

TEN FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM SWINDON

by

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21/09/2022
2,254

CAST

DAD - Male, 40s

CARL - Male, mid teens

LOCATION

Inside Dad's car, travelling to Swindon.

TIME

The present day, Saturday morning.

SCENE 1.

INSIDE CAR, ENGINE IDLING

DAD: (To himself, impatient) Come on, Carl!

DAD'S MOBILE RINGS, HE ANSWERS IT.

Hi. (Listens) No, I'm still at Carl's. (Listens) No, I haven't had a chance, I had to send him back in to do his teeth.

OUTSIDE, FRONT DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

I'm not scared of asking him... (Listens) I've only waited so I can ask him face to face, you know it's my weekend to see him.

CARL ENTERS CAR, SHUTTING DOOR.

Look... I'll talk to you later.

DAD ENDS CALL.

Finally.

CARL: Why do we have to leave so early, Dad?

DAD: It's gone *ten*, Carl. Seatbelt.

CARL: Hang on.

DAD: What?

CARL: *Wait.* I need to send this.

CARL TYPES ON HIS MOBILE.

DAD: Why are you doing this now? I need to get a move on, there's road works by the County Ground, traffic's going to be murder.

CARL: Calm down. Need to do this while I'm still on mum's wifi.

DAD SIGHS IMPATIENTLY. WHOOSH AS
MESSAGE SENT. CARL PUTS SEATBELT ON.

DAD: Finally.

DAD PULLS AWAY INTO TRAFFIC. CARL PUTS
HEADPHONES ON.

Headphones off. (BEAT) Carl.

CARL: (Removing headphones) What?

DAD: Headphones *off*. I want to talk.

CARL: Do we have to?

DAD: I want to have a proper conversation.

CARL: What... like before you moved out?

BEAT

DAD: I'm still your dad. I'm still interested in what's going on in your life. Like this detention? From school?

CARL: (Annoyed) I told mum not to tell you.

DAD: Don't blame her, school emailed me. Something about 'inappropriate behaviour?'

CARL: I don't want to talk about it.

DAD: I mean... what does that even mean?

CARL: And I had stuff to do today.

DAD: So put our weekends on your calendar.

CARL PUTS HEADPHONES ON.

(Loud) Headphones *off*.

CARL TAKES HEADPHONES OFF, SULKING.

Look, I don't see you very often. The least you can do is talk to me.

BEAT.

CARL: Can I play some sounds?

DAD: (Sighs) But we do Your track, My track, OK?

CARL: What?

DAD: Like when we drive down to Cornwall? Hang on...

CAR STEREO SWITCHED ON, PLAYS
COLDPLAY 'THE SCIENTIST'

CARL: A weekend in Swindon's bad enough, Dad. I'm not listening to bloody *Coldplay*.

FADE.

SCENE 2.

FADE UP XTC 'NO THUGS IN OUR HOUSE',
TRANSITION TO PLAYING OVER CAR STEREO.

INSIDE CAR, AS BEFORE, DRIVING ALONG
MAIN ROAD

DAD: I mean... is it something I need to worry about?

CARL: It's nothing.

DAD: Detentions are serious. My dad would have given me a thick ear. Is it about money?

CARL: It's *nothing*. (BEAT) Why did you move to Swindon?

DAD: Because I could afford it. And I've got family there. Your Aunt Ellen, remember? Your cousins near the Steam Museum?

CARL: Why can't we Skype? Do you know how much CO2 this thing uses?

DAD: Access means a physical meeting. Anyway, there's something I wanted to ask in person. Jules and I are -

CARL: And what is *this*?

DAD: This? XTC. Actually he's *from* Swindon.

CARL: Who is?

DAD: Andy Partridge, the guy singing. Still lives there. (BEAT)
Jules and I are -

CARL: Bet you can't think of ten famous people.

DAD: What?

CARL: Ten famous people. From Swindon. I bet you can't.

DAD: What have you got against Swindon?

CARL: It's just so crap, Dad. It's all roundabouts and kebab shops.

DAD: No it *isn't*.

CARL: Everybody's mad about football but the team's crap.

DAD: Billy Piper.

CARL: Who?

DAD: Billy Piper. A famous person, from Swindon.

CARL: Who's he?

DAD: She's an actress. She was in Doctor Who.

CARL: (Skeptical) When?

DAD: Christopher Ecclestone, David Tennant. She was the Doctor's main companion.

CARL: Never heard of her.

FADE.

SCENE 3.

FADE UP LED ZEPPELIN 'WHOLE LOTTA LOVE',
TRANSITION TO PLAYING OVER CAR STEREO

INSIDE CAR AS BEFORE. DRIVING ALONG
DUAL CARRIAGEWAY.

DAD: I need to ask you something. Jules and I are -

CARL: Hang on.

STEREO SKIPS OVER TRACKS.

DAD: Just pick one and let it play.

CARL: Hang *on*.

STEREO SKIPS OVER MORE TRACKS.

DAD: Carl, that is so infuriating!

STEREO PLAYS MUSE 'UPRISING'

CARL: Got anything to eat?

