

# **FRED, TED, JACK + HAROLD**

## **a Serial Killer Comedy**

**by Matt Fox**

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## **Fred, Ted, Jack & Harold**

### **Characters**

**Fred – 40s/50s. Male, White, Dark haired. Broad Gloucestershire accent, office worker**

**Ted – 30s/40s. Male, White, Dark haired. Good looking, Soft American accent, office worker**

**Jack – 20s, Female, White, London accent, office worker**

**Harold – 50s, Male, White, Bearded, Light Yorkshire accent, office worker**

**Liz – 30s, Female, White, Well spoken, Office Manager**

**Myra – 20s, Female, White, Manchester accent, Liz's PA**

### **Setting**

**An office block consisting of a main office and a manager's office**

### **Scene 1**

***Fred, Ted, Jack & Harold are sat at individual workstations in a bland office environment. They are dressed in general office attire, but with exception of Ted are all a little scruffy. They are all staring at their computer screens and there is total silence. Occasionally they type something, but largely there's nothing really happening. This goes on for a while.***

**Harold:** Did someone do that monthly report for Liz in the end?

***Silence***

**Harold:** Anyone?

***Silence***

**Harold:** I'll take that as a no then shall I?

***Silence***

**Harold:** I don't know why it's always me that has to do it.

**Ted:** You're just better at them than us.

**Harold:** I'm just the only bloody person here who has any pride in what they do. Do you all want to get sacked?

**Jack:** No one's ever been sacked.

**Harold:** Someone must have been. You have to sack people who don't pull their weight.

**Fred:** Nope. No one's ever been sacked. Very rare to have that kind of job security these days.

**Silence**

**Harold:** So you're really going to all leave me to do the report then?

**Silence**

**Harold:** (*under breath*) No wonder this place is going to the dogs.

**The other three are all silently amused by Harold's grumbling**

**Ted:** You know you really need to relax Harold. You're going to give yourself an aneurysm.

**Fred:** Yeah. It's not worth it mate. You got to put stuff in perspective. No one's gonna die if we don't get our report in on time.

**Harold:** It's not about people dying, it's about having pride in your work. We're employed to do a job to the best of our ability and I'm not prepared to let the tawdriness of you three damage my chances of getting a good mark in this year's review.

**Jack:** Who cares what mark you get? What do we receive for getting a good mark? Do we get a pay rise? No. Do we get more time off? No. Do we get anything worth working harder for?

**Harold:** We might get promoted? I have ambitions.

**Jack:** You're too old to have ambitions. Anyone your age still working at our level should have given up on your ambitions years ago.

**Harold:** That's blatant ageism. I had a whole other career before I came here. A wonderful career, I was respected and loved. A qualified professional.

**Fred:** So what happened then? You must have really buggered it up to end up here.

**Harold:** It doesn't matter what happened...suffice to say I had to change careers, and am now here. Changing careers is a perfectly reasonable thing to do in this day and age.

**Ted:** People don't generally leave a job where they've been a 'qualified professional' for pushing pens in an office unless something went wrong. What did you do Harold?

**Harold:** That is absolutely none of yours or anyone else's business. I decided I wanted a change and wasn't too proud to start at the bottom with you under achievers.

**Ted:** I have a psychology degree from the University of Washington.

**Harold:** A lot of good that's done you.

**Ted:** At least I didn't get fired from some big important job and end up here filling in spreadsheets.

**Fred:** Well I ain't got no qualifications...and I do the same job as you two boffins. Seems like you wasted your time.

**Jack:** Me neither; and I'm younger than all of you.

**Ted:** If you think university is just about what you'll earn when you leave then you're missing the point entirely. I went for the experience, the freedom, and the women.

**Fred:** I got plenty of women working on farms, don't you worry about that.

**Ted:** I'm sure you did...but I've always preferred ones without potato mould in their hair.

**Harold:** Well I've been happily married for decades. Once you find the right one you stick with them. I've made huge sacrifices for my wife.

**Fred:** I got a wife. Not my first I'll grant, but I've stuck with her for years. We've been through a lot together. I don't think you two (*indicating Ted & Jack*) have any idea what it means to love someone for better or worse.

**Ted:** All sounds horribly dull to me. I'm more of a field player.

**Jack:** I've had some intense relationships...I'm not married, but they still count.

**Fred:** You don't seem like the wife kind if I'm honest.

**Jack:** Come on now Fred, I know they're a bit backwards in Gloucester, but times have changed.

**Fred:** I'm not saying anything. I just assumed you was a bit the other way, you know.

**Jack:** What Fred? What did you assume?

**Ted:** Yeah Fred? What did you think she was into?

**Harold:** Come on all of you, this isn't a bloody playground. I don't wish to know the sordid details of your lives.

**Jack:** There's nothing sordid about it Harold. I'm just interested to know what Fred here thought?

**Fred:** Oh for Christ's sake...I assumed you was a lesbo. Not that there's anything wrong with it...but calling yourself Jack...is that short for Jacqueline?

**Jack:** Mary actually. My parents seemed to think that giving me a Victorian name was a good thing to do.

**Fred:** Why Jack then?

**Jack:** Why not? It's universal. Jack the lad.

**Fred:** But you're a girl.

**Ted:** I think you want to stop digging there Fred.

**Jack:** And for your information I'm not a lesbian, I'm not anything, I'm just me.

**Harold:** Oh for God's sake...can we just get back to what we're doing, the office isn't the place for this.

**Jack:** I think you'll find Harold, that this office has a very clear view on this and if I so wished I could go straight to Liz and report Fred here for being wholly inappropriate, asking personal questions and making assumptions about me that are none of his business.

**Fred:** Come on now. I wasn't trying to upset anyone. You don't need to take offense.

**Jack:** I'm just messing with you Fred. I couldn't care less really.

**Fred:** So have you ever done it with a woman then?

**Jack:** Oh for god sake... Have you ever done it with a man?

**Fred:** What? God no...I'm all about women.

**Jack:** What about you Ted? You're a metrosexual?

**Ted:** Me? I love woman...I really love them. There have been so many. I travelled all round the states for women. I'm not bragging, but I've probably slept with more women than all of you put together. It's just a matter of being charming.

