER: So he likes to read.

SHAW: At three in the morning, out loud and he jumps around naked all the time.

OFFICER: So what are you saying?

SHAW: I'm saying, the guy seems a bit unstable, he

makes me feel uncomfortable. I can't seem to do anything right for doing wrong.

OFFICER: Has Mr Cartwright threatened you?

SHAW: No nothing like that. I just think if we're stuck here together much longer it might get nasty. We just don't get on. I don't think he's quite all there. You must have noticed.

Beat

I mean he could probably do with a visit from healthcare. Mental healthcare.

OFFICER: I'll be sure to let Mr Cartwright know of your concern.

SHAW: No no no, just saying he should probably be on his own and you are his personal officer.

OFFICER: What's that supposed to mean?

SHAW: Nothing, just thinking you know him, what he's like.

OFFICER: Leave it with me.

SHAW: Thanks ma.... Guv, I appreciate it.

OFFICER: I didn't promise anything.

SHAW: I know.

SCENE 12

D is on the phone.

D: Alright love...

Yeah, I'm good. Got a new padmate last night...

I know. I told them but they never listen...

I got this guy wound right up, he thinks I'm nuts...

Yeah, he's terrified.

I know love but I haven't got a choice. It's what you have to do sometimes.

I reckon two days, another two days and they'll be dragging him out screaming.

I know love

I love you too...

SCENE 13

Shaw is sitting watching TV, D walks in holding a small milk bottle, he unscrews the top and dips his fingers into the bottle and starts to flick water across the cell.

SHAW: What the fuck?

D: *(intoning)* By this holy water and by Your Precious Blood, wash away all my sins, O Lord.

SHAW: What you doing D?

D: Blessing the cell.

D flicks more water most of it going over Shaw.

D *(cont'd)*: By this holy water and by Your Precious Blood, wash away all my sins, O Lord.

SHAW: Stop flicking water everywhere.

D: It's part of my religion mate.

SHAW: I'm getting all wet.

D: It's a blessing.

Shaw gets out his chair.

SHAW: Not from where I'm standing.

D: The devil runs from holy water mate. The cross is a powerful tool against evil but Holy Water is stronger. There will be no evil in this cell after this.

SHAW: You're tapped.

D: And have mercy on those who doubt; Jude 1.22.

SHAW: There'll be no mercy if you keep chucking water on my face.

D puts the bottle down and squares up to Shaw.

D: You're feeling a bit brave for yourself. Have you had 3 Weetabix this morning?

The men are facing in a Mexican stand-off. An officer appears in the doorway.

OFFICER: What's going on here?

No response.

OFFICER: Come on, what you two shouting about?

D/SHAW (*together*): Nothing guv.

OFFICER: Keep the noise down then.

The officer moves away slowly. The two men relax.

SHAW: Sorry D.

D: That's ok. Listen, to err is human but to forgive is divine.

SCENE 14

The door to the cell opens.

OFFICER: Pack up Cartwright, you're moving.

D: Where to?

OFFICER: Single cell.

D: Which one? Lemme give it a clean first.

OFFICER: Clean it when you're there.

D: Come on boss, just let me scrub it while it's empty. Go on?

OFFICER: Ok, ok, I'll leave you open.

D: Thanks boss, appreciated.

The officer leaves.

D: I'll come pack up after cleaning.

SHAW: Yeah, sure. Bit of a result eh? Single cell.

D: Had a word with the screws did you?

Pause.

D: They put me high risk.

Shaw still doesn't respond.

D: Don't worry. It's alright. Healthcare, that makes me laugh. What does it say everyone has the right to healthcare yeah as long as it's paracetamol. Enjoy the single life while it lasts mate you've got some decisions to make.

SHAW: How so?

D: How long do you think that bunk'll stay empty? Ask yourself is there anyone I fancy living with on this wing or do I take the cellmate lottery?

SHAW: Eh?

D: Whoever comes off the induction wing, the great unknown. Ask yourself, do you feel lucky punk?

D walks out the cell. After a moment his head pops back in.

D: Oh, and sorry if I was a pain, I just like my own space you know?

SHAW: You weren't that bad.

D: Means to an end. When you get a chance check it out, Proverbs 26 verses 18 and 19.

D leaves the cell.

SCENE 15

It is morning roll check. The door to Shaw's cell opens and an Officer is standing there.

OFFICER: Alright Shaw?

The officer strides into the cell, tosses him a toilet roll.

OFFICER: There you go. Enjoy your night? I'm guessing used most of it in the small hours but the fun's over as today you'll be pleased to know you're joining us for another addition of CELLMATE LOTTERY. That's right, today's the day you get to choose who will be moving in to share your most private and intimate moments. Are you ready to play?

SHAW: What you on about boss?

OFFICER: It's cellmate lottery so single man reveal yourself, what's your name sir?

SHAW: My name? You know my name, Shaw.

OFFICER: And where are you from Shaw?

SHAW: Ely.

OFFICER: Welcome Mr Shaw from Ely. Now let's get straight to the show and let the criminal see the criminal.

