

CLOSET PROFESSIONALS

a play in one act

written by

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CAST

MAX: 30 to 40. Intense.

DAVID: 30 to 40. Easy-going.

CAROLINE: A young woman.

WOMAN: A middle-aged woman.

A young woman's bedroom. A door centre stage right, a window centre stage left and a bed up stage centre. Up stage left is a clothes rack with clothing from various professions hanging from it (this should not be obvious to the audience). The clothes rack should be positioned to allow the actors to walk behind it and be of sufficient height to enable them to conceal themselves from the audience. Down stage right is a hatstand with a woman's hat and coat hanging from it.

The door is flung open and MAX hurries in. He is wearing a garland and toga. He quickly shuts the door, puts his ear against it and listens. DAVID'S head pops up over the clothes rack and he watches MAX. After a moment MAX sighs with relief and leans against the door, sapped of energy. DAVID ducks out of sight and then a few seconds later he appears from behind the clothes rack. He is dressed in conservative party clothing.

DAVID: Hello.

MAX: Shit!

MAX whirls around.

DAVID: Sorry. Should have known that would happen. You look a bit -

MAX: *(tense)* What?

DAVID: Tense.

MAX: No I'm not! I'm relaxed.

MAX grabs the door handle and shakes it.

MAX: Why doesn't this have a lock?

DAVID:*(pause)* Great party.

MAX: Yes. Just needed a break from the excitement, that's all. Be back into it in a minute. Looking forward to it.

DAVID: Me too.

MAX hurriedly crosses the room. He opens the window, looks out and struggles to put one leg over the sill because of the toga.

MAX: Where's the bloody downpipe?!

DAVID: Is everything all right?

MAX: I'm fine. Just trying to avoid an old girlfriend.

DAVID: Oh, right. I know how that can be.

MAX *pulls his leg back, hops backwards and falls onto the bed.*
DAVID *looks down at him. They look at each other. DAVID puts out his hand.*

DAVID: Hi. I'm David.

MAX *shakes his hand and then uses it to pull himself to his feet.*

MAX: Max.

MAX *tears off the toga and garland and throws them on the bed, He is now wearing everyday clothing.*

DAVID: I'm not into fancy dress parties either.

MAX *isn't listening. He's looking around the room, distracted.*

DAVID: So...what do you do for a living?

MAX *suddenly swings around to face him. DAVID has touched a nerve.*

MAX: Why? Why do you want to know?

DAVID: *(taken aback)* Oh, just an ice-breaker, start to the conversation. Perfectly innocent.

MAX: There's nothing innocent about it. A person's job is one of the main things they're judged on. It's the start of the weeding out process. To find out if a person is worth wasting time on. So I refuse to answer your question. And I'm courteous enough not to ask you what you do.

DAVID: *(Pause.)* I'm a -

MAX: I don't want to know because I don't want to categorise or judge you.

DAVID: Why would you judge me just because of my work?

MAX: Because people are shallow. You just mention your work to someone and they automatically categorise you, treat you the way they believe you deserve to be treated. Better than them, equal to them, less than them, to be revered, despised, envied, dismissed. Whatever.

DAVID: I don't agree with that.

MAX: Then you've led a sheltered life.

DAVID: I like people for themselves. I couldn't care less if they were garbage collectors.

MAX: See! Do you know what you just said? You couldn't care less if I was a *garbage collector*.

DAVID: *They*, if *they*, other people, were garbage collectors.

MAX: Yes...yes, but automatically you've labelled a job as being rock bottom. The garbo. And I'm not a garbo.

DAVID: It wouldn't worry me if you were.

MAX: Yes it would. You wouldn't be able to help yourself. You'd try to pretend it meant nothing, but in the end you wouldn't bother talking to me for long. You'd probably make up some pathetic excuse to get away from me...

DAVID *looks at his watch*. MAX *catches him and grabs his wrist*

MAX: ...like, "is that the time, I didn't realise how late it was"! Just because I am, *they are*, only garbage collectors!

MAX *releases DAVID'S wrist with a disgusted flick of his hand*.

DAVID: *(Pause)* I know a garbo. Good bloke. Finds the strangest things on the job. Once found a leg in a hopper. Loves a beer too.

MAX: Sounds fascinating.

They look at each other

DAVID: Your job's a bit more interesting, is it?

MAX: Well...yes it is actually. *(quickly.)* But not better than it, just...more interesting.