**Harold:** Right. That's enough. I don't generally agree with the modern obsession with political correctness, but I think this has got wholly inappropriate and I will be reporting it to Liz if the conversation does not stop right now. We are here to work, not boast about our sordid sexual exploits.

**Ted:** Don't get your panties in a twist Harry...we were just having a bit of fun. You didn't mind did you Jack?

**Harold:** It doesn't matter if she minded or not. I minded.

**Fred:** Blimey. You try and have a laugh and lighten the mood and there's always some bloody spoil sport. Work doesn't have to be dull you know.

**Jack:** Come on guys. Let's be nice and civil. I think Harold has a point. Liz will go ape shit if she hears half of this stuff. Let's save it for the pub.

***Silence. Everyone goes back to their computer monitors.***

**Fred:** So have you slept with any women then Jack?

**Ted:** My God Fred, are you sat there nursing a hardon?

**Harold:** Right that's it, I'm getting Liz.

***Harold stands up and moves towards the office door.***

**Jack:** Come on Harold sit down. I have as a matter of fact Fred, now stop acting like a child.

**Fred:** Nice...how many?

**Jack:** Oh for God's sake...five Fred, bloody five...do you want their names and addresses?

**Fred:** No no...but if you've got any pictures?

**Jack:** Fuck off Fred.

**Ted:** I've slept with hundreds.

**Jack:** Good for you Ted.

***At that moment there is a flicker/dimming of the lights***

**Jack:** Did it just get colder in here?

**Harold:** It's Liz...she's coming.

**Ted:** Hold onto your butts!

**Fred:** Oh Christ almighty.

***They all make the appearance of working.***

***There's a redness added to the lighting. After a moment Liz enters. She positions herself in the middle of the stage right between the 4 desks. She surveys them for a moment.***

**Liz:** It's my favourite time of year team.

**Silence**

**Liz: (to herself)** “Why’s that Liz?”

**Silence**

**Liz:** Do you really want to know that much team?

**Silence**

**Liz: (to herself)** We really do Liz.

**Silence**

**Liz:** Well if you insist. It’s review season. The time of year when I get to look at all the hard work you have put in over the last 12 months and have the opportunity to celebrate each and everyone one of you. Can I get a woo for that?

**Silence**

**Liz:** I can’t hear you. Can I get a woo for that?

**The other 4 all half-heartedly woo**

**Liz surveys them all for a moment. Finally she approaches Ted.**

**Liz:** Darling Ted. My all American boy. Still breaking hearts?

**Ted:** Still trying Liz.

**Liz leans over his screen and is uncomfortably close to him.**

**Liz:** Seem to be quite a few red emails still on here Ted. They’re not going to get answered all on their own are they?

**Ted:** No Liz. I’ll be staying late if they’re not done.

**Liz: (whispered in his ear)** Is that just so we’ll have the office to ourselves darling Teddy?

**Ted:** No Liz, I mean yes Liz, I mean...I need to get this work all done.

**Liz: (formally)** Yes you do...you’re not here to just sit around looking pretty.

**Liz surveys the room some more**

**Liz:** Did you shower this morning Fred?

**Fred:** Sorry what?

**Liz:** Did you apply soap and water to your body to ensure that this office doesn’t smell like a cow shed?

**Fred:** I don’t think that’s any of your business...no offense like.

**Liz:** Oh but you see it is Fred. It’s the very heart of my business. I’m here to ensure that you and your colleagues have a pleasant and inoffensive working environment so you can all achieve your full potential. The smell that is currently being emitted from your various unwashed crevices is in direct contradiction to that duty of care, and as such is damaging to the entire harmony of this workspace.

**Fred:** It’s not healthy to wash every day.

**Liz:** For you or for the parasites living upon you?

**Fred:** You need a bit of dirt to build up your immunity. I never get ill.

**Liz:** I would imagine that's because the germs can't find a viable access point through the many layers of grime which no doubt clog your various orifices.

**Fred:** I think you're being rather offensive there if truth be told.

**Liz:** Not as offensive as the fug of filth that's emanating from you this very moment. Office bathroom, now and don't come back until you smell like a bowl of lavender.

***Liz stares at Fred for a moment and he doesn't move. The others all seem genuinely shocked.***

**Liz:** Don't make me ask twice Fred.

***Fred eventually stands and awkwardly exits the room, sniffing himself.***

**Liz:** Well that's much fresher all round isn't it team?

***Silence***

**Liz:** Isn't it team.

**All (*mumbled*)** Yes Liz.

***Liz surveys the room a little longer and then turns her attention at Jack. She saunters over and again positions herself uncomfortably close.***

**Liz:** Jack Jack Jack...my funny little he/she...

***Jack doesn't answer***

**Liz:** I have a lesbian side...did I ever tell you about it?

**Jack:** I'm not a lesbian.

**Liz:** We weren't talking about you were we Jack...

***Jack doesn't answer***

**Liz:** I've always had a real affection for young women...very young. It's something about their flawless skin I think...the ravages of time haven't affected them and they are as tight and perfect as little china dolls.

**Jack:** Have you considered face creams? I think some of them can really help with the crow's feet?

**Liz:** You're funny Jack...if you weren't so fascinatingly androgynous I'd take offense.

**Jack:** Well glad my oddness keeps you amused...I really must get on with this though...unlike Ted I have no intension of staying late, so I'd better get on.

***Liz turns to Harold***

**Liz:** You would do well to take a leaf out of young Jack's book here Harold...she's got her priorities straight. Old duffers like you are the past and she's the future. How long do you think you can hang on here until you can no longer keep up? You must be over 65 by now...

**Harold:** They removed the age of compulsory retirement some years ago...you should surely be aware of that?

**Liz:** I couldn't care less what they decided...if I decide you're too old to be in my office then you're gone...surely you're not foolish enough to believe that laws and rules make any difference to who gets hired and fired? We just have to be a bit more creative with the reason these days.

**Harold:** You know that you're saying all this out loud don't you...that I have witnesses to what must by now be a whole raft of workplace bullying and harassment. I simply have to fill in a grievance form and I could have you disciplined and possibly sacked in days...

