

' STUFFED '

by

Gerard Foster

A 6 x 30 min non-audience comedy

**The everyday life of a family
with NOT ENOUGH TIME and TOO MUCH STUFF...**

STYLE NOTE:

The Swanns are a family with too much stuff. Their house is literally packed to the rafters. Not just the normal clutter of family life - although of course there's plenty of that too. They also have a serious hoarding issue. There are towers of boxes, mounds of bags, huge piles of books and magazines, plus a thousand other random objects that they hope might come in useful one day or just haven't got round to throwing away. Moving round the house is an obstacle course in itself, packed with challenges, hazards and many distractions...

They are also always up against time. Dialogue and action should be brisk and fast-paced, unless otherwise indicated. The general tone should be one of frantic plate-spinning - a breathless, jam-packed medley of chaos as DAN and CLAIRE struggle against the tide of stuff that threatens to sweep them all away...

Every episode of 'STUFFED' takes place in real time: twenty-eight minutes and thirty seconds on another manic Monday morning with the Swanns.

AGENT: Clare Israel at David Higham Associates

E-MAIL: clareisrael@davidhigham.co.uk

PHONE: 020 7434 5900

CLOSE UP ON: A radio-alarm clock, perched on a pile of books, newspapers, magazines, mugs, glasses etc. On the wall behind is a 'Missing Gerbil' poster, made by a seven-year-old child.

The time clicks on to 06.30 and the radio comes on.

RADIO VOICE ONE

The time is half past six and
you're listening to-

A hand (DAN's) comes into shot and slaps at the snooze button, cutting off the voice.

We CUT rapidly from shot to shot as the hand repeatedly slaps the snooze button and the radio gradually slips off its moorings. The clock advances nine minutes each time.

RADIO VOICES ONE / TWO / THREE

Thirty- Seven- To- Seven oh- Time's-
Up- Your- Gross domestic- Bottom-
Thanks Penny, it's just coming up
to eight o'clock-

The hand reaches out, trying to hit the snooze but finds only books, mugs, glasses etc. They go flying. Finally the hand locates the radio lead, pulls hard and yanks it out of the socket. <RADIO OFF>

PULL OUT TO REVEAL:

DAN, early 50s and past his best. He turns over and snuggles up to a pillow...then suddenly jerks awake.

DAN

Oh shit.

DAN springs out of bed, hastily pulls on the nearest things he can find: an old Pixies T-shirt and a pair of ladies pyjama bottoms, then bounce-steps across the bed (no room to move around in - too much stuff) and hurries out...

DAN rushes out of his bedroom and heads for the stairs, negotiating his way through piles of clutter. At the top of the stairs stands WILL, 7 years old, armed with a nerf gun.

WILL

Police! Freeze!

DAN

Hey, poppet.

DAN pushes past and hurries on down, pursued by bullets.

2.

WILL

I said freeze, you slag!

3 **INT. DOWNSTAIRS LANDING, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.00** 3

...DAN arrives at the foot of the stairs, ducks under a helium-filled remote-controlled SHARK, which suddenly floats into his path, and turns into the kitchen...

4 **INT. KITCHEN, THE SWANNS HOUSE - DAY 08.00** 4

...where EMMIE (also 7) sits in school uniform, eating cereal and reading a massive encyclopedia. DAN scoops up her bowl and hastily shovels cereal into his mouth as he continues on towards the filthy sink, crowded with dirty pots, pans, plates etc. The dishwasher stands open, full of clean stuff.

EMMIE

Hey!

DAN

(mouth full, milk
dribbling out)

It's eight o'clock, I've got a pick-up at nine and I'm not even in my own pyjamas!

EMMIE

Maybe this is the wake-up call you need.

DAN

No the wake-up call I needed was at half past six! Whose dishwasher is it?

EMMIE shrugs. DAN goes to the fridge and tries to locate the dishwasher rota from under a load of scraps of paper with 'RECYCLING!' "Emmie ART!" and "FILL SKIP!" on them plus shopping lists, doodles, and another Missing Gerbil poster.

EMMIE

I'll do it.

DAN

No we need to stick to the rota. Otherwise it's just chaos.

DAN finally finds the rota. By Monday, the name 'Jack' has been crossed out and replaced with 'Hugh Janus'.

DAN (CONT'D)

Jack!!!

(back to Emmie)

Oh and you need to do your art.

Emmie pulls a face and resumes reading. DAN moves off and arrives at an electric socket with a jumble of phones and leads. He hastily untangles his phone and makes a call.

DAN (CONT'D)

(leaving message)

Hi Sue, it's Dan, the original Dan, not the new one with the hair and teeth. Just to say I'm on my way to the airport now to pick up Mr What's-his-face. If he calls, I'll be waiting in Arrivals, wearing a black and white Pixies top and hopefully some sort of trousers by then. Oh and don't worry, I do know his name. Got it written on my little white board.