DAVID: Come on then, what is it? You've got me interested now.

MAX: Well, I'm...I'm a...

MAX *looks across the room and sees the clothes rack. He moves towards it.*

MAX: What's this?

DAVID: Fancy dress costumes. Haven't you met our hostess yet?

MAX: No. Why?

MAX *takes a costume off the rack and looks at it. He puts it back and moves behind the clothes rack. He starts looking through the costumes.*

DAVID: She's a fancy dress party fanatic. Before we'd even been introduced she raced up to me and told me I had to put on a costume or I'd have to leave. That's why I'm up here. I've been trying to choose one for... *(pause)* What are you doing behind there?

MAX: You want to know my profession, don't you?

DAVID: Well...yes.

MAX: Well, I'm a...

MAX strides out from behind the clothes rack with a more confident, professional air.

MAX: ...Doctor!

MAX stands there in a lab coat, with a stethoscope around his neck. His pants and shoes are the same. DAVID laughs.

MAX: What's so funny?

DAVID: Come on, what do you really do?

MAX: I just told you, I'm a doctor.

He holds the stethoscope to his own chest and breathes in and out a few times.

MAX: In...and out...in...and out...

DAVID: Come on.

MAX: You come on. This is what I am. Why wouldn't I be? *(Pause)* Any questions? You were interested in my work a minute ago.

They stare at each other. A decisive moment. DAVID joins in the fantasy.

DAVID: What sort of doctor? You're not just a *GP*, are you?

MAX: Of course not. I'm a specialist.

DAVID: What sort?

MAX: That depends.

DAVID: On what?

MAX: On what your symptoms are.

DAVID: *(Pause)* I don't think I have any.

MAX: Have you checked lately?

DAVID: No.

MAX: Then check. You're bound to find something. *(Pause)* Go on!

DAVID starts to check various parts of his body. MAX waits impatiently. DAVID'S search becomes increasingly frantic as though he thinks he's lost something. Suddenly he looks relieved and pulls out a chocolate bar out of his coat.

DAVID: I thought I'd lost it.

He takes a bite.

MAX: There must be something wrong with you!

DAVID stuffs the chocolate bar away.

DAVID: No, I'm in top-notch condition.

MAX: Really? Let's see... *(MAX looks him up and down.)* Does this hurt?

MAX grabs one of DAVID'S arms and gives him a Chinese burn.

DAVID: Argh! Yes!

DAVID pulls away.

MAX: Oh dear, I may have to amputate.

DAVID: No!

MAX: Then stop hiding your ailments from me! I'm your doctor! Tell me what's wrong with you?

DAVID: *(wary of MAX.)* Well I...I have sore feet!

MAX: Are you trying to turn me into a podiatrist?

DAVID: No. Sorry.

MAX: Then what else is wrong with you! And it better be something interesting.

DAVID: Well...

MAX: Yes?

DAVID: The truth is...I have voices in my head.

MAX: Voices?

DAVID: That's right.

MAX: Mm. Psychiatry.

DAVID: That's right.

Pause. MAX considers this.

MAX: Lucky for you that's one of my fields. What do these voices say?

DAVID: Well...they...they say...

DAVID suddenly has difficulty speaking. His body convulses as though he's fighting off something within himself. He doubles over.

MAX: What do they say? Spit it out!

MAX hits him on the back and instantly DAVID assumes a superior and dignified stance. Perhaps he even pulls out a pipe and pretends to smoke it. Note: when DAVID assumes a new personality his body will convulse wildly, perhaps he'll double over, then the new personality will suddenly lurch into life.

DAVID: *(Upper-class English accent)* We say a great deal. Much of it of interest to the intellectuals of the world, but nothing within the grasp of a mere garbage collector. Now go away, we're trying to write a computer program.

MAX: I am not a garbage...

MAX composes himself and studies DAVID. He seems to be in a trance. MAX approaches him carefully and waves his hand in front of his face. No reaction from DAVID. He then puts his hand into DAVID'S pocket and slowly takes out the chocolate bar. Just as he is about to take a bite DAVID suddenly stands/hops on only one leg and grabs him by the throat. The shin of his other leg is bent back behind his thigh. He is now a one-legged computer pirate.

DAVID: *(Pirate Voice)* Do that again and you'll be walking the plank!

DAVID grabs the chocolate bar and pushes MAX away. He lunges at MAX with the chocolate bar as though it is a cutlass. MAX leaps back.