**Liz:** Disciplined? I didn't think you had it in you Harold...you're making me excited...

**Harold:** This is no laughing matter...I genuinely am flabbergasted that you think this level of blatant abuse won't go unchallenged.

**Liz:** But who are you going to tell Harold? Who's going to listen to your whining? No one cares! Not one of this collection of spineless wasters will back you up. You're just an old man with nothing but his resentment.

**Harold:** We'll form a union.

**Liz laughs.**

**Liz:** Best of luck with that...a union of 4 isn't going to carry much weight.

**Harold:** We'll get the rest of the staff involved. There must be hundreds of people working here...

**Liz:** More than that I'd say.

**Harold:** Well then, that's plenty...we'll go on strike. Then what will you do?

**Liz:** You can't go on strike...

**Harold:** Of course we can...it's a fundamental right.

**Liz:** But you have no rights...not here at least. You all forfeited your rights years ago.

**Jack:** What? Everyone has rights...

**Liz:** Not you...you should really try and cast your minds back to the circumstances that lead you here.

**Ted:** It was just a job interview wasn't it?

**Liz:** Was it Ted?

**Ted:** Yes...I think...I can't actually recall now

**Jack:** It must have been...

**Harold:** Must have.

**Fred re-enters the room**

**Fred:** Right...I've washed everything thoroughly, and scraped the gunk from between my toes...that clean enough for you?

**Liz:** That's lovely Fred...Harold here has just been telling me about the union he's going to create.

**Fred:** Oh yeah...who's gonna be in that then?

**Harold:** All of us...everyone who works here...that's how unions work, its power of numbers.



**Fred:** But I don't know no one else who works here...

**Harold:** Liz says there's many hundreds.

**Liz:** Thousands, millions, billions...I don't think you have any idea of the scale of this operation Harold.

**Harold:** Let's not get carried away now...there's only seven billions people in the whole world...they don't all work here...

**Liz:** Of course not Harold...none of them work here.

**Fred:** I'm confused...everything seems to have got weird since I went for a wash.

**Ted:** Is this some sort of team exercise Liz?

**Liz:** It's all just an exercise Ted...

**Ted:** Right, I'm confused now...

***Liz looks at her watch***

**Liz:** Lunchtime...there should be a hot Panini waiting for me.

***Liz exits the room.***

**Jack:** She's actually got creepier.

**Ted:** I get this uncontrollable shiver when she whispers in my ear...

**Fred:** Don't ever accept a drink from her Ted...she'll drug you and do terrible things while you're asleep.

**Jack:** You ok Harold?

**Harold:** No I'm not.

**Ted:** She just likes to make herself feel important...you shouldn't take it to heart.

**Fred:** Come on now mate... What about this union idea? There is power in numbers.

**Harold:** But I've let Liz know what I'm thinking now...she'll try and do everything she can to stop it.

**Ted:** Well we'll join it won't we?

**Jack:** Yep.

**Fred:** Yep.

**Ted:** There you go then...4 already.

**Harold:** Liz just really pushes my buttons.

**Fred:** I think its Ted and Jack's buttons she really wants to push.

**Ted:** I got that shiver again.

**Jack:** me to.

***Scene ends***

***Blackout. Fred, Ted, Jack & Harold exit the stage.***

## Scene 2

### *Liz's office*

*Liz's office consists of her desk and chair, Myra's desk and chair and a filing cabinet. Liz sits at her desk eating. Myra sits at hers on a laptop.*

**Liz:** A union they said.

**Myra doesn't respond.**

**Liz:** A bloody union!

**Myra:** They're quite a normal thing aren't they?

**Liz:** Oh my darling...they might be elsewhere but not here.

**Myra:** There's only 4 of them...what harm could they do?

**Liz:** Unrest, disobedience, revolution. What if this got out?

**Myra:** I just don't see the harm...maybe they'd perform better if they thought they had some power?

**Liz laughs**

**Liz:** I don't care how they perform. There's no purpose to what they do.

**Myra:** There must be some purpose...otherwise what's the point?

**Liz:** Why misery...unending misery.

**Myra:** That's not a purpose...I mean it's fun, but not a purpose.

**Liz:** I'm glad I picked you to work in here with me...you're different to them, malleable, conforming...you will go far in this organisation.

**Myra:** I'm just your PA, nothing spectacular.

**Liz:** We all start somewhere...I see a great future for you.

**Myra:** By boyfriend used to say the same thing...

**Liz:** You still have a boyfriend?

**Myra:** No I went off him...I think he was a badun.

**Liz:** They all are...we're better off without them.

**Myra:** You not attached then Liz?

**Liz:** Alas no...I'm just not the settling kind.

**Myra:** Not sure I am either these days...maybe a bit of single time could be good.

**Liz:** Single time is always good...especially when you fill it with lots of different people.

**Myra:** You never been in love then Liz?

**Liz:** Oh my sweet, darling girl, I've been in love with so many people I've lost count...there are so many perfect, beautiful people out there...a girl can easily fall for them all.

**Myra:** Oh that's nice...any favourites?

**Liz:** They were all my favourite for the time I knew them...but I grow bored so quickly Myra...I go from passion to disinterest in the blink of an eye...and then they just need to go.

**Myra:** Oh that's sad...I loved my boyfriend...I'd have stayed with him forever, whatever he wanted me to do.

**Liz:** That's what I like about you Myra, you're a follower, a server of others...we can't all be leaders in this world.

**Myra:** Being a leader has its dangers...those four out there might start a revolution and then it could be your head on a pike.

**Liz laughs**

**Liz:** Those four couldn't start a fire in a hell... This union will be the dampest of damp squibs that's ever been attempted...I'm actually tempted not to crush it straight away just to see how far they get.