DAN ends the call, breathes... then panics.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

He looks around, frantically turns stuff over...

EMMIE

Wait, you're picking up from the airport?

DAN

Yeah.

EMMIE

And Mum's OK with that?

DAN

I dunno. Have you seen a little white board?

EMMIE

Oh. Yeah. So I found Stanley Gibbons.

DAN

What?

EMMIE

My gerbil. He was under the sink.

DAN looks and sees on the kitchen table: his taxi driver's whiteboard with a long, foreign-looking name scribbled on it. On top of the whiteboard is a glass mixing bowl. Safely contained between bowl and whiteboard is a rat.

DAN

Emmie, that's not a gerbil. It's a rat.

4.

EMMIE

No it isn't. It's Stanley. He's just grown that's all.

DAN picks up the bowl and whiteboard and heads for the back door. There's a wall of stuff piled up in the way. He scrambles up it like a wobbly staircase, keeping both hands firmly on the whiteboard and bowl so as not to drop the rat.

EMMIE (CONT'D)

Hey, stop!

DAN

It's a rat!

EMMIE

It's a gerbil!

DAN

It's a RAT!

Having arrived at the top of the wall of stuff, DAN awkwardly reaches down with one hand, opens the door behind, throws the rat out into the garden and hastily pulls the door shut.

Still holding the whiteboard, DAN notices yellow liquid on it. He wipes it with his sleeve and smudges out the name.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

EMMIE

So where's my gerbil?

DAN

I dunno. Probably eaten by one of the rats.

EMMIE

Oh great.

DAN

Yeah well maybe if you'd looked after your gerbil, he wouldn't have wanted to run away.

EMMIE

Yeah, and maybe if we didn't live in a TIP, he wouldn't have been KILLED BY RATS!

DAN

All right, easy tiger, don't look at me. I spent all weekend putting stuff in that skip.

5.

EMMIE

Are you saying it's all Mum's fault?

DAN

No. God, no. Absolutely not, no. I'm at least 20 per cent to blame. But I'm a collector. I keep books, records, videos, vintage bootleg reel to reels. Whereas Mum's just a compulsive hoarder who can't throw anything away, even when it's obvious to everyone else there's no longer any use for it.

EMMIE

And that's why you're still here.

DAN

Very good.

We hear the <FRONT DOOR OPEN & CLOSE> in the hallway.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Hiya.

DAN

Hiya!

DAN hastily goes to the fridge and starts rifling through it for packed lunch stuff. CLAIRE, late-40s, enters, running on empty after a long night-shift as a nurse. She has a plastic bag with shopping in it - bread, butter, cheese, ham etc.

CLAIRE

Right, what can I do?

DAN

No, nothing, everything under control. Just doing their packed lunches now.

DAN sees CLAIRE unloading her shopping and stops rifling for stuff. Then he spots a tiny flower in an old baked bean can in the fridge door.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh and Happy Monday.

He offers her the tin can and flower. CLAIRE is touched.

CLAIRE

Oh! Thanks. What you after?

DAN

Who me? Nothing.

6.

CLAIRE

Oh.

DAN

I just found it in the garden.

CLAIRE

What, growing?

DAN

Yeah. Between Mount Rubble and where the cat shits.

CLAIRE, sniffing the flower, recoils a little. Dan hastily commences making sandwiches. Claire tries to stuff her empty shopping bag into a drawer bursting with similar bags.

CLAIRE

Whose dishwasher is it?

DAN

JACK!!!

EMMIE

I'll do it.

DAN

No you need to do your art.

CLAIRE's phone pings. She gets it out, starts scrolling.

EMMIE

That's OK, Mum's here now. She can do it.

CLAIRE

Oh, thanks.

EMMIE

Well you always do.

DAN

No, Mum's just worked a twelve hour shift. She needs to relax, have a nice cup of tea, and then get on with filling that skip.

CLAIRE

Oh right, so there was something then.

DAN

Well they're picking it up this morning at ten so be good to get it full by then. You know, make that fresh start we were talking about.

7.

CLAIRE

Yeah, yeah. What do you think of
this whisk?

CLAIRE shows him a picture on her phone. It's a whisk.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Next door's put it up on the
neighbourhood whatsapp. Save it
going into landfill. What do you
think?

DAN

I dunno. Do we actually need one?

CLAIRE

No, but-

DAN

Right, so there's your answer.
JACK!!!!

CLAIRE surreptitiously replies on her phone. DAN hears the
<CLANK OF CUTLERY> and turns to see EMMIE at the dishwasher,
unpacking plates.

