

# Fruitless

Pilot

"Out of the Frying Pan"

By

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COLD OPEN:

INT. OFFICE FLOOR - INSURANCE BUILDING - DAY

Your typical UK office. People sit at their desks in quiet despair, staring into computer screens, tapping away on keyboards as their hopes and dreams slowly wither.

ALEX, late 30's, receding hairline, cheap supermarket suit, stands in front of a large PRINTER.

ON THE PRINTER SCREEN: "Error - C6". Alex sighs. He tries again and again, pushing the button but no joy. He opens the top, inspects the cartridge, places it back inside. Suddenly a hundred blank pieces of paper print at a furious speed, SPITS OUT BLACK INK all over Alex's suit.

Alex LOSES IT, walks over to his desk, yanks the MONITOR from the wall and SLAMS it against the printer over and over.

ALEX  
PRINT! PRINT YOU USELESS BASTARD!  
JUST BLOODY PRINT!

Alex throws the monitor on the floor. The rest of the staff watch on in stunned horror. CATHY, 40's, stands up.

CATHY  
You're gonna have to pay for that!

ALEX  
Oh shut up Cathy you bitch!

Cathy is stunned. Alex gulps, instant regret.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - INSURANCE BUILDING - DAY

Alex sits nervously in front of a desk. Various certificates and corporate motivational posters hang on the wall behind him.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK sits -- STEWART, 60's, Alex's MANAGER. Expensive suit, slightly posher than you might expect for middle management.

STEWART

Alex I'll be straight with you. We've got some new investors and they're right, we need some fresh faces around here and after this morning's outburst, you understand I am going to have to let you go?

ALEX

Stewart I am so sorry. I've been under rather a lot of stress lately and..

STEWART

We were planning on making cuts next quarter. May as well start with the low hanging fruit.

ALEX

What's that supposed to mean?

STEWART

Alex your figures have always been far from great and you know it.

ALEX

But... I've worked here for five years. Look I promise I'll improve, I'll work overtime for free. Is there not something we can do?

BEAT. Stewart scoffs.

STEWART

What would you suggest?

ALEX

Well, perhaps I could...

STEWART

Come on Alex insurance me. I'm an elderly client looking for cover before I'm six feet under. Now go!

ALEX

Well... maybe I could work on my pitch for the funeral expense plan? Mention alternative payment methods?

STEWART

Go on.

ALEX

And maybe... maybe I could shadow Joan on how to increase my length of cover. Joan's great, I'll make myself a sponge, mop up all of Joan's knowledge.

STEWART

Yes, well it's all a little too late my boy, I'm afraid the decision's already been made. You are hereby dismissed, a.k.a sacked, a.k.a gone, finito, no more. Barry has already packed your things.

Alex hangs his head, STANDS UP, not sure what to do or say.

ALEX

OK well, thanks for all your.. work.

STEWART

All the best.

Stewart smiles, casually resumes his paperwork. Alex goes to leave, STUMBLES into a FILING CABINET, knocks a few FILES TO THE FLOOR.

ALEX

Shit, sorry.

Alex picks them up, places them as they were, turns to leave. STEWART COUGHS, HOLDS OUT HIS PALM. Alex turns back, looks at the PEN in his hand with the company logo on it.

ALEX

This? I've had this ages.

Stewart SMILES, calmly NODS.

STEWART

Company policy.

Alex thinks for a second, but fuck it. He LICKS THE PEN, makes full and deliberate eye contact with Stewart and THROWS it across the room. It rebounds awkwardly off the far wall and onto the floor. Stewart shakes his head. Alex storms out.

**OPENING TITLES: FRUITLESS**

INT. HALLWAY - ALEX'S HOUSE - DAY

Alex closes the front door, puts a BOX of stationary on the floor, tosses his keys onto the chest of drawers and walks towards the living room.

ALEX  
(Shouting)  
Hey it's me, honestly you wouldn't  
believe the day I've had.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex enters, sees his girlfriend, RACHEL, 30's, and BRADLEY, 30's, a man mountain with BICEPS almost bursting out of his Topman extra small sat beside each other on the sofa.

