

# **THE KEEPER**

A sit-com by Phil Collinge & Andy Lord

## **Pilot Episode**

Running time thirty minutes

Phil Collinge & Andy Lord

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**SCENE: 1 INT. DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**PULL BACK FROM A CLOSE UP OF A POSTER, 'THE ANTLER HOTEL - ANNUAL HIGHLAND CATTLE RECOGNITION CONTEST, 21ST JULY'. THERE IS A STRIP OF PAPER ACROSS THE POSTER READING 'CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF COW'. ANGUS REEVES ENTERS FROM BEHIND THE BAR, SINGING THE THEME TO NEIGHBOURS TO HIMSELF. HE IS CARRYING A VASE OF FLOWERS. HE PLACES THEM ON THE BAR AND BEGINS TO DUST WITH A FEATHER DUSTER. THE DOOR OPENS AND THE LAIRD OF MULLSHIRE ENTERS.**

**LAIRD**

Fine day Angus.

**ANGUS**

Oh, yes...Very nice your Lairdship.

**HE REACHES UNDER THE BAR AND PRODUCES A PLATE COVERED IN GINGHAM CLOTH.**

**ANGUS**

Would you care for a complimentary drop scone at all?

**LAIRD**

Mmmm...I think I'll give it a miss if you don't mind  
Angus...I'll just take a dram.

**ANGUS**

Dram?...Right...Now don't tell me...I know this one...

**LAIRD**

Whisky.

**ANGUS**

Oh yes!...Whisky, that's right...Now then...How...Er  
...How much is a dram then?

**LAIRD**

Two measures Angus...Two measures...You're  
getting quite good at the Landlording now.

**ANGUS**

Mmmm...Well after twenty years working in a  
Glasgow temperance bar, it came as quite a  
change.

**LAIRD**

That must've been a very lonely life.

**ANGUS**

Yes...Well...Since Auntie died and left me this place  
I've become quite used to visitors.

**LAIRD**

Customers Angus...Customers.

**ANGUS**

Oh yes...I still feel you'd all be happier if you tried some of my herb tea though.

**THE LAIRD FINISHES HIS DRINK IN ONE.**

**LAIRD**

I'll give it a try if you like.

**ANGUS**

Oh lovely...One herbal tea then.

**LAIRD**

Aye...And stick a dram in it.

**ANGUS LOOKS DISMAYED AND GOES FOR THE TEA. THE LAIRD HELPS HIMSELF TO A SCONE AS SARAH ENTERS.**

**SARAH**

Father.

**LAIRD**

Sarah...Glad you could join us...Nice to know that you can fit the affairs of the estate around 'sex, drugs and rock and roll'...I must be one of the few men in the northern hemisphere who can recognise you stood up from twenty paces...

**ANGUS RETURNS WITH A TRAY OF TEA.**

**LAIRD**

(CONT)...Ah, Angus...You'll not have met my daughter will you?...This is Sarah...She's just returned from a month long fornication tour of the Outer Hebrides.

**ANGUS**

Oh...Er...Well, everyone should have a hobby...  
Delighted to meet you Sarah.

**SARAH**

Yea, right.

**LAIRD**

She's here to act as my personal assistant for the interviews.

**ANGUS**

Oh lovely!...I've made some badges.

**HE PRODUCES SOME CIRCULAR CARDS,  
EACH WITH A PIN ON THE BACK AND A PAPER  
DOILY STUCK ON TO PRODUCE A FRILLY  
EDGE.**

**SARAH**

Oh...That's...That's very nice Angus...I take it you  
don't get out much?

**ANGUS**

No, I'm fairly self sufficient...I can do anything with  
these hands.

**LAIRD**

Don't say a word girl!...Now, I'm expecting four  
people...Starting a half past eleven...So if we set up  
over there.

**SCENE: 2 EXT DAY.**

**SET: WOODED AREA BY DOUGIE'S HUT**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. WE SEE. A PAIR OF MANS LEGS SLOWLY  
TRAMPING THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH.  
HE IS WEARING SLATE GREY TROUSERS AND  
A PAIR OF HIGHLY POLISHED BOOTS.**

**WE HEAR. HEAVY BREATHING AND A  
CLANKING SOUND AS HE MOVES WITH A  
STUMBLING WALK.**

**SCENE: 3 INT. DAY**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. THE LAIRD AND SARAH ARE SAT AT THE BAR WHILST ANGUS POTTERS AROUND THE ROOM TIDYING UP.**

**LAIRD**

It's a long time since I last interviewed anybody for the post of Gamekeeper.

**SARAH**

You've never actually interviewed anyone.