DAN (CONT'D)

No, stop... Step away from the
dishwasher...

EMMIE ignores him, puts the plates in a cupboard and returns
to the dishwasher to unpack more.

DAN (CONT'D)

Right.

DAN takes the plates out of the cupboard and starts hastily
re-stacking them into the dishwasher... EMMIE unpacks more
and hurries off to put those away... DAN follows after her,
un-doing what she's done. CLAIRE is still on her phone.

EMMIE

Dad, stop!

DAN

You stop!

CLAIRE

(not looking up)
Dan, stop.

EMMIE

Stop!

DAN

JACK!!!!

8.

13-year-old JACK enters, eyes, as always, fixed on his phone, one finger tapping repeatedly on the screen.

JACK

Yeah ham and cheese no salad to go.

DAN, realising the time, abandons his battle with EMMIE and hastily resumes sandwich-making.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh and Dad, can you sponsor me? I'm doing keepie-uppies for Dignitas.

DAN

What?

JACK

It's a win-win. Grandad gets what he wants and we get our spare room back. Goal!

JACK's phone emits a synthesised crowd roar.

CLAIRE

Jack, Grandad isn't going to Dignitas.

JACK

Yeah he is. He's set up a crowd-funding site. He's already raised three hundred quid.

CLAIRE

What?!

CLAIRE swipes and taps rapidly on her own phone, looks furious at what she sees, and heads out into the hallway...

5 **INT. HALLWAY / SPARE ROOM, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.07** 5

CLAIRE crosses the hallway, opens the spare room door and goes in without knocking. Jim (late 70s) is in bed, watching a TV perched on a pile of boxes, bags and junk. The room, as everywhere else in the house, is stuffed.

JIM

(not looking up)

And in she comes without knocking.

CLAIRE

What's this?

CLAIRE holds the phone up to his face. JIM glances at it.

JIM

Oh, we're up to three hundred, nice.

JIM takes the phone, starts scrolling. CLAIRE takes it back.

CLAIRE

Dad, you can't just ask a load of strangers to pay for you to go to Switzerland!

JIM

Why not? If you won't give me the money, what else am I supposed to do?

CLAIRE

I don't know Dad, maybe just try being grateful you're alive and there's someone looking after you.

JIM

Well that's cheered me up, thanks.

CLAIRE looks furiously at him, inwardly seething.

CLAIRE

Do you want a cup of tea?

JIM

If you like.

CLAIRE exits and passes back through the hallway...

6

INT. HALLWAY, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.08

6

...where Jack is disappearing up the stairs, eyes on screen, munching a freshly-made sandwich. He's pursued by DAN.

DAN

Jack!

At the top of the stairs, WILL, still toting his nerf gun, lets JACK pass but then stops DAN.

WILL

Where's the dosh, you muppet?!

DAN pushes past him, heads for JACK's room... then stops as he hears from outside the sound of a <RECYCLING LORRY - WHEELIE BINS FULL OF BOTTLES, TINS ETC>. DAN turns, pushes past WILL and races back down the stairs, pursued by bullets.

WILL (CONT'D)

Oi!

DAN emerges from the house. A scruffy family car with TOPS TAXIS and its company motto stencilled on it ("We'll be there in half an hour, tops"), stands in the driveway. Next to it is a skip, half full. Building materials litter the drive, including several thick planks of wood, along with all sorts of furniture, junk and clutter.

DAN

Wait!

DAN grabs a wheelie bin full of recycling, and moves off towards the recycling van... But just then, CLAIRE races out.

CLAIRE

Wait!

DAN continues on but CLAIRE keeps up, doggedly rooting through the top of the recycling bin as they go.

DAN

What are you doing?!

CLAIRE

Junk model rocket. She's doing it.
I'm just helping. Dan, stop!

DAN reluctantly stops and sighs, keeping one eye on the recycling lorry as CLAIRE continues to fish for junk.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Did you manage to talk to Alfie?

DAN

Oh. No. Sorry. Still I guess
there's no rush.

CLAIRE

He was seen giving money to a gang
of boys known for dealing drugs!

DAN

Yeah and obviously that doesn't
sound good. But he is nearly
seventeen.

CLAIRE

So?

DAN

So maybe we need to start letting
go.

CLAIRE glares back, not impressed by this logic.

11.

DAN (CONT'D)

I mean, maybe it might do him some good to get out, make some friends-

CLAIRE

Take mind-bending drugs.

DAN

Why not? That's what I was doing at his age.

CLAIRE

Yeah and look at you now.

DAN

Exactly.

CLAIRE gives him a hard stare.

DAN (CONT'D)

What?

CLAIRE shakes her head and heads back inside. DAN meanwhile realises that the recycling lorry is already on its way.