**Myra:** Oh you do have a lovely smile when you're dismissing people Liz.

**Liz:** Well I think the whole of you is rather charming my dear.

**Myra:** Oh Liz you are a tease.

**Scene ends**

### **Scene 3**

**Main Office – Ted & Jack are sat eating**

**Jack:** It's very brave of us breaking the no food at the desk policy. Liz will go ape-shit if she finds out.

**Ted:** You have to live life on the edge sometimes don't you.

**Jack:** So why's an American working here then?

**Ted:** I honestly can't recall...must be for some reason...money I guess.

**Jack:** Plenty of jobs in America.

**Ted:** I think I needed to get away...too many ghosts.

**Jack:** I know that feeling...not sure I've been the best person.

**Ted:** Who has?...do you know I once worked for the Federal Government?

**Jack:** Nothing so impressive at my end...

**Ted:** Wasn't that impressive...just another job...wasn't the real me anyway.

**Jack:** And this is?

**Ted:** Its closer...at least I'm not supposed to be an upstanding member of society here.

**Jack:** I've never been an upstanding member of society.

**Ted:** Oh I never was...just pretending.

**Pause**

**Ted:** Do you really think Liz wants us?

**Jack:** I think Liz would like nothing more than to strip us down, tie us to her desk and perform unspeakable acts on our genitals.

**Ted:** Well if you put it like that maybe we should let her...

**Jack:** Maybe...it would make our lives easier. I don't think she's ever going to want to get elbows deep into Fred and Harold...I imagine Fred literally has things growing in there.

**Ted:** And Harold's ancient old sphincter is probably well past it.

**Jack:** Between you, me and that desk I'm not entirely opposed to a bit of rough treatment now and again...as long as I can give it back.

**Ted:** Me neither...

**Jack:** Variety is the spice of life.

**Ted:** That's so English.

**Jack:** London through and through me...born within the Bow Bells and everything.

**Ted:** Well aren't we a pair of stereotypes...the Pearly Queen and the all American Boy.

**Jack:** Yep...and the best looking people in this office.

**Ted:** I don't know... Myra's got a certain naïve charm about her...I imagine she could be very persuadable.

**Jack:** Liz'll never let you get your sordid fingers anywhere near her...she's strictly her property ...I can't even begin to imagine the things she makes her do to keep that cushy job.

**Ted:** I'm sure I saw Myra walking with a limp the other day...now I know why.

**Jack:** You're a filthy sod.

**Ted:** No worse than you.

**Jack:** True.

**Scene ends**

#### **Scene 4**

##### ***Liz's Office***

***Liz is sat at her chair facing a standing Harold with Myra is at her desk appearing to be working but listening intently to the entire conversation.***

**Harold:** So I really think you need to conduct yourself a little more respectfully...or there'll be trouble.

***Liz just looks at him long and hard. Myra's eyes flit between them and her computer.***

**Liz:** You do?

**Harold:** I do...it's very hard to be an effective member of this team when you're constantly being undermined and ridiculed by your line manager. It shows a lack of mutual respect and makes me and undoubtedly the others, feel very demotivated.

**Liz:** I see.

***Silence***

**Liz:** And do you have any suggestions as to how I should conduct myself...you are after all the elder statesman of the building and must have a vast level of life experience to draw upon?

**Harold: (*taken aback*)** Well I...I mean yes obviously I have many...what I'm really talking about is a general increase in the level of respect you show to us...some of the comments that have been made about my age for example are quite inappropriate.

**Myra:** And Fred's smell, Ted's bum, Jack's tits...

***Liz looks at Myra but then smiles.***

**Harold:** Indeed...all inappropriate.

**Liz: (*to Myra*)** And do you feel I've done anything inappropriate to you my dear? Just so we have it all out in the open.

**Myra:** Well there was that time you spanked me for that typo...and when you made me walk round the office in just my Jimmy Choos...and the time you handcuffed me to the desk...and the time...

**Liz:** Yes I think we get the idea...

***Harold is flabbergasted***

**Harold:** Well I'm not sure what to...I really don't know how you can even...this all happened here?

**Myra:** Yes right there actually (*points to desk*) well the spanking and the handcuffs anyway...

**Harold:** But there are policies, codes of conduct...dress requirements...

**Liz:** Where Harold, where are they?

**Harold:** Well there must be...that's how offices operate, that's how humans work...there is a behavioural contract between us which must not be broken...you can't spank someone in a place of work.

**Liz:** But what if they've been very, very bad?

***Myra giggles***

**Harold:** I just can't do this ...this is a mad house.

**Liz:** Do you need a moment to compose yourself?

**Harold:** Yes, no...I mean...I need to leave.

**Liz:** Well please always feel you can come in for a chat...my office door is always open as they say...though if I've closed it then probably best to knock.

***Myra giggles again***

***Harold can think of nothing else to say and exits***

**Myra:** You are so bad...poor Harold

**Liz:** Oh he loves it really...probably gone off to the lavatory for a wank.

**Pause**

**Myra:** Will you always love me Liz? Not get bored of me like the others?

**Liz:** What's bringing this on...isn't the fact that I love you now enough?

**Myra:** I just think we could be forever friends that's all.

**Liz:** Forever's a very long time my darling... let's just be now friends and see how we go.

**Myra (*a little disappointed*)** OK Liz...

***Myra blows a kiss at Liz. Liz catches it.***

**Scene ends**

## **Scene 5**

***Main office***

***Fred is alone at his desk***

**Fred:** Bloody yearly bloody reviews...what's the bloody point? I know how I've done, Liz knows how I've done, every bugger knows how I've done...why do I have to write this bollocks down? (*quotes from his computer*) 'Leading by example...please use the below space to list at least 3 times this year when you've lead by example. Please include as many facts and figures as you can'. What the bloody hell does that mean? Well I didn't take a dump in the corridor? So no one else copied me? I didn't watch animal porn on my work computer. I didn't even murder anyone...and as far as I know neither did anyone else...oh this is fucking nonsense...

When I worked on the farms we didn't have to do any of this crap. 'Please tell me about a time when you've shovelled some shit this year?' Please describe the 3 best tractor journeys you've undertaken in the last 12 months?' Please fucking outline your proudest achievement in the turnip field?'...bloody hell..

I think Liz might have a problem with my accent ...it might not be the Queen's English, it might not be the cosmopolitan gabble that everyone respects, but it's a good honest way of talking which has served my family for generations. I'm big on family, always have been...I know you get the incest jokes when you speak like I do, but that's just part of being me...the jokes I mean...

