

Am Dram

Pilot Episode

By

Josh Mills

FADE IN:

INT. THEATRE

A beautiful, ornate auditorium: chandeliers, soft jazz, butlered hors d'oeuvres. The upper echelons of society mingle, dressed to the nines.

GORDON TRAIN, a young man in gothically black evening wear, strolls through the theatre. Everyone wants a piece of him.

WEALTHY MAN

Wonderful show, Gordon. Put me down for ten thousand this season.

WEALTHIER WOMAN

Twenty from me, Gordon.

EVEN WEALTHIER MAN

Join me for brunch tomorrow, Gordon. We need to take this production national!

Gordon smiles politely and keeps circulating. He's tapped on the shoulder by a robed arm. He turns to see JESUS CHRIST and his ACOLYTE.

JESUS CHRIST

Gordon, my son. May I congratulate you on all your fantastic work.

GORDON

Wow, thanks, Jesus! That means a lot coming from you!

Jesus waves away the compliment.

JESUS CHRIST

I may have cured a leper or two, but as a theatrical director, I never had much promise.

ACOLYTE

Your *Streetcar* had some interesting ideas, my Lord.

JESUS CHRIST

Thank you, Alfonso. Listen, Gordon, me and the boys have a couple of donations for you.

He fishes around in his robes, producing several small bags.

JESUS CHRIST (CONT'D)

Let's see here... Ten sapphires from Matthew... Two dozen rubies from Luke and John...

(MORE)

JESUS CHRIST (CONT'D)
Some pieces of silver from Judas, I
wonder where he got that kind of
money...

The Acolyte slowly pours his drink over Gordon's head.

GORDON
Hey! Jesus, are you going to let
your mate get away with this? He's
soaking me, make him sto-

Gordon wakes up on the stage of the theatre. In reality, it's almost the exact opposite of what we've just seen. Small, dirty, floors strewn with rubbish. A broken pipe pours liquid onto Gordon's head.

He stands up and bends it back into place, then stretches, as if this is how he greets every morning. He surveys his kingdom, then looks at his wrist. His eyes widen.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Oh, shit! It's investors' day!

We see his wrist: in place of a watch is the scrawled message "IT'S INVESTORS' DAY!!"

EXT. THEATRE - DAY

Gordon hefts two bin bags to a back alley. They squish down on his head in the most graceless manner imaginable.

As he opens a dumpster, a dog on the other side of the alley throws itself against a fence, barking and frothing. Gordon drops the bin bags and approaches the dog, smirking.

GORDON
(taking a knee)
It's no good, mate. I know all your
tricks. Oh, you'd love to take a
bite out of me, wouldn't you? But
you can't!

He jiggles the bolt that keeps the dog fenced in. His volume steadily rises as he continues.

GORDON (CONT'D)
And you know why? Because I am
smarter than you, pal! And that's
why I'll always win! I will always
win!

As he reaches fever pitch, he notices two PRE TEEN GIRLS watching on, terrified. He considers his options.

GORDON (CONT'D)
(lunging forward)
Hello!

The Pre Teen Girls shriek and leap into a nearby taxi, which speeds off.

INT. THEATRE

Gordon pours Wotsits into a large bowl. He places the bowl onto an empty, dusty table and nods, satisfied.

GORDON

If that doesn't do it, nothing will.

A banner above the table reads "The Black Soul Theatre welcomes INVESTORS!"

INT. HOSPITAL

JOE DILLON, handsome but undeniably sinister, stands in a corridor with a YOUNG MOTHER and her SICKLY CHILD. He wears a doctor's coat.

JOE

So Frankie just needs a few of these a day, and he'll be right as rain in no time.

He hands an oversized pill bottle to the Mother.

YOUNG MOTHER

Thank you, doctor, for everything. You've been amazing.

JOE

Don't mention it.

He crouches down to the Child's level.

JOE (CONT'D)

Now no more worrying your mum, OK? I don't want to see you here again!

The Child manages a weak nod and a pathetic cough. Joe pats his head, producing a wet squelch. He looks disgusted. The Mother hands Joe a piece of paper.

YOUNG MOTHER

Here's my number, in case, you know... you want to see me again.

Joe smiles and pockets the number as the Mother and Child leave. An older DOCTOR storms over.

DOCTOR

Hey! Who the hell are you? Take that off right now!

JOE
No worries, I'm all done.

He pops the coat off, balls it up, and hurls it to the floor.

DOCTOR
What did you give to that child?

JOE
Bunch of pills.

He grins at the Doctor, as if they're sharing a joke.

DOCTOR
What pills?

JOE
I dunno, not a doctor, am I?

He frowns like the Doctor's being really unreasonable. A door opens; CHARLES HUNT emerges. He's in his 60s, wearing a suit that was once smart. His right foot is in a cast.

JOE (CONT'D)
Here he is! Hey, Charles!

CHARLES
Hello, Joe. Thank you for picking me up.

JOE
No worries. Man, look at this dumb thing!

He gives the cast several hard but playful kicks. Charles doesn't seem to mind, but the Doctor looks shocked.

DOCTOR
Now what are you doing?!

JOE
Just having a little kick of his leg.