DAN (CONT'D)

No wait! STOP!!!

He races off in pursuit of the lorry, then stops, gives up, turns around...

...and sees a smartly dressed woman (MICHELLE) come out of the next-door house and go towards DAN and CLAIRE's. She is carrying a large cardboard box full of stuff. DAN hastily races back with the recycling bin.

DAN (CONT'D)

No wait...! Hello...!

MICHELLE continues on. DAN, realising he's running out of time, blurts out the only thing he can think of:

DAN (CONT'D)

Look, it's Michael Buble!

MICHELLE turns around sharply.

MICHELLE

Oh, hi. Claire said she wanted this whisk. There's a few other bits and pieces too.

She hands DAN the cardboard box. DAN looks inside. There's a whisk in there, along with a load of other stuff. MICHELLE meanwhile is already speeding off. DAN sets off after her.

DAN

Uh right, well I'll take the books and CDs. But we're actually trying to de-clutter ourselves-

MICHELLE

No honestly, it's no trouble at all. I'd only have to take them all to the dump. Seeya!

MICHELLE arrives at her own front door and hastily disappears inside. DAN resignedly gives up and trudges back towards his house, where, checking that no one is watching, he puts the cardboard box into the skip, pulls out a clutch of books and CDs and sets off towards his front door...

Then stops as he sees three TEENAGE BOYS sharing a spliff on the edge of his drive. They hastily hide the joint.

DAN

Oh. Hi. You're not here for Alfie?

The BOYS look awkward, hesitate, then share a smirk.

BOY ONE

Uh, yeah.

DAN

Fantastic. Come on in. I'm Dan. Yeah, Alfie's always having friends to call.

The BOYS, a little thrown, hang back as DAN hurries to the door, realises it's closed and rings urgently on the bell.

DAN (CONT'D)

Alfie! You've got friends!

The BOYS look uncertain, start to edge away.

DAN (CONT'D)

No, don't go.

DAN, kneels down and opens the letterbox to call through.

DAN (CONT'D)

Alfie!

...then recoils in pain, clutching his face as a nerf gun bullet zips out and hits him in the eye.

DAN (CONT'D)

Aaaaggh!

(to the closed door)

Right, that's a yellow card!

Bullets continue to spurt out through the letter box. DAN struggles to his feet, gathers up the books and CD and heads round the side of the house...

8 **EXT. SIDE PASSAGE, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.12** 8

...where he fights his way past yet more furniture, bicycles, building stuff etc...

9 **EXT. BACK GARDEN, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.12** 9

DAN arrives at the back door. It's open but blocked with the wall of stuff inside. DAN struggles to push at the door.

DAN

Hello..?!

A volley of nerf gun bullets rains down from a window above. He hastily races back round into the side passage...

10 **EXT. SIDE PASSAGE, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.12** 10

DAN arrives at a small open window. He hurriedly chucks the books and CD through the window, then tries to pass through it himself...

11 **INT. DOWNSTAIRS LOO, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.12** 11

...and soon finds himself stuck halfway through, directly over the toilet.

DAN

Erm... Help!

From somewhere beyond the door, we hear CLAIRE approaching.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Dan..? Are you in the loo?

DAN

(beat)

Yes and no...

CLAIRE arrives in the loo holding Dan's mobile phone.

CLAIRE

It's Sue. Something about a pick-up from the airport. I'm guessing there's been some sort of mistake.

DAN takes the phone, presses a button and speaks...

14.

DAN

Hello Sue, no I don't do the airport, Sue. As I told you several weeks ago, Sue, I don't feel comfortable enabling people to systematically destroy our planet by flying half way round the world and then get driven home by me.

CLAIRE meanwhile hears a call of "Mum!" from EMMIE in the kitchen and departs, leaving the way clear for DAN to press the button on his phone and start again...

DAN (CONT'D)

Hey Sue, sorry to put you on hold. Yeah I'm literally getting in the car right now. No it's fine, I'll be half an hour, tops. Can you just remind me of the name again- OW! Right, that is now a RED card!

CUT AWAY TO:

12 **EXT. SIDE PASSAGE, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.42** 12

DAN's backside, sticking out from the window... WILL is there with his nerf gun, firing repeatedly from point blank range.

CUT BACK TO:

13 **INT. DOWNSTAIRS LOO, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.42** 13

DAN still on the phone.

DAN

STOP!!! No not you, Sue, yes please, the name.

DAN reaches for a tube of toothpaste on the top of the toilet cistern and sweeps everything else away onto the floor.

DAN (CONT'D)

Uh yeah, I've got a pen, fire away- Ow!!!

DAN squeezes out toothpaste to make letters on the cistern, while still receiving multiple bullets to his rear end.

DAN (CONT'D)

Yes... yes... ow!... yes... yes... yes... ow! shit!