**LAIRD**

Has it been that long?...You could be right.

**SARAH**

And we've never had a Gamekeeper have we?...  
Not only can we not afford one...But we don't actually have any game.

**ANGUS**

What, no animals at all?

**LAIRD**

Mmmm...Aukterbrook has a worldwide reputation for having the least wildlife in the whole of Scotland... With the obvious exception of my daughter here of course.

**ANGUS**

Why do you need a Gamekeeper then?

**LAIRD**

Well...The estate is also the home of the 'All in, poaching champion of Scotland'...A title he's held for twelve years...Some would say the two facts are not unconnected.

**ANGUS**

Oh...and who is this champion poacher then?

**LAIRD**

A cunning and dangerous man by the name of Dougie McRanald...He's...

**SARAH**

You've no evidence of that father...The man just has a keen interest in furry things.

**LAIRD**

Aye, and a keen interest in eating anything that lives and squeaks on my estate...But not any more...Oh no!...A new Gamekeeper, and I'll have him.

**SARAH**

You still haven't told me where the money's coming from father...We had to sell the piper last Christmas to make ends meet.

**LAIRD**

The way you kept looking at him, I sold him to make sure that ends didn't meet...Anyway the Gamekeeper will be paid for out of the Lottery grant.

**SARAH**

What Lottery grant?

**LAIRD**

The Lottery grant we received in the post.

**ANGUS**

Crumbs!...You've won the Lottery?

**LAIRD**

I never said we'd won...I said we'd received a grant ...If the English can't address their envelopes properly that's their look out...It was intended for a Greenkeeper at Lord's...And it's going on a Gamekeeper for the Laird...Same difference.

**SCENE: 4 EXT. DAY.**

**SET: WOODED AREA BY DOUGIE'S HUT**

**O/B.**

**MIX. DOUGIE MCRANALD IS CROUCHED DOWN SETTING A SNARE IN THE COPSE. HE IS WHISTLING QUIETLY TO HIMSELF AS HE SLOWLY MOVES AROUND. CUT TO. THE LOWER LEGS, WHICH ARE NOW MOVING THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH AT A QUICKER PACE. THE BREATHING IS HEAVIER AND THE CLANKING LOUDER. DOUGIE HEARS THE APPROACHING SOUNDS AND TAKES COVER. HE WATCHES FROM BEHIND A BUSH AS A FIGURE BLUNDERS INTO THE COPSE. DOUGIE'S EYES WIDEN.**

**DOUGIE**

Bugger me!!

**CUT TO. THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE. IT IS JOE GOODWIN DRESSED IN FULL ZOO KEEPERS UNIFORM INCLUDING A PEAKED CAP, AND CARRYING A MOP AND ALUMINIUM BUCKET. HE LOOKS AROUND. HE IS OBVIOUSLY LOST. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS DOUGIE REVEALS HIMSELF FROM BEHIND THE BUSH.**

**DOUGIE**

Who the hell are you?!

**JOE IS STARTLED BY DOUGIE'S SUDDEN  
APPEARANCE. HE SCREAMS AND RUNS BACK  
INTO THE WOODS.**

**SCENE: 5 INT. DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. THE LAIRD AND SARAH ARE SAT BEHIND TWO PUB TABLES PUSHED TOGETHER. THE LAIRD SHUFFLES PAPERS AND TRIES TO LOOK AUTHORITATIVE UNTIL HE REALISES THAT SARAH IS STARING AT HIM. HE STOPS AND COUGHS.**

**LAIRD**

Well then Angus...Send the first one in.

**ANGUS, CARRYING A CLIPBOARD, WADDLES OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM, WHERE TWO MEN AND A WOMAN ARE SAT IN A ROW. ONE MAN IS DRESSED CONSERVATIVELY, WHILST THE OTHER APPEARS TO BE A HIPPY. THE WOMAN SEEMS VERY STRAIGHT LACED.**

**ANGUS**

Good morning everybody...Now...Er...Mr Jelicho?

**THE HIPPY SLOWLY REACTS.**

**MR JELICHO**

Sorry...Names are labels yea?...Yea.

**ANGUS**

Morn...Er...Yes...Walk this way Mr Jelicho.

**THEY CROSS TO THE TABLE AND THE LAIRD INVITES MR JELICHO TO TAKE A SEAT. ANGUS PICKS UP ONE OF THE BADGES AND BEGINS TO WRITE ON IT.**

**ANGUS**

And our first contestant is...Er...This is Mr Jelicho, come about the job.