The officer refers to his clipboard throughout.

OFFICER: Contestant number one is Paddy on the threes. Paddy is a thirty-six year old millionaire from the Rhondda serving four years because the jury was too thick to see the biker he ran over should never have been on the road. Despite being a millionaire he enjoys nothing more than rooting through people's ashtrays for dog ends and is often referred to as 'The Swoop'....

Contestant number two is Paulie on the one's. Paulie is nineteen years old and is serving seven

years for section 18 'WITH INTENT'. Paulie frequents the gym and is quiet on the wing as long as everyone does exactly what he wants them to do. If not TVs, pool balls and occasionally food have been known to be thrown around.

Or finally we have contestant number three, the lucky dip from the induction wing. You don't know what you're going to get but it could be better than contestant one or two but word of warning, it could also be worse.

Pause.

Shaw looks as though he is about to speak but the officer holds up his hand.

OFFICER: Before you decide, you should know that one of these contestants hasn't washed his feet since the 90's. The decision is yours.

SHAW: Are you serious?

OFFICER: Deadly.

Pause.

OFFICER: I have to push you for an answer will it be contestant one or two or the lucky dip?

SHAW: Shit. I don't know.

OFFICER: Mr Shaw?

SHAW: Lucky dip.

OFFICER: Congratulations Mr Shaw, you've got Mr Lennon, a heroin using street urchin on an eighteen month stretch for street robbery. He is currently on withdrawal having just moved from his previous residence behind Tescos in Ammanford and he hasn't washed his feet since 1998. He'll be with you shortly

SHAW: Great.

OFFICER: You should know the rule Shaw, always better with the devil you know.

The officer walks out. Shaw sits on his bunk. After a moment, a figure appears in the doorway.

SHAW: Lennon?

The figure nods.

SHAW: You better come in.

SCENE 16

REPORTER (From the radio): ... with similar problems facing all English and Welsh prisons. A prison officer association spokesman said there was simply insufficient capacity for the number of prisoners in the system and this was leading to severe overcrowding. And now for today's weather...

SHAW: Pissing down inside.

The cell door is opened.

OFFICER: Healthcare.

Shaw gets up.

SHAW: Three months Guv, still no enhancement. I don't get it.

What have I got to do?

Even my padmate Lennon got his and moved on. I'm not making any progress.

Can you have a word?

The officer shrugs.

OFFICER: New padmate arriving today.

SHAW: Who is it?

OFFICER: Don't know. Wait and see isn't it.

SHAW: I was enjoying a couple of days on my own.

OFFICER: All fun has to come to an end sometime.

SHAW: About my enhancement Guv.

OFFICER: I'll have a word.

SHAW: Thanks.

OFFICER: Let's go.

Shaw and the officer leave.

SCENE 17

Shaw returns to the cell there are three large bags on the floor and his new padmate is under a duvet. Leg with calf covered in a tattoo of a voluptuous lady dangles over the edge into mid-air.

Shaw picks up his paper and relaxes on his bunk. Shaw watches as the voluptuous lady makes her way down to the floor until his padmate is standing in the middle of the cell.

BRETT: Brett.

SHAW: Shaw. You just in?

BRETT: Yep. I spent the whole of last week on the reception wing. I found the prison officers really rude and unhelpful. Are they any better here?

SHAW: A little. What you in for?

BRETT: Drugs. Got stopped with eight wraps of coke I was collecting for me and my mates. The Judge hit me hard.

SHAW: I'll move some of my stuff around so you have the space you need.

BRETT: Thanks but I hope I won't be here for long. I'm appealing against my conviction.

SHAW: Good luck with that one. Cell 23 down the landing got four years and he's been waiting eighteen

months for his appeal. He's more likely to get his tag first.

BRETT: My solicitor didn't mention that.

SHAW: Yeah, well he wouldn't, would he.

BRETT: I can't stay here. I was told I'd get a non-custodial sentence. This is a complete nightmare.

SHAW: Best you can do is accept where you are and get on with it.

BRETT: I can't just get on with it. I shouldn't be here.

SHAW: You won't find many blokes who are happy to be here.

BRETT: I'm not a proper criminal all I did was offer to pick up a few wraps as I arrived late for my mates going away party. Just 'cause I was sober, I agreed to drive. It's not as if I was drink driving or anything stupid like that.

SHAW: Mate, pull yourself together.

BRETT: But I've told my missus the appeal court will see the injustice. We have a girl, Tamara, she's only three. It's her birthday next month and I really want to be there for her. My missus says she's crying all the time.

SHAW: Calm down.

BRETT: Oh God! Why am I here! I only offered to pick up the drugs for the boys. None of them even called me after I was arrested.

SHAW: Look, Brett, we all have problems and sob stories in here. You have to take each day as it comes. That is the best advice I can offer you.

Walks out.

SCENE 18

Shaw is watching TV. Brett comes in. He picks up the telephone. Shaw looks at him but Brett doesn't notice.