Joe rolls his eyes, then motions for Charles to follow. Joe slams through the doors, which swing back on Charles.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Charles struggles with a heavy bag. Joe tosses a stone to himself.

JOE
So what's the deal here?

Charles sighs.

CHARLES

It was my granddaughter's first clarinet recital last night, but as you know I'm banned from her school. I stood on a crate in an alley just to hear the music through an open window, but the crate turned out to be rotten. My family found me lying in the mud with a broken ankle.

Joe nods solemnly.

JOE

Sounds hilarious, wish I'd seen it. Right, come on, limpy, I want a caramel shortbread.

Joe speeds off. Charles struggles to keep up.

INT. THEATRE

Gordon sits on the stage, chiselling gum off the bottom of a seat. He swears and murmurs to himself. The door opens. Gordon looks up, easily long enough to take in the information. Then, he does a double take.

KIM HANSON, a steely young woman, marches towards the front of the theatre. Gordon hops off the stage.

KIM

You Gordon Train?

GORDON

Why, yes I am. And you're my masseuse. I must say, I did request something specific, but...

KIM

What? No, no. I'm here about the poster.

She holds up a poster. It reads "OI! Do you have what it takes to act? Then come see Gordon Train! Time Wasters Will Be Sorry!" The name and address are scrawled on in pen, an afterthought. "OI!" takes up the whole top 1/3rd.

GORDON

Oh, even better! Come with me, I'll take you on the *grand tour!*

He yells "grand tour" and sticks his arms out as if a montage is about to begin. It doesn't, so he motions for Kim to follow him to the back.

An OLD WOMAN with an eye patch walks in. She spots Kim and Gordon, hurls a bottle of massage oil to the ground, and storms out.

INT. CORRIDOR

Fluids drip from the ceiling, fluorescent bulbs struggle for life. Busted lockers line the walls. The floor makes a sticky sound as Kim walks along. She looks disgusted.

GORDON

So, er...

KIM

Kim.

GORDON

Kim. "Acting" is basically pretending you're something you're not, like... a fireman, or a pepper, or...

KIM

No, I know what acting is.

GORDON

Oh, well that's a real time saver!

He hurls a large leather bound dictionary into a nearby bin.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Ah, you'll like this! A while ago we had this giant rat, living just over there. Long as a skateboard, easy! I tried to lure it out with a bit of rotten meat, so I could bash its head in, but that ended up attracting *more* rats. So I thought, just try and curb the number of rats as it stands.

He nods and smiles, nostalgic.

GORDON (CONT'D)

You like rats?

KIM

No.

GORDON

Ah. That... could be an issue.

EXT. THEATRE - DAY

Kim walks into the alley. Gordon covers her eyes.

KIM

Is this really necessary?

GORDON

Patience, Kim. It'll all become clear!

KIM

You're squeezing my eyeballs...

Gordon moves his hands just as the dog leaps against the fence. Kim jumps back. Gordon laughs.

GORDON

I thought I'd better show you this dog. He thinks he's a real tough guy, but he's nothing to worry about.

(crouching)

Because you're not too bright, are you, mate? Oh, he's dreaming of ripping my face off. Well dream on, pal!

(standing up, chuckling)

Yeah, we don't always get on, but there's mutual respect there.

INT. THEATRE

Kim and Gordon walk back in.

GORDON

So, Kim, what do you think?

KIM

Well, first of all, that backstage area needs ripping out and rebuilding. I'll need a private dressing room and a caustic gay assistant. Now, as for pay...

GORDON

Hang on, hang on! I think you're jumping ahead a bit!

KIM

Listen, Gordon. I've been in over eight plays, yeah? I know what I'm talking about.

GORDON

Well I've been around the block a few times myself, Kim!

KIM

Oh yeah? Ever heard of a little play called *Hamlet*?

GORDON

Yes.

KIM

Well so have I.

GORDON

(intimidated)

Wow... but even so-

KIM

Do you feel valued here, Gordon? Do your staff respect you? When's the last time they threw you a parade?

GORDON

Well, now that you mention it, I can't even remember-

KIM

Listen to me, and there'll be parades every. Thursday.

GORDON

That... that almost sounds like too many parades.

KIM

(shaking her head)

Gordon, Gordon, Gordon. So naive.

As Gordon struggles for words, the doors bang open. Joe strides in. Charles lags behind.

JOE

The cool kids are back!

GORDON

(relieved)

Joe! Come and meet Kim, she wants to join our ranks.

JOE

Gordon, no! We don't need more people!

GORDON

Now, Joe, I've been reading up on this, and apparently it's a good idea for a theatre group to have at least one female member.

JOE

Forget the plays, what's she going to add to everyday fun and mischief?

KIM

You see, Gordon? They've become selfish, and spoiled. How are you going to deal with it?

GORDON

(mumbled)

How come... you never throw me a parade?

JOE

(warm)

Mate. It's just because we don't really like you! Don't let her bully you out of your job!

KIM

I'm not. *Am* I, Gordon?

She stands very close, glaring at him and raising a fist.

GORDON

(terrified)

No.

JOE

Stand up for yourself!

KIM

Yeah, like I can be stopped by you, or your stupid old friend.