DAVID: *(Pirate Voice)* If you get that far. Ah ha! God it feels good to have arms and leg again.

He waves his arms around and does an uncontrolled hop. He then takes a bite of the chocolate bar.

DAVID: *(Pirate Voice)* Make a back up copy, Sir Reginald.

DAVID *flops over - they are gone. NOTE: whenever the voices leave his body, DAVID flops over, exhausted. DAVID is himself again, though dazed. He looks at the chocolate bar with bemusement and then puts it away.*

MAX: If I'm going to examine you you're going to have to control yourself - selves.

DAVID: *(normal)* Sorry, please forgive us.

MAX *puts the stethoscope on DAVID'S ear. DAVID looks perplexed.*

DAVID: Why are -

MAX: Shush!

MAX *listens. He then moves away.*

MAX: I can't hear any voices. Only the sea.

Suddenly DAVID switches to one leg.

DAVID:*(Pirate voice)* Of course you hear the sea, you land lubber, we're in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

DAVID *staggers. He's quickly back to normal.*

MAX: Are you okay?

DAVID: *(Normal)* Fine, just a little sea sick.

DAVID *goes to the window and sucks in some fresh air.*

MAX: I'm sorry to have to say this, but I think it's all in your head.

DAVID: Yes, I know. The Englishman and the Computer Pirate. They're writing a computer program designed to delete my personality so they can take full control of my body.

MAX: *(sceptical)* Delete your personality?

DAVID: Yes.

MAX: Why?

DAVID: So the Englishman can reopen his psychiatry practice.

MAX: Really? A colleague.

DAVID: Yes. He was Sigmund Freud's star pupil until they fell out over the value of awakening repressed memories. Apparently Freud -

DAVID *doubles over in agony. He whips into an upright position and slaps himself in the face.*

DAVID: *(Englishman)* How dare you mention that charlatan's name! Never mention it again. He ruined my life! He...oh Mummy, why? Why?

He begins sobbing. DAVID flops over and, after a moment, dries his eyes and rubs his cheek.

DAVID: You see? Can you help me?

MAX: *(Stunned pause)* I don't think so.

DAVID: There's nothing you can do?

MAX: No... *(sudden change of heart)* Not until I know more about you.

DAVID: Such as?

MAX: Well, to enable me to make an accurate diagnosis, it's very important that I understand the nature of your employment.

DAVID: *(suspicious)* Why?

MAX: To understand the stresses of your work, the sort of people you deal with, how drunken strangers react to your job at a party! *(composing himself)* It will help me understand why an Englishman and a limbless Computer Pirate are squatting in your body. So...

MAX smiles and gestures DAVID in the direction of the clothes rack. DAVID hesitates.

MAX: Go on!

MAX gives DAVID an encouraging push and he goes behind the clothes rack. Suddenly there are voices at the door. MAX flattens himself against the wall on the safe side of the door. It opens and hides MAX from view. A middle-aged WOMAN dressed as a witch and holding a broom strides in and looks around menacingly. Her entrance is accompanied by a crack of thunder and a flash of lightning. She's agitated. Finally she is satisfied that no-one is in there.

WOMAN: *(to someone outside the door.)* He's not in here either. Let's look outside.

She leaves and closes the door. MAX sighs and peels himself off the wall. DAVID comes out from behind the clothes rack dressed as a king.

DAVID: *(French accent)* I am the King of France!

MAX: You are not!

DAVID: I am. And it's such a pleasure to be able to walk amongst one's subjects for a change, to experience the simple life. Are you a common garbage collector?

MAX: You are not a king, you're just trying to have a better profession than me.

DAVID: I can't help that I'm better than you, I was born to it. Such was my good fortune.

MAX: The Englishman is making you do this, isn't he? He knows very well you're not a king. Don't you?

DAVID: *(suddenly an English accent)* No, it has nothing to do with him at all.

MAX: Then why do you suddenly have an English accent?

Pause.

DAVID: *(English voice)* Damn! I lost concentration.

DAVID flops over.

MAX: Get into your real work clothes.

DAVID hurries behind the clothes rack. MAX looks around and sees the hat stand with a woman's hat and coat hanging from it. He stares at it for a moment and then quickly neatens up his hair and clothes. The lights dim and stars are projected all over the room. He casually moves towards the coat stand.

MAX: *(talks to the hat stand)* Good evening. I saw you from across the room and I sensed you were in urgent need of a glass of champagne.

