

MEN BEHAVING BADLY

by

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SERIES VI

Episode one:

" Stag Night "

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[PRE-TITLES:]

1 INT. GARY'S BEDROOM DAY

LATE EVENING. GARY AND DOROTHY ARE SITTING UP IN BED. DOROTHY IS READING A BOOK. GARY IS WATCHING TV.

WE SWITCH THE ANGLE TO REVEAL THAT IT IS IN FACT A TINY (4-INCH) PORTABLE TV. GARY CHUCKLES. HE SQUINTS AT THE SCREEN, THEN CHUCKLES AGAIN.

DOROTHY: What's on?

GARY: I can't tell, the screen's too small.

DOROTHY: We always said if we became the kind of couple who watched TV in bed we might as well split up.

GARY: (CONCENTRATING ON TV) Okay. Close the door quietly on your way out.

THEY CONCENTRATE ON THEIR TV AND BOOK.

DOROTHY: (NOT LOOKING AT HIM) When I went away on that sailing weekend did you sleep with anyone?

GARY: (SHIFTY) Sorry?

DOROTHY: When I went away did you sleep with a woman?

GARY: How do you mean 'woman'?

DOROTHY: A woman. They're the ones who have what you and Tony call 'chest puppies'.

GARY: Absolutely *not*! *Absolutely* not, love! No! No way! Ask Tony-

DOROTHY: You did, didn't you.

GARY HESITATES.

GARY: It was the most *meaningless* thing I have done in my entire life. I might as well have been... putting a tortoise into its box for the winter.

DOROTHY TAKES THIS IN, OBVIOUSLY HURT.

GARY: You said yourself, love, sex without commitment is just two people stuffing bits of body into each

other. And to be fair, you've done quite a bit of stuffing yourself.

DOROTHY: Gary, let's not do any more stuffing with other people.

GARY: Well, it's out of *my* system. You could put me in a room full of women wearing only tiny little pants and I'd probably just want to chat.

DOROTHY: Maybe we should get married.

GARY SCOFFS, ASSUMING SHE IS JOKING.

DOROTHY: No, I mean it-

GARY: (JOINING IN) Yes, why not. Yes. (A BEAT)
Well, we've tried everything else.

DOROTHY: You know what I mean though, perhaps we need something to show that we're serious about being together.

GARY: Or would buying a dog make the same point in a slightly more fun way?

DOROTHY: No, and this might help us relax more together. No more looking over our shoulders for someone better.

GARY: Mm. (ON CONSIDERATION) And... could we have a proper TV in bed?

DOROTHY: Yes.

GARY: Okay. Let's get married.

DOROTHY: Propose to me properly.

HE REACHES OVER AND TAKES A WRAPPED CONDOM OUT OF A PACKET. HE UNWRAPS IT AND BITES OFF THE TIP. THEY LOOK INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES AFFECTIONATELY AND GARY PUTS THE ROLLED-UP CONDOM ON DOROTHY'S ENGAGEMENT FINGER.

DOROTHY: Oh Gary. You've bought me a ring.

OPENING TITLES AND CREDITS.

2 INT. LIVING ROOM NIGHT

A FEW WEEKS LATER. TONY AND GARY ARE SITTING

IN A SIMILAR POSITION ON THE SOFA WATCHING THE TV, LAGER PROBABLY IN HAND. GARY IS IDLY LEAFING THROUGH A COPY OF *BRIDES MAGAZINE*.

TONY: You know Mark Phillips married Princess Anne in his uniform. Do you reckon he'd forgotten to pick his suit up from the dry cleaners so he thought, oh bugger I'll have to wear what I had on yesterday?

GARY: Yeah. Still, it could have been worse, he could have ended up in a tank top.

TONY: Yeah. And you know Princess Di's dress was all creased when she went up the aisle, I reckon that was because the Queen had been hogging the iron.

GARY: Uh huh.

TONY: 'Cos you're not telling me, when you're nineteen odd, you've got the confidence to barge over to a Queen and say "How long are you going to be ironing that... top? Queen."

GARY: No.

TONY: So is Dorothy going to wear white?

GARY: No, she said she was thinking about grey or brown. (RE. MAGAZINE) Wedding night lingerie.

GARY GOES QUIET. TONY LEANS OVER AND STARES. GARY QUIETLY PUTS A CUSHION ON HIS LAP. TONY DOES THE SAME. GARY TURNS THE PAGE, TO EVEN RAUNCHIER LINGERIE ADVERTS. GARY AND TONY REACH OVER FOR BIGGER CUSHIONS AND REPLACE THE SMALLER CUSHIONS ON THEIR LAPS.

THEY REACH OVER FOR A D.I.Y. MAGAZINE AND THE *RADIO TIMES* (E.G. PATRICK MOORE ON THE COVER) AND GAZE AT THEM. AFTER A MOMENT THEY THROW THEIR CUSHIONS ASIDE.

GARY: So are you ever going to get married?

TONY: Yeah, I'd marry Debs tomorrow.

GARY: Course.

TONY: Oh no, I can't make tomorrow, they're doing free teas down at the library.