Charles steps forward, puffing himself up. Joe grins.

JOE

Uh oh! You've awakened the dragon!

Charles takes a few more John Wayne-esque slow steps.

JOE (CONT'D)

Kill her, Charles!

CHARLES

Kim. If you carry on like this...

Joe rubs his hands together, ready for the killer blow.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You're going to hurt someone's feelings. So steady on, OK?

Charles steps back, happy with his contribution. Joe looks sorely disappointed.

KIM

OK, so first of all, we need to spruce this dive up.

(MORE)

KIM (CONT'D)

Tear up the floors, move the stage
to the other side of the room.

GORDON

No probs.

KIM

And for god's sake, get rid of
those Wotsits.

GORDON

(monstrous scream)

Nooooooooo! That does it. Kim, you
may be a theatre expert, but I will
not stand by while you defile
everything I believe in. Fetch your
cousin and get out!

KIM

I didn't come here with my cousin.

GORDON

Then just get out!

KIM

Fine, I don't care. Enjoy your
disgusting theatre, you stupid
shits.

She flips each of them the bird in turn and storms off. In
doing so, she bumps into KEVIN, a portly suited man at the
snack table.

KIM (CONT'D)

Oi, watch it.

Kevin gawks at Kim. Gordon's eyes widen. He shrieks without
opening his mouth and sprints over, barging Kim out of the
way.

GORDON

Hello! Hello! I'm Gordon, and you
must be one of our wise investors!

Kevin tries to talk, but his mouth is full of Wotsits.

KIM

Investors, you've got investors?
You're an investor?

KEVIN

Well...

GORDON

Of course he is, Kim. The Wotsits
have worked their magic. God bless
those beans!

KIM
Wotsits aren't beans!

GORDON
Shut up, you. You're out of your depth. Pleased to meet you, sir, I'm Gordon Train, the director.

KEVIN
Erm, Kevin.

Kim takes a step towards Gordon.

KIM
Listen, Gordon. About the things I said and did...

GORDON
Oho! One sniff of Gordon's gold and your eyes light up! Well it's too late for that! Out with you!

KEVIN
Oh, you're leaving? Well listen, erm, Kim, was it? Would you maybe like to go get a drink with me, if you're not staying here?

Kim smirks at Gordon, who looks furious.

Joe and Charles remain at the other side of the room.

JOE
This is boring. What do you say we ruin Gordon's investment thing? Run the old French envoy/libertine priest routine? Or the classic Man With Knife?

CHARLES
I don't know, Joe. I have a lot of reading to catch up on.

He holds up a copy of "Topsoil Aficionado" magazine.

JOE
Fine. Then I'm off to meet my friend Ryan.

CHARLES
I thought we were going to spend time together today!

JOE
Hey, don't be sad! It's just that you're a useless old cripple at the moment! And I don't hang out with useless old cripples. Bye!

Joe dashes off as Gordon leads Kim to one side.

GORDON
Right, you, what's your game here?

KIM
Don't you see, Gordon? You need me!
If you've got any chance of
thwarting this guy, *you need me!*

GORDON
Wait a minute... you like thwarting
people? I like thwarting people!

KIM
I love thwarting people.

GORDON
Maybe we're not so different, you
and I. We may despise each other,
but if we stand any chance of
getting this guy's cash, we need to
work together.

KIM
I'm not sure I'd say I *despise* you.
We only met this morning.

GORDON
Oh. Well, I'm afraid I do despise
you, but maybe I'll change my mind
later.

They turn back to Kevin.

GORDON (CONT'D)
So, Kevin, let's discuss how we can
help each other!

He grabs a chair with one hand, and tries to force Kevin into
it with the other. Kevin wriggles free.

KEVIN
I should really get back to the
office...

KIM
Office? Wow, that sounds important.
Maybe I could come by and see it
some time?

KEVIN
I'm really not in the position to
invest...

KIM
Who said anything about investing?

Kevin looks flustered. Gordon looks furious.

GORDON

Kim! Investing's the whole point,
what are you...

Kim shoots him a glare. Gordon cottons on.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Oh, I see! Well, Kevin, I certainly
think you and Kim should get to
know each other better, on a
totally personal level! Do you have
a business card?

KEVIN

Yeah, just...

He holds up his Wotsit-encrusted hands.

GORDON

No worries.

Gordon dives into Kevin's jacket pockets with both hands. He
pulls out a business card and hands it to Kim.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Oh, I've got your driver's license
here too.

He inspects it.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Hey, I only live a mile or two from
you! Worth bearing in mind, eh?

He gives Kevin a threatening stare, then laughs and claps him
on the shoulder.

KIM

(holding the card)
Maybe I'll swing by some time.

KEVIN

That sounds great!

GORDON

What a wonderful afternoon! Out you
go, then!

He pushes Kevin towards the door. As soon as he's shoved him
out, he whips round.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Right, team meeting immediately.
Where's Joe?

CHARLES

Out.

GORDON

FUCK!

(immediately relaxing)

Well, I had no idea what I was going to say anyway. We'll do it tomorrow.

