

The Cut

A Williams and Jones
Production

Spring/summer day. The sun is beaming bright and orange as it sets. The mood is friendly and light. Todd and Chris are outside the pub having a friendly smoke. They are discussing whether the term "nowt" is in the dictionary

Chris: Look, man, I told you "nowt" is a word in the dictionary, I am right, the dictionary is right, drop it, you spanner!

Todd: Yeah, whatever

BEAT

Todd looks inside and takes a puff of his nearly burned-out straight. He looks over at his mates in the pub, then looks back at Chris

Todd: Fuck, I need to start vaping so I don't have to stand out here with you.

They both turn to walk back into the pub

Chris: If only you could, the vape man got busted last week, no chance from him

Todd: Busted?

Chris: Yeah man, money laundering, the vape shop was a front turns out.

Todd: Damn

Chris: No more "kiwi limes" for you, crypto boy

Todd and Chris rejoin the gang at the table. Daniel is wearing a button-up shirt, headphones on one ear and a uni lanyard and is being talked at by Matilda. Matilda is wearing a thrifted outfit and is commenting on Daniel's landyard.

Matilda: You know we aren't in uni right now? You don't have to keep wearing that, and do you have to wear those headphones?

Daniel looks up with a blank expression, blissfully ignoring the headphones comment

Daniel: How else would I get the student discount?

The group laughs

Ruby: Could do without Shannon breathing down my neck about my industry placement, because it's not like I haven't done anything for it, it's just I can't be bothered.

(Tapping her drink)

Anyone feeling chivalrous?

Todd: nah, get your money up, I've been telling you get trading 2-1...

Ruby: Oh, shut up, Tate Jr. you don't have to be a tool about it

Daniel: yer back to the shed, bloody tool

The group laughs at the joke

Matilda: Yeah, back to the shed

The group looks around at everyone else and then chuckles at her.

Chris: Well, if film school doesn't work out, there's always stand-up for you

The group laughs again, but then is interrupted by a stranger standing over them. He is dressed casually with a semi-flash necklace. He smells of beer and cigarettes.

Stranger: Did I hear you're film students?

In an excitable voice, Daniel pipes up

Daniel: Yes, as a matter of fact, we are. Are you in film school as well?

Stranger: nah mate, not quite, but I might have a gig for you guys tho.

(The group begins to listen more intently)

It's paid and it's tomorrow.

Chris: Have you got any details? (confused)

Stranger: Here is his number.

He slides over a business card for a barber shop.

END OF SCENE

The next day, in the morning. The gang- Matilda, Daniel, Chris and Todd get off the bus the following morning. They stop at the bus stop.

Todd: I ain't ever getting on that bus ever again, that bus driver hated the fact I had an iPhone.

Chris: You sure it was the phone, mate?

Chris lights a cigarette

Matilda: Has anyone got the call sheet on them?

Chris: This is a promo for a barber shop, not the next interstellar mate.

Daniel: Has anyone heard from Ruby?

Todd: No Dan, I haven't heard from Ruby. Can you please stop asking

Daniel: My name is Daniel, not DAN, and do you have the microphone then?

Matilda: No, because Ruby is doing sound

BEAT

They all look around in disappointment.

Chris: I'm not one to talk my way out of a paid job, but why does a barber shop need all this gear??

Matilda: Didn't they say it was for social media?

Daniel: Still, it does seem excessive. Do we really need a boom mic for a promo showing off haircuts?

Chris stubs out his cigarette

Chris: thank god Ruby's here then, eh?

The gang walks out of frame.

Inside the barber shop, it is dead silent. There are no customers and a single man is sitting in one of the chairs. The Gang file into the shop, looking especially amateur. The man, dressed smart, acknowledges them and rises to meet them.

Tom: Hey guys, I'm the manager here. We spoke on the phone, you can just call me Tom.

here He reaches out a hand

Daniel: Is that your real name, then?

They shake hands, and Tom's face drops into a stern look

Tom: Call me Tom.

Todd steps up between Tom and Daniel. He extends his hand.