BRETT: Hello, hello babes, it's me... What do you mean you haven't got long?

Shaw looks at him then mutes the TV.

BRETT: But you were out Friday night babes... Who's looking after Tamara?

Who's going out with you?

Stacey!!! I don't trust Stacy she's a fucking tart. Why can't you just invite her to our flat and have a Chinese or something.

Where are you heading too then?

That place is a cattle market, all the boys go there to cop off... Why there?

No I haven't.

I left a message for him... I'm doing everything I can. It's really tough. I'm scared babes. I don't think I can do this!! I love you... Please stay in so I can call you later. Well come home early so I can call... 10.30. The phones go off at 10.30. Please!

Please stay in so I can call you later.

I know it's tough for you too but Tamara is always at your mum's. No ... I didn't I didn't mean that. You're a great mum.

I know...

Who's there? Stacey... Already.... But it's only six-thirty... Please don't hang up. Babes... Babes,

Brett puts the phone down. He climbs into his bunk and buries his face in his pillow. Shaw puts the sound back on the telly.

SHAW: Women don't like jealousy mate, the more pressure you put on the more nights out with Stacey

she'll be having believe me.

BRETT: That's your experience is it?

SHAW: I guess, lots of blokes in here because of their girlfriends.

Pause.

SHAW: Fancy a cuppa?

BRETT: Nope.

SHAW: Look mate, you've got to stay positive.

BRETT: How can I stay positive, I'm in fucking prison! I only went to buy a few wraps of coke and my life is ruined. I've got to get home to my missus, she's really struggling on her own. It's not fair she's being punished like this. Tamara refused to go to her dance class today. I usually take her. I've got to get out or I'll do myself in!

SHAW: Calm down, you're getting yourself all worked up again.

BRETT: Of course I'm worked up. I'm away from my home and family and stuck in this hellhole. I can't do it, I can't, I need to get out of here!

SHAW: Brett, you're fucking losing it. Just calm down. How long did you get anyway?

BRETT: Twelve months.

SHAW: WHAT! Twelve months! You're crying like a baby and all you got is twelve months. That's not a jail term, that's a walk in the park. I'll spend longer than that standing in the dinner queue. Fuck me. Anyway, you'll only serve six months and if you're lucky you'll get D cat and be out by Christmas. I'll miss three.

BRETT: But I...

SHAW: Sit down and shut up. I don't want to hear it for

a while.

Time passes. Shaw is dozing on his bunk. Brett is standing by the door and pressing the emergency buzzer.

SHAW: What are you doing?

INTERCOM: What is your medical emergency?

SHAW: Apologise quickly, say you pressed it in error.

BRETT: When is gym?

INTERCOM: What is your medical emergency?

BRETT: I wasn't unlocked for gym yesterday so I really need to go today.

INTERCOM: The emergency buzzer is for use in medical emergencies only. Do you have a medical emergency?

BRETT: NO... Yes... Stress and anxiety. I need to go to the gym.

INTERCOM: The emergency button is for use in medical emergencies only. If you do not have a medical emergency you are misusing the system and will receive a written warning.

BRETT: But how can I request the gym unless I press the button.

INTERCOM: This isn't HMP Hilton! Use the button again and I will write you up.

Brett sits down.

SHAW: Brett you really are a fucking idiot. You're lucky he's not writing you up.

BRETT: I didn't come to prison to be spoken too like that. I'm putting in a complaint tomorrow. I go to the gym everyday on the out. Chloe likes me to stay in shape.

SCENE 19

It is later in the evening. Shaw is watching TV while Brett is back at the door.

SHAW: You really don't want to be doing that Brett.

BRETT: But it's not fair.

Brett presses the buzzer.

INTERCOM: What is your medical emergency?

BRETT: I didn't get a breakfast pack at dinner time. Can you bring me one please?

INTERCOM: Are you diabetic?

BRETT: No, but I have a nut allergy.

INTERCOM: Are you Mr Shaw or Mr Lewis?

BRETT: Mr Lewis.

INTERCOM: Thank you.

SHAW: Don't you learn, I told you to leave the buzzer alone.

BRETT: He said thank you, I expect he'll be up with my breakfast pack shortly.

SHAW: I think he'll be up with something but it won't be breakfast. Put the kettle on.

Brett fills the kettle and it starts to boil. A sheet of typed paper appears from, slid under the door. It says clearly on the header 'written warning'.

Brett bends down and picks it up.

SHAW: It doesn't look like breakfast.

BRETT: It's addressed to me, written warning for misuse of the buzzer.

SHAW: I fucking warned you but you wouldn't listen, you knew best. Kiss goodbye to your D-Cat now sunshine. You'll have to do the whole six months

here now.

BRETT: But I was told I wouldn't get a prison term. That's why I am appealing. I pleaded guilty and they still put me in here. I saw the dealer Simmo on the way to healthcare and he called me a scumbag and a fucking grass.

SHAW: Simmons?

BRETT: Yeah, that's him. Everyone was staring at me whispering. I think he's got it in for me.

SHAW: And why would that be, think Brett.