THE NEXT DAY

Kim enters the theatre. It appears deserted until she spots Charles, who lies across several chairs. He uses a newspaper as a blanket and his balled fists as a pillow.

Kim coughs. He shoots up and pretends to read the paper.

KIM

Hi.

CHARLES

Ah, good morning! I was just checking my stocks.

KIM

Uh huh.

She walks off. Charles continues his pantomime.

CHARLES

These stocks are just... a nightmare.

Gordon bustles out from the back wearing a cardigan and tie.

GORDON

Kim! Excellent. Take a seat, we've got a busy day ahead of us.

KIM

Alright. Hey, I've been texting with that Kevin guy all morning, he wants to meet up for dinner or something.

GORDON

We can discuss all that after the seminar.

KIM

Seminar?

Gordon points Kim towards a semi circle of chairs facing a TV which is connected to a laptop. The first slide of a PowerPoint presentation reads "HOW TO BE CHARMING".

KIM (CONT'D)
"How to be charming"?

GORDON
That's right! Charm is the number
one key to success!

He points to his enormous grin to prove his point.

KIM
You're going to teach us how to be
charming?

GORDON
(still grinning)
Shut the fuck up and sit down, Kim.

KIM
I'm just saying, I imagine you
repel a lot of people. That's all.

Joe enters, his friend RYAN, an even more sinister young man,
in tow.

JOE
Hey. We're here.

GORDON
Who's this? Joe, no one said you
could bring a friend!

JOE
This is Ryan, he's cool.

GORDON
Well listen, Byron, this is a
closed meeting, so-

RYAN
Don't shit yourself, pal, I'm just
hanging out with Joe.

Ryan and Joe wander away. Gordon turns to Kim.

GORDON
See that? No charm. And one day
he'll pay the price!

Gordon scribbles a quick note in a book.

GORDON (CONT'D)
See how everything's connected?

Charles shuffles over towards Joe. He spots Ryan and slows
down. The two turn to look at him.

RYAN

Hey Joe, you didn't tell me this place was haunted!

Joe sniggers as Ryan looks Charles up and down.

RYAN (CONT'D)

A bag of bones in a suit. You don't see that every day! No, I'm just kidding. You must be Charles, Joe's told me very few things about you.

CHARLES

Yes, well. I'm sure the three of us can be great friends.

Joe beams and nods. He takes a seat. Ryan leans in to Charles.

RYAN

I smell fear on you.

He stares hungrily at Charles as he sits down next to Joe. Charles finds a seat as far away as possible.

GORDON

Right, let's get started! My name is Gordon Train, and today I'm going to teach you how to be charming!

He clicks forward one slide. The screen reads "WHAT IS CHARNING".

GORDON (CONT'D)

Now. What does it mean to be charming?

RYAN

Mate, that says "charning".

Gordon whips round to check.

GORDON

That was a test. It's *not* charming to point out other people's mistakes, OK? So you fucking button it. Now, who can give me an example of a charming person?

Silence.

RYAN

(nodding towards Charles)
Well this guy must be pretty charming.

CHARLES

Thank you. It seems I may have misjudged you, young man-

RYAN

He is a homeless guy you let sleep here, right?

Charles stews with rage. Joe laughs, then smiles at Charles.

JOE

Come on, Charles, hit him back!
Zing him good!

RYAN

Yeah, *Charles*.

Charles seethes for a few more seconds, then grabs an empty water bottle and flings it at Ryan. It flies about a foot and a half from Charles' hand before clonking to the floor.

GORDON

(stamping his feet and banging the table)

Right! Everyone shut up! Being charming simply means getting people to do whatever you want.

KIM

What?! Show me in the dictionary where it says that.

GORDON

I'll do you one better - I'll demonstrate it. If I were to say "Kim, give me all the money you have in your purse", you would...

KIM

I dunno. Tell you to fuck off? Spit on you?

GORDON

Right! But if I were to say:
(tilting his head, slowing his speech)
Hey... give me all your money.

Kim frowns; Charles reaches into his pockets.

KIM

Still no!

GORDON

Well, that's only because you knew it was coming!

KIM

That's your whole approach? Tilt your head and speak a bit slower?

GORDON

No! Well, that's a large part of it, but... I haven't told you *how* slow, or what angle to tilt your head...

JOE

Gordon, this is a drag. Come on, Ryan, let's go.

RYAN

Alright, just let me piss first.

He stands up, noisily scraping his chair across the floor.

GORDON

Hey, come on, guys! I like to piss as much as the next man, but show me some respect, yeah?

RYAN

Can't do it, mate. Can't do it.

He walks off, jabbing Gordon in the belly as he passes. Gordon squeals and throws a lazy punch before righting himself.

GORDON

Now. The fundamentals of charm.

He clicks onto the next slide - two small children in a paddling pool. Charles stands up too.

CHARLES

I also need the toilet.

GORDON

Stop interrupting, you ugly pricks! I'm teaching you how to be charming!

INT. BATHROOM

Ryan stands at the urinal. He sways around, singing "Smooth" by Santana at the top of his voice. Charles enters.

CHARLES

I think you and I need to talk.

RYAN

Can't, mate! I'm pissing!

