INT. CAR - DAY

FRED & his MUM drive to LONDON. They sit in a silence. An irritating CAR NOISE can be heard periodically: maybe the air-conditioning, fanbelt, etc. Whatever it is, Fred soon becomes visibly irritated by it. He looks to his Mum. She remains oblivious. He switches on the RADIO.

The DJ in midway through speaking to a musician about some depressing event in his life and how he searched deep inside and found the inner strength needed to overcome it. The DJ listens with faux-sincerity. The story the musicians tells is a sad on, and he has written a song about it. After the brief discussion, the DJ asks if the music will sing the song. The musician says yes and begins a very mediocre contrivance that, in its simplicity and hackiness, is an insult to the story it is based on.

Fred sits listening in disgust.

TITLE CARD: MEPOSE

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

Fred and his Mum stand hugging each other next to the parked car. After a time they uncouple.

MUM
Let me take you the rest of the way.

FRED
It’s fine. Honestly. Save the petrol.

She offers him some money.

MUM
Take this.

FRED
Thanks.

He takes the money and they embrace again.

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

The SOUND of asphalt as the car drives off. Michael stands holding a large box, a bag across his shoulder. He watches the car drive away.

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

Michael walks down the motorway, passed a sign that reads LONDON.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Michael walks down the street: something happens.

EXT. FLAT - DAY

Michael walks down the hallway and stops outside a flat. I puts down the box and knocks on the door. BROCK opens the door: shirtless and muscle-bound. He speaks in a thick eastern-european accent.

BROCK
Fred?

FRED
Brock?

Brock looks Fred over. He seems unimpressed - His size maybe?

BROCK
I show you.

Fred enters the house. The door is closed.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Brock and Fred stand looking at the room. Brock points out the rooms various utilities.

BROCK
Bed ... Socks and underpants ...
Space for weight bench ... You
lift?

Lift? Fred looks at him confused for a bit, then decides to lie.

FRED
... yep.

BROCK
What you lift?

FRED
Erm ... Five

Brock baulks at five. Shakes his head.

BROCK
Five. You can always do more. Push always hard. I teach you.

He thumps Fred in the centre of the chest. Fred nods. They stand in silence for a moment. Then Brock remembers.

BROCK (CONT'D)
Ah. (Undetermined eastern-european words.)

Brock leaves. When he returns it is with a potted plant.

BROCK (CONT'D)
My girlfriends give. Housewarming.

Fred doesn't know how to respond. He begins nodding.

FRED
Thanks. Thank her.

BROCK
Them.

FRED
... Excuse me.

BROCK
Them. It is two.

FRED
... two?

BROCK
Two.

Brock puts two fingers in the air.

FRED
Oh ... well ... Thank them.

Brock nods, crosses his arms. The two men stand looking: Brock in his stoic Eastern-European way, Fred fraught with internal British anxiety.

EXT. PUB - EVENING

The exterior of a pub: strange people sit smoking and talking utter nonsense.

INT. PUB - EVENING

Fred is midway through pouring the worst pint of Guinness you have ever seen. It has about six inches of head. The CUSTOMER stands opposite looking at him like he's smeared in shit. Next to Fred, the MANAGER looks at the pint vexed: as if the pint itself held the answer to its own terrible form. When the pint has settle, Fred hands it to the customer.

FRED
£4 please.

The customer stands blinking. He gives Fred the money and he rings it up. The manager looks at him confused.

MANAGER
What pub d'you say you worked at?

FRED
The ... erm.

Fred cant think of any names. He looks to the ground.

This moment of awkwardness is punctuated by the emergence from the kitchen of the CHEF (who has been pottering in the background). He comes to the kitchen door, screams something in his / her language, pulls the overlarge chefs hat their head and throws it to the ground. He then points at the manager with an accusatory finger. He moves around the bar and begins babbling as if he were a disgruntled customer.

CHEF
(In mouth tongue)
You fucking louse. You small, small bastard. I am an artist! I'm a student of Bocuse, and you have me rotting in that puddle of piss, making french fries for english pigs. Well no! No, no, no, no, NO! Fuck you, Australian man. You are a country full of criminals and you each of you fuck your own mothers. I quit! I'd rather suck at the teat of a deflated horse cock than spend one more second making gruel for wastrels. There is no talent in this country. No passion. No spirit. No more. It's done. It's done. Find some other to be complicit in this abortion. I'm going back to France. No - America. Ha! Ha Ha!