**HE SMILES AND HANDS THE BADGE TO MR JELICHO BEFORE SHEEPISHLY EDGING AWAY FROM THE PROCEEDINGS.**

**LAIRD**

Good morning Mr Jelicho...Good to have you with us...Now then...Have you got a new book out at the moment?

**SARAH**

You'll have to excuse my father Mr Jelicho...The only experience he's had of interviewing is watching Michael Parkinson...Now then...

**SCENE: 6 EXT. DAY.**

**SET: WOODED AREA BY DOUGIE'S HUT**

**O/B.**

**MIX. JOE'S HEAD POKES THROUGH THE TREES AND LOOKS AT DOUGIE WHO IS STOOD IN THE CENTRE OF THE COPSE.**

**JOE**

Er...Hello.

**DOUGIE**

Hello yerself...It's all right...I don't bite...At least not the English...Never know what you might catch...Is there something I can do for you?

**JOE**

Well...I'm a bit lost.

**DOUGIE**

Aye, you are that all right...You're about three hundred miles lost by the look of it.

**JOE**

I'm looking for the Antler Pub in Aukterbrook...The man at the train station said I could catch a bus.

**DOUGIE**

Well you'll not catch one stood here.

**JOE**

I couldn't catch one at all...Apparently they're on strike...And I couldn't find a taxi, so I had to walk.

**DOUGIE**

Hamish gone fishing then has he?

**JOE**

Pardon?

**DOUGIE**

Aye, he does that a lot...See, Hamish drives the only bus in town...And when the buses aren't running, he drives the only taxi.

**JOE**

So why's he on strike?

**DOUGIE**

He's protesting about cut price taxi fares...You look cold...Let's go inside, and I'll get you a wee snifter.

**DOUGIE WALKS OVER TO A SMALL BUSH AND DRAGS IT ASIDE TO REVEAL A SMALL WOODEN DOOR. HE OPENS IT AND BECKONS JOE OVER.**

**SCENE: 7 INT. DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. MR JELICHO'S INTERVIEW CONTINUES  
SLOWLY. HE IS ADMIRING HIS NAME BADGE.**

**LAIRD**

So...Mr...Mr Jelicho...Good Morning...Again.

**MR JELICHO**

Morning...Yea...Again.

**LAIRD**

Yes...Now then...

**SARAH**

What he's trying to ask you, Mr Jelicho is...Why  
have you applied for the position of Gamekeeper?

**MR JELICHO**

Well...It's basically a green thing...Y'know?...It's  
nature...It's...Living things...It's all that open space  
trip yea?...And the free love and magic mushrooms.

**SARAH**

Free love?

**LAIRD**

Excuse me Mr Jelicho...Forgive me if I drag you by the josticks down to somewhere close to the planet earth...What experience do you actually have in this line of work?

**MR JELICHO**

Experience man is bad Karma yea?...I'm a child of the now dig?...Now is with us here...It's...Now...This moment is new and unique...I don't need experience of the new, man.

**SARAH**

So, about this free love then...?

**LAIRD**

And have you ever worked with animals?

**MR JELICHO**

Animals?...The furry things that squeak?...Yea get you...Animals.

**LAIRD**

Well?

**MR JELICHO**

Well...Er...Well what?

**LAIRD**

Have you ever...At any time in your drug induced, flower power existence ever so much as actually seen an animal?

**MR JELICHO**

Hey...I'm just not a negative guy, y'know?

**LAIRD**

It's 'no' isn't it!?...The answer's no!...You've never seen an animal in the flesh...Close up!

**MR JELICHO**

Hey, denial yea?

**SARAH**

Done much of this free love then have you?

**SCENE: 8 INT. DAY.**

**SET: DOUGIE'S HIDEOUT**

**STUDIO**

**MIX. THE SMALL AND DINGY ROOM IS LITTERED WITH A COLLECTION OF BIZARRE OBJECTS. HUNTING TROPHIES AND STUFFED FISH LINE THE WALLS. PHEASANT, GROUSE AND RABBITS HANG FROM HOOKS ABOVE A SMALL WINDOW. THERE IS A DANGEROUS LOOKING COPPER STILL AT ONE END OF THE ROOM. DOUGIE MOVES AWAY FROM THE STILL WITH TWO GLASSES OF MOONSHINE. HE OFFERS ONE TO JOE.**

**DOUGIE**

There you go laddie...Get that down your neck.

**JOE**

Er...Right...Thanks.

**HE TASTES HIS DRINK. HE APPEARS APPRECIATIVE AT FIRST THEN HE SPLUTTERS.**

**JOE**

Christ!...That's...Interesting...What's it made of?

**DOUGIE**

You don't want to know.

**JOE**

An old closely guarded recipe is it?