CHARLES
 (leaning in close)
 We'll talk *now*, or I'll squeeze
 your penis shut and fill your
 kidneys with urine.

A beat.

RYAN
 Done now.

CHARLES
 You're to stay away from Joe. He's
 my friend. Not yours.

RYAN
 That's funny, because *I'm* about to
 get ice cream with him!

CHARLES
 (to himself)
Ice cream.
 (to Ryan)
 He doesn't need you. What could you
 possibly have to offer?

RYAN
 Erm, a working leg, you invalid!

Ryan throws playful kicks at Charles' leg. Charles dodges,
 and grabs Ryan's arm.

CHARLES
 I don't need two legs to deal with
 the likes of you.

RYAN
 I'd love to see it, mate.

They stare each other down for a while. Ryan breaks the grip,
 squeezes Charles' nose really hard, and leaves.

INT. THEATRE

Now addressing only Kim and Charles, Gordon finishes his
 presentation, with a bit more energy.

GORDON
 So, just remember Gordon's four Gs:
 Generate smiles, Get talking, Go
 and be active, and Gather
 reactions.

On the screen, the non-G words form the word STAR down the
 centre. This has passed Gordon by.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Any questions?

CHARLES
Yes. This was a total waste of time.

GORDON
(sighs)
That's not a question, Charles, but more importantly, it was very rude. Very un-charming.

CHARLES
Completely pointless.

Charles leaves. Gordon shakes his head.

GORDON
That's probably for the best. Now: how do we turn what we've learned today into stacks of cash?

Kim doesn't look up from her phone.

KIM
(unenthused)
I don't know, Gordon. Please please tell me.

GORDON
Well, it's another of my classic nine point plans, of course! Step one, we boil up a big cauldron of lobster bisque, just like my grandma used to. Then-

Kim's phone bleeps. Gordon glares.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Kim! I told you to put that contraption on the roof before we started!

KIM
It's Kevin. He wants to meet with me this afternoon.

GORDON
This afternoon? But granny's bisque takes at least four days to-

KIM
No, Gordon, no bisque. Instead, how about we meet with this guy face to face, and convince him to invest?

Gordon shakes his head.

GORDON

It's bloody unorthodox... but it might just work.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

Joe and Ryan stroll along, each holding enormous ice cream cones. Ryan eats with gusto; Joe stares into space.

RYAN

What's wrong, mate? Wish you'd got the hot fudge sauce?

JOE

No... well, yeah, but... it's Charles. I think he's losing his edge.

RYAN

That old guy? He's a dinosaur! Forget him!

JOE

No, but you should've seen him in his prime. Every time you'd think he couldn't get any crueller or sneakier, wham! He'd top himself. And now...

RYAN

Listen: you don't need him! You want to go smash up a car? Let's do it. You want to go to some soup kitchen and spit in all the food? I'm there.

(leaning in closer)

You want to kidnap some little boy, and see how long we can get away with it for? I'm with you, man. I'm with you.

JOE

Thanks, mate.

They exchange smiles. Ryan notices someone approaching.

RYAN

Oh, shit. Look who it is.

Charles walks into view, flanked by DARREN, a thuggish 18 year old.

CHARLES

Joe and associate! What a remarkable coincidence.

RYAN

Yeah, coincidence, sure.

CHARLES

Joe, I'd like you to meet *my* new friend, Darren.

Darren offers Joe and Ryan a curt nod.

DARREN

Yeah, call me Dragon.

JOE

Absolutely not.

CHARLES

Darren's 18, and he enjoys cars, rap music, and selling cocaine!

DARREN

Oi, shut it, you fucking snitch!

JOE

Charles, this is indecent. You've just picked up some common lowlife!

CHARLES

That's not the case at all. Darren and I have bonded over a multitude of common interests.

He pops his arm around Darren's shoulder. Darren glares.

DARREN

Fuck off me.

CHARLES

Speak up, young man! You really must work on this mumbling.

DARREN

I said get your fucking arm off me!

Charles retracts his arm.

CHARLES

You see? We already have our little in-jokes.

RYAN

(to Joe)

You're right. He's lost it.

CHARLES

Lost what, Joe? My belt? Because I'll have you know I'm chasing down several promising leads.

Charles' trousers slip a little. He pulls them up.

RYAN

Your *edge*, mate. It's been sanded down over the years.

Joe looks at the ground.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Face it, Charles. You're a circle.

Charles looks confused.

RYAN (CONT'D)

No edges?

Joe chuckles despite himself, but gives Charles a sad look as he and Ryan walk off.

CHARLES

I have edge in spades! I'm a dodecahedron! That's a twelve sided shape! A twelve sided shape!

INT. THEATRE

Gordon and Kim sit at a table, scheming. Gordon frowns as he gets to grips with the plan.

GORDON

So let me get this straight: you're going to date this Kevin guy for several months, if not years, slowly breaking down his resolve until he's finally willing to invest in the theatre? It's a bit long winded, Kim!

Kim frowns.

KIM

That's not the plan at all!

GORDON

Oh. Well, good!

KIM

I'll meet him this afternoon and take him to some bar, where we'll *conveniently* bump into you. You strike up a conversation with him, slip in the pitch, real natural, and *bam!*

GORDON

Save the theatre... by *acting*? How delicious!