Alex notices various CARDBOARD BOXES and BIN BAGS scattered around the room.

ALEX  
What's all this?

BRADLEY  
Hi mate...

ALEX  
Oh yeah, it's that car boot sale this weekend isn't it? God do we really have this much stuff? You know you can find some decent finds at these things if you're savvy enough.

(To Rachel)  
We went to that one in Burnley didn't we?

(To Bradley)  
They had one of those work experience guys with a hi-vis giving directions. Honestly he didn't know his arse from his elbow.

Bradley stands, everything is very serious. He places his strong hand onto Alex's shoulder.

BRADLEY  
Take a seat bud.

Alex takes a seat on the chair, faces them. Bradley sits back down next to Rachel.

ALEX  
Everything alright?

RACHEL  
Alex I need to tell you something.  
Following on from our conversation  
about... well everything.

ALEX  
OK.

RACHEL  
See, the thing is you know how  
Bradley's been helping me around the  
house lately?

ALEX  
Yeah.  
(To Bradley)  
The patio looks great by the way.

BRADLEY  
Don't mention it.

RACHEL  
Well I don't know how else to put  
this but... we waited for you to come  
back today because...

Rachel looks to Bradley for help, unsure and afraid.

ALEX  
(Oblivious)  
Because what?

BRADLEY  
Rachel isn't happy. She hasn't been  
for a while.

BEAT. Alex is confused. He leans towards Rachel.

ALEX  
(Quietly, To Rachel)  
Babe... if this is a "woman's thing",  
we can always talk about this in  
private if you'd prefer?

BRADLEY  
There's no easy way to say this so  
I'm just going to come out and say  
it. Rachel and I have been having a  
relationship.

ALEX  
A relationship?

BRADLEY

Yes. A sexual relationship, for about six months.

BEAT

ALEX

Did you just say sexual?

BRAD

Yes.

ALEX

As in..... sex?

RACHEL

It wasn't supposed to be like this, but I felt like I never had the heart to tell you and... we just thought it'd be easier if you know... we ripped the plaster off quickly.

Rachel puts her head in her hands. The news sinks in for Alex as he looks around at all the boxes.

ALEX

This is my stuff.. isn't it?

RACHEL

I never wanted it to be like this.

ALEX

Well... you can't. I live here.

BRAD

Technically it is just Rachel's name on the mortgage mate.

ALEX

OK but..... I have rights.

Alex sees some BIG CARDBOARD BOXES pushed into the far corner. They're filled to the brim with LEGO BRICKS. Alex is furious, stands up.

ALEX

Are those my models?!

RACHEL

They were taking up space. Plus we need room in the garage for Brad's motorbike.

ALEX  
Bollocks to his bloody motorbike  
they're MY models! Do you have any  
idea how long that Big Ben took me to  
build?! Well?! Do you?!

Rachel bursts into TEARS.

BRADLEY  
(To Rachel)  
It's alright, I'll take it from here.

ALEX  
Oh you'll "take it from here" will  
you? Like you're so perfect?! What's  
next? Starting your own orphanage?  
Freeing the Donkeys?!

RACHEL  
That was ONE fun run!

Bradley stands up.

BRADLEY  
Come on, I'll give you a hand..

ALEX  
No! Sod off!

BRADLEY  
Look, let's not make this into a big  
deal, yeah?

Bradley goes to take Alex by the forearm.

ALEX  
(Not confident)  
Don't touch me. Touch me and I'll  
attack, OK. I will unleash hell fury  
on you Bradley and don't think I  
wont!

BRADLEY  
Nobody's talking about violence, but  
remember, I am a black belt.

ALEX  
Oh yeah, I almost forgot. I mean you  
only mention it, what? Every five  
minutes. "Oh look at me, I'm Brad, I  
can speak Dutch and I know Karate".

BRADLEY  
Jujitsu.



ALEX  
Karate, cock-jitsu, whatever!

Awkward silence.

BRADLEY  
Come on...