**DOUGIE**

No...but believe me, you don't want to know.

**JOE SNIFFS THE DRINK. DOUGIE IS RUMMAGING AROUND THE HUT, OBVIOUSLY LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.**

**DOUGIE**

So, tell me laddie...What are you doing in these parts?

**JOE**

Well, like I said...I'm on my way to the Antler...

**DOUGIE PICKS UP A HUGE KNIFE AND STARTS TO CLEAN HIS FINGERNAILS. JOE GULPS.**

**JOE**

(CONT.)...So if you could just point me in the right direction...I'll be off.

**DOUGIE**

The Antler y'say?...And what would you be doing there?

**JOE**

Er...I'm on my way to a job interview.

**DOUGIE**

For a security guard is it?

**JOE**

What?...No, no I've just lost my job...Fifteen years at London Zoo...Without even a thank you...Rosie's going to miss me.

**DOUGIE FINDS A HUGE PIPE AND SMILES WITH SATISFACTION.**

**DOUGIE**

That the wife is it?

**DOUGIE STARTS TO RUMMAGE IN SOME DRAWERS.**

**JOE**

Not exactly no...Rosie's a Hippopotamus.

**DOUGIE**

A what?

**JOE**

A hippopotamus...Y'know, large African quadruped.

**DOUGIE**

I know what a hippopotamus is laddie...I just couldn't believe what you said.

**HE DISCOVERS SOME TOBACCO IN THE DRAWER AND STARTS TO CRAM IT IN THE PIPE.**

**JOE**

They say as how I'm not needed now that they've created the new 'All in one Pachyderm house'...

**DOUGIE**

Aye?

**JOE**

(CONT)...Hippo's get second billing you know... Everyone wants Elephants and Chimps or Lions... No attraction in a Hippo...That's what they told me anyway...

**DOUGIE**

Aye?

**JOE**

Poor old Rosie...She's having to share a pen with Neil...The Rhinoceros.

**DOUGIE**

Rhino Neil?

**JOE**

I just hope she's all-right that's all.

**DOUGIE HAS FILLED HIS PIPE AND IS NOW  
TAPPING HIS POCKETS LOOKING FOR  
MATCHES.**

**JOE**

Anyway...That's why I'm here...For an interview...  
This is the only thing the Job Centre came up with.

**DOUGIE**

Aye?

**HE STRIKES A MATCH AND IS ABOUT TO  
LIGHT HIS PIPE.**

**JOE**

(CONT.)...I don't know what sort of Gamekeeper I'd  
make mind...But...

**DOUGIE LOOKS AGHAST. HE DROPS HIS PIPE  
AND BURNS HIS FINGERS ON THE MATCH.**

**SCENE: 9 INT. DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. THE LAIRD AND SARAH ARE SAT STARING INTO SPACE AS THE NEXT CANDIDATE TALKS TO THEM. SHE SPEAKS IN A SLOW MATTER OF FACT WAY.**

**MS STERLING**

...And after that I spent two years with the Forestry Commission on their deciduous tree replanting scheme. I developed a new rota for reforestation and a conservation programme to preserve the indigenous wildlife. Then...

**AS SHE PAUSES FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, BOTH THE LAIRD AND SARAH ATTEMPT TO SPEAK, BUT LAPSE BACK INTO SILENCE AS SHE CONTINUES HER MONOLOGUE.**

**MS STERLING**

(CONT)...Then I started my current job as Wildfowl Ranger for the Orkneys. Most satisfying. A surprisingly varied and exiting array of sea birds you know?...But I suppose you want to know why I want to break into gamekeeping?...

**SCENE: 10 INT. DAY**

**SET: DOUGIE'S HUT**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. DOUGIE IS PACING AROUND THE HUT  
LOOKING FLUSTERED.**

**DOUGIE**

A Gamekeeper...A bloody Gamekeeper!...What  
would my father say?...A Gamekeeper in my hut...  
Sharing my drink!!

**JOE**

I'm sorry...Have you got something against  
Gamekeepers?

**DOUGIE**

Something against!?...Course I bloody have!!...I'll  
have to move the hut now...Twenty years I've been  
here...Jesus!...Entertaining a bloody Gamekeeper!!

**JOE**

Well, I might not get the job...Anyway, what's wrong  
with Gamekeepers?...You might be able to advise  
me...Being a country man...I could do with the help.

**DOUGIE**

Well you won't be getting any from me, you...You!...  
You won't be getting any from me!

**JOE**

Why, what have you got against Gamekeepers anyway?