He whips an imaginary glass out from behind his back and offers it.

MAX: Champagne under the stars is one of my favourite things. My name's Max. I'd be honoured to know yours. *(pause)* Delighted to meet you, Caroline. Beautiful name. What do you do with yourself when you're not being charming? *(pause)* Why did you look ashamed when you said that? There's nothing wrong with being a secretary. It's a very important position. I don't know what I'd do without my...three. *(pause)* Oh, I'm a...*(fake humility)* ...psychiatrist. *(pause)* Yes, yes it is a very important job. Would you like to come for a drive in my Jaguar? *(pause)* Thought you might.

MAX starts to drive an imaginary car while drinking imaginary champagne. He makes driving sounds, perhaps even a skidding one as he takes a sharp corner to show off. He smiles over at the hat stand.

MAX: I'm an excellent driver, aren't I? But to be honest I'm driving slowly for you. I can go much faster if you like?

DAVID: Drink driving, Sir?

The lights come up and there is DAVID standing next to him dressed in a highly decorated Police uniform. MAX is startled. He throws the imaginary glass away, but DAVID catches it and has a sniff. He tosses the glass away. We hear the sound of breaking glass.

DAVID: Champagne.

MAX: Officer, I swear I only had a few sips! I'm way under the lim.... *(back to normal)* A Policeman... *(MAX mimes getting out of the car.)* Yes, that feels right. I feel very comfortable with that.

DAVID: Not threatened at all?

MAX: No.

DAVID: A little superior?

MAX: Yes - no! Equals.

DAVID: Understandably. After all, I am the Police Commissioner.

DAVID gestures proudly at his stripes. His enthusiasm is dampened by MAX'S unimpressed expression.

DAVID: *Acting* Police Commissioner. Though the rumour is I will soon be offered the position permanently as I am revered by the press and the Government for ridding the Force of corruption.

MAX: Voices in your head still?

DAVID: Clearly.

MAX: Then I have no option but to operate. I'll fetch my instruments.

MAX'S seriousness worries DAVID. DAVID grabs his arm.

DAVID: Psychiatrist's don't operate.

MAX: They do if they're also neurosurgeons. Lucky for you that's another of my fields.

MAX pulls and goes behind the clothes rack.

DAVID: Actually, the voices have gone now. So there's no -

DAVID convulses, doubles over and then is on one leg.

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Gone! We'll never be gone! We're steering this ship, land lubber. It's time for you to be set adrift! Sir Reginald, the program's ready. Let's get your psychiatry practice up and running. Hit the delete button.

DAVID, *involuntarily, does one large hop sideways and stops.*

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Not the tab button! The delete button! Try again.

DAVID *does lots of tiny hops sideways across the stage.*

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Take your hand off the space bar!

DAVID *stops.*

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Sir Reginald, put your coffee down and concentrate! I can't hold him for much longer. Now hit the - watch the coffee!

DAVID *clutches his head, seemingly in agony.*

DAVID: *(Pirate)* Argh! That's boiling hot!

DAVID *suddenly starts to hop wildly around the stage, accompanied by computer alert sounds: the quack, the monkey, etc. It should sound like a jungle of computer alert sounds.*

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Hit the escape button, Sir Reginald! Or we'll be shipwrecked!

DAVID *finally stops and stands still. The lights dim. He starts to creep around the room looking for his mother, talking like a little boy. Perhaps haunting, child-like music can accompany him. A spooky triangle playing in the background might do the trick.*

DAVID: *(himself, as a little boy)* Mummy? Mummy? Where are you, Mummy? Come out and play. I've got a surprise for you. *(DAVID sees the hatstand.)* There you are, Mummy! *(He goes over to it.)* Guess what I've got for you?

He takes a huge cigar out of his trousers.

DAVID: It's a big one, isn't it, Mummy?

DAVID'S *body suddenly lurches and the pirate returns. He throws away the cigar.*

DAVID: *(Pirate)* Sir Reginald, you idiot, you've opened his Oedipus Complex! Hit every button in sight!

DAVID *lurches around the room. The music lurches with him, jumping forward wildly. Finally he collapses to the ground. After a moment he raises his head.*

DAVID: (*Englishman*) Thank God. (*beat*) Freud you bastard! I swear to you I will destroy all of your theories. No-one will ever have their subconscious opened again. I will delete every last subconscious so no-one will ever have to go through the pain that I...that I...oh, Mummy, why? Why!