Todd: What's the plan then, boss?

Tom ignores the handshake, beckoning the others to come further into the shop

Tom: You're gonna be filming a few of my clients as they come and go, and making this place look as proper as you can. All of the footage will be front of house. If you do need to use the bathroom, just let me know.

He flashes an untrustworthy smile

Matilda: So, when are the clients getting here?

Tom: Here they are now!

He motions to the window. A long line of random men are standing outside.

The gang stand confused, clutching a bit of equipment each.

Tom smiles again, rubbing his hands together.

Tom: Action!

MONTAGE

A fast-paced montage of different random men getting into the chair and being filmed by the gang. The gang grow more and more confused as they realise nobody is cutting any hair. We see the gang try some ridiculous experimental angles and zooms. The sequence is presented both from an outside cinematic view and the Gang's camera POV.

MONTAGE ENDS

Chris: Tom, mate, can I use your bathroom?

*Tom is talking on the phone, he looks annoyed.
He lowers it.*

Tom: Uh sure, just down there!

*He points to a very dark, very uninviting back area of the shop.
Chris, with the camera around his neck, walks away. Chris doesn't notice the camera is recording. He walks down the corridor looking lost, he opens the first door he sees.*

From the camera around his neck's perspective, we see the door open. The room is empty, and inside is a table piled high with cocaine and money. A gun is resting on the table as well. The walls are decorated with various maps and whiteboards with large sums written next to names. Chris looks stunned. His eyes are wide and his mouth agape

Chris: Shit

*He steps back, letting out a deep sigh
His eyes scan the room again and again*

Chris: Fuck

He notices his camera is rolling, he raises it and takes footage of the room. Just then, it dies. Before he can react, he hears voices and a door begins to open on the other end of the room. Just as the unseen person steps in, Chris hastily disappears back into the shop.

Tom: Did you find the toilets okay?

Chris: (Quickly) Yes mate, down the hall and to the uhh- down the hall- yep, Yeah, I found them.

Matilda: Can I use the camera? Wanna grab some BTS of Todd with the light rig twice his height.

Chris: (still panicked) Uh, yeah. NO! It's uhh it's dead! Dead as hell, dead as disco, dead as your gran- It's just died, it was rolling now it is not. Drop it.

Matilda looks very confused. The shop again falls silent.

BEAT

Tom sighs, he stands and walks over to Chris.

Tom: If the camera is dead, we'll have to bag this one up today!

Tom smiles, Chris does not

Tom: Send me the footage when it's back on charge and then I can let you know if we need to meet again.

Chris nods obediently, trying his best to look casual as he ushers the gang out of the shop. As they leave, Chris looks ahead and speaks through a forced smile.

Chris: Everyone, look casual and don't look back at the hairdresser. I'll tell you everything when we get on the bus.

END OF SCENE

After some hours pass, Chris and Daniel are walking through their neighbourhood and stop by Chris' house on the way back. The rest of the gang has already departed.

Chris: Look I know what I saw in there.

Daniel: without sufficient evidence? I don't believe you, you could've seen anything back there!

They stop outside Chris's front door

Chris: Come in then! I'll charge up the "Sufficient evidence" and you can see for yourself!

Daniel: It's late and I'm tired, show me tomorrow.

Chris: Alright, half ten. Everyone will come over and then you'll have to believe me.

Daniel: Half past to eleven! Gotcha!

Chris: Yep, half ten mate.

Daniel salutes and turns, walking further down the dark street. Chris heads into the house, takes his shoes off and gets to the kitchen.

*RING DOORBELL NOTIFICATION
"MOVEMENT DETECTED AT THE FRONT DOOR"*

He rushes back to the door

Chris: For fucks sake Daniel, no i don't wanna walk yo-

He opens the front door, but nobody is there.

He wanders out into the street. Looking around. He sees nothing.

END OF SCENE

The same evening, we see Todd walking down the street and passing the vape shop that Chris had previously mentioned. He is on the phone watching a local influencer's video.