**DOUGIE**

Look around you man!...I'm a bloody poacher...In fact, round here, I'm THE bloody poacher...Hang on a minute thought laddie...Hang on a minute... Perhaps we could help one another here...Y'know nothing about the gamekeeping you say?

**JOE**

Er...No...Nothing...But I see your problem...A poacher...I couldn't really take advice from a poacher...I'd better be on my way,

**DOUGIE**

No, no, no...Wait a minute...I'm sure we could come to some sort of...Arrangement?

**JOE**

No, no...I can't do that...Even if I got the job...The Laird wouldn't like it...I'm sure I can cope on my own...Mr...Er...?

**DOUGIE**

Rubbish!...You canna even find the pub...How will you cope with the hidden dangers of the Highlands?

**JOE HEADS TOWARDS THE DOOR.**

**JOE**

Well we'll see...If I get the job I'll be back to...Er...  
Well you know...Thanks for the drink.

**DOUGIE**

No...No laddie we can't have that...We can't have  
that at all.

**DOUGIE PICKS UP HIS KNIFE AGAIN. JOE  
QUICKLY EXITS.**

**JOE**

(O.O.V) Yeeeeeeaaaagh!!!

**WE HEAR A LOUD THWANG AND THE NOISE  
OF RUSTLING UNDERGROWTH. CLOSE ON  
DOUGIE. HE SMILES AS AN ALUMINIUM  
BUCKET HITS THE WALL NEAR HIS HEAD.  
FADE TO BLACK.**

**SCENE: 11 EXT. DAY.**

**SET: WOODED AREA BY DOUGIE'S HUT**

**O/B.**

**MIX. DOUGIE IS STOOD AT THE DOOR TO HIS HUT.**

**JOE**

(OOV) Actually...Thinking about it...Perhaps it would be quite a good idea if we did help each other...You know...You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours... That sort of thing...Hmmm?

**DOUGIE**

Ach..You've soon changed your tune...listen to me now will you?

**JOE**

Well...Like you said...We could come up with some sort of arrangement...No one would know...What d'you say?

**DOUGIE**

I'll think about it.

**JOE**

I really could do with a bit of help...PLEASE?!

**CUT TO JOE HANGING UPSIDE DOWN FROM THE BRANCHES OF A TREE.**

**SCENE: 12 INT DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**SARAH AND THE LAIRD STILL LOOK BORED AS MS STERLING CONTINUES WITH HER CREDENTIALS.**

**MS STERLING.**

...Well of course you do. It's total environmental management you see. I want to work with the whole ecosystem. Create an harmonious and symbiotic whole. An environment where flora and fauna can exist as they were meant to be, in an inter linked interrelating cycle of nature. I have a special relationship with animals you know, they all seem to respect me. Not that I let feelings get in the way of my duties at all. Oh no, if some little innocent creature needs butchering for the overall good of he surrounding environment, so be it. Whilst I'm on the subject, I am of course fully qualified in many humane methods of destroying animals. A two week residential course in 'animal husbandry and advanced slaughtering techniques' in Cockfosters...

**LAIRD**

(WHISPERS TO SARAH). Slaughtering techniques  
..Hmmm.

**MS STERLING**

(CONT)...I suppose if I get the job, there would be ample opportunity to put all my qualifications to the test. As you can see from my C.V. I've got a Honours Degree in Agriculture, A Masters Degree in Fish Farming, and a Diploma from the Edinburgh Guild of Falconry...I've also got a research grant from 'Walls' for my work is Bovine Management and the development of the sausage.

**SCENE: 13 INT. DAY.**

**SET: DOUGIE'S HIDEOUT.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. JOE AND DOUGIE ARE SAT. JOE IS REMOVING A ROPE FROM AROUND HIS ANKLES.**

**JOE**

What sort of Gamekeeper would I make?...I can't even walk through the woods without ending up upside down hanging from a tree...I'll never get the job anyway...Any chance of another one of your...Er ...Brews?

**DOUGIE**

That snare would've fooled better men than you laddie...Make no mistake about that...Now then...

**DOUGIE POURS THEM BOTH A DRINK FROM THE STILL.**

**DOUGIE**

There you go laddie...Bottoms up!

**DOUGIE LAUGHS. JOE IS LESS IMPRESSED.**

**DOUGIE**

(CONT.)...Well then laddie...There's no point in giving up now is there?...No point at all...All this way for nothing...No, no.

**JOE**

No but let's face it...Er...

**DOUGIE**

Er what?

**JOE**

I don't know your name.

**DOUGIE**

No, you don't do you...What were you saying?