BRETT: Cause he got fourteen years?

SHAW: Bingo! Not just a cry baby but a supergrass. Do me a favour Brett.

BRETT: What's that?

SHAW: When we're out on the wing, don't talk to me. Last thing I need is Simmo and his crew all over me.

Shaw gets up and presses the buzzer.

BRETT: What are you doing? Don't do that.

INTERCOM: What is your medical emergency?

SHAW: I haven't got one yet.

INTERCOM: The emergency button is for use in medical emergencies only. If you do not have a medical emergency you are misusing the system and will receive a written warning.

SHAW: And if you don't move out Mr Lewis there will be a medical emergency.

Shaw turns to Brett.

SHAW: Smile Brett, you'll probably come out with a single cell for all this.

SCENE 19

Shaw wheels his trolley onto to T Block. He stops at a door and pokes his head into the cell.

SHAW: Is this thirty-four?

MARTIN: Yeah.

SHAW: Martin.

MARTIN: Hey, Shaw, I heard you were coming on the wing. Told the officer we could two up.

Shaw strides in and the two shake hands.

SHAW: Yeah? Great.

MARTIN: Well, it was either you or Lennon in twenty-three who hasn't washed his feet in three years.

SHAW: Cheers Martin, I love you too, I'm on top I suppose.

Pause.

It's good to get back to normality Mart, I've been in with some right one's since you left me. The last one was a complete train wreck and couldn't do his bird and the nutcase before that was throwing holy water over me at 3:30 in the morning.

MARTIN: If he thrown holy water at me, I'd have napalmed him. That would have stopped him fucking about.

SHAW: Napalm?

MARTIN: Boiling water with sugar. Sticks to the skin, third degree burns.

SHAW: Bit harsh Mart.

MARTIN: That's what you've got to do. Stops people fucking about with you.

SHAW: It was just a bit of cold water that's all. By the way you don't know everything mate, six months and

I'm still waiting on that job in the gardens. Six months you said and still nothing. Remember?

MARTIN: I remember, I also said it's who you know.

There is a knock on the door.

ANDREW: Hello, Blockbusters open? I've got three milks for three movies.

MARTIN: Come back later, I'm on my dinner break.

Andrew looks at Shaw then leaves.

SHAW: Blockbusters?

MARTIN: Yeah, I have a little DVD thing going. Gets me a few extras in the week.

The door opens and Davies walks in.

DAVIES: Can I get a slab Martin?

MARTIN: I'm busy, welcoming my new padmate, Shaw this is Davies. Pain in the arse though he is.

The two men nod at each other.

DAVIES: But it's bang up in ten.

MARTIN: I'll drop it by in a minute.

Davies nods and leaves. Martin searches through a box under his bed and takes out some chocolate. He stands up.

MARTIN: You lend out a couple of things and before you know it everybody thinks you're the fucking corner shop. I'll see you in five ok?

SHAW: Yeah.

Martin leaves. Shaw sits in a chair and looks round the cell.

SCENE 20

Shaw is in the cell watching TV. The door opens and Davies walks in.

DAVIES: Where's Martin?

SHAW: Dunno, gym I think.

DAVIES: Right, gym, you sure?

SHAW: The room's less smelly cause his trainers are missing so I assume he's wearing them.

DAVIES: Right.

Davies is still standing there.

SHAW: Any message?

DAVIES: Yeah, tell him I haven't got it.

SHAW: Haven't got what?

DAVIES: Just tell him and tell him I'll have it Friday. He doesn't have to get upset it'll be sorted by Friday.

Davies leaves.

SCENE 21

Shaw is still watching TV.

A letter appears under the door. Shaw opens it.

SCENE 22

Shaw is again watching TV. Martin walks into the cell back from the gym.

MARTIN: Alright?

SHAW: Yeah mate, guess what? I got a letter, job in the gardens, start next week.

MARTIN: Yeah? Like I said, it's who you know.

SHAW: You put a word in for me?

MARTIN: Told them you might be handy with a trowel.

SHAW: Thanks man.

MARTIN: That's ok.

SHAW: No, really, I really appreciate it.

Beat.

SHAW: By the way, Davies came by.

MARTIN: Oh yeah.

SHAW: He said he didn't have it but he'll have it by Friday.

MARTIN: Twat. I'll have to go round there.

SHAW: What's it about?

The door crashes open and Razor, a six foot muscle bound mountain appears.

RAZOR: You got my sniff?

MARTIN: There's been a slight delay Raze.

RAZOR: Don't fucking delay me mate.

MARTIN: It's coming Friday.

RAZOR: Fuck Friday... Sort it out now.

An officer appears in the doorway.

OFFICER: Everything alright lads? Neville you're not supposed to be here. It's bang up in five.

Neville looks at Martin then walks out. The officer stares at them before banging the door shut.

MARTIN: Fucking Davies, he's put me in a right spot.

SHAW: What's going on Martin?

MARTIN: He's supposed to have got Mr Neville's order on his visit. Look, you better off not knowing unless you want in.