(MORE)

GORDON (CONT'D)

The only thing is, if he sees me in some slick city bar, he's going to be thinking, "Gordon Train, pride of the art community, in a bar with all these corporate rats? Something's amiss!", you know?

KIM

OK...

GORDON

It takes away the element of surprise. But if you were to deliver the pitch, he'd be like "..."

He points at Kim, frowning and clicking his fingers. Kim looks amazed.

KIM

Kim.

GORDON

Kim, yeah, he'd be like "Kim's got some interesting things to say about the theatre, which I never expected! I should listen!" You know?

KIM

Well, I mean... I'm not so familiar with this theatre, you know, so...

GORDON

Oh, don't worry, just think about some of the plays you've done in the past.

KIM

Yeah, about that...

GORDON

You know, the ones you boasted about? Just take that wealth of experience, and turn it into cash!

KIM

Look, I lied about all that. OK? I haven't acted since primary school.

GORDON

Oh, you were lying? Well that's no problem, I'm sure there are plenty of ways we can work arou- **WHAT?!**

Kim grabs up her stuff, shaking her head.

KIM

I thought I could bullshit and bully my way to the top. I guess that was stupid. I'm sorry, Gordon, I've just... I've got no talents.

She heads for the door. Gordon catches her arm.

GORDON

Don't you see, Kim? All this time, you did have a talent - lying!

KIM

Lying?

GORDON

Yes! Your true strength was inside you all along!

KIM

Yeah... I guess you're right!

GORDON

And with lies, we can accomplish anything we dream of.

KIM

You're right. I'll use *lies* to get this investment.

GORDON

Yeah! You know something, Kim, I think I'm in love with you.

Kim frowns as Gordon mulls this over.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Oh, hang on... no, never mind.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Charles stands about 20 meters from a children's play area. In the distance, Darren runs amok, knocking over far smaller kids.

CHARLES

(pushy dad)

That's it, now knock him back down before he can get up! There's stones and rocks, use your environment! Use your environment!

A POSH LADY approaches Charles. They exchange polite smiles.

POSH LADY

Which one's yours?

CHARLES

The lad in the black tracksuit.

The Posh Lady frowns as Darren leaps on a small boy.

POSH LADY

He's behaving like a brute!

CHARLES

(sighs)

He has his talents, but he can't compare to the boy I used to work with. Naturally gifted, that one.

POSH LADY

He just kicked that boy in the ribs!

CHARLES

Yes, but the form, the follow through... he doesn't listen to me, doesn't want to learn.

POSH LADY

He's totally out of control!

CHARLES

You're right. I'm trying to replace the irreplaceable.

Charles slouches off, shaking his head. A few moments later, Darren wanders over and stands next to the Posh Lady.

DARREN

Where's Charles?

POSH LADY

Young man, I have no idea who Charles is.

Darren looks the Posh Lady up and down.

DARREN

Can I feel your tits?

She sighs and rolls her eyes.

POSH LADY

Fine.

INT. THEATRE

Gordon and Kim now stand on stage, acting out a role play.

KIM

Gordon, come on. I've got it.

GORDON

One more rehearsal. For old Uncle Gordon.

KIM

Alright, but stop calling yourself that.

(in character)

So, erm, let's get to know each other. What are some of your interests.

GORDON

(high voice)

Well, I love love love love love the theatre. And I'd do anything for a man who supports the arts!

Before Kim can correct this, Charles enters. He frowns at the display on stage.

CHARLES

What's going on here? What's my involvement?

KIM

We're putting together our pitch for the investor.

CHARLES

Why aren't I involved? How dare you exclude me!

KIM

You stormed off earlier, remember?

CHARLES

Well now I want a key role. Make a role for me, Gordon!

GORDON

Charles, why don't you... sit down and give some feedback?

CHARLES

Excellent. A perfect role for me.

Charles sits down as Joe enters, singing "Smooth" at the top of his voice.

GORDON

Joe, you can give notes too.

CHARLES

Gordon, no! He's not qualified for a position like this! Perhaps he could give the toilets a scrub instead?

Joe frowns at Charles, sitting down. Charles moves one seat further away. Joe shakes his head, but does likewise.

GORDON

Alright guys, so what we're looking for is a *natural* segue from polite conversation to getting a whopping great investment, OK? So.

(clears throat, adopts high voice)

Ooh, Kevin, those pockets are looking awfully bulbous!

Charles and Joe pay no attention as the performance continues.

JOE

How's Darren?

CHARLES

Oh, erm... he's fine. Healthy and robust as ever. How's Ryan?

JOE

You're just jealous.

CHARLES

Jealous? Of that ape? Not a chance. I hope he dies in a ditch.

They both glare, avoiding eye contact.

JOE

Face facts. You've lost it. You're all washed up.

CHARLES

Oh really? Well I've spent *my* afternoon in the park. Is that something a man with no edge would do?

JOE

Absolutely. One hundred percent.

Kim and Gordon finish their performance.

GORDON

So that's the plan. What do you think? Natural enough?