A nice big pint of cider would go down well right now...I am quite a stereotype I know, but there's nothing like some alcoholic apple juice to make everything feel better. That and a bit of the rough stuff ...I do like a forward woman, not shy to tell you what she likes...even if it's not to everyone's taste. That's one of the few things I do like about Liz...she's a sexual predator...I like that a lot in people...she knows what she's after and she just takes it...seems pretty open to most things as well...I don't think she much fancies me though, not when little miss he/she and the pretty boy are sat in the same room...and then there's the perky little darling she has in her office...oh my giddy aunt I can only imagine what she does to her when the door's closed...might set up a camera in there one day to capture the freaky wonderfulness. I love it when people are aggressive in the bedroom...really gets my apples excited.

***Fred turns back to his computer***

So 3 sodding times I've lead by example...fuck me I'm in hell.

**Scene ends**

**Scene 6**

*Liz's Office*

**Myra is sat at her desk but Liz is absent. Myra does her nails, looks in a mirror, reapplies lipstick etc. She does no actual work.**

**Myra: (to the mirror)** Who's a pretty girl then? Is it you? Are you the prettiest of all girls? Does everyone love your pretty face and perfect curves? He did, she does...they all do.

**Myra stops looking in the mirror**

Does that make me a bimbo then? I'm sure I'm not a bimbo. I've got thoughts, real thoughts about real things. Politics...sort of...world peace...love and hate, life and death...it's all in here somewhere. I think it's unfair to be disregarded just because you're pretty. I could be Prime Minister if I put my mind to it...

But they all love me don't they? They all love love love me...I'm their little pretty doll. I'll do whatever they want me to...

**She laughs. There's a knock at the door**

Who is it?

**Jack (Offstage)** Is that you Liz?

**Myra:** Oh no my lovely, just Myra...Liz is out somewhere. Come in though please.

**Jack enters**

**Jack:** Any idea when she'll be back?

**Myra:** None whatsoever...I might be able to help?

**Jack:** Yeah maybe...

**Myra:** No really, I'm not just hair and makeup...there's a big brain in here as well...

**Jack:** Well I was sort of hoping to see if she might have some kind of programme for those looking to get on in the business...like a fast track thing? I think me and her might be quite similar.

**Myra:** Oh no...you're nothing like each other...you're so...boyish...she's a proper lady.

**Jack:** Well of course we don't look the same...but our characters.

**Myra:** You're really common...she's a person of class.

**Jack:** But we're driven...we're people that like to get on with things, make stuff happen...the leaders of the world.

**Myra:** But you've been here longer than all of us and you're still an office nobody...if you were going to do something I'd have thought you'd have done it by now?

**Jack:** I'm sorry...I'm not sure why you've decided to get all offensive...I was just asking a question.

**Myra:** You were comparing yourself to Liz and you are not her.

**Jack:** OK fine, whatever...but do you know if they do any sort of talent programme thing?

**Myra:** Why would they? There's nowhere for any of you to go? You don't get out of that room just by getting round Liz.

**Jack:** You did.

**Myra:** Excuse me?

**Jack:** You got out of that room by sleeping with the boss...everyone knows.

**Myra:** I didn't.

**Jack:** You bloody did...you fingered your way into Liz's affections and got yourself a cosy little job here painting your nails.

**Myra:** I'm a personal assistant! I am an intricate part of this organisation's internal workings.

**Jack:** You're an intricate part of Liz's internal workings.

**Myra:** How dare you. I'll be telling Liz about this.

**Jack:** Look I'm sorry...don't say anything to Liz...I actually was hoping we might be friends...we're the only young women here...

**Myra:** You were suggesting I was sexually promiscuous.

**Jack:** I wasn't...and you make it sound like that's a bad thing? it's not just the men who are allowed to sleep around.

**Myra:** Oh you and your metrosexual ways...I'm an old fashioned girl.

**Jack:** You just need to take charge of yourself...you're charming and beautiful...you don't need to be anyone's sex pet.

**Myra:** I like it...I like feeling safe with someone...my boyfriend, Liz...they all make me feel safe.

**Jack:** I could make you feel safe?

**Myra:** I don't think so...

**Jack:** I'm a lot more than I look...I'm a dynamo. If I wanted I could take this place over...

**Myra suddenly appears interested.**

**Myra:** You surprise me...I thought you were one of the sheep?

**Jack:** Appearances can be deceiving...you can't really love Liz? She's dreadful.

**Myra:** She's in charge...that's what matters...she's the one with the power...no one else has that...I could be interested in anyone with power...

**Jack:** Well we're starting a union...that's power of sorts.

**Myra:** No...not real power...individuals have real power, not groups...if you want to impress me you have to do it on your own...not with that lot in there...

**Jack:** And what would gaining power win me?



**Myra:** Anything you liked...

***By this point Jack and Myra are very close together***

**Jack:** Sounds like a coup d'état might be in order...

**Myra:** I do love people who can speak foreign languages...Liz is fluent in Hungarian you know...

**Jack:** Well I do a good line in rhyming slang...My little Bobby Dazzler...I'd love to take a gander at your Raspberry Ripples...

**Myra:** Ooh you're so exotic...we don't get that in Manchester...

***They are so close now they're almost kissing, Jack leaning right over Myra***

**Jack:** And get a hand on your Morris Minor...

**At this point Liz enters**

**Liz:** What on earth is happening here?

**Myra:** Sexual harassment Liz...Jack said she wanted to look at my nipples and put her hand down my pants.

**Jack:** I thought you didn't understand me?

**Myra:** I'm not as dumb as I look.

**Liz:** How dare you come into my office and make such sordid suggestions to my staff...what on earth made you think you could try and touch my property? There will be serious consequences for this.

**Jack:** Oh yes? Well I happen to think that there might be a change happening here actually. A alteration in the power ratio. We can't carry on like this anymore and union or not we're going to topple you.

**Liz:** Oh my silly little misfit, how are you going to do that? You're nothing compared to me...no one...a spec of shit on my shoe. Do you know the things I've done? I'm the ultimate predator, I'm the queen bee. Now get out of my sight before I have Myra staple your nipples to my desk.