SHAW: In?

MARTIN: Yeah. I can always use a new lad. You can start by visiting Davies when we open up for soc. Lots of

benefits with my firm.

SHAW: Like getting your head kicked in by Razor.

MARTIN: He won't be kicking anything. It's all noise.

SHAW: I think I'll opt out.

MARTIN: Fair enough, not much gratitude for that garden job though eh?

SHAW: No, it's not like that.

MARTIN: It's ok man, just means you're on your own though, doesn't it.

Martin goes back to the table and starts unwrapping some powder.

SHAW: What are you doing!?

MARTIN: I'm sniffing a shitty subby, aren't I?

SHAW: I didn't know you were into all that. What'dyou mean shitty subby?

MARTIN: Well this came in packed up some fucker's arse and have you ever seen a bloke wrap a Christmas present? Sometimes it isn't as neat as it could be. A little bit of fluid tends to be absorbed in the package. Hence shitty subby

SHAW: Shit.

MARTIN: You said it butt.

SHAW: And you're still taking it?

MARTIN: Too expensive to waste, that's why you need to always remember that rule I told you, number three.. I think.

SHAW: What was that?

Martin takes a packet of crisps out of a box.

MARTIN: Always trade up to cheese 'n' onion.

SHAW: The most popular crisp in the prison.

MARTIN: Kills the shitty aftertaste.

SHAW: No shit.

SCENE 22

Shaw is lying on his bed. Martin is below him.

MARTIN: I've been trying to get hold of you...

SHAW: Oh right, why?

MARTIN: I've missed you, where were you last night?

SHAW: Er... B Block.

MARTIN: Were you with him? You've been fucking him again haven't you?

SHAW: What the fuck are you on about?

Shaw looks down and realises Martin is on a mobile. Martin gives him a thumbs up.

MARTIN: Yeah babe, I know I know but I can't help getting jealous.

Alright, it's fine.

I'll see you Thursday.

Yeah.

Love you too.

Bye love.

SHAW: You'll get us nicked for that.

MARTIN: Stop being such an old woman Shaw for fucks sake.

Shaw jumps down and goes over to the proper phone.

SHAW: Anyway, I need to phone the enemy.

MARTIN: The phones are still goosed, why do you think I'm on this.

SHAW: Shit, I promised I'd ring her. She's coming on her first visit Friday. We still haven't talked about what happened.

Martin holds out the mobile.

MARTIN: This'll sort you. Nokia's finest, there you go. Only half an ounce.

SHAW: Half ounce! I'm phoning Cardiff not fucking Adelaide.

MARTIN: That's the going rate.

SHAW: Yeah, well I'm not that desperate. Whatever happened to mate's rates anyway.

MARTIN: Didn't I teach you anything. There's no mates in prison. Oh, go on, get me a Mars bar when you're flush.

Shaw hesitates then takes the phone. He dials a number.

SHAW: Shit, answerphone, again. It's me. Hope you're ok. Checking you are still coming Friday. Remember you need to bring photo I.D. If I get a chance I'll call again but the phones are off so may not be until tomorrow. Take care, love you. Bye.

MARTIN: Awww, love you, bye....

SHAW: Fuck off.

MARTIN: Long time though, for a first visit.

SHAW: We've had a few troubles. She was nervous about coming here.

MARTIN: Trust me mate, if she hasn't been here by now she ain't coming. Bin her off. The time will go quicker if you do.

SHAW: You don't know everything.

MARTIN: Sometimes I think I don't know anything but I've seen enough jail time to know that I've probably seen everything.

There is the sound of keys jangling outside.

MARTIN: Fuck, plug it

SHAW: Plug it?

MARTIN: Plug the fucking phone.

SHAW: Plug it where?

MARTIN: Up your fucking arse.

SHAW: There's fuck-all going up my arse, you do it.

MARTIN: I can't, I'm full.

SHAW: Full?

MARTIN: Cheek the bastard then.

SHAW: Cheek it?

MARTIN: (*Sighs loudly*) Haven't you learnt anything on your travels, put it between the cheeks of your arse and clench man, the screws won't touch you there on a pat down.

Shaw sticks the phone down his pants.

MARTIN: Just act natural.

SHAW: How natural can I be with a Nokia in my arse?

The cell door opens

OFFICER: Everything alright boys.

SHAW / MARTIN: Yes Gov.

OFFICER: You look a bit flustered Shaw, Williams treating you ok?

SHAW: Yeah Gov., course, Martin has just been showing me some cell workout exercises that's all; keep fit like.

OFFICER: I see, (*Pause*) I've got a legal letter here for you.

SHAW: Thanks Gov.

OFFICER: Don't thank me Shaw; just open it so I can leave you two fitness fanatics alone.

The officer checks the contents of the letter and leaves.

MARTIN: That was close.

SHAW: Too close.

Shaw takes the phone out of his pants

SHAW: Have this fucking thing back. I was shitting myself man.

Martin rummages through his stuff putting the phone out of sight.