**JOE**

Er...Oh...Well, here I am in the middle of God knows where, in a poachers hut...Drinking poachers... Whatever...And I'm supposed to be on my way to an interview as a Gamekeeper...I mean, how am I going to explain how late I am?...', I'm sorry I'm late, I just stopped off at the local poachers hut for a sniffer'...That'd go down well...And I can't exactly admit that I got lost on the way from the station can I?

**DOUGIE**

I see our problem...We need a plan.

**JOE**

Sorry?...OUR problem?

**DOUGIE**

Aye...I'd rather have a dosy sassanach like you as Gamekeeper, than some ex-marine professional.

**JOE**

I don't think you need to worry much about professionals...Not on the money his Lairdship's offering.

**DOUGIE**

Aye, that'd be right enough...Arsehole that he is... Now, how are we going to get you this job?...You might have some tough opposition.

**SCENE: 14 INT. DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. THE LAIRD IS FLICKING BEER MATS INTO THE AIR AND CATCHING THEM. SARAH IS PAINTING HER NAILS.**

**MS STERLING**

...I will expect full co-operation from the Estate's management of course. Access to the necessary equipment and facilities is essential if I'm to manage the game in the proper manner. I assume that you have a suitable armoury?...For the shooting parties I mean...How many beaters do you have?

**AFTER A SHORT PAUSE, THE LAIRD AND SARAH REALISE THAT SHE HAS STOPPED TALKING. THEY LOOK AT HER WITH BLANK EXPRESSIONS.**

**MS STERLING.**

Oh, I'm sure you have adequate cover. Now about remuneration. I think wage is an ugly word don't you? Now in my last position I was given unlimited use of the Range Rover. I assume you have similar transport arrangements?...

**SCENE: 15 INT. DAY.**

**SET: DOUGIE'S HIDEOUT.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. JOE AND DOUGIE ARE SAT TALKING.**

**DOUGIE**

Well things would certainly be different around here with a Gamekeeper about...We've not had a Gamekeeper in Auckterbrook since Blind James McCrimmon saw one in eighteen seventy two...And there's those that say he never actually saw him... I'd have to be on my guard for sure...Unless...

**JOE**

Unless what?

**DOUGIE**

Unless the particular Gamekeeper concerned is... Sympathetic to my needs...Shall we say?

**JOE**

If the Gamekeeper concerned overlooks your poaching, scheming and general misdemeanours you mean?

**DOUGIE**

Aye...Well...Aye...You could say that...But in return I could make your life a lot easier than it would've been... Cause you no trouble...Point you in the right direction...If you follow?

**JOE**

Point me in the WRONG direction you mean.

**DOUGIE**

Well...Aye laddie...Aye.

**DOUGIE SMILES WRYLY AND TAKES A SWIG OF HIS DRINK. HE REACTS DRAMATICALLY.**

**DOUGIE**

Another good batch...It must be the Germoline...No lad, I think we're on the same wavelength.

**JOE**

It's all very well being on the same wavelength...But it's not much use if I don't actually get the job.

**DOUGIE**

Och, don't be so pessimistic...You'll get the job all right...You'll get the job.

**HE MOVES NEARER TO JOE.**

**DOUGIE**

(CONT)...Now, you have a great deal of experience with animals...Yes?

**JOE**

Er...Hippopotami yes.

**DOUGIE**

Wild beasties?

**JOE**

Hippopotami.

**DOUGIE**

Creatures of the forest?

**JOE**

Creatures of the mud.

**DOUGIE**

Well there we are then...It's simple.

**JOE**

Right...Is it?...What is?

**DOUGIE**

All we have to do is demonstrate to that half-wit of a Laird that you have a unique talent in handling the wild animals.

**JOE**

How?...I don't think we'll find a Hippo around here...  
Not really ideal terrain you see...Too much  
undergrowth...They like open grassland and mud...  
Mostly mud.

**DOUGIE**

What are you blethering about man?!...We don't  
need a Hippo...Just a wee scary beastie to run into  
the Antler at the right moment...Understand?

**JOE**

Ahhh!...No, not really.

**DOUGIE**

The plan's foolproof man!...Foolproof!...You turn up  
in the nick of time...Save the day...And get rid of the  
beastie...The Laird'll take you on 'cos he's a fool...  
His daughter'll back him 'cos you're a man...And the  
Landlord'll bake a cake in celebration...It's foolproof.

**JOE**

Now hang on...When you say scary beastie...What  
exactly do you mean?

**DOUGIE**

Och, it's nothing to worry about...It won't be a real scary beastie...It'll just look like a real scary beastie.

**JOE**

Ah...Right...Good...Excellent...Not really dangerous at all then?

**DOUGIE**

Aye...I mean no.

