

FIT IN

A one-man monologue inspired by Ciaran Foley

Written by  
Jake Hodges

Performed by Ciaran Foley

The stage is split into two contrasting sides. On one side is gym equipment such as dumbbells and protein powder. On the other side is empty alcohol bottles and the small implications of a party e.g. balloons, banners etc.

*The lights fade up with JIM (22) finishing some reps with a dumbbell. Jim's headphones clearly blast loud music. He finishes up his reps and exhales, proud of his day's work so far. He shakes his shoulders and places the dumbbells back neatly.*

*Shoulders back, he saunters towards the front of the stage to look in the mirror. He flexes his muscles and checks out his physical progress before, off-guard, he is caught by the sight of the audience.*

*He speaks, but shouts because of his music.*

JIM  
(shouting)

IT'S NOT VANITY... I'M ONLY CHECKING MY PROGRESS. TO BE HONEST YOU SCARED ME A BIT!

*He laughs way too loud.*

PEOPLE TEND TO ASSUME THAT US GYM-LOVERS ARE LOUD AND OBNOXIOUS, BUT REALLY --

*Suddenly Jim pauses embarrassed. He slowly takes off his headphones.*

Ahh, sorry 'bout that. Forgot I had them on.

*Jim sets an alarm on his digital watch.*

Just setting an alarm, have to get back to my circuit in 20 minutes just need a quick break. I try and set my playlist to go along with my circuit.

(beat.)

The music really pumps you up you know, gets you ready for the session.

*Suddenly, Jim is dragged towards the other side of the stage into the party scene.*

(TECHNO MUSIC PLAYS)

**He picks up a cup and starts to dance.** (The lines of the party go-er are in brackets to help with the flow of the dialogue)

JIM

(shouting over the music,  
talking to the audience  
as if having a  
conversation with  
someone else at a party)

(Good mate innit) Yeah... yeah... (Can you hear that beat, so good) the beat is good yeah... (Can you feel it, it's vibrating the floor) don't worry, I can feel it. (What you drinking mate)

**He holds up his cup.**

Just water (Water?) yeah... (You sure it's not vodka) haha no not vodka, look -- oh, okay take a sip, why not. (Why you drinking water? Why you not having a proper drink?) I just don't want to really. This is a proper drink. (You religious or sommat?) No, it's not for religious reasons, I'm just not much of a drinker. (why you here then?) I was invited? Why else would I be here? (Huh. I thought Jess had friends who are fun) Yes, she does have "friends who are fun".

(beat.)

(C'mon mate, have a sip of mine) I'm honestly alright mate, but thanks for the offer... (Oh, c'mon!) no seriously, I just told you I don't really drink. (Don't be boring mate) I'm not being boring, you're boring. (Everyone's having a shit time cause of you) No, you're making this party shit. (Boring bastard) Oh, fuck off!

**Jim is swung back into the gym, he drops the cup on his way. In the gym, he picks up a towel, grabs a chair, and sits down in front of the audience.**

JIM (CONT'D)

Not everyone does listen to music. If you look around there's all sorts come in the gym, it's a bit like one of those intros to a John Hughes movie, you know, where they show you all the different cliques at high school.

**Jim jumps into action, ready to reenact each of the following categories. For the first, he screws up his face and starts ruthlessly, and badly, lifting a dumbbell.**

First, you got the meatheads. They need to let out their anger after they had another letter about them failing to pay their TV licence.

**(beat.)**

***He starts shadow boxing in the mirror.***

There's the failed fighter who spends more time shadowboxing in the mirror than he does anything else. He thinks he's got the speed of Ali and the power of Tyson, but here he is in a Pure Gym in Bedford looking like he's trying to start a scrap with his reflection.

**(beat.)**

Of course you got the power lifters, although to be honest they spend most of their time having a nap on a bench.

**(beat.)**

***He pretends to pull out a phone and take selfies.***

Oh yes, then you got the influencers. Love these guys, they somehow manage to make it look like they've been on every machine in the gym without actually touching one... well apart from the vending one. You can always find them lurking by some impressive bit of kit with their phone out. Caption always says, "never restin" with a strong man emoji. Pathetic.

