

# GOD BLESS

Grant Bull ★ Richard Collieran

# HOOKY STREET

AN UNOFFICIAL CELEBRATION OF  
ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES





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**ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES**



CANDY JAR BOOKS · CARDIFF  
2018

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An Unofficial Celebration of *Only Fools and Horses*

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## Introduction

G: Here you go, Rich, one pint. I've asked the barman to change the channel too, these wildlife shows turn my stomach, especially after that mountain of meat I had for dinner...

R: Oh yeah, he's doing it now. Hey look, how's that for a bit of luck? *Only Fools and Horses* is on.

G: Fantastic. I do love me some *Only Fools...* of all the shows I watch and re-watch this has to be my all-time favourite.

R: Yeah me too. I've loved it ever since I was a kid. I always remember watching the Christmas specials with my nan and grandad.

G: Me too, of all the television shows I recall watching as a family, I think *Only Fools...* is the only one that everyone agreed on and enjoyed watching altogether.

R: What episode is on? Del is waiting at the train station... looks like 'Dates' to me.

G: Yeah, that is 'Dates'. Good call, Rich. You know I have always wanted to write something on *Only Fools...* and funny enough the beginning of this episode was my inspiration. Never have I seen a comedy with an opening scene with as many jokes, and good ones too, as in this episode.

R: What do you mean write something?

G: You know, for a magazine, or blog or Internet article. Anything really.

R: We should do it then, Grant. I'd love to get involved. We talk about the show enough!

G: OK, I'd still be up for writing something. You game then?!

R: Hell, yeah. But what do you have in mind? What was your 'Dates' piece going to be about?

G: To be honest I was just going to gush about how fantastic the writing is, the characters are, the performances and so on. It was going to be a real send-up on how perfect I think the show is.

R: That sounds right up my alley! But I wouldn't be able to pick one episode to talk about. I love them all so much; we'd have to watch all of them to properly do the show justice.

G: I like the sound of this. OK, how about we go back to the beginning, watch them all in order and write about them? Hold on, I am getting excited, I need another drink...

R: Yeah, get me another one as well. Hang on. We were just saying how we used to love watching it with our families, so why don't we watch it together? I've got a few contacts in the pub trade, I could see if they would let us use their places for a public screening.

G: That's a brilliant idea! Two mates down the pub, watching *Only Fools...* Perfect viewing, perfect company. I reckon we should do this...

R: Well, you go dig out the DVDs, I'll make some phone calls and we'll get this started.

G: I'll drink to that.

R: Lovely jubbly!

SERIES  
★ ★ ★  
ONE



### 1.1 'Big Brother'

*In which we meet the Trotter family and are introduced to their money-making ways, this time being suitcases which no one can open as the combination for the locks are inside.*

**Original air date 8 September 1981**

Watched by 9.2 million viewers

*Notable moments: the first appearance of Derek 'Del Boy' Edward Trotter, Rodney Charlton Trotter, Edward Kitchener 'Ted' Trotter aka Grandad and Colin 'Trigger' Ball; first appearance of Joyce the barmaid.*

### 1.2 'Go West Young Man'

*Del enters the motor trade, and at the same time offers to hide Boycie's Jag from his wife Marlene as it's a gift for his girlfriend.*

**Original air date on 15 September 1981**

Watched by 6.1 million viewers

*Notable moments: first appearance of Herman Terrance Aubrey 'Boycie' Boyce; first mention of Rodney's uniform fetish; first use of the phrase 'This time next year we'll be millionaires.'*

### 1.3 'Cash and Curry'

*Del and Rodney become involved in a dispute between two Indian businessmen.*

**Original air date 22 September 1981**

Watched by 7.3 million viewers

*Notable moment: first time Del calls Rodney a 'plonker'.*

### 1.4 'The Second Time Around'

*Del's old girlfriend Pauline Harris returns, possibly with murderous intentions.*

**Original air date 29 September 1981**

Watched by 7.8 million viewers

*Notable moment: first appearance of one of Del's former fiancées in the series, which later became a regular occurrence.*

1.5 'A Slow Bus to Chingford'

*Del Boy starts a tour bus business around 'ethnic London'.*

**Original air date 6 October 1981**

Watched by 7 million viewers

*Notable moment: first time Del realises the abbreviation for Trotters Independent Traders.*