As DAN continues frantically squeezing out letters, JACK enters, eyes fixed as ever on his screen, oblivious to his father stuck in the window just inches away. With his spare hand he unzips his flies and starts to wee: <SFX PISSING>.

DAN (CONT'D)
(hastily improvising)
No, that's just a spot of rain.

DAN reaches out to try and stop JACK peeing and comes lurching clumsily through the window-

DAN (CONT'D)
Waaargh..!!!

-and <CRASHES> into JACK who ends up with him in a heap on the floor.

JACK
Oh my god, you TWAT!

JACK looks at his trousers, now covered in wee and toothpaste. He starts to crossly pull them off. DAN meanwhile hastily fishes his phone out of the toilet.

DAN
Hello, Sue..?

The phone is dead. DAN hurries out into the hallway...

14 **INT. HALLWAY, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.14**

14

...Where 16-year-old ALFIE is at the front door. He is studious and straight-looking. On the doorstep are the trio of older, bigger, and far cooler BOYS. One of them is offering ALFIE a small bag of weed. ALFIE looks awkward, freaked out, hastily closes the door on the boys.

ALFIE
Hi, Dad!

DAN hurries on into the kitchen. ALFIE re-opens the door...

15 **INT. KITCHEN, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.14**

15

DAN hurriedly grabs the mixing bowl from earlier, puts his phone in it, pulls out a massive bag of rice and starts messily pouring rice into the bowl...

The helium-filled shark floats by. JACK arrives, carrying his wet trousers, and goes over to the microwave...

CLAIRE meanwhile is hurriedly finishing a junk model rocket, while Emmie reads her encyclopedia.

16.

CLAIRE

There! Wow! Great job, Emmie! Shall I put it by the door?

EMMIE

Oh, no. We just need to take a photo. Mrs Blake said she doesn't want a load of rubbish cluttering up her lovely school.

CLAIRE

Right.

CLAIRE takes a photo with her phone, puts the junk model with a load of other home-made art, then heads to the kettle.

DAN meanwhile, having covered his phone with rice, hears <CRACKLING> from the microwave. JACK is there on his phone, oblivious. DAN yanks open the microwave and pulls out... JACK's trousers.

DAN

For Christ's sake! You can't put trousers in a microwave!

JACK

How else am I gonna get them dry?

DAN

I dunno, try the grill.
(turns to CLAIRE)
Right got to go. Not to the airport. Somewhere else. You won't forget to fill that skip?

CLAIRE

Yeah yeah.

DAN grabs his car key and races out into the hallway...

16

INT. HALLWAY, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.15

16

...where ALFIE is still in the doorway, hesitating over the bag of weed, which the BOYS again hastily hide as DAN ploughs through them and out of the house...

ALFIE

Hi Dad!

17

EXT. THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.15

17

DAN opens the car door. It's a mess, packed with bags, coats, CDs, games, toys, books, rubbish... and a pair of jeans. DAN hastily pulls the jeans on over the pyjamas, scoops out armfuls of stuff and races back inside...

...where ALFIE and the BOYS are again, it seems, forced to hastily abort their deal.

ALFIE

Hi Dad!

This time DAN can't help but stop.

DAN

For God's sake, I'm not stupid,
Alf!

(beat)

Go on, just buy the stuff and get
to school.

ALFIE and the BOYS hesitate, thrown.

ALFIE

I... don't have any money...

DAN

Right.

DAN wearily reaches into the pocket of the jeans he's just put on and produces a crumpled twenty pound note. He hands it to the BOYS. They in turn hand the bag of weed to ALFIE and hastily head out the door. ALFIE looks stunned, terrified.

ALFIE

Dad!

DAN

Don't worry, I won't tell Mum-

Just then CLAIRE emerges from the kitchen with a mug of tea. ALFIE hastily hides the weed.

DAN (CONT'D)

-and let that be a lesson, now go!

ALFIE hastily scoots upstairs. DAN turns smoothly to CLAIRE.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh hi, just having that word with Alfie. Turns out there's someone who looks quite like him who's really friendly with those boys.

CLAIRE

And that's what he said, is it?

DAN

Yeah.

18.

CLAIRE

Right, well I think we need to search his room.

CLAIRE moves off towards the spare room, leaving DAN floundering in the hallway.

DAN

What? No I think that's a really bad idea... I mean... surely we need some sense of trust.

CLAIRE re-emerges, without the mug, now looking at her phone.

CLAIRE

That's weird, just got a text from next door saying thanks for taking all that stuff.

DAN

Oh... Yeah...

CLAIRE looks accusinly at DAN and heads out the front door. DAN hastily dumps the stuff from the car and follows her.