JOE

You know what, guys? With a pitch like that, I wouldn't even worry about natural segues or any of that. Just barge on in there and blow his socks off.

They mull this over.

KIM
What do you think?

GORDON
I'm feeling it!

KIM
Let's do it!

GORDON
Let's do it!

They leap from the stage and run for the door, whooping.

JOE
See that? I wasn't even watching,
but I'm sure their plan is
terrible. I've totally set them up
for a fall. *That's* edge.

He shakes his head at Charles and leaves. Charles slumps in his seat until he spots Joe's mobile phone. He pockets it.

INT. LOBBY

The large waiting area of a seemingly prosperous business. Gordon and Kim sit in plush leather chairs, looking out of place. Suited folk cast wary glances.

They exchange thumbs-ups and smiles. Both fidget, bursting with energy. A RECEPTIONIST watches them, frowning, until she's had enough.

RECEPTIONIST
'Scuse me? You've been here for
like... 40 minutes? Do you have an
appointment? Because if not you
kind of have to leave?

KIM
We're here to see Kevin. Can you
tell us where his office is?

RECEPTIONIST
Sorry, I can't let anyone onto that
floor without permission.

GORDON
(to Kim)
So he's on a floor, she's let that
slip. Give me a minute, I'll
extract the info.

He winks at Kim, standing up. He spits in his hands and runs them through his hair as he approaches the desk. The Receptionist instinctively pushes herself back.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Hi! You look a little lonely behind
that desk. How about some company?

He begins to scale the desk.

RECEPTIONIST
No, I would have to call security.

GORDON
Understood. Best toe the line, eh?

He stops climbing and leans on the desk, smiling. Instantly
he's out of conversation.

GORDON (CONT'D)
So! Er... both parents still alive?

The Receptionist looks shocked.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Sorry, sorry. That was rude.

He peers over the desk for a conversation starter.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Oh, I like your mouse mat! Is that
Rasputin?

RECEPTIONIST
No, it's Olly Murs.

GORDON
Oh. I don't know who that is.

Kim marches over.

KIM
Hi, can you just call Kevin and
tell him Kim's here? Do that and
I'll make him sit down.

Instantly, the Receptionist grabs the phone.

GORDON
That's a little hurtful, I don't
mind saying.

RECEPTIONIST
(on the phone)
Mmmhmm. OK.
(putting the phone down)
Floor nine, you can go straight up.

Kim and Gordon head for the lift.

GORDON

See, I told you I'd get it out of her. The powers of persuasion, another of my seminars.

They get into the lift and press a button. As the doors close, Gordon whips out his phone and starts playing loud music. He breathes heavily and pounds the walls.

KIM

Jesus, pack that in. That's so annoying.

GORDON

It's my psyche up routine! I've got to get in the zone!

KIM

Use headphones!

GORDON

Headphones are a scam, Kim. I've got speakers on my phone, look.

He shows Kim the speakers on his phone.

INT. THEATRE

Charles sits on a prop throne. He arches his fingers like a villain. As the door opens, he rises. A SUITED MAN enters. Charles sits down, grumbling.

SUITED MAN

Oh, hello. Listen, I heard this theatre was looking for investors, and I'm interested in-

CHARLES

Get out, will you? Can't you see I'm in the midst of a scheme?

The Suited Man shrugs and leaves. Moments later, Ryan enters.

RYAN

Joe! Hey, Joe!

CHARLES

Aha!

Charles leaps from the seat. He puts his weight on his bad foot and falls back into the chair. He stands up again.

RYAN

Oh, it's you. Where's Joe, he told me to meet him here.

CHARLES

Or... *did* he?

Charles produces Joe's phone. Ryan rolls his eyes.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

That's right. I stole your little friend's communicator. And after a young homeless woman showed me how to work it, it was a simple case of composing a message and luring you into my web.

RYAN

Great, you wasted a bit of my time. Well done.

CHARLES

This is your last warning, young man. Pack your bags and leave town *tonight*. Or stay away from Joe at the very least.

RYAN

(advancing on Charles)

Right, that's it. All you old fucks need to realise your time has *passed*. You had your turn in charge, and now it's gone. Me and Joe, we run things now. The revolution has started, so take one last look at the world you remember, because in a few years, your generation will be nothing but corpses rotting in *our* streets.

He backs off, breathing heavily. Charles hangs his head.

CHARLES

Fine, you win. I can't fight you any more.

RYAN

Yeah, that's right.

CHARLES

Joe's outside in the alley, anyway. I think he's tearing up a small boy's homework.

RYAN

Amazing - the guy never stops!

Ryan dashes outside. After a few seconds, we hear his screams, and the frenzied barks of a dog. Charles scratches his ear with the fence's bolt.

INT. OFFICE

Kim and Gordon stand in the corridor outside Kevin's office.

GORDON

Now remember. The key to any good pitch is the element of surprise. We need to catch this guy off guard, and go straight for it.

Kim nods. Gordon boots the door open. They charge in to find Kevin sat at his desk wearing just a tie. Everyone freezes.

GORDON (CONT'D)

You know, the world is such an ugly place. So when we find a little beauty, we need to cherish it - don't you think?

Kim says nothing. Gordon gives her several quick looks, then elbows her.