Bristolcrazy's video: Yes, guys! Vapeshop in Broadmead has been raided by the police, you know, people are saying it was a front guys. Be carefu...

Todd closes his phone and looks up at the vape shop. He looks deep in thought, he takes out his phone again and looks up the barber shop they have just been at. Sees no reviews and looks at the postcode and phone number of the barber shop.

END SCENE

Again on the same evening. Matilda is on the phone with her mates, asking their opinions on what they think about what Chris told her

Matilda: Hypothetically, if you thought you had evidence of a drug cartel, would you report it to the police?

Waits for an answer on the phone

Matilda: Yeah, because it is the right thing to do.

Matilda: But what if they knew you had evidence of it? I mean, isn't it dangerous?

BEAT

She looks up and realises that the window is wide open. She rushes to close it.

Matilda: No no it's just an idea for a film, don't worry.

She is fixed on the window.

END SCENE

Next day, in the morning, the gang is in Chris' house in the living room, they are all sitting around the table. Ruby is just coming down the road, Chris is trying to discreetly hurry her inside. Ruby is strutting up to the house evidently a bit hung over, with a can of cider in hand.

Chris: A bit early isn't it?

Ruby: Hair dog of the dog innit!

She proceeds to take a swig

Chris: come in, alchy

They walk in and join the gang, and Ruby puts her can down. Chris pulls the camera out of a drawer.

Chris: Look alright, at the barber shop when I went for a piss I came across a room with tons of coke and money and guns and-

Matilda: Can we just see the footage, please

Chris leans down and gets the recording up on the laptop and turns it to face the group. They sit in intrigue at the laptop, looking for what Chris described. The footage doesn't make it absolutely clear. Chris is explaining what it is that they are watching, trying to point out all the incriminating bits of evidence that somewhat show up on the camera

Chris: So you see, we just filmed a promo for a bunch of drug dealers.

Matilda: Well, it could have been anything because you can't quite see in that bit when you swipe across the room, which is horrible quality (when saying this line, she is right up being very critical of the quality of the footage)

Chris: I knew we should have got a focus puller. Guess I didn't think of that (sarcastically voiced), well, if the batteries didn't die on me, and the camera wasn't so shit I might've planned the shot better!

The group look up at him speculatively but not dismissively

Chris: Looks like there is literally no benefit in me lying! There was like a mountain of coke on that table (gesturing at the laptop).

Daniel: So, what do we do, do they know that we know?

Chris: God, I hope not!

Todd: What do you mean? We can play this!

Ruby : (sips her drink) Did we watch the same video? What are you chatting about?

Todd: Look, they might fold us in! I've seen Goodfellas and one of the Godfathers. Look if I could just talk to this "Tom" guy I reckon I could sort us out!

Ruby : calm down, crypto boy-

Todd: Look, maybe they trust us! And how many times have you seen cash like that?

Matilda : Thats ridiculous we need to call the police-

Chris: Don't talk to the feds! That's when people end up getting skinned alive and buried in the woods.

Daniel : Nice try, but I don't scare easily.

The gang devolves into arguing, getting louder with every line.

*(RING DOORBELL NOTIFICATION)
MOTION DETECTED AT THE FRONT DOOR*

Everyone goes dead silent stares towards the door. Chris stands up and slowly makes his way to the front door, they all look panicked. The gang follows behind and Ruby grabs the SD card from the laptop. Chris takes a moment, looks out of the window then back at the gang and swings the door open. There is no one outside and the gang piles out onto the street. They scan the street.

Daniel: Ok that does it, I am going home

He sprints away clutching his rucksack

Matilda: Look, let's all go home but if so much gets a whiff of anything following me, I am calling the police.

Todd: You're all jumping at nothing. I am gonna go work my magic.

Chris goes to stop him, Ruby interrupts

*Ruby: Look, can I take the SD? I might be able to clean some of the
footage up.*

Chirs: Sure, clean it up, be careful.

She launches the empty can at Chris and walks away.

END SCENE

Todd is sitting at a park bench, time has passed, but it is the same day. He pulls out his phone and makes a phone call. There is no answer, he tries a few more times. Someone picks up.