MARTIN: Glad you didn't, that'll fuck up a Nokia.

SHAW: I'm sure he suspected something.

MARTIN: Nah, we're alright. Gets the adrenalin going though doesn't it?

SHAW: I can't go through that again mate, my nerves are shot.

MARTIN: Relax, roll a couple of burns and I'll put the kettle on.

SHAW: The burns on the side mate, I'm going for a game of pool

Shaw returns to the cell.

OFFICER: Five Minutes.

MARTIN: Win at pool?

SHAW: Not the first few games, I was still shaking like a freshly made jelly.

MARTIN: Get yourself a burn and I'll make the cuppas

OFFICER: Bang up

The cell door bangs shut.

SHAW: Thank fuck for that. What a day this has been. You don't half sail close to the wind Mart.

MARTIN: Yeah I know but it makes me feel alive.

Keys in the lock and the cell door springs open.

OFFICER: Right you two, stand still. Williams you wait

outside with Officer Reynolds. Right Shaw, apart from William's belongings is there anything in this cell that doesn't belong to you.

SHAW: Uh, um, No Gov.

OFFICER: Is there anything you want to give us

SHAW: No Gov.

OFFICER: Anything sharp that could harm us during the search

SHAW: Don't think so Gov.

OFFICER: Right I'm going to conduct a strip search.

SHAW: Oh, Ok Gov.

OFFICER: Mr Reynolds, put Shaw in the holding cell and send in Williams.

Shaw is led from the cell.

SCENE 23

Shaw is sitting in the holding cell. The door opens and Martin arrives. The door is closed.

SHAW: What's going on Mart?

MARTIN: They'll trash the cell mate, that's what's going on. Full search this is, Reynolds is from security.

SHAW: Have you got anything you shouldn't have?

MARTIN: Apart form a few too many ounces of burn, no. YOU?

SHAW: I've got nothing to worry about.

MARTIN: You sure about that?

SHAW: Yeah mate I ain't got nothing through the black market.

MARTIN: What about your phone?

SHAW: What do you mean MY phone?

MARTIN: Trust me, when they finish rifling through our things, they'll find 'YOUR' phone amongst my kit.

SHAW: There you go again. It's your fucking phone.

MARTIN: Well you used it last.

SHAW: And you fucking used it before me. It still doesn't make it my phone. You'll have to tell them it's yours. You're not pinning this on me, this'll fuck up my D cat.

MARTIN: I'm not telling them fuck all and as for pinning it on you sunshine, I think you'll find you've done that yourself. Anyway you've got more chance of getting M-Cat than D-Cat after this.

SHAW: What you on about man, It's your phone, *(pause)* It's your phone.

MARTIN: Look, I didn't have time to drop it to Gilbert on the threes so when they find it they're going to nick us.

SHAW: Nick us?

MARTIN: Yes but you say it's your phone

SHAW: Fuck that, it's your phone

MARTIN: You rang your beloved earlier didn't you?

SHAW: What's that got to do with it, you had just rung yours.

MARTIN: Yes. *(Sarcastically and slowly)* Yes I did, but I didn't dial a number that is on my pin and after the call I deleted it. Can you say the same?

SHAW: So?

MARTIN: So? When they find the phone and check the last number dialled, it's not going to take a rocket scientist to work out it's your missus.

SHAW: I don't believe this. Come on Martin, this is me, Shaw.

Martin just looks at Shaw. Officer Reynolds enters the cell and points at Shaw.

REYNOLDS: Follow me.

Shaw follows Reynolds out of the cell.

SCENE 24

Shaw sits in a chair while Reynolds sits perched on the edge of a desk overlooking him.

REYNOLDS: Anything you want to tell me?

SHAW: No.

REYNOLDS: Sure?

SHAW: Yeah.

REYNOLDS: We found a phone.

SHAW: Really.

REYNOLDS: Yes.

Pause.

Look we know it isn't yours. We know Williams and what he's been up to. Why not do yourself a favour and tell us it's his.

SHAW: His what?

REYNOLDS: His phone. We now you used it. The number on there is on your pin. Checked our logs, twenty-seven missed calls this month, not avoiding you is she?

Pause.

SHAW: Don't know what you're talking about guv.

REYNOLDS: Maybe you will when we nick you. This could go outside, to court and you could be looking at two additional years.

Beat.

Anything you want to say?

SHAW: No comment.

SCENE 25

Martin arrives back in the cell and sits down.

MARTIN: What did he say?

SHAW: Asked me to grass you up. Said I could get an extra two years if this goes to court.

MARTIN: No, he's bullshitting, trying to scare you.

SHAW: Yeah, well it's fucking working.

MARTIN: What does that mean?

SHAW: Don't piss yer pants, I'm not a grass.

MARTIN: Good because whatever time you do get, you don't want to do it with a target on your back.

SHAW: And what's that supposed to mean?

MARTIN: I mean nobody likes a grass. Anyway, two years is rubbish, it's a basic phone, no camera, you'll get an extra fifty days at the most and you can work some of that back.

SHAW: You sure?