THEY WATCH TV.

GARY: No, it's great, marriage. No more messing around. As the saying goes: You don't go out for a steak when you've got hamburger at home.

THEY THINK ABOUT THIS.

TONY: No, the other-

GARY: -other way round, yeah.

TONY: (GLANCING AT LINGERIE ADS) Although sometimes you really want to wolf down a hamburger, don't you.

GARY: Yeah, you do. Still, the great thing is, nothing will change. I'll still be the same Gary and she'll still be the same unique...

HE PETERS OUT, WATCHING THE TV.

TONY: Dorothy-

GARY: Dorothy.

TONY: Gary, if I was a girl, with a girl's bottom and everything, would you marry me?

GARY LOOKS ACROSS AT TONY, WHO SEEMS RATHER NEEDY.

GARY: Yes mate.

TONY: Ta mate.

TONY PICKS UP A WELL-THUMBED BOOK: "The Best Man's Duties".

TONY: Okay. The stag night.

GARY: The stag night. Can I just say, I don't want anything too sleazy. That's all a bit of a cliché.

TONY: Yeah, right.

GARY: Strippers though, obviously-

TONY: Obviously.

THEY THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A BIT. THEY REACH FOR THEIR BIG CUSHIONS AND PUT THEM BACK ON THEIR LAPS.

3 INT. DEBORAH'S FLAT DAY

DOROTHY AND DEBORAH ARE SITTING ON THEIR SOFA, PENSIVE, AN ECHO OF THE PREVIOUS SCENE. DOROTHY OBVIOUSLY LIVES HERE TOO.

DEBORAH: So, are you looking forward to it?

DOROTHY: (BRAVE SMILE) Yes. I suppose I'm just a bit sad that... I'm not marrying somebody else.

DEBORAH: Come on, Gary's sort of special. What other man would offer to pierce his nipples as a wedding present?

DOROTHY: Ton-

DEBORAH: Apart from Tony.

DOROTHY: Mm. Maybe that's the trouble. You never felt that if Humphrey Bogart had married Lauren Bacall in *Casablanca* he would have been happy to spend the honeymoon dabbing disinfectant on his nipples.

DEBORAH: Well, it's a different era, isn't it.

DOROTHY: (GLOOMILY) Yes it is.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. DEBORAH GETS UP.

4 INT. DEBORAH'S HALL CONT. ACTION

DEBORAH COMES THROUGH AND ANSWERS THE DOOR. FOR NO PARTICULAR REASON TONY HAS PULLED HIS HEAD INSIDE HIS JACKET AND IS HOLDING UNDER HIS ARM A BALL WITH A CHILDISH FACE PAINTED ON IT, AS THOUGH CARRYING HIS OWN HEAD.

DEBORAH: (NOT REACTING) Hello Tony.

SHE GOES INSIDE. TONY TAKES A HESITANT STEP INSIDE, UNSURE WHERE HE IS.

5 INT. DEBORAH'S LIVING ROOM CONT. ACTION

DEBORAH COMES IN, FOLLOWED BY TONY, NOW LOOKING NORMAL.

DOROTHY: Hi Tony.

TONY: Hello Dorothy. Or should I say: hello Gary's future little lady.

DOROTHY: Yes, you can say it, but then I'll have to kill you.

TONY: It's weird isn't it, that in a week's time you'll be Gary's other half.

DOROTHY: I thought we'd already established that Gary's two halves are Homer Simpson and Christopher Biggins.

DEBORAH: So what have you been up to Tony?

TONY: (PROUDLY) Well, did I tell you Gary's asked me to be his Best Man-

DEBORAH: } Yes you have mentioned it...

DOROTHY: } Yes we've gathered that...

TONY: I have to organise the stag night. It says in my book (GETTING OUT HIS BEST MAN BOOK) "Allow the groom to have fun but take care not to let his behaviour destroy the marriage". So I wanted to know if there were any things, you know, that you didn't want us to do.

DOROTHY: I'll just leave that to your own conscience shall I?

TONY: So where does that leave us on sucking whipped cream off a-

DOROTHY: I don't want to know the details!

TONY: Oh, fine. How's the studying going Deborah?

DEBORAH: Really well.

TONY: Can I help you with any stories?

DEBORAH: We don't do stories, we do essays.

TONY: Oh, okay.

DEBORAH: Tony put the bra back.

TONY WORDLESSLY TAKES OUT OF HIS POCKET THE BRA OF DEBORAH'S HE HAS SURREPTITIOUSLY TAKEN OUT OF A WASHING BASKET. HE PUTS IT BACK.

DEBORAH GIVES TONY A LONG LOOK.

DEBORAH: Tony, you seem a bit...

TONY: (SMILES) What? Groovy?

DEBORAH: No-

TONY: Snazzy?

DEBORAH: No, a bit pathetic. (WITH SYMPATHY) Do you think you're keeping your mind active enough these days?

TONY: Yeah, I work two nights a week at the Crown. That keeps my mind as sharp as a... (LONG PAUSE) stick.

DEBORAH: What do you do during the days?