***Jack falters after this***

**Jack:** What? Is that a standard disciplinary measure?

**Liz:** It's a mild one from me...now get out of here...you have just created a whole world of terror for yourself.

***Jack doesn't know what to do and leaves.***

***Liz and Myra watch her go. Liz then turns to Myra***

**Liz:** You weren't encouraging that were you? I'd be very disappointed.

**Myra:** Of course not Liz...I was just leading her on so you'd catch her in the act...she's trying to overthrow you.

**Liz:** Well good luck to her with that...she has no idea what she's started. We need to deal with this little rebellion, put those fools back in their place before they do any real harm. I don't want the big boss coming up here to see me again...it's not pleasant...

**Myra:** I'm always loyal to you Liz...you're in charge...no one else.

**Liz:** Thank you my dear...you're sweet. Now fishnets and strap-on I think...to calm my nerves...

**Myra:** You're the boss.

**Scene ends**

## **Scene 7**

*The main office. Fred, Ted, Jack & Harold are at their desks.*

**Fred:** Bloody hell Harold. Your threats of industrial unrest have caused this whole bloody thing. We've never had to do our reviews like this before.

**Ted:** It will be fine, don't panic. It's just another hurdle...what can she do if she doesn't like our answers?

**Harold:** Fire us...throw us out on the scrapheap. I should have just stayed quiet.

**Ted:** I don't think this one was your fault actually Harry...I think our young friend here has made this happen.  
*(indicates Jack)*

**Jack:** Don't bloody blame me...it's that bitch Myra...frigging clit tease.

**Harold:** I'm sorry what did you say?

**Fred:** Yeah...what did you say?

**Jack:** Oh I'm sorry...prick tease all fine, but when it's about twats then it's shocking?

**Fred:** Not shocking...just fucking brilliant.

**Ted:** What did you get up to in there? Thought you were flushed when you came out...

**Jack:** I did nothing except completely get taken in by that foul blond bitch. We need to destroy her.

**Ted:** Jesus Christ Jack, you've got dark...destroy her?

**Jack:** Yes, chase her down an alleyway, cut her throat and gut the bitch.

**Fred:** Bloody hell ...the true you seems to be coming out now...and I love it. Now what I'd do would be far more private...got a lovely basement in the house perfect for that kind of thing...it'd get messy though I can tell you. Big garden to hide all the evidence in.

**Ted:** You're a very disturbing man Fred. Who even thinks of that stuff?

**Fred:** I dunno...just where my mind wanders sometimes when I'm bored...everyone must have thought about how they'd kill someone at some point?

**Ted:** Well, the problem with both of your ideas is that you're easily detectable...out in the street, in your own house...if it was me I'd travel around so no one knew where I'd be next. Try not to leave patterns.

**Harold:** I think I preferred you discussing your sexual preferences to this...

**Ted:** Oh come on now Harry...we're not actually going to do these things...it's just a hypothetical discussion...it won't hurt anyone. How would you finish someone off?

**Harold:** As cleanly and painlessly as possible. I see no benefit in making people suffer...and if you picked people who were on their last legs anyway, no one would bat an eyelid.

**Fred:** Choosing random people just cos they won't be missed is very dark Harold...I think there's someone horrible inside you waiting to get out.

**Harold:** Not at all...I was just looking at your hypothetical question and applying logic. I told you, I was once a highly respected professional...you have to control your passions and look at things coolly.

***Liz enters***

**Liz:** So team...are we excited about the new review process?

**Silence**

**Liz:** I can't hear you

**All:** Yes Liz.

**Liz:** Good...I am...nothing like a friendly 121 chat to really get to the bottom of how you've all got on this year...so who's going first?

***Silence***

**Liz:** Eeny, meeny, miney, mo...Fred. Let's get the unpleasantness out the way, and then we can get some fresh air in this room for everyone else.

***Fred doesn't move***

**Liz:** Well move then.

***Fred exits the stage and Liz follows him***

**Jack:** Poor inbred bastard

**Scene ends**

## **Scene 8**

***Liz's office***

***Liz and Myra are at their desks and Fred is sat in front of Liz. A projector has been set up which currently shows a corporate screensaver.***

**Liz:** So Fred, how do you think your year has gone?

**Fred:** Well, I...I think it's gone ok I guess...I mean no one died or anything did they?

**Liz:** And that would be your measure of a successful year would it?

**Fred:** Well it's better than the alternative? I mean...no...it's been fine I came to work and did what I needed...you can't ask more than that can you...

**Liz:** I'm rather afraid I can though Fred. Do we really want to be the people who do the bare minimum? Do we want to just cruise along and not own what we do? Do we just want to be passengers in our careers?

**Fred:** But I'm just working in an office...this ain't a career...it's just the only job I could get. I'm not the sort of person who has a career.

**Liz:** Oh Fred...that's so depressing to hear...you've got a glorious opportunity to grow and develop and all you want to do is 'do a job'...I'm genuinely confounded at your lack of ambition.

**Fred:** Just don't really think what I do here matters much...I'm not really sure what we do do, to be honest...and I'm quite happy to carry on doing that until I retire.

**Liz:** Oh darling! We don't retire...we never retire from here. This goes on and on and on...don't you all understand that yet?

***Myra takes an interest from this point***

**Fred:** Well nothing goes on forever. Jobs are just for as long as you want them...one day I'll get old and retire. That's what people do...even bloody perky tits Myra here will get old and retire one day.

**Liz:** No my dear...even my beautiful Myra won't be able to do that...though it means she'll be as young and wonderful as she is now forever...to be young forever is a dream we all share...sadly I'd lost some of my youth before I ended up here.

**Fred:** I'm a bit confused to be honest Liz...

**Myra:** So am I...I know it's lovely to be young and pretty forever, but I think I will eventually get old...horrible a thought as that is...

**Liz:** No no no no, neither of you are getting it...you don't see the blindingly obvious do you?...this job is your forever job...forever...

**Fred:** Nope...don't get it.

***Myra just looks confused***

**Liz:** It looks like we're ready for everyone's key message for this year's review...I've waited years for this.

**Myra:** For what?

**Fred:** Yeah what?

**Liz:** Time to go through your files.

***Liz pulls out a large pile of very full personal files and drops them on the desk. She also clicks the mouse so Fred's picture appears with the words 'Employee Record'***

**Fred:** Didn't even realise I had one...never seen it before.

**Liz:** Well of course you haven't...if I'd shown it to you earlier, it wouldn't be the delicious, tortuous surprise we're about to enjoy together...