19

EXT. THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.16

19

CLAIRE is heading purposefully for the skip. DAN follows.

DAN

To be fair, I did have a good look through.

CLAIRE

Yeah and then you thought sod it, I'll just put it in the skip.

DAN

Well apart from the books and CDs-

CLAIRE

Oh!

CLAIRE pulls the box out of the skip and heads back inside, looking less than impressed. DAN follows.

20

INT. HALLWAY / KITCHEN, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.16

20

CLAIRE arrives back in the kitchen with the box and starts pulling stuff out. JACK is on his phone. EMMIE is reading. WILL is firing bullets at the flower in the can.

CLAIRE

You can't just throw stuff into landfill, Dan. Think about the planet.

DAN

Sod the planet! What about our bloody house?! I mean look, it's all rubbish.

CLAIRE

Well it's our rubbish now. And don't blame me. I only wanted the whisk.

DAN

Yeah and what's wrong with the other seven in the drawer?

CLAIRE

We haven't got seven.

DAN

Uh yeah, we have.

CLAIRE

Not seven, Dan, that would be crazy.

DAN

Yeah!

DAN reaches for the utensils drawer and starts pulling out various whisks, one by one.

DAN (CONT'D)

One!

CLAIRE

That's really old.

DAN

Two!

CLAIRE

That's a *gravy* whisk.

DAN

Three!

CLAIRE

That one's broken.

DAN

Then throw it away!

CLAIRE

No, it might come in useful one day.

DAN

Four!

CLAIRE

Oh my Mum gave me that one. Wow.

Claire holds it like a treasured family heirloom.

DAN

It's a whisk.

CLAIRE

Yeah a whisk that my mum gave me...

(to the room)

Right, who wants pancakes?!

WILL and EMMIE react excitedly. JACK puts his hand up, eyes still on the screen. ALFIE arrives from upstairs.

EMMIE / WILL / JACK / ALFIE

Yes me! / Me! / Me!

DAN

Wait, what are you doing?

EMMIE, WILL, ALFIE and CLAIRE set about gathering ingredients and tools from around the kitchen: eggs, milk, flour, oil, frying pan, scales etc. DAN follows them, trying to sabotage their efforts but it's a losing battle. No one appears to notice the smoke now drifting out from under the grill.

DAN (CONT'D)

Claire, it's twenty past eight...

They need to go to school... Stop!

WILL picks up the mixing bowl full of rice, tips out the contents (including DAN's phone) and passes it to CLAIRE.

CLAIRE

No I need to do this.

DAN

No you don't.

CLAIRE

Yes I do!

The <SMOKE ALARM> bursts into life and they turn to see smoke billowing out from the grill. CLAIRE races over and pulls out the grill-pan to reveal... JACK's trousers, now on fire.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Jack!!! What the hell were you thinking?!!

She tips the trousers into the sink and turns on the tap.

JACK

Dad said to put them under the grill.

21.

CLAIRE looks accusingly at DAN.

DAN

Not leave them unattended, you loon!

CLAIRE

(to Dan)

Unbelievable! Do you want to start a fire?!

DAN

Be one way of getting rid of all these whisks.

As he says this, the landline phone <RINGS> from somewhere underneath a pile of stuff. DAN hastily finds it, sees the caller display, and answers.

DAN (CONT'D)

Hello, Sue, yeah I'm nearly at the airport now- No, I am- How do you know I'm lying? Because you called me on the land-line, fair enough... No, Sue please don't give it to the other Dan- Sue, I PROMISE I will be there in arrivals. You might just need to remind me of his name...

DAN tails off, realising the call has ended, then turns to see the children and CLAIRE all looking at him.

CLAIRE

So you are picking up from the airport. Great.

DAN tries to form a reply. CLAIRE moves off.

21 **INT. HALLWAY / SPARE ROOM, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.19** 21

CLAIRE, still seething, goes across the hallway and into the spare room, where JIM is still watching TV. CLAIRE starts furiously moving things around, opening up boxes and pulling out stuff, creating even more mess. DAN arrives.

DAN

Look, I'm sorry, all right... We need the money... I can't just pick and choose the jobs.

CLAIRE

No that's fine, Dan. Go ahead, screw the planet. Just don't expect to be screwing me.

DAN looks momentarily thrown by this sudden left-turn.

DAN

Right... Well I wasn't... I mean it's not as if... I mean when would we find the time?

JIM

Bloody hell! Can this not wait till I'm dead? I'm trying to watch the Dukes of Hazard here!

DAN

(grateful for the diversion)

Oh is this the one where Luke and Bo have to make it over this huge ravine?

JIM

That's pretty much every episode, yeah.

DAN

Yeah but this one, they get two planks of wood and they-

CLAIRE

Aaaah!!!!