He sobs. DAVID falls to his knees, exhausted. He is back to normal. Suddenly MAX runs out from behind the clothes rack with a cardboard axe raised above his head.

MAX: Time to operate!

DAVID leaps up and scrambles for cover. The axe just misses.

MAX: The Englishman first! To the Tower of London with him.

DAVID backs away, MAX stalks him.

DAVID: Enough's enough! The fantasy's over.

MAX: Which voice is that? I know it's not the real you.

DAVID: It is the real me. Stop it.

MAX: Not till you're cured. Now put your head on the bed so I can get a good swing at it.

MAX swings, but again misses.

DAVID: Stop it!

MAX: For a Police Commissioner you're not very calm.

DAVID: *Acting* Police Commissioner. Short-term acting.

MAX: You were trying to be better than me. You said you were revered by the press and Government.

DAVID: I was just having fun.

MAX: At my expense.

DAVID: Listen, I am not the Police Commissioner, and you're not a neurosurgeon. So let's just take off these clothes.

MAX: Indecent exposure! I demand you set up an inquiry into yourself. That's how you people do it, isn't it?

DAVID: Let's just drop the act. You have to accept that putting on a white coat does not make you a neurosurgeon.

MAX: *(Pause)* I know that.

MAX has calmed down. He's thinking. DAVID carefully moves over to him .

DAVID: Good. So let's put this down.

He takes the axe from him and throws it on the bed. He then begins to take off his coat.

DAVID: And take this -

MAX: It makes me a gynaecologist!

MAX struggles with DAVID to keep on the coat. A scuffle breaks out.

DAVID: You are not a gynaecologist!

MAX: I am! You're just jealous!

MAX still has the coat on when the door opens and the WOMAN dressed as a witch strides in. Once again she is accompanied by lightning and thunder. MAX and DAVID freeze. They stand ashamed and afraid in their fancy dress. She stares at them for a moment, then...

WOMAN: I'm here to see the gynaecologist.

Stunned pause. They look at each other.

MAX: Ah...ah...if you could undress behind there... *(indicates the clothes rack)*....he'll be right with you.

MAX frantically takes the coat off and tries to put it on DAVID. DAVID resists.

WOMAN: It's not my appointment. It's my daughter's.

They stop.

WOMAN: Caroline!

CAROLINE, an attractive young woman, walks in. She is dressed as Aphrodite.

MAX: *(snapping the coat back on)* Why hello there.

She smiles and looks away.

WOMAN: She's very shy.

MAX: She'll soon be over that. Can you undress, please? Right in front of me will be fine.

*MAX pulls some surgical gloves out of the coat pocket and snaps them on.
CAROLINE is startled.*

WOMAN: It's all right, darling, I'll be with you.

MAX: No, I'm sorry, you won't be able to stay. It'll disrupt my concentration.

WOMAN: But it's a very sensitive issue. She may not be able to discuss the problem with you.

MAX: Don't worry, I'm sure I'll get her to open up.

*MAX clenches and unclenches his fists, checking the comfort of the gloves.
CAROLINE clings to her mother.*

MAX: *(to CAROLINE)* Afterwards we can drink champagne under the stars and then I'll take you for a drive in my Jaguar.

WOMAN: What on earth are you talking about?

MAX dashes over to the hat stand and grabs the coat and hat.

MAX: *(to Caroline)* I have some presents for you.

He races back and puts the hat on her head and drapes the coat over her shoulders.

MAX: Would you like to be my secretary?

Suddenly there is a gunshot. Everyone starts and turns to face DAVID. He is holding a cap gun in the air.

DAVID: That's enough! This fantasy's out of control.

MAX: Keep out of it. Talk amongst your personalities until I've finished.

WOMAN: What's going on here?

MAX: Nothing.

DAVID: It's okay, Madam, I'm the Police Commissioner.

MAX: Only acting.

DAVID: Madam, you and your daughter must leave this room immediately. *(Pirate voice)* Not until after the examination. *(Englishman)* Hear hear. *(DAVID fights to regain his body and wins.)* Leave the room now!

DAVID *collapses from the effort.*

WOMAN: We're going!

She grabs her daughter. MAX blocks their exit.

MAX: Wait! I have to explain something to you.

He takes the WOMAN aside.

MAX: You see, he's one of my patients.

WOMAN: *(horrified)* What!