TONY: Well, in the mornings I tend to sit and... Just sit. Then I make lunch - a cheese sandwich on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, a baked-bean sandwich on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Then I... sit down again, until the Children's Programmes come on, when I have a cup of tea and a biscuit, except on Friday, when I have a small cake.

EVERYONE TAKES THIS IN.

DOROTHY: So it's a full life then.

TONY: Yeah, brilliant.

DEBORAH: Why don't you try to get a regular job?

TONY: Well, routines, you see, I'm no good at routines.

DOROTHY: There's a job advertised on the noticeboard at the hospital, in Obstetrics. They need agents for birthing pools. You work from home.

TONY: What's a birthing pool?

DOROTHY: For women who have their babies at home and want them to be born in water.

TONY: That's a bit weird isn't it?

DOROTHY: Never mind.

TONY: No, I'm interested.

TONY LOOKS AT DOROTHY WITH A SELF-CONSCIOUSLY 'INTERESTED' EXPRESSION.

DEBORAH: Knickers, Tony.

TONY AUTOMATICALLY PUTS SOME OF DEBORAH'S KNICKERS BACK IN THE BASKET AND GOES BACK TO HIS 'INTERESTED' EXPRESSION.

6 INT. OFFICE DAY

GEORGE IS SITTING AT HIS DESK, ANTHERA IS FILING. GARY IS FINISHING AN IRATE PHONE CALL.

GARY: (INTO PHONE) Yeah, you too mate, sit and swivel.

HE HANGS UP.

GARY: (MILDLY) So, that was a no.

GEORGE SMILES AT GARY, WHO GOES BACK TO THE ROLODEX OF PHONE NUMBERS ON HIS DESK.

GARY: Did you have a stag night George?

GEORGE: Yes. Some chums and I went to see the film *Whistle Down The Wind* starring Hayley Mills.

GARY: That was it, was it?

GEORGE: We had a sherry beforehand.

GARY: Oh, that's alright then. For a moment I thought it might all have been rather tame.

GARY HAS DIALLED ANOTHER PHONE NUMBER.

GARY: (INTO PHONE) Hello, is that Colin Attwater? It's Gary Strang, how are you? We met briefly at the Happy Eater just outside Taunton in 1992. Yup. Well, I'm getting married and wondered if you'd like to come to my stag night. How do you know you're busy? I haven't told you when it is. Okay, well, your decision. Bye, specky.

HE FLICKS THROUGH THE ROLODEX AGAIN FOR ANOTHER NUMBER, THEN LOOKS UP TO FIND ANTHERA AND GEORGE LOOKING AT HIM.

GEORGE: Are you having trouble finding chums for your stag night?

GARY: No.

ANTHERA: At least you can count on Tony and George.

GEORGE SMILES AGAIN. GARY LOOKS UNEASY.

GARY: Oh, I don't think it's something George would enjoy.

ANTHEA: Why, what will you be doing?

GARY: Oh, you know.

ANTHEA'S EXPRESSION.

GARY: No, you don't, do you. (DIALLING ANOTHER NUMBER) Well, certain traditions have grown up whereby the groom is allowed to drink alcohol till he bleeds and indulge in, um...

GEORGE AND ANTHEA ARE ALL EARS. GARY IS GRATEFUL FOR THE INTERRUPTION.

GARY: (INTO PHONE) Hello, Simon Watkins! It's Gary Strang, how are you, we met at the Barnet Sales Forum in 1989- Oh, when did he leave? How about you, do you want to come to my stag night? Okay, fine.

HE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN, DEFLATED. GEORGE IS LOOKING EXPECTANT.

GARY: Okay you can come.

ANTHEA: Oh thanks.

GARY: Not you.

7 INT. KITCHEN DAY

TONY HAS PUSHED BACK THE KITCHEN TABLE AND SPREAD OUT WHAT LOOKS LIKE A PADDLING POOL AND VARIOUS ACCESSORIES.

HE HAS THE TELEPHONE CRADLED UNDER HIS CHIN AS HE STUDIES AN INSTRUCTION BOOKLET, AND IS MEANWHILE USING A FOOT PUMP TO INFLATE THE POOL. IN HIS OTHER HAND HE HAS A LEAFLET ADVERTISING A SLEAZY NIGHTCLUB.

TONY: (INTO PHONE) Hi, is that *Cheeks*? Can you tell me if your club would it be suitable for a small group of men on an outing? Great. So do the girls, like, (VOICE BREAKING) take everything off? Brilliant. And then... They... (JOINING IN) put them back on again, right. No, fair do's. One of the gentlemen isn't as young as he was so could he be excused individual lap-dancing? He'll be the one in the cardigan. Okay, bye. See you tomorrow.

TONY HANGS UP BUT IS STILL PUMPING. HE LOOKS AT VARIOUS ACCESSORIES: A LARGE METAL STRAINER, PLASTIC TUBING, SURGICAL RUBBER GLOVES... THE PUMPING APPEARS TO BE MAKING NO DIFFERENCE. HE GIVES UP AND FINDS AN ELECTRIC PUMP. HE TRIES TO GET A HAND IN THE RUBBER GLOVES BUT CAN'T. UNABLE TO RESIST, TONY ATTACHES THE GLOVE TO THE ELECTRIC PUMP. THE GLOVE BALLOONS TO A HUGE SIZE AND EXPLODES.

