

THE DEPARTMENT

Written by

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EXT. EAST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITY - DAY

A redbrick office building in the UK Midlands. A large sign outside says "EAST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITY: RESEARCH ANNEXE".

INT. THE DEPARTMENT OFFICES - DAY

An open plan office area that looks suspiciously like a corridor. There's an entrance at one end and a desk squeezed in at the other, with doors off to three proper offices.

SARA (32, round, indie) strides in. She wears a Sonic Youth t-shirt and carries a guitar.

SARA

Morning Rosemary! Is it OK if I
leave this semi-acoustic guitar
here?

ROSEMARY (52, compact, smartly dressed) is in one of the offices audio-typing with headphones on. Sara stands at the door gesticulating with the guitar but Rosemary can't hear.

ROSEMARY

(singing along)

Some people think I'm bonkers / But
I just think I'm free.

Sara tries the next office, where MIKE (57, ageing rake) sits snoring away with his Hush Puppies up on the desk and a copy of "Top Gear Magazine" resting on his belly.

SARA

Hi Mike! Thanks for suggesting
Kickstarter for my album - I don't
suppose you've re-considered a
contribution?

MIKE

(mumbling in his sleep)

No Jeremy, you're wrong. The Fiat
Punto remains a top quality shag
wagon.

Sara tuts, stomps out and trips over her guitar strap, crashing to the ground with a CLANG. Neither Rosemary nor Mike look up.

ROSEMARY AND MIKE

Morning Sara!

The main door opens and BOB (48, formal, moustached) enters and marches up to Sara's desk. He wears a well preserved suit from Burton's 2002 collection and carries a briefcase.

BOB

Good morning. Bob Bristow,
Department Head of the Business
Sector Learning Directive, here to
see Professor Mike.

Sara clambers up off the floor.

SARA

Bob. You work here. And I'm not the
receptionist.

ROSEMARY

(shouting from other room)
Is that Bobby? Bobby, in here!

SARA

Rosemary will see you now.

BOB

But I've got my own Department now -

ROSEMARY

(shouting)
Bobby!

Bob sighs and walks through. Rosemary takes her headphones
off and leaves them fizzing with music on her desk.

BOB

I'm here to see Mike actually...

ROSEMARY

He's very busy at the moment
darling.

INT. MIKE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mike is fast asleep with his feet on the desk, snoring. A
copy of "Practical Caravanning" now rests on his stomach.

MIKE

Why yes Kelly Brook, the lounge
seating does fold out into a bed.

INT. THE DEPARTMENT OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

ROSEMARY

So you can help me instead. It's
this wicked paedo on my computer.

BOB

Wikipedia, Rosemary. I explained
this -

ROSEMARY

I told IT I couldn't see the bottom
and they were quite rude about it.

Bob has come round to look.

BOB

You've reached the edge of the
screen, you need to scroll down.

ROSEMARY

Is it easier if I just switch it
off at the plug?

BOB

No, don't, here, let me -

Bob is right behind her now, looking over her shoulder.

BOB (CONT'D)

May I place my hand on your mouse?

ROSEMARY

Please do.

"UNCHAINED MELODY" plays out of Rosemary's headphones.

BOB

Now, gently flick your wrist.

ROSEMARY

Like this?

BOB

That's good. And do you feel this
little bump, in the middle of your
mouse?

ROSEMARY

Yes. Yes.

BOB

Just roll it very gently with your
finger.

ROSEMARY

Goodness.

She looks up and gazes into his eyes.

Sara is at the door, listening in.

SARA

Bob!

Bob leaps backwards. Rosemary scowls at Sara.

SARA (CONT'D)

I don't suppose you'd like to invest in a Kickstarter campaign would you?

BOB BRISTOW

Kickstarter eh? Very modern - supporting talent, investing in the future. I'm very interested!

SARA

It's for me to record an album

BOB BRISTOW

I'm not interested.

ROSEMARY

Leave Bobby alone. He's busy, with me.

SARA

What did you actually want, Bob?

BOB

As it happens I've come about URARS.

ROSEMARY

Sara's bottom? Ugh!

SARA

What do you mean Ugh? What's wrong with my bottom?

ROSEMARY

Nothing dear, it's got a lovely personality.

BOB

URARS is the University Research Assessment Readiness Subcommittee. Didn't you see the email from The Vice Chancellor?

They all cross themselves.

ROSEMARY

That sort of thing usually goes to the Professor. I'll enquire directly, one moment.

She bellows into the next office.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

MICHAEL!

INT. MIKE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mike wakes with a start.