**DOUGIE RUMMAGES IN A PILE OF JUNK AND PRODUCES AN OLD WOODEN TOILET SEAT.**

**DOUGIE**

We'll be needing this.

**JOE**

Just exactly how frightening is this thing going to be?

**SCENE: 16 INT. DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**MIX. WE SEE. THE LAIRD USHERING MS STERLING OUT OF THE PUB WITH A YARD BRUSH.**

**LAIRD**

...Yes, Yes Ms Sterling, I'm sure you are.

**MS STERLING**

...And as a result of my extensive training I'm sure I can bring a successful approach to your Gamekeeping requirements. I was trained by the S.A.S. in undercover surveillance you know... Poachers would be a thing of the past...

**THE LAIRD SLAMS THE DOOR BEHIND HER AND LEANS ON IT. AS HE SIGHS AND RELAXES, THE DOOR IS FORCED OPEN.**

**MS STERLING**

So you'll let me know then?

**THE LAIRD SLAMS THE DOOR AGAIN.**

**LAIRD**

Meanwhile back on the planet Earth...Who's next?

**HE SITS NEXT TO SARAH. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS OF LOOKING THROUGH APPLICATIONS, SHE DIGS HIM IN THE RIBS. OPPOSITE THEM IS SAT A RATHER INEFFECTUAL LOOKING MAN, WHO SMILES RATHER NERVOUSLY.**

**LAIRD**

I'm sorry, I didn't realise you were there...Now then  
Mr...Er...

**THE MAN POINTS AT HIS BADGE.**

**LAIRD**

Right Mr...Er...Sponge...Perhaps you could tell me a little about your past employment?

**MR SPONGE REMAINS SILENT, AND SQUIRMS IN HIS SEAT.**

**LAIRD**

Er...Have you ever worked in this line before at all?

**MR SPONGE NODS SHYLY.**

**SARAH**

Where was that Mr Sponge?

**HE LOOKS EVEN MORE EMBARRASSED AND STARES AT HIS FEET.**

**LAIRD**

Ever worked with firearms before have you?

**MR SPONGE OPENS HIS MOUTH AS IF HE IS ABOUT TO SPEAK, BUT CLOSES IT AGAIN.**

**LAIRD**

I think we nearly had something then...Now then Mr Sponge, in your letter you said that you have a great love of the outdoors.

**NO RESPONSE.**

**LAIRD**

Mr Sponge?

**NOTHING.**

**LAIRD**

Hello?

**STILL NOTHING.**

**LAIRD**

Am I communicating in a language which you are familiar with Mr Sponge?

**SARAH**

Father!...The boy's just shy that's all...there's no need to be shy with us Mr Sponge...I'll be helping quite a lot no the job...I could take you in hand...

**MR SPONGE LOOKS ALARMED.**

**LAIRD**

I think he's better off shy!...Thank you Mr Sponge... We'll let you know.

**SUDDENLY, THE DOOR OF THE BAR SLAMS OPEN AND ALL EYES LOOKS TOWARDS GROUND LEVEL. CUT TO A LOW VIEW OF THE BAR AS IF LOOKING FROM A SMALL ANIMALS VIEWPOINT. THE PEOPLE IN THE BAR APPEAR ALARMED AS THE ANIMAL RUNS AROUND THE TABLE LEGS, ETC. ANGUS JUMPS ON A TABLE AND SHOOS AT THE CAMERA WITH A FEATHER DUSTER. SUDDENLY MR SPONGE SCREAMS IN A RIDICULOUSLY HIGH VOICE.**

**MR SPONGE**

Ooooooh!...It's a wild boar!!

**EVERYTHING STOPS AND EVERYONE IN THE BAR STARES AT MR SPONGE. HE LOWERS HIS HEAD IN EMBARRASSMENT. MR JELICHO IS DISTRACTED FROM ROLLING A HUGE JOINT.**

**MR JELICHO**

Hey man...Like...Wow...Pig yea?

**THE LAIRD IS STILL SAT IMPASSIVELY AT THE TABLE. SARAH LOOKS QUIZZICALLY AT THE ANIMAL, WHICH WE STILL HAVEN'T SEEN.**

**LAIRD**

You know...In planning these interviews, I'd totally overlooked the possibility of a marauding, pork based life form, scenario

**THE CAMERA SCURRIES AROUND FOR A WHILE BEFORE COMING TO REST LOOKING UP AT ANGUS WHO IS STANDING ON A TABLE.**

**ANGUS**

Stop him!...Stop him!...He's doing doo doos on my carpet.

**FROM THE ANIMALS VIEWPOINT WE SEE SARAH APPROACH.**

**SARAH**

Relax Angus...Now, who's a nice little pig then?