IMPRESSED, TONY LOOKS AROUND FOR SOMETHING ELSE TO INFLATE. HE ATTACHES THE PUMP TO THE POOL. IT QUICKLY INFLATES.

GARY COMES IN, FROM WORK, IN TIME TO SEE THE POOL EXPLODE. HE TAKES IT IN HIS STRIDE.

GARY: Nice one.

TONY: Ta mate.

GARY: What are you doing?

TONY: It's this new job I've got, hiring out these pools to, like, knocked-up women.

GARY: That's a bit weird isn't it?

TONY: That's what *I* said.

THEY LOOK AT A LONG PIECE OF PLASTIC TUBING.

GARY: What's that?

TONY: I don't know. Umbilical cord?

GARY: Mm. (HOLDING STRAINER) I suppose that'll be for... straining the baby.

THEY NOD CLUELESSLY AND GAZE FOR SOME TIME AT THE VARIOUS ITEMS.

TONY: I'd better go on the training course-

GARY: Yeah.

THEY WANDER AROUND THE KITCHEN.

TONY: So, I've arranged tomorrow night.

GARY: Great. (LEWD SMILE) So will it be, you know.

TONY: (LADDISH) Yeah.

GARY: (SOBER) Without being, you know.

TONY: (SOBER) No.

8 INT. COMMUNAL HALL NIGHT

THE FOLLOWING EVENING. DEBORAH EMERGES FROM HER FLAT, WEARING ELEGANTLY UNDERSTATED CLOTHES. SHE CHECKS HERSELF IN THE HALL MIRROR WHILE SHE WAITS.

DEBORAH: (SHOUTING UPSTAIRS) *Dorothy!*

TONY AND GARY COME OUT OF THEIR FLAT. THEY ARE DRESSED FOR A REAL LADS-ON-THE-TOWN NIGHT OUT, TONY IN A SHIRT OPEN TO THE NAVEL ETC. DEBORAH GAZES AT THEM.

GARY: What?

DEBORAH: Just a wild guess, are you off on your stag night?

GARY: Few quiet drinks, yeah.

DEBORAH: Tony, I hear you took the job Dorothy told you about. That's great.

TONY: Well, I was thinking over what you said about stretching my mind.

DEBORAH: I just think you've got this potential-

TONY: Yeah, because the mind's like a loaf of bread, isn't it, it needs the yeast of experience to rise-

GARY: Excuse me, *excuse me*, can we stop being sensitive here, it's my stag night.

TONY: Sorry mate.

DEBORAH: A friend of mine's interested in a pool actually. Let me give you her number.

SHE GETS A PEN OUT OF HER BAG AND WRITES A TELEPHONE NUMBER ON TONY'S HAND. HE WATCHES WITH HIS USUAL BLIND ADORATION.

TONY: Do you want to come with us?

GARY: No! No girls!

DEBORAH: I can't come anyway. It's Dorothy's hen night.

DOROTHY ARRIVES FINALLY, ALSO ELEGANTLY DRESSED. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE COUPLES IS COMPLETE. DOROTHY GAZES AT THE MEN.

DOROTHY: Where are you two off to, Las Vegas?

GARY: (VERY MACHO) Listen, I'm not apologising, on my last proper night of freedom, for doing what men do. It's a stag night, so I'm going to be acting like a stag.

DOROTHY: (AFFECTIONATELY) Don't overdo it, though, will you love.

GARY: (SUDDENLY MEEK) Course not love.

THEY KISS AND LEAVE.

FADE TO:

9 INT. LIVING ROOM / KITCHEN / HALLWAY DAY

THE NEXT MORNING. GARY IS WAKING UP ON THE SOFA. HE BEARS THE SCARS OF THE NIGHT BEFORE: A FURRY MOUTH, TERRIBLE HANGOVER, THE ODD SMEAR OF GAUDY LIPSTICK. HE STRUGGLES TO AN UPRIGHT POSITION.

SALLY-ANNE: I don't understand why we couldn't use your bed.

WE - AND GARY - REALISE THERE IS A HALF-DRESSED WOMAN SITTING UP ON THE OTHER END OF THE SOFA. FROM HER BUSINESSLIKE ATTITUDE AND APPEARANCE IT LOOKS MORE THAN POSSIBLE THAT SHE IS A PROSTITUTE. SHE HAS OBVIOUSLY SLEPT WITH GARY ON THE SOFA.

GARY'S REACTION IS FEAR AND SOME CONFUSION.

SALLY-ANNE: Which is your bathroom?

GARY: It's the quite small room with the bath in it.

SALLY-ANNE GIVES HIM A BLANK LOOK AND GETS UP TO FIND IT HERSELF.

GARY: Hello, I'm Gary.

SALLY-ANNE: Hi Gary.

GARY: Can I just warn you that I'm getting married in a few days.

SALLY-ANNE: Oh dear.