KIM

Oh, erm... The Black Soul Theatre is the *only* solution to *your* cultural needs.

On "your", they both point at Kevin, slightly out of synch.

KEVIN

What? What's going on?

GORDON

But we can't do it alone.

KIM

That's right. The theatre needs *your* help.

Another slightly mistimed point.

GORDON

We're talent-rich but cash-poor. And in this economy? That means bad news!

KIM

But with the help of a kind hearted rich man like you, we can continue entertaining your loved ones, long after you're dead and forgotten.

KEVIN

Guys, please leave...

Kevin reaches for his trousers, which are just a little too far away.

GORDON

A one-off donation of ten thousand pounds would more than quadruple our takings from the past year, and could pay for fireworks, trained seals, and all the other touches that make the theatre so special.

KEVIN

Ten thousand? That's rid-

KIM

But why stop there? Double down, and we can get our name up on a billboard in Time Square for almost two entire days! That's right - New York City!

GORDON

Live theatre has never been less popular. But with your help, the Black Soul Theatre can once again stand proud as a beacon of hope in an otherwise pointless existence. Here's a pen and your cheque book. The next move is yours.

Gordon hands Kevin his cheque book. He and Kim stare.

KEVIN

OK. I mean, I will say that I enjoyed the presentation. You got a lot of good information in there, plus some stuff I think you made up, but it flowed very nicely.

Gordon beams. Kim continues to stare.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

But once again, I'm really in no position to invest... in *anything*. I've got two ex-wives and three kids to support, and I don't make that much to start with. To be perfectly honest, Kim, I thought you were coming here to... you know.

KIM

Gross. What on earth gave you that idea?

KEVIN

Well, all those... *filthy texts* you've been sending.

He holds his phone in their direction. Gordon leans forward to read. His eyes widen, and he giggles childishly while looking back and forth between Kim and the screen.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

And you know, I was only there in the first place because I could smell those Wotsits.

GORDON

I knew it! They really are the perfect snack. Bursting with flavour, yet substantially lower in fat than the average-

KIM

(pouncing at Kevin)
Motherfucker!

As Kim flies across the desk, we...

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE

Charles sits on the stage, wearing jeweler's glasses and pruning a cactus. Joe comes rushing in.

JOE

I just got a call from the hospital! Ryan's been attacked by a dog!

CHARLES

Really! In this day and age. How extraordinary.

JOE

Yeah, it's chewed up his face, or shoulder or something. I wasn't really listening.

CHARLES

Well I never. A thing like that!

He scratches his head with the bolt, more and more enthusiastically until Joe cottons on. Joe's eyes widen.

JOE

No way! You crafty minx!

Charles smirks.

JOE (CONT'D)

Hey, I guess you got your edge back!

CHARLES
Maybe it never left.

JOE
And maybe you've still got a lot to
teach me.

They drape their arms around each other's shoulders and head
backstage as uplifting music plays.

Kim and Gordon enter, looking dejected. Kim falls into a
seat. She sighs, then kicks the floor.

KIM
Fuck! I had this all planned out,
man. Do a couple of plays, get a TV
show... I was all set up!

GORDON
Well, look on the bright side. You
smashed up that guy's office pretty
thoroughly.

Kim nods, comforted by the thought.

GORDON (CONT'D)
And he buzzed us up, so he could
easily get fired.

KIM
Yeah, I suppose. I stole this, too.

She produces an iPad. Gordon snatches it, leaping to his
feet.

GORDON
(about to sprint off)
Brilliant! Let's take it to the car
park and kick it around!

KIM
Or we could sell it. Or keep it, at
least.

GORDON
Huh! I never thought of that. Good
idea. You know, we make a pretty
good team!

He sits down, managing to whack the iPad on the table in the
process. He drops it on the floor, to a big crunch. Kim
sighs.

KIM
Yeah, I guess we do.

GORDON

Hey - join the team. This ploy may have backfired, but there's always another scheme around the corner!

KIM

Hmm. Not sure I want to just go through an endless series of schemes, though.

GORDON

Ah, come on. What else are you going to do?

KIM

(shrugs)

Alright, fine. Until literally anything else comes along.

GORDON

Brilliant! Let's go to the office, I've got a couple of legally binding forms for you to sign.

INT. BACK OFFICE

Gordon and Kim enter to find Charles lying prone on the ground. Joe nudges him with his foot, grinning.

GORDON

What's this, then?

JOE

He's fallen and he can't get up! He's totally defenseless!

CHARLES

Please, just let me up!

JOE

Come and join in, it's great!

GORDON

...alright!

Gordon dashes over. Kim thinks about it for a second, then shrugs and wanders over as "You Get What You Give" by New Radicals fades up.

Gordon drops a heavy book on Charles' back. Kim spoons honey into his hair, earning an approving look from Joe.

JOE

I find the best thing to do is let him *almost* get back up... and then knock him down again.

He demonstrates this. Everyone but Charles cheers.

CHARLES
Stop it, I beg you!

GORDON
(so happy)
No!

They continue their fun as the song builds. On the count in,
we...

CUT TO CREDITS.

TWO TOWNS Over