**Fred:** Tortuous?

**Liz:** Agonising...

**Myra:** You wouldn't torture me Liz. Not properly anyway...

**Liz:** Oh my dear sweet girl...torturing you will be the most wonderful bit of it all...with your pretty little face...we will have so much fun.

**Scene ends**

## Scene 9

### *The main office*

#### *Harold is sat alone*

**Harold:** Left until last. That can't be good. I can only imagine that Liz is building up her big crescendo of humiliation for me. Probably gift wrapped my P45 and got all those two faced bastards I work with to do a grand, soul crushing song and dance at my expense. I don't know what I did to deserve this. A man my age shouldn't be subjected to such humiliation. It must have been something truly awful for fate to so royally break me.

#### *Liz enters the stage*

**Liz:** It's time Harold...no point putting it off any longer.

**Harold:** Look Liz, if you're going to fire me then please just do it quickly...I can't bear this waiting. I know you've had it in for me from the start, and if that's the aim of today then let's just get it done. I'm an old man; I don't deserve to be abused and mocked. Just give it to me straight and we can all get on with our lives.

**Liz:** Lives? What life...you're done with life. You actually made that decision yourself...

**Harold:** Look I know I dropped my career, fell down the ladder, but it's not the complete end of my life. There's more I can do. I could make something of myself here. I'm sorry I talked about a union, I'm sorry I was disrespectful. Please don't throw me out, I've nothing left.

**Liz:** I'll never throw you out Harold. Never ever...apart from me you're the most prolific and successful of us all...the others are small fry compared to you and me.

**Harold:** Prolific? I mean I am certainly the hardest worker, the most dedicated...I thought my efforts had been in vain. So you've noticed me?

**Liz:** Of course Harold, you're infamous...though really you all are...that's why you landed here. We only take the top in this department.

**Harold:** Really? Respect for colleagues and everything but is Fred really the top?

**Liz:** Of course...one of the best in our field.

#### *Harold is completely confused*

**Harold:** I'm sorry, and it's definitely not my mind going...but what field? Office administration?

#### *Liz pauses*

**Liz:** I think we might need to look at your file...that's what everyone has been doing...yours is quite a read.

**Harold:** OK...

**Liz:** Come on through...all will be revealed...

#### *Liz and Harold exit*

**Scene ends**

**Scene 10**

*Liz's office*

*Fred, Ted, Jack and Myra are spread around the room staring at their files. There is total silence*

*Liz enters with Harold. She picks up a file from her desk and offers him her seat.*

**Liz:** Have a seat Harold...you'll want to be sitting.

*Harold sits and takes the file. He opens it. The file contents appear on the projector when the characters start to read them.*

**Liz:** You'll see the first page is just some basic details Harold, name, date of birth, last known address...date of death...

**Harold:** Sorry what?

**Liz:** 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2004 if I'm not mistaken...I think you and Myra here are the only two who saw the new millennium in...

**Harold:** I'm sorry I've completely lost track of what's happening now...is this some kind of test? Team building or something? Is this in the review?

**Liz:** This is the review, your own review...a chance to look back on what you managed to achieve in your life...the remarkable things you did. Why don't you read some of the opening details Harold?

**Harold:** But I don't understand

**Liz:** Just indulge me...

*Harold is confused but looks at the file. The following information flashes up on the screen with a photo of the real Harold Shipman*

**'Name: Harold Frederick Shipman**

**Born: 14<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

**Died: 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2004**

**Overview: British GP and one of the most prolific serial killers in recorded history, murdering at least 250 of his patients over a 23 year period'**

**Liz:** See Harold...prolific...

**Harold:** But I don't understand...I don't see how...how am I dead? When you're dead you're dead...

**Liz:** Well that sort of attitude makes what you did even worse doesn't it Harold? No chance of an afterlife for your victims, no hope of something better...just stone cold dead.

***Harold is confounded***

**Liz:** Why don't you read your file Ted?

**Ted:** Well I'd really rather not Liz...

**Liz:** Now Ted...no point hiding who we are...best to get these things out in the open...

**Ted:** Fine...

***The following information flashes up on the screen with a photo of the real Ted Bundy***

**'Name:** Theodore Robert Bundy

**Born:** 24<sup>th</sup> November 1946

**Died:** 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989

**Overview:** American serial killer, kidnapper, rapist, burglar, and necrophile who assaulted and murdered 30 or more women and girls during the 1970s.'

**Fred:** What does necrophile mean?

**Jack:** It means he liked shagging dead people. *(Jack grabs the file from Ted and reads)* 'Bundy would often return to his victims' bodies days and weeks after their murders, to perform sexual acts on their putrefying corpses...' Nice Ted...

**Ted:** Well I don't remember any of it...sure I've thought about screwing corpses, who hasn't?...but I can't believe I actually did it...

**Liz:** Oh don't be embarrassed to admit your sexual preferences Ted...who are we to decide what's normal or acceptable? 1946 does sound like quite the year for birthing stone cold killers though...the psychotic baby boomers! What would your mothers say? Fred next I think...

***The following information flashes up on the screen with a photo of the real Fred West***

**'Name:** Frederick Walter Stephen West

**Born:** 29<sup>th</sup> September 1941

**Died:** 1<sup>st</sup> January 1995

**Overview:** an English serial killer who committed at least 12 murders between 1967 and 1987 in Gloucestershire, England, the majority with his second wife, Rosemary West...

**Fred:** Nice to include my wife in my pastimes I s'pose? Mark of a successful marriage that...

**Harold:** Are you joking? Did you not just read that? You killed 'at least' 12 people...that's absolutely outrageous...