MAX: It's not what you think. I'm also a neurosurgeon and after I've thoroughly examined and re-examined your daughter I'm removing a couple of his surplus personalities. But if your daughter leaves here without receiving treatment he'll worry himself into a frenzy and he'll be too traumatised to undergo the operation. So, in my professional opinion, the best thing for him would be for your daughter to strip off.

DAVID: Liar!

MAX approaches DAVID.

MAX: Come on, be a sport. Think of it as a strip search.

DAVID stands up and herds the women towards the door.

DAVID: Time to go, ladies.

DAVID takes the hat and coat from her and puts them back of the hat stand.

DAVID: No more dress ups! Out! Both of you.

DAVID pushes the women out.

MAX: You ruined everything.

DAVID points the gun at him and approaches him like the Police do when they corner an armed person.

DAVID: Take off the coat.

MAX: What about your voices? Don't you want help?

DAVID: We're fine. Take off the coat. And the stethoscope. *(beat)* Now!

MAX reluctantly takes them off.

DAVID: Throw them well away from you. On the bed.

MAX *does this.*

DAVID: Now go behind the clothes rack and get dressed in your real work clothes.

MAX: No...no I won't do it.

DAVID: Yes, you will.

MAX: You can't make me.

DAVID: *(waving the gun.)* Yes I can.

MAX: But...but...you'll despise me and make jokes about me and think you're better than me.

DAVID: It sounds like you'd prefer to be dead.

DAVID *steadies his aim.*

MAX: I'll just be a minute.

MAX *walks behind the clothes rack and starts to dress. Suddenly he starts to whimper.*

DAVID: What's wrong?

MAX: I just want you to know that there's much more to me than my job. Much much more. Dimensions to my personality that no-one knows about.

DAVID: I'm sure there is.

MAX: Things people never ask about because they can't be bothered to dig below the surface. They find out my profession, judge me, then move on. They would never guess in a million years that I've read the first chapter of "A Brief History of Time".

DAVID: *(feigned interest)* Oh.

MAX: Or that for some time I've been planning to take singing lessons.

DAVID: Uh huh.

MAX: Or that I've had some bad luck. Some very bad luck.

DAVID: That's no good.

MAX: All they can see is that I'm...I'm a...

MAX slumps out dressed as a Parking Inspector.

DAVID: Parking Inspector!

MAX: See, you've judged me! Written me off.

DAVID: No, no that's not - I got a ticket last week! I tried to explain that *I* didn't park in the handicapped zone, it was the computer pirate! But he wouldn't listen to reason. You people are the hardest bunch of -

MAX: No! I can't bear it. If I can't be a neurosurgeon, or a gynaecologist, then I want to die.

MAX moves towards DAVID.

MAX: Kill me.

DAVID backs away.

DAVID: Don't be ridiculous.

MAX clutches him.

MAX: Kill me.

DAVID: No. You could go to university, study hard and become that neurosurgeon.

MAX: Now *you're* being ridiculous. Kill me.

DAVID: No!

MAX: In that case...

MAX wrestles the gun away from DAVID and points it at him.

MAX: Wouldn't shoot a lowly parking inspector, eh?

DAVID: No, it's just that I have the greatest respect for parking inspectors. And we need the revenue.

MAX: Stop lying. I bet if I was a gynaecologist or neurosurgeon you would have me shot on sight.

DAVID: No, everyone's equal in my eyes.

MAX: Don't make me sick.

DAVID: We're all unique.

MAX: Not me.

DAVID: Especially you.

MAX: What's that supposed to mean?

DAVID: *(Pause)* You're a nut.

MAX: A nut?

DAVID: Yes.

MAX: Just because you've got a psychiatrist living in your head doesn't mean you know anything about me.

DAVID: You're right. I'm sorry.

MAX: I s'pose you both want me to lie on the bed and tell you about my childhood sexual experiences? I could tell you some stories that'd make your hair stand on -

DAVID: No!

MAX: Then who are you? Go behind the clothes rack and get into *your* work clothes.

DAVID: *(pause)* I can't.

MAX: Get round there.

DAVID: I...I won't.

Pause. MAX thinks.

MAX: I want to talk to the pirate.

DAVID: What?

MAX: I want to talk to the pirate. Get him on deck.

DAVID: No, I don't want you to -

MAX: Mr Computer Pirate? Mr Computer Pirate? Bill Gates is on deck and he wants your advice.

DAVID convulses, doubles over and then lurches into life.