MIKE

Not in the awning Keira!

He falls off his chair. Rosemary comes in, pulling Bob behind her by the hand. Sara squeezes in behind. Mike staggers up.

ROSEMARY

Bobby wants to talk about URARS.

MIKE

Dammit Bristow, what happens on conference stays on conference!

BOB

As I'm sure you're aware, it's Research Excellence Review time, when our paymasters in Whitehall assess the quality of our research.

SARA

Again? But it's only been ...

ROSEMARY

Six years.

MIKE

Christ! How do these busy bodies expect us to reach our throughput targets if they keep on with this constant inquisition?

BOB

Good Lord, don't you even read the University Bulletin?

MIKE

Cover to cover.

INT. TOILETS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Two toilet cubicles, one with the door shut.

MIKE

(shouting from cubicle)
Rosemary!

Rosemary enters, tiptoeing across to the cubicle, a pile of magazines in one hand, holding her nose with the other.

ROSEMARY

Here you are darling.

She passes the magazines - all copies of the University Bulletin - underneath the door.

INT. MIKE'S ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

BOB

Then you'll know how keen the University is to retain its place in the Top 136 Research Institutions.

SARA

Where are we in the Top 136, exactly?

BOB

That's not important.

ROSEMARY

But we used to be in the Top 135.

BOB

URARS is here to ensure that all departments have done adequate research.

MIKE

It's political correctness gone mad.

BOB

As I understand it they'll be using the results to decide which department to close.

MIKE

Just to check - is it the Department with most research that closes, or -

BOB

Of course, my new department already has a hefty portfolio of publications.

ROSEMARY

Yes, you had that letter in Take A Break didn't you?

BOB

Letter Of The Week, I think you'll find. But I was referring to research publications, conference presentations -

MIKE

Nobody does conferences like the
Department of Research Methods
Methodology Research - Rosemary!
Show him the Conference Box

Rosemary takes a box marked "CONFERENCE TAT" down from a shelf. It's overflowing with beach hats, straw donkeys and bucket and spades.

MIKE (CONT'D)

There's souvenir condoms from six
continents in there.

ROSEMARY

Not all in mint condition.

BOB

Oh good, so you'll have some
research to show them then?

SARA

What? When?

BOB

Don't worry, you've got ages to get
ready.

MIKE

Thank God.

BOB

They're seeing me first, so they
won't get around to you until this
afternoon. Have fun!

He saunters out.

SARA

Mike, you colossal twit, why didn't
you tell us?

MIKE

I didn't get the email.

ROSEMARY

Don't fib Michael, show us your
inbox.

They scurry round to look at his screen as Mike quickly closes windows.

SARA

What are all these folders? "Sexy
chicks", "Game Old Birds"... This is
appalling.

ROSEMARY

I know, it's not even alphabetical.

MIKE

Look in the work folder.

SARA

What's that called?

MIKE

"Deleted".

SARA

Yes, here it is - "URARS visit".

MIKE

Well how was I to know it was important?

SARA

It says "IMPORTANT. READ NOW."

MIKE

That could mean anything.

ROSEMARY

Oh Michael, if we don't pass this inspection they'll close us down!

SARA

Don't be silly Rosemary, what about all the important work we do?

They all try to think of something.

MIKE

Oh well, if they close the Department it'll give me more time for my outreach projects.

INT. FAIRGROUND - DREAM SEQUENCE

A merry-go-round full of women. Mike stands behind a barrier, happily reaching out to touch them.

INT. MIKE'S ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

SARA

And I'll be in the studio of course. My Kickstarter closes in fifteen minutes.

MIKE

How much did you ask for?

SARA
Twenty.

MIKE
Grand?

SARA
Pence. I might need to match the
funding.

ROSEMARY
If the Department closes they'll be
no funding for anyone.

MIKE
How do you mean?

ROSEMARY
They'll stop paying us!

MIKE
What? Penny pinching bureaucrats!

SARA
We need to do something!

MIKE
Absolutely! Come on team - together
we can sort this out!

SARA
Yeah! Go team Department Of
Research Methods Methodology
Research team!

Sara and Mike whoop and high five. Sara misses. They think
for a moment then turn to Rosemary.

MIKE
What shall we do?

Rosemary sighs.

ROSEMARY
You just need to gather together
all the research you've been doing.

MIKE
We're f-

KNOCK at the main door.

MIKE (CONT'D)
That must be Bristow's Arsehole
Inspector.

Mike sets off out of the room.

ROSEMARY

Michael! Be nice!

MIKE

I'm going to give this two-bit Hans
Blix a piece of my mind!