**Liz:** Oh Harold...you don't know the half of it...he didn't just kill people...he destroyed them...some of the things our dear Fred here did, shocked even me... *(She grabs the file from Fred and reads)*. 'At least eight of the murders, involved the Wests' sexual gratification and included rape, bondage, torture and mutilation; the victims' dismembered bodies were typically buried in the cellar or garden of their home in Gloucester'

**Fred:** Blimey Ted...we're both murderous sex offenders!

**Ted:** Forgive me if I don't high five you.

**Liz:** Oh lighten up Ted...we're all friends here...your victim numbers are more than double Fred's, and you didn't even need an accomplice...I also have a feeling that if the truth were known you've killed a lot more than 30...moving about all the time you clever little psycho.

**Ted:** Well glad I beat Fred in killer top trumps...

**Liz:** There you go...lightening up already...but you're nothing compared to Harold here...over 250...can you even imagine it? How did you slaughter so many people Harold? You must have been a model of organisation....do read on and let us know...

**Harold:** I will not. This is sick and I don't want to take any part in it...you can't make me Liz...

**Liz:** You're mine forever Harold...I can make you do whatever I like...

**Harold:** No Liz...you can burn me alive for all I care, but I will not take part in this.

***Liz meanders across to Harold and stands right in front of him.***

**Liz:** Fine...

***Liz snatches Harold's file from his hand***

**Harold:** That's my personal file...it's not for anyone to read...is there no respect of personal information in this place...

**Liz:** I think we're a little beyond that now aren't we Harold?

**Harold:** I won't take part in this.

***Liz reads Harold's file***

**Harold:** Oh Harold...if you'd read on you'd see that your killings are lovely actually...just like putting someone's pet cat to sleep...those old ladies would have felt just lovely once you injected them...right up to the point their hearts stopped...

**Harold:** I don't want to hear it. I don't remember it and therefore I don't believe it...I think this whole thing has been concocted by you to destroy the remainder of my sanity and make me leave...you're a cruel, evil bitch Liz.

**Liz:** Well Harold...seems you do have got a spine after all...I'd be careful not to let that temper get any worse...don't want to add to your stunning numbers do we?

***Harold is dejected and says nothing***

**Liz:** So who have we missed? My lovely girls...how are we going to break through that glass ceiling if we always go to the boys first? So...butch or fem?...



**Myra:** I'll go Liz.

**Liz:** How bold...not like my little mouse at all...tell me Myra...do you like children?

**Myra:** Of course Liz...who doesn't like children?

**Liz:** Have a read my darling.

***Myra picks up her file and reads. The following information flashes up on the screen with a photo of the real Myra Hindley***

**'Name: Myra Hindley**

**Born: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1942**

**Died: 16<sup>th</sup> November 2002**

**Overview: English serial killer. In partnership with Ian Brady, she committed the rapes and murders of five small Children.'**

***Myra stops reading***

**Liz:** Something wrong my dear?

**Myra:** Well I just don't quite believe it Liz...it says here I was born in 1942 and died in 2002...that would make me 60...I don't look 60 do I Liz?

**Liz:** Is that really the most shocking thing you take from what you've read?

**Myra:** Yes it is Liz...that makes me the oldest person here...how am I 60 Liz?

**Liz:** You're an infamous child killer Myra...how can you be worried about anything else?

**Myra:** Because Liz, I thought you always said that you picked me for your office because I was young and pretty...when in fact I'm older than Harold...how can I be older than Harold Liz?

**Liz:** It is possible for me to make certain requests to the big boss to have certain things altered in our new recruits...all the press photography I saw had you as a young blonde bombshell...not the haggard woman who sat in a prison cell for 36 years...

**Myra:** So you made me beautiful again Liz? You gave me back my youth?

**Liz:** I have a thing for pretty young women...what can I say?

**Myra:** Oh thank you Liz...you truly are my guardian angel...

**Liz:** So you're really ok with having killed those children?...no regrets?

**Myra:** Oh it will have been for the best...the man will have made the decision...I like to have someone who decides what's best...

**Liz:** I do love you Myra.

**Myra:** Right back at you Liz...

**Jack:** Sorry to break up this touching moment Liz, but my file seems pretty short on details...

**Liz:** Oh Jack Jack Jack...of course it does...you're the original, unsolved killer...you're the most famous of us all... and still, no one knows who you are. Let's have a look shall we...

*Liz brings up Jack's slide. The following information flashes up on the screen with question mark where the other photos have been.*

**'Name: Unknown**

**Born: Unknown**

**Died: Unknown**

**Overview: Jack the Ripper is the best known name given to an unidentified serial killer believed to have been active in the Whitechapel district of London in 1888. Over one hundred Jack the Ripper suspects have been named, of which all but one is male.**

**Liz:** Told you you've been here a while...

**Jack:** More than a while...how do I not remember all that time?

**Liz:** Working in offices is so tedious that most people lose track of the years eventually...

**Jack:** It's over a century...

**Liz:** It's a really dull office...

**Jack:** And you chose to bring back the one female suspect from 100 male ones?

**Liz:** Oh darling Jack...you were my original when I started to pick this team all those years ago...you were the one who sparked the whole idea in my head... The world doesn't know what you looked like and the theories are endless...the face I've given you is as probable as any other, so why not make it fascinating, why not go for the best possible face...a woman's face...serial killing is such a penis fest, when you get a chance for a woman to be part of it, then why not take it?

**Jack:** So my parents really did call me Mary? I just said that because it annoyed all the sexists...

**Liz:** A memory must have lodged in your mind...Mary Pearcey I believe...hanged for killing a mother and her baby...

**Jack:** So I've killed two people even if I'm not Jack the Ripper?

**Liz:** And butchered seven if you are...

**Jack:** Jesus...

**Liz:** Cheer up...you're a celebrity. You all are...the world is absolutely fascinated by all of you...you couldn't have got more famous if you'd tried...

**Ted:** It's not good though is it?

**Liz:** What's good? What's bad? What's life or death? We're just specks of dust in this universe...none of it matters...kill 5 people, kill 50, kill 500...who cares in the end?

***The other 5 are all silent and dejected***

**Liz:** Well team...I think that probably concludes this year's review...thanks very much for taking part and I really hope you all feel you know yourselves a little bit better now?

**She checks her watch**

**Liz:** Just look at the time...lunch I think...who fancies a Panini?

**Scene ends**

**End of Act 1**