MARTIN: I know what I'm talking about. Haven't I always been right?

SHAW: I guess, but you don't know everything, you don't even know the rules.

MARTIN: How's that?

SHAW: Stand by your mates, remember that? On induction.

MARTIN: The first rule is, there are no rules. If there are you have to rewrite them every day. There are no

mates in here. You come in on your own, do your time on your own and walk out the door on your own. That's the reality.

SHAW: That's reality yeah?

MARTIN: Yeah, it fucking is. It's not like the old days. When I first come inside people looked after each other. You arrived on a wing boys would even put a pack together for you, little things, shampoo, soap, coffee, a bit of burn. There really was a bit of solidarity. People had your back, nowadays you have to watch you back, because all that has gone.

SHAW: Yeah? Well that's the one rule worth teaching and I'll remember it... Mate.

MARTIN: What do you mean?

SHAW: That's you and me gone.

Pause.

MARTIN: Calm down, it's a bad day all round. It doesn't mean I won't look after you, see you alright. I'll make sure you get what you need.

SHAW: Forget it. From now on I've got my own back. You take care of yours.

SCENE 26

Shaw is in a cell on his own. There is nothing in the cell and all you can hear is doors being booted and muffled shouting. His door is opened and Razor is standing there with a tray.

RAZOR: Alright?

SHAW: Yeah, didn't know you worked in seg?

RAZOR: Been on the servery here for a year. Good job. Martin says hello.

SHAW: Does he.

RAZER: I didn't get a chance to say on the wing but I thought I knew you.

SHAW: Really? I don't think so.

RAZOR: We haven't met or anything but you're the bloke who beat up me mate Tony. Tony Williams. Anthony Williams, the bouncer you battered.

SHAW: Oh... I see... He's your mate?

RAZOR: Yeah, used to work the doors with Tony. He's alright. He didn't know why the fuck you went at him. He said you just came out the bog and started throwing punches.

SHAW: He had his hands all over my girlfriend.

RAZOR: You mean his girlfriend.

SHAW: No mate, you've got the story wrong. I was out with my girlfriend and he had his hands all over her arse.

RAZOR: No mate, you have the story wrong. Tony was with Beth, Beth Armstrong, they'd been seeing each other about three months. She had just finished with her boyfriend, Alan something... that's what she told him.

Pause.

RAZOR: You ok mate?

SHAW: Alan, Alan Shaw.

RAZOR: I see. Sorry man.

SHAW: That's ok.

RAZER: I gotta move on, look Martin said to let you know not to worry, he'll look after you.

SHAW: Yeah, great.

Razor goes to leave, then turns back.

RAZOR: I guess I'm a bit old school, I mean Tony's big and bad enough to look after himself but you didn't have to hit her, you didn't have to hit Beth did you?

SHAW: No, I didn't.

SCENE 27

Officer Reynolds from security opens Shaw's door on the block.

REYNOLDS: Get yourself together Shaw, you're going back to the mains.

SHAW: Where's my kit?

REYNOLDS: You can pick it up from the office on the way.

SHAW: Where am I going?

REYNOLDS: A block.

SHAW: A block... Which wing?

REYNOLDS: A4.

SHAW: A 4's a jungle

REYNOLDS: I know.

SHAW: Can't I go to B2, I know a couple of boys on B2.

REYNOLDS: I know, that's why you're going to A4.

SHAW: Fuck.

SCENE 28

Shaw and Reynolds arrive on A4 and are greeted by Officer Jones.

REYNOLDS: This is Mr Shaw, just finished a stint down seg.

JONES: Ok Paul. Let's go Shaw, basic cell.

They walk down the wing.

JONES: So how come you are on basic?

SHAW: Mobile phone.

JONES: It's good to talk eh?

Officer stops and puts his hand to his ear.

JONES: Is that you I can hear ringing Shaw?

SHAW: Very funny Guv, can you just allocate me a cell.

JONES: Funny or not, just don't think you can fuck about on my wing, understood?

SHAW: Understood.

JONES: Well here you are, no TV, no phone, there is a bible if you feel you need some spiritual guidance, you've missed basic soc so you'll have to wait until tomorrow for a shower.

SHAW: What about a phone call?

OFFICER: Tomorrow, unless you have something we don't know about.

SHAW: Haha.

They walk across the wing to a cell. Officer Jones opens the cell. Shaw enters the cell and the door bangs shut.

Almost immediately there is banging on the wall.

NEIGHBOUR: Yo nextsdoor, you nextsdoor.

SHAW: Yeah?

NEIGHBOUR: What you on basic for butt?

SHAW: Phone

NEIGHBOUR: Wounded, forty-two days that is .

SHAW: So I'm told.

NEIGHBOUR: Got any burn?

SHAW: A little.

NEIGHBOUR: Gis a skinny one butt.

SHAW: How am I going to get it to you?

A rattle of metal on metal and a fork tied to a shoelace appears under the door.

NEIGHBOUR: Tie it on that.

Shaw ties the skinny burn onto the fork and swoosh it disappears.