GARY: What I mean is, you're lovely, as far as I remember, but we probably haven't got a long-term future.

SALLY-ANNE: (DRYLY) Well, that's my life in ruins.

SHE HEADS FOR THE BATHROOM.

GARY: (AFTER HER) Only fair to warn you. (TO HIMSELF) Oh God what have I done.

GARY GETS TO HIS FEET, HIS BLANKET DRAPED ROUND HIM, AND HEADS FOR THE KITCHEN. HE HAS TO WADE THROUGH EMPTY CANS OF LAGER AND REMNANTS OF TAKEAWAY FOOD.

IN THE KITCHEN, GARY FINDS TONY FACE DOWN ON THE FLOOR NEAR HIS DOOR, ASLEEP IN LAST NIGHT'S CLOTHES.

GARY: Tony, Tony.

GARY NUDGES TONY WITH HIS FOOT AND STANDS THERE, LOOKING APPREHENSIVE AND CORNERED. TONY STARTS TO STIR.

TONY: You should have put me to bed.

GARY: Don't you start.

TONY GETS UP. HE LOOKS DOWN AT HIS UTTERLY CRUMPLED TROUSERS AND SHIRT.

TONY: Do I look creased in this?

GARY: Dorothy mustn't find out I had sex with a woman last night.

TONY: Why?

GARY: Because... (EXASPERATED) it's not nice! How would you like it?

TONY: Well, it would have been great but I could only afford one woman.

GARY: You *paid* for her to sleep with me?!

TONY: To be fair, mate, why do you think she was here when we got in?

GARY: I thought she'd seen me and followed me home, in a nice way.

TONY: Why would she have done that?

GARY: Because she liked me!

TONY: Oh, I'm sure she liked you, but not in a sexual way. (CONFUSED) No, hang on a minute-

GARY: Dorothy won't marry me if she finds out I slept with a prostitute the weekend before our wedding.

TONY: You said you wanted to enjoy yourself.

GARY: Not *that* much!

TONY: You could have said no.

GARY: Of course I couldn't have said no! (A BEAT) No wonder she kept calling me 'Dearie'.

TONY: Sorry mate.

AN AWKWARD SILENCE. TONY LOOKS CONTRITE.

TONY: What was it like-?

GARY: I can't remember! I don't think she was very... involved-

TONY: Well, she wouldn't be, would she, it was a job of work to her.

GARY: I know.

TONY: She didn't get any pleasure out of it-

GARY: (SNAPPING) *I know*.

TONY: When I rang round I tried to pick someone you'd like. Her parents come from the West Country, like yours.

GARY IS TOO TROUBLED TO REACT.

TONY: Dorothy said she didn't want to know what you were up to-

GARY: Believe me, she'll want to know if I spent the night with some tart- so, I gather you're familiar with Central Somerset.

SALLY-ANNE HAS EMERGED FROM THE BATHROOM, READY TO LEAVE. GARY IS ALL POLITE SMILES.

SALLY-ANNE: Well, more Devon really.

GARY: Uh huh. Well, that was great! Can I ask you to leave *fairly* quietly...

HE USHERS HER TOWARDS THE HALL THEN STOPS. FROM DEBORAH AND DOROTHY'S FLAT WE HEAR A SOUND, E.G. OF FOOTSTEPS OR A FLOORBOARD.

GARY: In fact, don't take this the wrong way but would you mind leaving under a blanket?

SALLY-ANNE: Yes I would.

GARY: I'm sure I could find you a nice one.

SALLY-ANNE: I'm going now.

GARY: Okay. Ah, actually the front door's been playing up. We've been using the front window to get in and out. It slides up quite nicely-

SALLY-ANNE: Bye.

GARY: Bye.

SHE OPENS THE FLAT DOOR AND LEAVES.

GARY DUCKS OUT OF VIEW IN CASE ANYONE'S IN THE HALL. HE GOES BACK INTO THE LIVING ROOM. TONY IS STANDING THERE, LOOKING SUBDUED.

TONY: Sorry mate.

GARY GOES OVER TO THE HALF-DRAWN CURTAINS AND PEAKS OUT.

10 EXT. HOUSE (O.B.) CONT. ACTION

GARY PEERS CAUTIOUSLY OUT OF THE CURTAINS, ANXIOUS NOT TO BE SEEN. HE WATCHES UNTIL SALLY-ANNE HAS DISAPPEARED FROM VIEW. HE IS ABOUT TO GO BACK INSIDE WHEN HE SEES A MAN EMERGING FROM HIS FRONT DOOR.

GARY WATCHES AS THE MAN - YOUNG AND GOOD-LOOKING, MORE HUNK THAN BRAIN SURGEON - TURNS BACK AND LOOKS UP AT THE UPSTAIRS WINDOW. ALL BEDROOM-EYED, HE SMILES, WAVES GOODBYE AND WALKS AWAY.

GARY LOOKS EXTREMELY SUSPICIOUS.

11 INT. LIVING ROOM CONT. ACTION

GARY TURNS BACK, SLIGHTLY DAZED.

TONY: What's the matter mate?