DAD: You've just had breakfast.

CARL: Can we stop? At a garage?

DAD: You can wait until we get to mine.

CARL: I'm *starving*.

DAD: (Irritated) Try the glove compartment

CARL OPENS GLOVE COMPARTMENT.

DAD: Anything?

CARL: What is this?

DAD: What does it look like? It's an apple! Jules must have left it for you.

CARL: What kind is it?

DAD SPLUTTERS, CONFUSED.

I only eat Braeburns, dad. What this?

DAD: What does it *matter*?

CARL: Does she sell Braeburns?

DAD: I have no idea.

CARL: Could you phone her and ask?

DAD: Just *eat* it. (BEAT) I am not stopping to buy you sugary crap just because you prefer Braeburn to Golden Delicious.

FADE.

SCENE 4.

FADE UP PETE TONG 'GO', TRANSITION TO
PLAYING OVER CAR STEREO.

INSIDE CAR, STATIONARY IN PETROL
STATION.

DAD ENTERS CAR AND SHUTS DOOR.

DAD: Here.

DAD HANDS CRISPS, CAN TO CARL.

CARL: Ta.

DAD PUTS SEATBELT ON.

DAD: You're just lucky I needed petrol.

DAD SWITCHES CAR ENGINE ON, PULLS INTO TRAFFIC.

CARL OPENS CRISPS, CAN.

This is from Twin Peaks?

CARL: What's Twin Peaks?

DAD: TV Show, From the... 1980s.

CARL: (Sarcastic) A little before my time, dad.

DAD: David Lynch. A genius.

CARL: But was he from Swindon?

DAD: Now that you mention it... yes, I believe he was.

CARL: Yeah right.

POWERFUL CAR PASSES.

Maserati, get *in!*

DAD: Funny place to put an ironing board.

CARL: (Sarcastic) Ha ha. It's a rear spoiler, dad. (BEAT) God, someone in Swindon drives a Maserati. Bet they stole it.

SILENCE.

DAD: I need to ask you something.

CARL: When are you getting a new car?

DAD: What's wrong with this one?

CARL: You should get an L200. Like Paul.

DAD: Who's Paul?

CARL: Mum's new boyfriend.

DAD: Oh, *him*. She works for him, Carl. Doesn't make him her boyfriend. (BEAT) Must be doing well, if he can afford petrol for an L200.

CARL: Ha ha. (BEAT) That's what I'm going to get when I pass my test.

BEAT.

DAD: Anyway, where would I keep an L200? I've have to buy a field somewhere.

CARL: We can't take this thing camping? Where would we put stuff?

DAD: There's plenty of space for the two of us.

BEAT.

CARL: Isn't Jules coming?

DAD: After last time?! I am not inflicting your feet and my snoring on her again. And speaking of Jules, I don't want any attitude this time, OK?

CARL: Whatever.

DAD: I'm serious. Any issues you have, with me, the divorce, we sort them out between us. (BEAT) Is that what the detention was about?

CARL: I'm not talking about it, dad.

BEAT.

DAD: I could get a roof box.

CARL: They're *pathetic*.

DAD: A trailer?

CARL: This thing can barely move now, dad. A trailer might kill it.

FADE.

SCENE 5.

FADE UP MACCABEES 'PELICAN',
TRANSITIONS TO PLAYING OVER CAR
STEREO.

INSIDE DAD'S CAR, DRIVING ALONG DUAL
CARRIAGEWAY

CARL: You said you wanted to talk.

DAD: This isn't talking. This is you giving a list of all the stuff you want me to buy you. Christmas isn't for months yet and you've just had a birthday, you're going to have to wait. Or get a Saturday job. Or maybe stop blowing all your pocket money on energy drinks and giant cookies from Tesco. (BEAT) You're not getting a new phone just because one of your mates has parents stupid enough to buy them the latest iPhone.

CARL: What if I tell you about the detention? Would you buy me a new phone then?

FADE TO:

CAR INTERIOR.

STEREO PLAYS BRIAN ENO/DAVID BYRNE
'THE CARRIER'

DAD: Diana Dors. She's from Swindon.

CARL: You're making these up.

DAD: Google her. She was a film star, the Blonde Bombshell they called her. There's a statue, outside the cinema.

BEAT

CARL: What is this guy singing about, dad? You could get arrested for listening to it. I should phone MI5.

DAD: And who's going to buy you stuff if I get arrested?

CARL: So... if I promise not to grass you up to MI5, you'll buy me a new phone?

FADE TO:

CAR INTERIOR.

STEREO PLAYS ELBOW 'LIPPY KIDS'

DAD: So... tell me about Paul?

CARL: He's cool. He's a proper developer.

DAD SNORTS DISMISSIVELY.

CARL: You're jealous, dad. Jules only works in a shop.

DAD: Jules runs her own business.

CARL: Selling fruit and veg?

DAD: *Organic* fruit and veg.

CARL: Paul's got apps on the actual Apple store.

DAD: Jamie Cullum.