The chef storms out. Customer watch him leave, more for something to do than anything.

Fred and the Manager stand watching him leave. The manager turns to Fred, looks at him. Eventually Fred stops turns to look at the manager, unaware of what is about to happen.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Fred stands in the kitchen cooking. He wears the overlarge chef's hat and matching smock. He chops vegetables for a pizza without any discernible technique, hacking away at them like it's all guesswork, a mixture of apathy and complete lack of skill.

HELGA, the waitress, comes into the kitchen with arms full of soiled plates.

HELGA
Do you have the Dawn French Fries for table six - they've been waiting thirty minutes. One of them has a boss eye I don't want to have to keep looking at him.

Fred turns to Helga. He stars at her gormless for a moment: overcome by her beauty. She looks back at him in disgust.

HELGA (CONT'D)
Dawn French Fries. Where are they?

FRED
Oh. Erm. Yeah. I always worry about undercooking stuff, so I dunno.

He directs her to two plates of CHARRED chips. She looks on in disbelieve.

HELGA
They look acrylamidic.

FRED
Is that good?

HELGA
No it isn't. Are you retarded.

FRED
(Kinda wounded)
... no.

HELGA
Look, cover them with cheese, put them in the microwave for a minute-ten. Put some jalapeños on em and think of a comedian we can palm them off as.

FRED
Ok.

She stands looking at him.

HELGA
... Do it!

She storms out with a couple of plates of food.

HELGA (CONT'D)
Fucking retard.

INT. VENUE - EVENING

Helga enters the venue with the food and searches the table that ordered it. An group of HENNIGHT WOMEN sits armsfolded in the audience. On the stage, a COMEDIAN stands doing his set. He wears an American Football helmet.

COMEDIAN
I'm ... People say to me, Terry they say (that's my name). Terry, what's the worst part of being in comedy. And I. Erm. Ha. The worst part? And they say yeah? What's the worst part. I assume there's lots of good things about it: the laughs, travelling all over the world, meeting lots of interesting people. But what's the worst part about it. I always tell them the same thing: when they ask me that: ask me what's the worst part of being a comedian - which is, that's what I - that's what I do. I say, in answer to the question of what's the worst part of being a comedian, I say, I tell them, my friends when they ask me, I say ... how long you got?

He does a 'tada' motion with his hands and is immediately hit with either an egg or a tomato from the audience. He voices pain and the audience whoop mildly.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Fred sits at the bar, his hat removed and beside him. He watches two comedians (one old, one young) who stand propped at the bar talking gravely about terrible gigs they're endured.

IRISH COMEDIAN
I had one once where I get to the place: this battered victoria house with decrepit decor, home to some mad old eccentric. I mean, this guy was old as fuck. Taxidermy everywhere. Right away he strips me off and shoves me into his da's victorian tuxedo. Now - by that point I'm starting to get suspicious. But, you know, I'm a professional and a gigs and gig so I go along with it.
We go into the venue - well, his living room - and there's no one fucking there. No microphone, no stand. There's not even chairs. Well ... that's not necessarily true, there are chairs but you see there's around this long elegant table. All done up with silverware and napkin swans and the like. And this mad old bastard sits us either end of this long elegant table and we have a seven course meal sat in silence. It took about five hours because he had to keep ferrying plates to and from the kitchen. I'm pretty sure at one point he got lost. Terrible.
And one point he called me da. Daft old cunt - he was older than me.

YOUNG COMEDIAN
One to ones are the worst. I did a charity gig once where I had to sit at a hospital bedside trying to make a dying kid laugh. It was sisyphean. I wasn't really looking at him on account of how horrible he looked, but at one point I thought I had him: he sort of lurched up and I thought to myself 'that's it: here comes the fun'.
(Beat)
But then he started convulsing I was ushered out.
(MORE)

YOUNG COMEDIAN (CONT'D)
(shaking his head)
Never again.

Helga comes out of the venue, carrying soiled plated, passed the two comedians and stops aside Fred.

HELGA
Where’s you hat?

FRED
I’m on my break.