ALEX  
No! I'm not leaving, call the police  
if you have to! I'm not going  
anywhere, so you can fuck off!

EXT. DRIVEWAY - ALEX'S HOUSE - DAY

Alex's CAR, a crap FORD KA sits in the driveway. He sits in the driver's seat with the engine running. Various BOXES and BIN BAGS fill the back seats.

He talks with Rachel through the open driver's side window. Bradley stands by the front door.

ALEX  
Come on Rach. What about all the good  
times? Our trips to Turkey?

RACHEL  
Alex I will always remember our time  
together. How you made me feel,  
everything you've done for me, but  
things haven't felt right in a while  
and you know it.

Alex hangs his head, knows she's right.

ALEX  
Three years. Three years and it ends  
like this? Where am I supposed to go?

RACHEL  
I bumped into your brother in the  
supermarket...

ALEX  
Brilliant.

RACHEL  
I didn't say anything but, he said  
he'd love to have you around more.  
Maybe you could give him a call?

Alex scoffs, shakes his head.

ALEX  
 Been planning this a while then?

Rachel fights tears but loses the battle. She affectionately places her hand onto Alex's which is resting on the open window, walks back into the house.

Alex winds the window up, REVERSES out the driveway at speed. He takes one FINAL LOOK at the house. Bradley gives him a cocky WINK and a smug SMILE from the doorway, walks back inside, closes the door. Alex drives away.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Alex SOBS hysterically. A JAMES BLUNT SONG plays loudly on the radio. There's a MCDONALD'S PAPER BAG on the PASSENGER SEAT. Alex removes a BURGER, takes a giant BITE, slurps on a MILKSHAKE, GAGS on the burger as he continues to cry.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - DAY

Alex is PARKED up on the hard shoulder. He VOMITS VIOLENTLY into the MCDONALD'S BAG. He looks at a PHOTO attached to the dashboard.

ON THE PHOTO: Him and Rachel are sat on a TURKISH BEACH together. Arm in arm, smiling, happy. He throws up again.

EXT. BRISTOL SUBURB - DAY

Alex's car parks up at the side of the road. A housing estate. Lower middle class. He gets out, faint DRUM AND BASS MUSIC from a nearby house.

DELIVERY DRIVER  
 (O.C)  
 Just come to the door!

CHRIS  
 (O.C)  
 You've almost got it! You're so close man!

Alex looks across the street at a HOUSE where the music is coming from. His brother, CHRIS, late 20's, greasy swept back hair, worn Pajamas, leans out of a SECOND FLOOR WINDOW. He holds a thin piece of ROPE. Below, AT THE FRONT DOOR, stands a DELIVERY DRIVER, 40's, PLASTIC TAKEAWAY BOXES in his arms.

CHRIS  
Yes, it's re-attached! Try it again.

DELIVERY DRIVER  
Fuck sake.

The delivery driver puts the boxes into a SMALL WICKER BASKET that's attached to the rope. Chris pulls up on the rope and the basket begins to be hoisted up towards Chris.

CHRIS  
We have lift off! Legend!

DELIVERY DRIVER  
Wanker!

The delivery driver leaves on his PUSH BIKE. Alex approaches as Chris retrieves the basket.

ALEX  
Chris?

CHRIS  
Alex? I haven't seen you in ages!  
What's happening man?

ALEX  
Life. Can we talk?

CHRIS  
Course. Hey, what do you think of my invention? Pretty good innit?

Chris FUMBLES three of the TAKEAWAY BOXES as he attempts to retrieve them from the basket. They FALL, SPLATTER on the overgrown FRONT GARDEN below. Various SAUCES, NOODLES and bits of CHINESE TAKEAWAY litter the GRASS. Chris looks down, assesses the carnage.

CHRIS  
Well that's the black bean fucked.  
Chicken balls might be alright though. Would you mind?

ALEX  
Would I mind what? Picking up your dirty chicken balls from the garden?!

CHRIS  
I won't be long. I just gotta find my keys.

**END OF EXTRACT**