CARL: Is this still the Swindon thing? Wish I hadn't started it now.

FADE TO:

CAR INTERIOR, AS BEFORE.

STEREO PLAYS 'CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG'

CARL: (Both amused and irritated) Turn it *off!*

DAD: Don't you remember seeing it in London?

CARL: *Off!*

DAD: You use to love singing along to it. Ian Fleming.

CARL: What?

DAD: Ian Fleming wrote the original story, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. And he's *buried* in Swindon.

CARL: That doesn't count. Turn it *off!*

FADE.

SCENE 6.

FADE UP RADIOHEAD 'CUTTOOTH',
TRANSITIONING TO PLAYING OVER CAR
STEREO.

INSIDE DAD'S CAR, DRIVING THROUGH BUSY
TOWN.

DAD: I need to ask you a serious question.

CARL: Why do you always go this way?

DAD: Stop changing the subject. (BEAT) What's wrong with this way?

CARL: Turn left... here. *Here.*

DAD: No.

CARL: Why not?

DAD: Look, Jules and I are -

CARL: (Realising) Are you scared of the Magic Roundabout?

DAD: (Defensive) I just... don't like going that way.

CARL: (Laughing) You are such a noob!

DAD: Less of the lip, you. Five years watching Top Gear doesn't make you an expert.

CARL: It's only five roundabouts in a circle, dad. What's the problem?

DAD: (Sighing) It just... always terrified me.

CARL: I'll find you a route.

DAD: (Wary) What?

CARL: Trust me. Left here. Come *on*.

DAD: God help me...

CAR INDICATORS.

FADE.

SCENE 7.

FADE UP STEVIE WONDER 'VERY
SUPERSTITIOUS', TRANSITION TO PLAYING
OVER CAR STEREO.

CAR INTERIOR, AS BEFORE.

DAD: Seriously? Kids your age are into Stevie Wonder?

CARL: It's cool. What were you going to ask me?

DAD: ... it can wait.

CARL: Go on.

DAD: (Bracing himself) The thing is, Jules and I... we've
decided to get married.

CARL: Oh. Right.

SILENCE.

DAD: Carl?

CARL: It's OK. I just... it's fine. It doesn't matter.

DAD: And I wanted you... we wanted you to be my best man.

CARL: Best man?

DAD: I know it's been tough, with the divorce and everything, but it would mean a lot to me. To us.

CARL: (Upset) Like that's going to make everything OK?

DAD: Carl, come on -

CARL: (Upset) You break up with mum, you move in with Jules, and now I'm just supposed to...

DAD: I didn't leave your mum for Jules, kiddo. Your mum and me... things hadn't been working for a while.

CARL: I thought... you might be moving back in. With Mum?

SILENCE.

DAD: I'm sorry Carl. It's not going to happen. But you're still important to me, you know? I'm still your dad. (BEAT) I miss you. I know it's no fun only meeting once a month...

TRAFFIC BUSIER.

You toe rag!

CARL: Welcome to the Magic Roundabout, dad.

DAD: (Alarmed) I told you not to come this way.

CARL: I heard you on the phone. (Sarcastic) 'I've got Carl for the weekend'. Like I'm just some chore.

DAD: I didn't mean it like *that*.

CARL: Time to man up.

TRAFFIC EVEN BUSIER.

DAD: *Carl!*

FADE.

SCENE 8.

CAR PULLS UP ON QUIET STREET, ENGINE
TURNED OFF.

SOME BIRDSONG OUTSIDE.

CARL: See? You made it.

DAD: Thank you. I think. Jules'll be at work until five, what would you like to do? You got any homework to get out of the way? I can get pizzas started. I'll even put pineapple on one for you.

CARL: It was for fighting. The detention.

DAD: (Surprised) OK... who with?

CARL: Andrew.

DAD: *Primary* school Andrew? What about?

CARL: I told him something. He was supposed to keep it private, but he told everyone in my year, and he's been winding me up all week and I just lost it. (BEAT) Last Friday night, I woke up, went to the loo, and I... heard something.

DAD: ... OK?

CARL: (Embarrassed) I went to mum's room... and I opened the door, and... Paul was in there. With her. You know?

DAD: Ah.

CARL: They didn't see me, but... I can't explain to mum.

DAD: I'll have a word. (BEAT) Your mum and me... sometimes things just don't work out. Sometimes it's more honest to just accept what's happened and separate. And we've managed to keep things amicable?

CARL: I know. But it was like... so many people at school, their parents had split up, and I liked being different, that you two were still together. Now it feels like I messed up.

DAD: None of it was your fault, OK? (BEAT) Come on, I'm hungry. And we'd still love you to come to the wedding, even if you don't want to be the Best man.

SEATBELTS UNDONE.

CARL: Does the best man get to come on the Stag Night?

DAD: Technically, the best man *organises* the Stag Night.

CARL: Sweet. I hear Amsterdam is good for Stag Nights.

DAD: I think we'll organise something right here in Swindon.
(BEAT) Did I make it to ten?

CARL: Ten what?

DAD: ... doesn't matter.

FADE.