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Bill Gates! After all these years you've finally worked up the courage to face me. I've no limbs of my own thanks to you! I had a promising career ahead of me, but you couldn't cope with the competition. So you took me out! A cowardly hit and run on the Information Super Highway. But now I'm back! And it's my turn.

He pulls out the chocolate bar, lunges at MAX and rubs the chocolate over his shirt.

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Aha! Stained your shirt!

DAVID *stares at* MAX.

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* You're not Bill Gates! What's the idea? I've got work to do.

MAX: What's David's profession? What does he do in the real world?

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* What does it matter? He'll soon be gone.

MAX: But in the meantime, what does he do?

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* Why, he be me parrot, of course. Davey want a cracker?
Davey want a -

MAX: Get me the Englishman!

DAVID: *(Pirate voice)* All right. There's no need to be so snappy. Sir Reginald, you're wanted on deck. *(violent change of posture, English voice)* Yes, old chap, what's on your simplistic little mind?

MAX: What's David's profession?

DAVID: *(English voice)* Hm, interesting question.

MAX: It's a *simple* question. What's his profession?

DAVID: *(English voice)* He doesn't really have one, does he?

MAX: He's unemployed?

DAVID: *(English voice)* Not exactly.

MAX: What do you mean, "not exactly"?

DAVID: *(English voice)* He doesn't have much to do. Then again, how many Kings do?

MAX: Get below deck!

DAVID: *(English voice)* Actually, if you don't mind, I think I'll stay for a few moments and throw-up over the side.

DAVID runs to the window, and throws up outside. After a moment he crumples to his knees. He's back to normal.

MAX: David, is that you?

DAVID: *(weakly)* Yes.

MAX: You've got one more chance.

MAX holds the gun to his head. Pause.

DAVID: *(weakly)* I am in my work clothes.

MAX: You're the Police Commissioner?

DAVID: *(sadly)* No.

MAX: Acting Commissioner?

DAVID: *(sadly)* No.

MAX: Then you're not in your work clothes. Get behind the clothes -

DAVID tears a stripe from his uniform and drops it on the floor. Pause. MAX is about to say something when DAVID tears off another one, then another.

MAX: That isn't too bad, you're still a Senior Con -

DAVID tears off the last stripe. His head hangs low.

DAVID: Now I'm in uniform. Junior Constable Smith. Traffic Police.

MAX: This is horrific. We're practically colleagues.

DAVID: Now can I go?

MAX nods. DAVID staggers to his feet.

MAX: Wait.

DAVID stops.

MAX: What were you doing in here when I first came in?

DAVID: *(covering)* I was...picking a fancy dress costume. That girl made me -

MAX: No you weren't. It was too late into the party to bother with that. You looked suspicious when you came out from behind the clothes rack. You were up to something.

DAVID: I was not. I was picking a costume.

MAX: No you weren't. Tell me what you were really doing. I've got the gun, remember?

DAVID *convulses.*

DAVID: *(English voice)* Don't you dare say a word or we'll never speak for you again.

MAX: Ignore him! What were you doing?

DAVID'S *body tenses as he fights for control of himself.*

DAVID: I was...*(Pirate voice)* Red alert! Red alert! Run the program, Sir Reginald! Run the pro - *(MAX hits him on the back. Normal voice)* I was being myself!

The lights black out. Suddenly a spotlight comes up on DAVID who is striking a sexy pose. He has dispensed with his shirt to reveal he is wearing a bikini top. He then tears away his pants to reveal he is wearing bikini bottoms too, comically juxtaposed with long socks and shoes. He stands with his arms outstretched above him in triumph.

DAVID: I'm finally me!

The spotlight black out. In complete darkness we hear DAVID'S recorded voices...

PIRATE: Virus in the program! Virus in the program!

ENGLISHMAN: It's a repressed desire! The worst of them all!

PIRATE: Abandon ship! Every personality for itself!

There is a whistling sound and some yelling that suggests the ENGLISHMAN and PIRATE have jumped overboard. Then a splash is heard. We hear the sound of them spitting out water. We hear seagulls and gentle waves.

ENGLISHMAN: I say, is that a shark?

PIRATE: 'Fraid so, matey.

ENGLISHMAN: But I can't die now. I have to save the world from Sigmund Freud. He makes people remember things they're meant to forget. He...oh, Mummy, why?

PIRATE: Don't start on your mother! Die like a man.