Todd: (in a faux tough guy voice) Hello? Who is this

Man On Phone: you called me?... speak.

Todd: I was uhh in your barbershop yesterday, and I umm think I could be an asset to your growing business?

Man on phone: What? Cutting hair?

Todd: No no aha, I mean elsewhere around the shop?

Man on Phone: We've got a cleaner.

Todd: Look, I'm an investment, I'm a big player! Surely a man like you could find a job for a man like me?

*Man on Phone: *Chuckles* Well be in touch, "Big Man"*

He chuckles again before hanging up on Todd, his mocking tone is completely lost on him. Todd smiles and flicks his hand, he rises and walks away, clicking his heels as he goes.

END SCENE

A Day has passed. Daniel is walking to a bus stop after uni. Backpack in tow and lanyard swinging. As he approaches he sees Matilda sitting at the bus stop. She spots Daniel and waves him over, he hurries towards her and sits down next to Matilda.

Daniel: (whispering) *eyes front!*

Matilda: *What, why did you see someone?*

dDaniel: *No, and I want to keep it that way, so eyes front!*

Matilda straightens up as well to match Daniels posture (they look even more noticeable and unnatural)

A group of guys come round the corner on the other side of the road. They are dressed in dark colours, complete with big coats and balaclavas. They stop opposite Daniel and Matilda. The men cross the road towards the bus stop. One of them slowly and deliberately goes into their coat pocket. Daniel and Matilda both get up and pace away and after a suitable distance they run. They stop in an alley.

Daniel: *Was that them? How did they find us?*

Matilda: *Maybe it wasn't them? They could just live here.*

Daniel: *What? Are they still behind us?*

Matilda : *I don't know, I didn't see!*

Daniel: *Look, we are not too far away from my house. Let's run! If we are fast we can make it in under 10 minutes.*

They both run out of frame

Cuts to Chris who is sitting on his laptop. The screen briefly shows local gang-related news. We see through a window, Daniel and Matilda sprint by. Daniel pauses partway, noticing he is too far ahead, and waits for Matilda to catch up, then they both continue to run. Chris doesn't see them.

RING DOORBELL NOTIFICATION
"MOVEMENT DETECTED AT THE FRONT DOOR"

Chris jolts up, he is beyond spooked. He cautiously looks out of his window and moves downstairs. He is looking outside, he sees nothing. He lingers at the downstairs window for a while, the two guys that were following Daniel and Matilda appear outside on the street

Chris is fixated on them

The two men both look up at Chris' house and stop for a moment and point at his front door. After sharing some unheard words, they proceed to carry on walking. Chris runs around his home locking windows and doors, in a panic he tries to phone Daniel. The phone rings and he gets no response, he then tries to call Todd but the line is busy.

END SCENE

Following directly on from the previous scene, We see Todd walking in the woods and talking on the phone. He is isolated and his conversation appears very one sided.

Todd: Sooo boss, the postcode you sent me I think I'm here, but I can't see-

He is interrupted by the phone call going silent due to lack of signal. Todd looks down at the phone and sees that he is no longer on the call and proceeds to look around at his surroundings. Unsure about what to do, he continues walking forward deeper into the woods.

He stumbles and stops, looking down he sees an open, freshly dug grave. There is a muddy shovel stabbed in the ground next to it.

In terrified disbelief, his face drops. He takes a moment to ponder what he should do. Before he can make his mind up, he hears movement in the bushes around him. Pumping with adrenaline, he runs away.

A figure appears behind a tree, and disappears back behind it as Todd runs past.

END SCENE

Again, following on from the prior scene. We cut back to Chris who has now given up trying to ring Todd. He is still in quite a frantic state. He then goes back to his room to his laptop then realises his SD Card isn't in the slot on his laptop. After a moment of panic and realisation, he runs to the phone.

Cut to Ruby sitting in her living room with the SD card plugged into her laptop and the footage visible on some editing software. There is music playing in the room from her speaker. The footage on her screen is clearer than before, with the drugs and money being seen more prominently.