**(beat.)**

And then there's me, just trying to get on with my life and better my body. I suppose I'm a little bit of all of them really, like some sort of stereotypical soup. I like to think I've got all the good bits at least.

**(beat.)**

There are plenty of women that go to the gym too, it's just they don't usually fit into any of those categories. They just get on with it really... well, almost. You do get the odd booty-pic taker, and then there are the shy ones who hide mostly... but you can't win 'em all.

**(beat.)**

My mum actually used to go to the gym. She was the first person that brought me here, I remember it like it was yesterday.

***Jim turns into his younger self, wide-eyed and nervous as he enters the gym for the first time.***

I was like a little boy in a sweet shop, except these sweets were good for your health, and already had a sweaty bloke using them. She took me round, gave me a tour, told me the do's and don'ts and even pointed out who the local creeps were who only came in to stare at arses. That was valuable information for a young man. Honestly, I wouldn't be where I am now without her.

**(beat.)**

Don't get me wrong, after about one session I was too embarrassed to be seen with her in a gym so I'd go when she was at work. That's the male ego for ya. Although she never helped herself in public appearances, at least not when it came to me anyway --

***Jim is once again flung into the party. He grabs the cup, and sits on a chair looking embarrassed.***

***He addresses the audience.***

JIM (CONT'D)

For context, my mum has just done the unthinkable. What's rule one of house parties? Ahh, actually, no, I think rule one of house parties is 'don't throw up in the flowerbed', and come to think of it I think rule two is 'don't shake the contents of the dirty toaster in your mouth for a bet', although that might just be for my mate Jamie. Look, the point is parents come and pick you up don't they. They wait outside, maybe send a text, and all is well. Normal everyday activities. But my mum... oh, my mum. She can't do normal everyday activities. She has to let herself into the party and start asking around as to where I am. She even gets the host to make an announcement, like a supermarket tannoy calling for a clean-up in aisle 3... I think I'm what's being cleaned up. But before you ask, that's not what I'm currently sitting here cringing my arse off about... oh no, mum's announcement was just the beginning. I'm currently wishing I'd never been born because, in front of me, burning itself into my poor retinas, is the sight of my mother and that *dickhead* from earlier dancing, aggressively, to LMFAO's 'I'm Sexy and I Know It'. See this is why I can't drink, my genes aren't made for it. The woman who makes up 50% of my DNA is currently slut-dropping in a room of 18-year-olds, and she's sober.

**(beat.)**

***Defeated, he sighs.***

I can't watch this anymore.

***Jim rushes back into the gym. He starts to down a couple of stretches.***

JIM (CONT'D)

See, going to these parties is difficult for someone like me. Truth is, I do miss out, quite a lot. In this country, all we do is drink. Doesn't matter the occasion: Someone's birthday? Drink. Funeral? Drink. Saturday evening? Drink. Saturday morning? Drink. A day ending in a Y? You get the idea.

**(beat.)**

So in a society that revolves around a culture of drinking, where socialising and meeting new people seems to be intrinsically linked to alcohol... what am I supposed to do?

**(beat.)**

People assume that, because I don't drink, I won't have a good time, or that I don't understand what it's like to have fun. I'm fine going to parties like everyone else, it's everyone else that seems to have an issue with me. Take Jamie's 19th for example.

**(TECHNO MUSIC PLAYS)**

***Jim rushes into the party and starts bopping to the beat.***

***He talks loudly to the audience, gesturing at an invisible party happening behind him like the presenter of a nature programme.***

JIM (CONT'D)

Here, in their rawest form, is your typical flock of teenagers. Wild on heat as mating season begins, they rhythmically flail their arms and legs in a way that may seem odd to you and me, but, to them, it is called dancing. However, the plight of the plucky youngster is not so simple as, to enter this higher state of consciousness where hormones harmonise with logic, they must first drink a sort of elixir.