Helga looks to the manager who has up to this point been staring off into space. When he notices her looking, the manager looks around for something to busy himself with. He settles on pressing buttons on the cash register and his expression changes to signify that this meaningless act in an important task.

HELGA
Ben!

Ben (the manager) looks up.

BEN
Huh?

Helga, wide eyed, motions to Fred with a whip of her head: put him to work. Ben nods in accordance. He goes under the bar and emerges with a tray of eggs. He offers them to Fred.

BEN (CONT’D)
Take these eggs into the hen party,
Fred.

Fred looks at the tray of eggs, at Ben and Helga. He isn’t very happy. He takes the eggs.

FRED
Okay.

INT. VENUE - EVENING

Fred carries the tray of eggs into the venue. Music now - well sort of. The comedian stands on the stage, still wearing the protective helmet. He stands behind a large keyboard, maladroitly playing the chords of ‘It’s Raining Men’ whilst attempting to sing it. The rendition is unrhythmic and laced with errors and false starts. A few boos can be heard. Maybe some whoops.

As Fred crosses the stage he is pelted with an egg. Dropping the tray, he falls to the floor clutching his eye.

INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

Fred sits clutching his eye. The doctor next to him offers him an eye patch.

DOCTOR
You're gonna have to wear this for a few weeks. There's a small possibly you could lose the eye.

Fred looks at the eye patch and to the doctor.

FRED
Have you got anything else. I'll ... I'll look like a pirate.

The doctor looks at Fred for a moment. He withdraws the eye patch.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Fred lies on his size with a bandaged dressing across his head. He looks miserable. Through the wall, the SOUND of aggressive fucking.

GIRLFRIEND
Oh brock.

BROCK
Ha. Ha. That is right. You sex with that one, I'll sex with this one. So sexy my two girlfriend.

More fucking.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Fred stands chopping ingredients with the same childish aggression. He wears a bandaged dressing across his head and a chefs hat. He chops and chops. After a time of chopping, he chops his own hand.

FRED
No!

Blood pours from the wound. He tries to stop the flow but it keeps coming, leaking from his clutched hand and cascading onto a half made pizza. Fred looks at the pizza, wondering to himself how best to correct the situation.

INT. VENUE - EVENING

Fred - carrying two pizzas - approaches a seated pair of pompous ARTIST. His hand is now bandages and mottled with blood. He presents the pizzas - one of which is an obvious bloodbath. The artists look disgusted.

NOAH
What is that?

FRED
It's a pizza.

TREX
Er - yeah - mine look fine but my friend ordered a Fuck Button and I'm pretty sure *those*
*(*twirling an accusatory finger)
aren't mushrooms.

The pizza is a blooded mess, bits of soiled bandage sticking out of it.

FRED
... It's a Bikini Kill.

Upon hearing this, Noah and Trex's demeanour shift from hoity superiority to fearful blaggery. The nod and shift.

NOAH
Bikini Kill ... yeah oool.

TREX
(with unction)
Thanks *so* much.

Fred nods and leaves, proud of himself. He moves through the venue, passing the musician COCO SCHWAB on stage in the middle of a soundcheck, and leaves.

Coco Schwab is a serious electronic artist. His voice possess a Bowie type quality. His music is needlessly complex: asynchronous arpeggios coupled with long periods of irregularly timed silence. Even he has trouble figuring it out. He seems to have gotten it into his head that it's because he cannot hear himself properly over the pa - although the sound it crystal clear. After a few fuck ups and false starts he stops. In contrary to his music and appearance, when coco speaks he is quiet and unassuming.

COCO SCHWAB
Look I like, don't wanna be a dick but I really can't hear myself in the monitors and - you know - these songs are very complex and if I you - you know - facilities don't that the capabilities - er.

Blaine (the sound guy) disagrees.

BLAINE
It sounds fine, man. Levels are good. You're coming through clear.

NOAH
Sounding lush Rupert baby.

COCO SCHWAB
Coco, Noah. Coco Schwab. It's like a ... persona-

TREX
You're coming through load and clear, Coco, hun.

Coco is beginning to look panicked now.

COCO SCHWAB
I really don't ... I mean the facilities aren't ... I need to ...

Coco stands panicked, struggling to formulate thought. Then he leaves. Blaine sees this and is confused.

BLAINE
... Where's he gone?

NOAH
... I think he's left.