GARY: It was a man.

TONY: (TUTS) Honestly, you pay good money and you get a bloody trans-sexual!

GARY STARES AT TONY. PATIENTLY:

GARY: No. It looks like Deborah or Dorothy slept with a bloke last night.

TONY: I hope it was Dorothy.

GARY LOOKS FURIOUS.

TONY: Sorry mate.

12 INT. DEBORAH'S LIVING ROOM DAY

LATER THAT DAY. DOROTHY LEADS GARY IN. SHE BUSIES HERSELF TIDYING UP THE FLAT. SUPPRESSED TENSION.

DOROTHY: So, how was last night? Anybody throw up?

GARY: George felt dizzy at one point but I think that was from clutching his train timetable too tightly.

DOROTHY: Were you stripped naked, covered in treacle and left tied to railings?

GARY: No, that's dying out. How was your evening?

DOROTHY: Oh, lots of girl talk. Relationships, holiday plans, hair care.

GARY: So, what did you get up to?

DOROTHY: Oh, you know - pub, restaurant, club, the usual. What about you?

GARY: Oh, you know - circus, launderette, bat cave, the usual.

SLIGHTLY TENSE LAUGHTER FROM THEM BOTH.

GARY: Where's Deborah?

DOROTHY: She spent the night with her friend Claire.

DOROTHY SEES FROM GARY'S EXPRESSION THAT HE KNOWS WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

DOROTHY: Gary, I've got a confession to make.

GARY: Really.

DOROTHY: I had a... thing last night. I'm sorry. It was completely meaningless.

GARY WONDERS HOW TO REACT.

GARY: I guess that's that then.

HURT, HE LEAVES. DOROTHY BITES HER LIP.

GARY RETURNS.

GARY: Well you'll be pleased to hear that I also had someone to stay last night, someone rather special.

DOROTHY: How is Clive?

GARY: No, actually, not Clive, actually. A woman. And out of respect for you I wouldn't let her sleep with me in our bed. Now *that* is commitment.

DOROTHY: At least when I have a silly little fling I don't claim it was like putting a tortoise away in its box for the winter.

THEY GLARE AT EACH OTHER.

DOROTHY: Well, this whole idea's obviously a terrible mistake, isn't it.

DOROTHY WALKS AWAY, OUT OF THE ROOM. GARY WAITS FOR HER TO COME BACK. SHE DOESN'T.

13 INT. DEBORAH'S FRIEND'S HOUSE (O.B.) DAY

A LARGE BEDROOM IN A FAIRLY TRENDY HOUSE.

TONY IS ON HIS KNEES, DEMONSTRATING THE BIRTHING POOL [LIKE A SLIGHTLY LARGER PADDLING POOL WITH SIDES UP TO FOUR FEET HIGH], WHICH HE HAS HALF INFLATED. BESIDE HIM STANDS DEBORAH'S TIMID FRIEND, WHO IS EXTREMELY PREGNANT. TONY NOW KNOWS MORE OR LESS WHAT HE'S DOING.

TONY: So the water *supports* and *soothes* during the stages of labour, providing drug-free *relief* and a calming *environment*.

DEB'S FRIEND: Oh. Good.

TONY: Do ask any questions. I have done a course.

DEB'S FRIEND: Okay. Um-

TONY: I love Debs, you know.

DEB'S FRIEND: Yes, she said you were quite keen. So what temperature should the water be maintained a-

TONY: It started out as something sexual but over the years it's kind of changed into a general obsession.

TONY GOES OUT. DEBORAH'S FRIEND EXPERIENCES A TWINGE. WATER STARTS TO GUSH OUT OF THE TUBE INTO THE POOL.

TONY: (O.O.V., CALLING THROUGH) I was beginning to give up, to be honest, but what's good is how in their thirties women start to lower their standards.

DEB'S FRIEND: (WINCING) Tony, can you come in-

TONY: (COMING IN) It's like footballers, isn't it. They start off by only wanting to play for Manchester United but by the time they're Debs' age it's kind of: Ooh Stenhouse Muir, brilliant. Or: Well, actually I've always had a lot of respect for Basildon Athletic.

OBLIVIOUS, TONY FIDDLES WITH THE HOSE WHILE DEB'S FRIEND FEELS HER CONTRACTIONS.

TONY: Because in the end- Are you alright?

DEB'S FRIEND: It's starting, Tony.

TONY TAKES FULL CONTROL OF THE SITUATION.

TONY: What is?

14 INT. OFFICE DAY

GARY IS AT HIS DESK, SMOKING, IN A BAD MOOD, BANGING DRAWERS OPEN AND SHUT. GEORGE IS SITTING AT HIS DESK, STILL SHELL-SHOCKED FROM THE STAG NIGHT.

GARY: Oh snap out of it George, that's what happens on stag nights. It was a nightclub with a few nice topless ladies, not the last days of Sodom and Gomorra.

GEORGE: What's happening to the world?

GARY: Oh, I think there have always been places where men are encouraged to bury their faces between women's jiggling breasts.

GEORGE: I didn't know where to put myself.