Ruby: ooo looks like a party!

She hears her phone ringing upstairs.

Ruby looks annoyed and gets up to go and answer the phone. We follow her journey and in the background we see a closed front door. As she gets to the phone it stops ringing. The music downstairs suddenly cuts out leaving the house silent.

She gets a voicemail notification from chris

Beat

She picks up the phone and heads back downstairs. The trip is a mirror of when she went upstairs, but now in the background, the front door has been opened. Ruby doesn't notice, as she walks in, she is accessing her voicemails. She enters the room as her voicemail begins to play.

She looks down and sees her laptop and SD card gone.
Her face drops.

CHRIS ON VOICEMAIL: RUBY, WHEN YOU GET THIS CALL ME-

Behind her, a silhouette appears in the doorway for a brief second.

END SCENE

Two days later. Chris opens his front door to Matilda. Chris is panicked, Matilda has a more concerned demeanour. They stand in the doorway.

Chris: Anything? Did you knock AND ring the doorbell?

Matilda: Yes, yes, I did both, multiple times! It's odd, but it's not exactly out of character? This is the same Ruby that slept through a whole semester, yknow... But I did run into Todd on my way through town!

Chris: (rubbing his face with his hands) oh thank god, how was he?

Matilda: Wired man. Skittish, hardly stopped when I called out to him. I asked why he's been dodging our calls and he just spewed some shit about "staying off grid" and not using my phone?

Chris: That's off, maybe he knows something? Maybe about Ruby?

Matilda: Why are you so worried about Ruby? I know it's been a scary few days, but she's hardly even involved? She wasn't even at the Job, and last I checked it was me and Daniel who got followed! I mean-

Chris: What?! They followed you?

Matilda: YES! Well, maybe two guys were giving us some funny looks and came our way, but I'm not sure they were after us.

Chris: Oh god, oh god, Ruby...

Matilda: What about her?!

Chris: She had the footage, she took my SD card the other day, she had the only evidence of...

Matilda looks stunned, a mix of anger and terror flashes across her face. They both stand there speechless, struggling to come to terms with what Ruby's lack of contact might imply.

END OF SCENE

MONTAGE

Short, assorted snippets of DANIEL, MATILDA, TODD and CHRIS. They all share a look of misery and fear on their faces. Daniel is seen lingering by his windows and front door, wide eyes fixated on the outside street, almost waiting for someone sinister to appear. Chris is seen locking himself away in his room; he is grief-stricken and feeling guilty; he looks unwell. Todd is shown taking his room apart, binning all his tech and pulling out wires. It ends with his disposing of his phone. Matilda is shown throughout, on her way through the city. She is wiping tears away from her red-stained face.

END OF MONTAGE

Directly after her conversation with Chris, Matilda stops on a street corner. She looks up at the police station opposite her.

BEAT

She walks towards the police station, moving quickly with purpose. She halts suddenly, almost in reach of the door and looks around.

Her face drops as she spots Tom from the barbershop loitering across from her. He smiles at her. She is paralysed with fear. He tips his sunglasses, still flashing his untrustworthy smile.

Matilda turns and sees two men walking in her direction. After a moment, she sprints away from the scene.

END OF SCENE

A Vague amount of time has passed. We see Chris and Todd smoking outside the same pub from the intro. The shot is a mirror of the beginning. There is an awkward atmosphere between the two. Todd shakily finishes his cigarette and lets it fall from his hand.

Todd: Fuck, I'm almost out of cigs...

Chris: Yeah, 20 a day will do that to you

They both weakly smile. Chris stubs his cigarette, and in silence, they both enter the pub.

They rejoin the gang at the table. They appear similar to the intro however, the mood is heavy and depressing. There is a noticeably empty seat at the table where Ruby sat in the beginning. Daniel is nervously tapping at his glass. Matilda is fidgeting and playing with her hair.

What's left of the Gang sits in silence.

The end shot of the can still sat outside the house from when Ruby threw it at Chris.

END OF SCENE

FIN