CLAIRE suddenly shrieks with surprise as a creature flits out from behind a tower of boxes and shoots across the room.

JIM

Shit, a rat!

DAN instinctively topples over an old fridge onto the 'rat' as it makes a bolt for under JIM's bed.

DAN

Got him!

Sure enough, they see a tiny tail and flattened rear end poking out from underneath the fridge.

JIM

Dead. Lucky sod...

DAN

Oh God. That's not a rat. It's Stanley Gibbons.

JIM

Who?

DAN

Emmie's gerbil.

CLAIRE

Oh great, well done. What are you going to tell Emmie?

DAN

I dunno. Why me?

CLAIRE

Well you are the one who flattened him, Dan.

DAN

Yeah under a fridge you've been hanging onto for the last god knows how many years!

CLAIRE

(beat)

All right fine, this never happened, all right.

DAN

What you're saying we just lie to her?

CLAIRE

No, I'm saying we just don't tell the truth.

DAN

OK fine. You got that Jim, you saw nothing, right?

JIM

What's it worth?

CLAIRE and DAN look at JIM in disbelief.

CLAIRE

Are you serious?!

JIM

Two hundred to my crowd funding site-

CLAIRE

No way.

JIM

One eighty-

CLAIRE

No I'm sorry-

JIM

Fifty quid-

24.

CLAIRE

You're my Dad! We're not going to pay you money to bugger off to Switzerland and top yourself!

JIM

(shouts off)

Emmie!

CLAIRE finally snaps, produces her phone and starts swiping.

CLAIRE

All right, fine, you want to do yourself in, be my guest. Two hundred, you say, yeah that's fine. Have more. How about five hundred?

JIM

Sounds good.

DAN

Wait, what?

CLAIRE

Yeah, that's fine, Dad, seeing as it's such a good cause. There you go-

DAN

Claire-

CLAIRE

Sending the money now. Bang goes our family holiday. Still, at least we'll all get a break from YOU!

CLAIRE storms out, brushing past the arriving EMMIE as she goes. DAN hastily stands in the way of the squashed gerbil.

DAN

Hey Emmie.

EMMIE

You know they're taking the skip?

DAN

What?!

DAN races out the door. EMMIE sees the gerbil and screams.

EMMIE

Aaaaaahhhh!!!

22 **EXT. THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.23**

22

DAN hurries out and sees the skip on the back of the collection vehicle, which is just beginning to slowly pull away. DAN races after it, banging on the driver's door.

DAN

No wait! Stop! It isn't ready! We were told you'd be here at ten!

The DRIVER stops, glares at DAN, furiously reverses back up to the house and gets out.

DRIVER

Two minutes!

DAN races back inside the house.

23 **INT. HALLWAY / STAIRS, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.23**

23

DAN races back in. ALFIE, JACK and WILL are hurriedly gathering their stuff together for school. CLAIRE is comforting a distraught-looking EMMIE.

DAN

We've got TWO MINUTES!

EMMIE

Murderer!!!

DAN ignores this, grabs a box of junk from the hallway and heads back out. CLAIRE looks alarmed and chases after him.

24 **EXT. THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.23**

24

DAN heads for the skip, now unloaded directly in front of his car. CLAIRE pursues him.

CLAIRE

What are you doing?

DAN

We need to fill the skip.

CLAIRE

Wait, stop!

DAN deposits the box in the skip and heads back to the house. CLAIRE takes it out of the skip and follows him back in.

25 **INT. HALLWAY, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.23**

25

DAN hurries back in, grabs another load and barks at the children, all watching him, puzzled.

DAN

Well don't just stand there! Grab a box! Any box! No, not my Beans obviously!

The kids all obediently grab boxes and follow DAN out, pushing past the arriving CLAIRE as they go.

26

EXT. THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.24

26

CLAIRE hastily follows DAN and the children out.

CLAIRE

Dan, you can't just throw it all in the skip. It's illegal for a start!

Just then we see a police car approaching...

JACK

Yeah watch out Dad, looks like they're onto you already.

DAN looks suddenly horrified as the police car pulls up...

DAN

Oh shit.

DAN races back into the house...

27

INT. HALLWAY / STAIRS, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.24

27

DAN races up the stairs. ALFIE, looking panicked follows. CLAIRE, baffled, races after them too.

28

INT. ALFIE'S BEDROOM, THE SWANNS' HOUSE - DAY 08.24

28

DAN bursts in to the bedroom and starts ransacking the place, pulling out drawers, looking under the mattress etc.

DAN

Where is it?

ALFIE, arriving, hurries over to a drawer and opens it. Too late, CLAIRE arrives.

CLAIRE

Where's what?

ALFIE

Nothing.

CLAIRE

What's going on?!