ENGLISHMAN: But I have to purge myself of it.

PIRATE: Then hurry up.

ENGLISHMAN: Sigmund Freud put me through psychotherapy and made me remember...

PIRATE: Made you remember what!

ENGLISHMAN: Seeing my mother in bed with my nanny! (*sobs*)

PIRATE: So what? Be a little more open-minded.

ENGLISHMAN: Remembering that ruined my life! They were ignoring me! I was only four years old - a critical time in the development of - argh!!!

PIRATE: Good timing, matey. No need for seconds, eh? That should keep you going until - Argh!!!

Silence.

DAVID: (*real voice*) They're gone.

Lights up.

MAX: (*shaking his head.*) A cross-dressing Policeman.

DAVID: Don't you dare judge me! My mother judged me when she caught me in her bikini. She put me into therapy. But all it did was traumatise me and I developed the Englishman and the Computer Pirate. But now they're gone. No more guilt, no more fear.

MAX: I have to lie down.

MAX lies down on the bed and puts the gun down next to him. DAVID suddenly leaps on the bed and grabs the gun. He points it at MAX.

DAVID: Why did *you* come in here? You were running from more than just an ex-girlfriend, weren't you?

MAX grabs the gun and they struggle on the bed for it. Suddenly there is a commotion outside the door. CAROLINE and the WOMAN burst in, still dressed as Aphrodite and a Witch, respectively (no thunder and lightning on this occasion). MAX leaps up, DAVID hides behind him.

MAX: (*excited*) Have you decided to strip off?

WOMAN: What?

CAROLINE: That's him! He's the parking inspector who gave me a ticket in my own driveway.

WOMAN: Why on earth did you do that?

MAX: *(Pause)* She smirked when I told her I was a parking inspector! She's not smirking any more.

CAROLINE *screams. She has seen what DAVID is wearing.*

WOMAN: What's wrong?

CAROLINE: That pervert is wearing the bikini Dylan gave me for my birthday! You're disgusting. Get it off this instant and get out of my bedroom.

DAVID *strides towards CAROLINE.*

DAVID: I'm not disgusting, I'm beautiful.

MAX *joins him and points the gun at the women.*

MAX: Get out.

The women scream. The WOMAN tries to poke DAVID away with her broom. He snatches it from her and throws it on the floor. The women race out the door.

DAVID: And tell your boyfriend he has excellent taste!

CAROLINE *pops her head back in.*

CAROLINE: You'll meet him in a minute. Along with the rest of the rugby team!

She leaves. DAVID closes the door. MAX sits on the bed. He's drained of energy. Long pause.

DAVID: What do you prescribe for this situation, Doctor?

MAX *looks up. Thinks.*

MAX: For a start, Commissioner...I think we should get dressed.

They burst into action. MAX puts on the coat and stethoscope. DAVID runs to the hatstand and puts on the hat and coat. They stop and look at each other.

MAX: Caroline?

DAVID: Yes, Doctor?

MALE VOICE: *(off)* Where are they?

CAROLINE: *(off)* In my room.

MALE VOICE: *(off)* Right fellas, let's punch the shit out of 'em!

A cheer of "Yeah" goes up from what sounds suspiciously like a whole rugby team. The rugby players start up a chant of "Kill kill kill". The volume increases as they get closer. DAVID and MAX almost have to yell over it by the end.

DAVID: What do we do now?

MAX: How would you like to go for a drive in my Jaguar and drink champagne under the stars?

DAVID: I'd love to, but I don't see how we can at the moment.

MAX picks up the broom and puts it between his legs.

MAX: Get on.

DAVID: This is your Jaguar?

MAX: It's the best I can do.

DAVID hesitates.

MAX: Come on, Caroline, there's no time to lose.

DAVID gets on.

MAX: Now back up.

They back up and then steady themselves.)

MAX: Right. Are you ready?

DAVID: Ready!

MAX: Hold on tight.

DAVID puts his arms around MAX'S waist. They run towards the open window with the broom between their legs. Before they reach the window the door bursts open and the lights black out. A moment later a whistling sound is heard to suggest they are flying. The rugby players groan in disappointment. Stars are slowly projected all over the blackened room to reveal MAX and DAVID flying on the broomstick while pretending to drink champagne.

MAX: *(raises his glass)* To a beautiful night.

DAVID: *(raises his glass)* To a beautiful night.

They clink their pretend champagne glasses. Blackout.

THE END