GARY: If it's any consolation, she was as embarrassed as you to find you'd wedged your briefcase in her cleavage.

GEORGE HAS GOT UP, STILL DAZED.

GEORGE: I'm going to buy some biscuits.

HE EXITS AS ANTHERA COMES IN.

ANTHERA: Is he any better?

GARY: A bit. He's stopped doing that scary humming.
(HE SIGHS, UPSET) Anthea, can I confide in you?

ANTHERA: Of course.

ANTHERA MAKES TO SIT DOWN ON A CHAIR.

GARY: What are you doing?

ANTHERA: Sorry.

SHE PUTS THE CHAIR BACK AND STANDS.

GARY: George is right, these days everything's cheap and sleazy and dirty.

ANTHERA: I thought that was what you liked.

GARY: It is, but... maybe I'm moving away from all that. I mean, look at George, he's got his picture of his wife on his desk, he's got a packed lunch with the special cold sausage he and Marjorie like, he's got a model village set out in his loft. I want that.

ANTHEA: Maybe he'll let you borrow it.

GARY: No, not the model village, the lifestyle, the togetherness.

ANTHEA: I'm sure you and Dorothy can patch it up.

GARY: No we can't. It's all spoilt. It would be like marrying... a great, rutting rabbit.

ANTHEA: What have you fallen out about? I know soft furnishings are often a flashpoint when you're setting up home.

GARY WONDERS WHETHER TO BREAK IT TO ANTHEA.

GARY: Yes, we've fallen out over soft furnishings.

15 EXT/INT. DEBS' FRIEND'S HOUSE (O.B.) DAY

SHAKY P.O.V., HAND-HELD CAMERA. SOMEONE TOSSING ASIDE AN OLD-FASHIONED BICYCLE AND ENTERING THE HOUSE AT A RUN.

WE DIP INTO THE KITCHEN - DESERTED - THEN UP THE STAIRS. AS WE GO WE START TO HEAR THE SOUND OF A BABY CRYING. WE GO ONTO A LANDING, THEN PUSH OPEN A BEDROOM DOOR. THE BABY'S CRYING IS LOUDER STILL.

MIDWIFE: (O.O.V.) That sounds like a healthy pair of lungs.

WE FINALLY LOCATE THE STILL ONLY HALF-INFLATED BIRTHING POOL. TONY AND DEBORAH'S FRIEND ARE SITTING IN IT IN TWO FEET OF MURKY WATER. TONY STOPS CRYING LIKE A BABY.

TONY: Thanks.

AN EMOTIONAL TONY IS CRADLING A VERY NEW-BORN, SLIGHTLY SUSPICIOUS LOOKING BABY AS THE MOTHER LOOKS ON, EXHAUSTED BUT HAPPY.

TONY: It's a boy!

DEBS' FRIEND: No, it's a girl-

TONY: It's a girl!

16 INT. DEBORAH'S LIVING ROOM DAY

THE NEXT DAY. TONY IS WITH DEBORAH.

DEBORAH: What are they going to call him?

TONY: They're thinking about Tony.

DEBORAH: Oh, how nice.

TONY: Or Bilbo.

THEY BOTH DO NOT-SURE-ABOUT-THAT GRIMACES.

DEBORAH: God, you must be so proud.

TONY: Well, you know.

DEBORAH: You did everything right. I'm really proud of you Tony.

TONY: (BASHFUL) Oh, stop it.

DEBORAH: No, really.

TONY: Stop it.

DEBORAH LOOKS AT HIM WITH AFFECTION. THEY ARE SITTING CLOSE TOGETHER.

TONY: Actually, don't stop.

DEBORAH: No, I'm bored now.

TO THEIR MUTUAL SURPRISE, THEY KISS.

DEBORAH: Anyway...

TONY: Anyway...

THEY PART, SLIGHTLY DAZED.

DEBORAH: So how are we going to get them back together again?

TONY: Who?

DEBORAH: Dorothy and Gary.

THEY KISS AGAIN, THEN DEBORAH PULLS AWAY.

DEBORAH: I can't concentrate until this is sorted out.

TONY INSTANTLY BREAKS OFF, BUSINESSLIKE,
CALLING OUT TOWARDS DOROTHY'S BEDROOM:

TONY: Dorothy, we're going downstairs to sort this out.

17 INT. KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM DAY

THE LIVING ROOM IS EMPTY. THE DOOR TO THE
HALL OPENS AND WE SEE DEBORAH'S HAND
PUSHING DOROTHY IN. SHE GOES IN, GRUDGINGLY.

GARY IS PUSHED INTO THE ROOM FROM THE
KITCHEN, BY TONY. GARY AND DOROTHY LOOK AT
EACH OTHER COOLLY.

GARY: So, are we going to get married?

DOROTHY: I don't really see much point, do you.

GARY: No.

DOROTHY: At least we can agree that sleeping with other
people doesn't do anyone any good.

GARY HESITATES.

GARY: No.

TONY STANDS IN THE KITCHEN LISTENING.
DEBORAH JOINS HIM FROM THE HALL.