27.

ALFIE

It was him! He made me do it!

CLAIRE

Do what?

ALFIE

Buy drugs from those boys!

CLAIRE

What?!!

DAN

Oh great, yeah, blame it all on me.
They're your friends, Alfie.

ALFIE

No they're not. I was trying to get
rid of them! Then you came along
with a twenty pound note-

DAN

All right, I'm sorry, I was in a
rush!

CLAIRE

Is that it? Dan, you're ALWAYS in a
rush! We both are. Always running
round like headless chickens. On
and on and on and on... I just want
it all to STOP!

A pause. CLAIRE looks utterly defeated. ALFIE looks at his
mum, freaked out. DAN hesitates, not sure what to say.

DAN

...Maybe we can talk about this
after the police have gone?

Just then a POLICE OFFICER appears in the doorway.

POLICE OFFICER

Good morning. Mr and Mrs Swann? You
may have already guessed why I'm
here.

DAN, CLAIRE and ALFIE wait for the inevitable...

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Nothing heavy. Just a friendly
reminder that according to the
archaic laws of this country it is
still a serious criminal offence to
assist a person in ending their
life, however ill or in pain they
happen to be.

28.

CLAIRE

Sorry, what?

The POLICE OFFICER produces a mobile phone.

POLICE OFFICER

Your father's crowd-funding page.

DAN

So you're not here for the drugs?

(beat)

What drugs?

An awkward moment. CLAIRE hastily moves on.

CLAIRE

Honestly, this thing of my dad's.
We literally only found out just
now.

The OFFICER looks again at his phone.

POLICE OFFICER

And immediately made a large
donation and shared it with your
neighbourhood whatsapp group.

CLAIRE

Wait, what?

CLAIRE gets out her own phone and hastily swipes and scrolls.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Oh shit. It's gone viral. He's up
to fifteen hundred quid.

On CLAIRE's phone we see the donations total rising every
second. From downstairs we hear JIM give a delighted hoot.

JIM (O.S.)

Hoo-hoo!

CLAIRE

Dad!

CLAIRE races off downstairs, leaving DAN, ALFIE and the
POLICE OFFICER.

POLICE OFFICER

Right, well I'll leave you to tidy
up.

The POLICE OFFICER nods at the bag of weed, clearly visible
in the drawer, then turns and leaves. DAN hastily follows.

DAN

Uh yeah, so I'm free to go?

They pass by the spare room, from where they can hear CLAIRE and JIM arguing vociferously, and continue on outside...

DAN

It's just I've got a pick up at nine, so I ought to be-

POLICE OFFICER

Yeah, good luck with that.

DAN looks confused for a moment, then sees... the skip parked directly in front of his car, blocking it into the drive, and the collection truck moving off down the road.

EMMIE

He said he'd be back at ten like you asked.

DAN

No...!!! Stop...!!!

DAN races off a few yards in pursuit of the truck, then quickly gives up and turns back to the kids.

DAN (CONT'D)

Well don't just stand there! Help!

DAN hurries back to the drive and starts hastily dragging a plank into place - leaning it down from the edge of the skip to the front wheel of his car.

EMMIE, JACK and WILL all watch, puzzled, as DAN drags another plank into place. Finally they understand what he's doing.

EMMIE

Oh my God, are you serious..? MUM!

Will excitedly goes to help his dad. JACK starts filming on his phone.

DAN

Now two more along the top. Come on, quick!

CLAIRE, JIM and ALFIE as DAN and WILL continue to lay the planks in place.

CLAIRE

Dan, what are you doing? This is crazy! Stop!

ALFIE

Dad seriously, that's not going to work.

JIM

Yeah it is. It was on the Dukes of Hazard.

CLAIRE

What?!

JIM

You know, Luke, Bo, Daisy, Boss Hogg, yee-ha.

CLAIRE

Yeah I know who the Dukes of Hazzard are, Dad, I just don't think this is a good idea! Dan, stop!

DAN

No, I need to do this-

CLAIRE

No you don't-

DAN

Yes I do! This is my pancakes, Claire! This is me doing what I need to do to get to that bloody airport on time!

DAN gets in, turns the engine on and carefully guides the car forward onto the makeshift ramp. JACK is still filming. The car edges up the planks. DAN winds the window down.

DAN (CONT'D)

You see, I told you. Easy. Yee-ha!

DAN accelerates forward across the horizontal planks... which suddenly give way with a sickening <CRACK> and the car <CRASHES> down into the skip below...

The others look on in stunned silence, as the helium-filled shark floats by out of the house and onwards, free at last.

DAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Well I managed to fill the skip.

CLAIRE

Yeah...

CUT TO BLACK. END CREDITS.

MUSIC: "BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE" BY TALKING HEADS