**SHE REACHES DOWN AS IF TO PICK UP THE ANIMAL. CUT TO. A SHOT OF HER HOLDING IT. IT IS AN ORDINARY PIGLET WITH HALF A TOILET SEAT FASTENED TO ITS LOWER JAW TO LOOK LIKE TUSKS.**

**ANGUS**

Get rid of it!...Get rid of it!

**SARAH**

Oh Angus...He's cute.

**AS SARAH STROKES THE PIGLET, THE LAIRD  
STRIDES OVER AND SNATCHES IT FROM HER.**

**LAIRD**

Enough!...The whole bleeding world's gone mad!...  
Here I am, trying to conduct interview for a new  
Gamekeeper...And what do the Job Centre supply  
me with?...A man who cannot speak...A woman who  
can't shut up...A man who is here in body alone, and  
a man who is not here at all...It's like being trapped  
in an episode of 'The Land That Sanity forgot'...Now  
get rid of this flaming pig!!

**HE THROWS THE PIG THROUGH THE DOOR  
WITH SOME FORCE. WE HEAR A SCREAM AND  
A THUD FROM OUTSIDE. THE LAIRD AND  
SARAH LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN CONFUSION.  
FADE.**

**SCENE: 17 INT. DAY.**

**SET: THE ANTLER - PUBLIC BAR.**

**STUDIO.**

**FADE UP. JOE IS SLUMPED IN A CHAIR APPARENTLY UNCONSCIOUS. SARAH IS GENTLY SLAPPING HIS FACE. CUT TO. THE LAIRD SHOWING MR JELICHO AND MR SPONGE THE DOOR. MR JELICHO OFFERS A HUGE JOINT TO MR SPONGE WHO DECLINES IT.**

**LAIRD**

Good-bye now...Lovely to talk to you...Mind how you go finding your way back to the real world.

**HE SHUTS THE DOOR AND GOES TO JOIN THE OTHERS.**

**SARAH**

It must be Mr Goodwin...The last candidate...He was due on the train from London.

**ANGUS JOINS THEM WITH A GLASS OF WATER, AND STARTS TO FAN JOE WITH A TEA TOWEL.**

**ANGUS**

Poor man...What's happened to him?

**SARAH**

I just found him in the yard...He tried to swallow a flying pig...It's something you should never do in a peaked cap.

**ANGUS**

Crumbs...D'you think he's all right?

**SARAH**

Unless he's got strong religious objections to pork, he'll be fine...Not the most impressive way to arrive for a job interview though.

**ANGUS**

He's a candidate?...Why's he dressed as a...Zoo Keeper?

**LAIRD**

He is a Zoo Keeper...Or at least he was...Fifteen years mucking out the same Hippopotamus apparently...He was a bit of an outside bet really... Just invited him to make the numbers up.

**SARAH**

You got him to come all the way from London just to make the numbers up?!

**ANGUS**

He's got very shiny buttons though.

**LAIRD**

Aye well...

**SARAH**

I think you should give him the job.

**ANGUS**

Oh yes!...Why not?!

**LAIRD**

Why not?...WHY NOT!!...An unemployed Zoo Keeper?...An English unemployed Zoo Keeper!... Who specialises in Hippopotamuses!

**ANGUS**

Hippopotami.

**LAIRD**

Eh?

**ANGUS**

The plural of Hippopotamus is Hippopotami not Hippopotamuses...Though there's no proof that he ever had more than one at once I suppose.

**SARAH**

And he's experienced with animals.

**LAIRD**

A Hippopotamus!

**SARAH**

He's used to being outside.

**LAIRD**

In a Zoo!...In a bloody Zoo!!

**SARAH**

So?...What does it matter?...We're in a village miles from anywhere with only six inhabitants...Last year we voted a Ford Escort onto the local council...I think he'd fit in very well...And he's a man.

**ANGUS**

An unconscious man...Who's had a face full of pig ...He'd be well within his rights to sue you know.

**LAIRD**

Mmmm...

**THE LAIRD REACHES OVER AND SLAPS JOE'S FACE.**

**LAIRD**

(CONT.)...Mr Goodwin?...Mr Goodwin!...I'm the Laird of Mullshire...Congratulations, you've got the job.

**JOE'S EYES SLOWLY OPEN. HE SEES THE  
OTHERS GRINNING BROADLY AND SLUMPS  
BACK INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS. PULL BACK.  
TO THE PUB WINDOW. DOUGIE'S FACE IS  
UPAGAINST THE GLASS. HE SMILES SLOWLY  
AND NODS TO HIMSELF. FADE.**

**END.**