SCENE 29

The flap on the door opens and Shaw sees an eye through the spyhole.

THE EYE: You Shaw?

SHAW: Yeah.

THE EYE: Martin's boy.

SHAW: What's that?

THE EYE: You the kid that took the charge for Martin?

SHAW: Yeah, that's me.

THE EYE: You need anything you call me. I'm Jonesy, Martin's boy on road, he sends his thanks and says I got to look after you. I'll get you out for a shower tonight, the screws are good with me, I been on this wing for over two years, so I get a lot of leeway.

SHAW: Ok, thanks, I need to use the phone.

THE EYE: I'll slide mine under for you in a bit, it's put away at the mo.

SHAW: I think I'll pass mate, once bitten and all that.

THE EYE: Not a problem, I'll try and sort one out for the cell later. I got a TV for you as well, just keep it under the bed in the day and pull it out after 8.30 roll count, just make sure it's away by seven in the morning and you'll be ok.

SHAW: Really?

THE EYE: Yeahhhh, good to go. Listen, I gotta go but we'll chat later, come to mine for a cuppa.

SHAW: Ok, thanks.

THE EYE: Safe.

Later in the evening and Shaw has a TV and a phone in his cell thanks to Jonesy. He is on the phone.

SHAW: Calm down mum, I'm alright... I've just had a little bit of trouble that's all...

It's a long story mum.

No, I don't want to tell you over the phone. I'll book a visit so we can talk.

Mum... I'll book a visit.

No, something stupid happened, I'm on a new wing.

A block.

I know, I'll tell you when you come in.

At least I'm on my own now. Someone left a bible, might have read of it, some guy once told me it had all the answers.

Forget about her mum, forget about Beth. Yeah, it's finished...

Pause.

I'm sure. We're not going to see each other again. She's not going to visit. No, don't call her. Leave her alone. It's what I should have done really. No... It's best left. I can move on now. We all can.

Look I got to go my credit is about out. Yeah, I'll call you later in the week.

Love you too mum.

Shaw puts down the phone, he picks up the bible and starts to leaf through it.

SHAW: Holds all the answers.

He starts to examine the book more closely.

SHAW: Here we are, this is what Mr Lunatic was quoting. Proverbs twenty-six, verses eighteen and nineteen. 'Like a madman shooting firebrands and deadly arrows. Is a man who deceives his neighbour and says, 'I was only joking!'

He stares at the book.

SHAW: Fuck me. Says it all.

The cell door springs open and Officer Jones is standing in the doorway.

JONES: You alright Shaw? You look a bit spooked.

SHAW: Eh... spooked? No Guv, I've just been reading the good book. Not spooked, I was before but I think I'm a bit wiser now.

JONES: Fair enough. Right Edwards in you go.

SHAW: What's going on?

JONES: Your new padmate, look after him.

Shaw glances at Edwards.

SHAW: No offence but can't you put him somewhere else. I've just come off the block.

JONES: No.

SHAW: At least give me the weekend.

JONES: I run this wing Shaw not you.

Edwards shuffles in and the door is banged behind him.

SHAW: Looks like you're staying then. Put your kit over there.

EDWARDS: Thanks mate.

SHAW: I'm not your mate but you could get on the right

side of me if you've got a couple of burns and some coffee in that kit of yours.

Edwards rummages through his kit and produces his burn and a bag of coffee.

SHAW: Pass me the burn and stick the kettle on.

EDWARDS: Ok... This your cup?

SHAW: Don't see anyone else here do you?

EDWARDS: No. Milk, sugar?

SHAW: Just milk.

Edwards passes coffee to Shaw.

EDWARDS: There you go... Can I put the telly on?

SHAW: You don't have to ask.

EDWARDS: Ok, thanks.

SHAW: You won't see fuck all though cos we haven't got an aerial.

EDWARDS: How do we get an aerial? I don't want to miss Eastenders.

SHAW: Press the button by the light and an officer will fetch you one.

Edwards presses the emergency button.

INTERCOM: What is your medical emergency?

EDWARDS: Excuse me, this is Mr Edwards in cell 26, can you fetch me an aerial for my TV please?

INTERCOM: I know what cell you are in Edwards. The emergency button is for use in medical emergencies only. Press it again and I'll write you up.

Edwards looks flustered. He looks at Shaw.

SHAW: This is your first time isn't it?

EDWARDS: Is it that obvious?

SHAW: You have to learn the rules mate.

EDWARDS: What rules?

SHAW: The rules of prison.

EDWARDS: So what are the rules?

SHAW: The first rule of prison is there are no rules. You have to find them out for yourself because you can't believe what anyone tells you no matter who you think they are. Eastenders, forget it, there's no better bunch of actors or bigger soap opera than this place.

He chucks the bible over to Edwards.

SHAW: There you go, Proverbs twenty-six, verses eighteen and nineteen.

Edwards looks at the book.

SHAW: Don't worry, I know I sound mad but you'll learn it, switch the telly on the aerial's fine.

END.