**(beat.)**

Known to academics as ethanol, us as alcohol, and your Uncle as a drink to go with breakfast, beverages, or 'bevvies', are scientifically proven to improve a youngster's chance at mating through dance... or at least that's what they believe.

**(beat.)**

In fact, what many people don't know is that, when consuming the beverages, control of their limbs, bladder, and, crucially, their filter provides the facade that mating chances are increased. Luckily for the youngster, everyone else is engaging with the beverages, and so all inhibitions, and thus standards, have slipped across the board.

***Jim moves back over to his chair in the gym.***

JIM (CONT'D)

When you're working relentlessly on your fitness, and pushing yourself to new personal bests in the gym, the rushing blood to your head and body can actually give a similar sense we get when we're drunk; That our vision and speech are blurred and slurred... only without the hangover. What I'm trying to say is that I get it, I know what it's like I just choose not to.

(beat.)

***Jim starts to get frustrated. The techno music returns, quietly.***

But no one gets *me*, they don't want to get me. They'd rather ignore me because they're, what, jealous? Jealous that I don't need alcohol to have a good time? Jealous that I can focus on my own personal progress rather than wasting my time on nights I can't even remember?

(beat.)

Well, that's it I suppose. I may not have as many friends, and I may not be considered fun in today's childish society but at least I have the moral high ground.

***The music intensifies. Jim turns and stares as the party.***

I want to be in there, of course I do. Isn't that what we all want? To be accepted? Not to compromise who we are or what we stand for but to be in the room with the rest, comfortable with our differences.

(beat.)

So why not? Why do I feel so alien to these people? I have worked tirelessly to make myself proud of who I am, turning my own demons into positive, forward-thinking attributes, just to be shunned because I want water in my cup when we play beer pong. And the irony is, I can throw much more accurately than all those intoxicated wankers, and that makes them hate me even more!

*The music stops abruptly. Jim takes his chair and puts it centre stage. He grabs one dumbbell in his right hand, and a bottle of alcohol in his left hand. One at a time, he lifts his arms, arguing with himself as he does so.*

*Jim lifts the dumbbell.*

I can be proud of who I am. I was always taught to be myself and that's what I'm doing.

*Jim lifts the bottle.*

But what does that get me? Sitting alone at night watching Instagram stories of parties I haven't been invited to.

*Jim lifts the dumbbell.*

But I have been invited. I choose to not go because I'm in control of my own life.

*Jim lifts the bottle.*

I only choose to not go because I don't want to face the scrutiny I always seem to face. I'm not in control, not really.

*Jim lifts the dumbbell.*

But why would I want to lose control of my bodily functions. That's not fun, give me a run on a treadmill any day.

*Jim lifts the bottle.*

People run on treadmills alone.

*Jim lifts the dumbbell. The reps of the dumbbell are getting harder for Jim, as the bottle stays light.*

But I can't waste all the work I've put in.

*Jim easily lifts the bottle.*

But one night, one drink, just to prove I can have a good time.

*Jim struggles with the dumbbell.*

But I have nothing to prove? Alcohol will ruin all my progress.

*Jim lifts the bottle, again easily.*

Says who?



*Jim lifts the dumbbell even more strenuously this time.*

Says... science.

*Jim lifts the bottle with extreme ease.*

Well science says one drink will make all my problems go away.

*He tries to lift the dumbbell but can't. Instead, he lifts the bottle again.*

Imagine all of them in there, cheering and counting me in as I slam a shot.

*He fails to lift the dumbbell a second time and lifts the bottle once more.*

They will be so proud of me. That's what I want right? Pride?

*He lifts the bottle.*

Just --

*Lifts again.*

--One--

*Lift.*

--drink.

*He goes to take a big swig of the bottle. It's empty. He tips it upside down, disappointed.*

It's empty. Probably all been drunk already.

(pause.)

*The digital watch on Jim's wrist goes off. He stands up and composes himself.*

Back to it then.

*He picks up the dumbbell and as he walks over to the gym again...*

**CUT TO BLACK.**