WE CUT BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM:

GARY: Still, I don't suppose I'm the first bloke to send
his old policeman out on special duties the week before his
wedding.

DOROTHY: That's the difference, isn't it. I apologise but you
have to boast about it.

GARY: I wasn't boasting.

TONY: (O.O.V.) He wasn't boasting.

DOROTHY: Tony, get out.

WE CUT BACK TO THE KITCHEN. DEBORAH WALKS TONY AWAY FROM THE LIVING ROOM. THEY STOP AT THE DOOR TO TONY'S BEDROOM.

DOROTHY: Get right out, Tony-

TONY: I'm going.

WE CUT BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM. GARY AND DOROTHY WEIGH EACH OTHER UP.

18 INT. TONY'S BEDROOM DAY

MOMENTS LATER. TONY AND DEBORAH STAND THERE, WAITING, CONSCIOUS THERE IS A BED IN THE ROOM.

DEBORAH PEERS INTO A PLASTIC BAG ON THE BED.

DEBORAH: What's that?

TONY: Oh, nothing.

TONY TRIES TO GRAB THE BAG BUT DEBORAH MANAGES TO REMOVE IT'S CONTENTS.

DEBORAH: (AMUSED) Put it on.

TONY: No.

DEBORAH: Come on - you've bought it, put it on.

TONY RELUCTANTLY PUTS ON A BRAND NEW DOCTOR'S WHITE COAT. HE HAS ALREADY LINED UP PENS IN THE TOP POCKET.

DEBORAH: You don't think you're taking your medical triumphs a bit seriously?

TONY: It's just to wear about the house, you know.

DEBORAH IS AMUSED. SHE AND TONY ARE ON THE BED. THEY START TO KISS, THEN ROLL ON TOP OF EACH OTHER.

DEBORAH: (MUFFLED) Your row of pens is sticking in me.

TONY: Sorry.

THEY KISS SOME MORE AND ARE EDGING TOWARDS LOVE-MAKING WHEN DEBORAH STOPS THEM AND SITS UP.

DEBORAH: We can't do this. Our best friends' lives are being decided in the next room.

DEBORAH GETS UP. TONY WHIMPERS WITH FRUSTRATION. SHE LEAVES THE ROOM.

19 INT. KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM CONT. ACTION

TONY JOINS DEBORAH. THEY LISTEN OUT. SILENCE. THEY WALK QUIETLY ACROSS TO THE LIVING ROOM.

DOROTHY AND GARY ARE SEMI-NAKED ON THE SOFA, IN A FLAGRANTLY SEXUAL POSITION.

TONY: So, how's it going-

DOROTHY: }

GARY: } Get out!

FADE TO:

20 INT. LIVING ROOM NIGHT

A BIRTHING POOL, UNOCCUPIED BUT FILLED WITH WATER, IS SET UP WHERE THE SOFA NORMALLY IS.

TONY AND GARY SUDDENLY BURST UP OUT OF THE WATER, SPLUTTERING, AND GO INTO THEIR HOME-MADE SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING ROUTINE - GRINNING FIXEDLY AND DOING VARIOUS WOULD-BE BALLETIC MOVES.

WE SWITCH TO A VIEW OF THE POOL FROM A CEILING-MOUNTED CAMERA, WATCHING FOUR LEGS FLAIL ABOUT, THE ODD ARM ETC. THEY POSSIBLY END WITH SOME SYNCHRONISED LAGER-DRINKING AND LAGER-CAN-TOSSING.

THEY STOP AND RECOVER THEIR BREATH.

TONY: And they say synchronised swimming doesn't deserve to be in the Olympics!

THEY REACH OVER AND PUT A RAFT MADE OF EMPTY LAGER CANS INTO THE WATER. ON IT IS THE TINY BATTERY TV, WHICH THEY NOW WATCH.

TONY: So Debs and I have agreed that we shouldn't rush into it.

GARY: Well, it's only been five years, hasn't it. You're not warmed up.

TONY: It's like you and marriage, isn't it. You've taken a cool, calm look at marriage and decided that: Yes!

GARY: Yes-

TONY: Yes-

GARY: Yes-

TONY: Yes. Marriage *is* for you.

AS THEY STAND THERE AIR SUDDENLY BUBBLES TO THE SURFACE BEHIND THEM. NEITHER DRAWS ATTENTION TO IT.

GARY: I was reading in *Bride Magazine*, the average wedding costs eight thousand pounds.

TONY: How much is yours going to cost?

GARY: Seventy-three quid.

TONY: After you're married is Dorothy going to take your name?

GARY: No, I think she's quite attached to Dorothy.

MORE AIR BUBBLES UP TO THE SURFACE.

TONY: I wouldn't mind changing. (MUSING) Tony Minogue.

GARY: Gary Minogue.

TONY: Tony Minogue.

GARY: Gary Binoche.

TONY: Tony Binoche.

AIR BUBBLES TO THE SURFACE, ON AND ON INTERMITTENTLY FOR A SPECTACULARLY LONG TIME. A PAUSE.

GARY: Shall we get out-?

TONY: Yeah.

CLOSING CREDITS. END.