They all just sit there.

INT. PUB - EVENING

Fred sits at the bar. He looks terrible: bandaged eye, bandaged hand, haggard expression. He picks his nose. Ben stands behind the bar doing nothing. This comparatively peaceful act is punctured by Helga.

HELGA
Coco's fucked off.

BEN
What?

HELGA
Coco's done a runner.

BEN
... Where?

HELGA
I don't know! I knew that I find him, wouldn't I.

Ben doesn't know what to do.

HELGA (CONT'D)
What are we gonna do?

BEN
I ... dunno ... We do need an act ... If we haven't got an act we're dead in the water.

HELGA
I'm not doing it.

BEN
(scratching his chin)
No ... I suppose not.

HELGA
Make Frank do it.

BEN
Who's Frank?

Helga points to Fred.

HELGA
Him. Make him to it.

BEN
What d'you say, Fred. Have any artistic aspirations?

FRED
(apprehensive)
... I suppose. What do I do?

HELGA
Go into the lost and found, cobble together a costume, get up on stage and *do something*! It isn't hard.

Fred looks at the two of them. He isn't happy. He picks his nose.

INT. VENUE - EVENING

A well lit stage, tones of deep red. The audiences consists of Noah, Trex and a third man who stands in the corner with a pint.

BLAINE
Ladies and gentlemen, please put your hands together and give a big round of applause for tonight's main event: our own very talented and valued employee ... Frank.

Fred emerges onto the stage in a clown costume. He wears a replica of the Joker's heist mask. As soon as he does, Noah and Trex are up and out of there. Just Blaine and the weird looking third man watch.

FRED
Hi. My name is Fred. And I'm gonna do a song.

Fred signals to Blaine to start the song. He is wearing headphones and it takes a few moments.

BLAINE
Oh ... Sorry.

Blaine starts the music. The slow swelling of luscious strings. The song is 'Vesti La Giubba (On With the Motley)' from the opera *Pagliacci*. Fred sings garbled Italian in a strange high pitched voice whilst attempting a quasi-elegant dance in accompaniment. It soon becomes apparent that whilst he is aware of the melody, he has no understanding of the Italian language nor the words to the aria. He continues on regardless: one long colossal blag. The song ends with him on his knees, centre stage, arms outstretch in orant. The weird third man sips his pint and leaves.

EXT. PUB - EVENING

Ben and Fred leave the pub. Fred looks dejected; Ben looks fine - like he seemingly able to absorb life's crushing defeats with a sort of stoic indifference. The two men look at each other. Ben nods.

BEN
Night.

Ben leaves. Fred watches him. In the pub, Helga is finishing up. He peers in looking at her.

FRED
Do you want help cleaning up?

HELGA
Go. Home.

FRED
... Okay ... Night.

Fred walks out of the pub's front and down street. He walks passed a bin. Crouching beside the bin is Coco Schwab. He has a knife.

COCO SCHWAB
Stealing my set and poisoning my friends with voodoo.

Fred is confused but quickly see the knife and becomes suitably afraid.

FRED
No! No!

Coco emerges from his crouched position and sticks the knife in Fred's side. Fred peels away from the knife and falls to the ground. Coco drops the knife and runs away singing to himself. Fred just lies there.

EXT. PUB - EVENING

Helga turns off the lights, leaves the pub and locks the door. She turns the corner and sees a puddle of blood trail off behind one of the bins. She investigates.

FRED (O.S.)
Help, Helga.

Helga makes an exasperated sound: she doesn't need this.

INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

Fred sits shirtless as the doctor staples the knife wound closed. Every staple causes him to grimace.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Fred lies doing bench presses. Brock spots him. It's immediately obvious that he's lifting too much. He looks in excruciating pain.

BROCK
C'mon, man. One. Give me one.

FRED
(strained)
Brock ... I can't ... It's too-

BROCK
C'mon you pussy. What sort of man cannot give single bench press. My two girlfriends are stronger than you. One even would be.

FRED
Brock ... Please ... I ...

We hear a tear. Fred screams out a lame cry of pain.

FRED (CONT'D)
Ah ... My stitches ... Brock ... please ... please ... I think I'm gonna pass -

BROCK
One. Give me one you fucking pussy man.

We leave Fred as he's on the verge of passing out.

END