1.6 'The Russians Are Coming'

*The Trotters build a fallout shelter under the looming threat of a nuclear war.*

**Original air date 13 October 1981**

Watched by 8.8 million viewers

*Notable moments: first mention of Grandad's allotment, which is seen eleven years later in 'Mother Nature's Son'; the episode was first broadcast during the Soviet war in Afghanistan.*

Christmas Special 1981 'Christmas Crackers'

*The Trotters celebrate Christmas by going out on the pull.*

**Original air date 28 December 1981**

Watched by 7.5 million viewers

*Notable moment: first 'Christmas Special' of the series, something which will become a tradition as the series' popularity grows and the format expands.*



# Big Brother

*Derek 'Del Boy' Trotter employs his younger brother Rodney as his assistant in his company Trotters Independent Traders. Rodney thinks that Del is trying to cheat him out of money...*

R: Right, first things first, the name *Only Fools and Horses*. Was this a popular expression at the time? Have you ever heard it apart from this show?

G: No, I must admit, I haven't. It's a saying which in full is 'Why do only fools and horses work? For money' and that makes sense in the context of the show. The working title for the show was *Readies* (as in available cash), but John Sullivan wanted *Only Fools...* Seeing as we are in a pub, here's a little bit of pub quiz trivia: John Sullivan had already used the title 'Only Fools and Horses' for an episode of his series *Citizen Smith*.

R: I might be mad, but I remember having three episodes from series one on VHS when I was a kid...

G: VHS! Blimey, Grandpa, the kids reading this will have to go to a museum to see one of them. You sure it wasn't a reel to reel?!

R: You're one year older than me! Anyway, on this VHS I swear I remember it having a different theme. It was sort of jazzy.

G: Yeah, you're right, that was the original theme which went out for season one. John Sullivan disliked it though. He had written the opening and closing theme tunes as we now know them and wanted to use these, but producer Ray Butt overruled him. When it came to season two John Sullivan got his way and the now classic theme tune was used. It's a brilliant theme and it explains the title of the show too. Everyone's a winner!

*Inside the Trotter's flat in Nelson Mandela House, Rodney and Grandad are chatting as Del enters...*

R: The flat is like an open car boot sale or warehouse full of stock and everything is for sale. You get the impression you could buy anything from Del, even the chair he is sitting on.

G: The opening exchange between Rodney and Grandad

reflects life in the Trotter household, volatile, always arguing, trying to be correct and get one over each other. A male driven environment. A bit like us two I guess...

R: Yeah, except I'm always right. This episode focuses heavily on the volatile side of the Trotters relationship.

G: There's one for the books, Del gets a French phrase right! Right there in front of the mirror, admiring himself.

R: Hmm, not sure about that. He says 's'il vous plait, s'il vous plait. What an enigma? I get better looking every day.' That's just means 'please, please'. Not as out of context as some of the things we'll hear him say but not really correct.

G: Blimey, OK, don't go all Oxford Dictionary on me or whatever the French equivalent is.

R: That would be the Dictionnaire de L'Académie Française. Anyway, we get a lot of exposition in the interaction between Del and Rodney in this scene. We discover that they are brothers who are thirteen years apart; their mother died when Rodney was six and that their dad left two months afterwards; Del raised Rodney; they are traders who don't pay VAT, council Tax or NI. This pretty much establishes their backstory within ten minutes of the show.

G: Yes, this exchange is clever. It offers the backstory in a very quick and frank way. We also get a mention of The Who, Del's favourite band, who will come up time and again.

R: He mentions he was a mod. Which probably explains his fashion conscience and not being a stranger to getting in fights.

G: The no VAT bit shows Del's way of thinking. The way he presents it kinda makes it OK, it makes sense, sure it's wrong but the man's got a point! Do you think he is trying to convince himself a bit too? Maybe he has a little bit of a conscience left...

R: He's right in his own mind and that's good enough for Del. Rodney mentions that he's twenty-three and wants a career. The first sign that Rodney wants to do better for himself than working with, or more accurately for, Del.

G: Yes, Rodney wants and can do more which he proves when he finally flies the nest but Del always puts him down, keeps him close. I think as much as anything this is Del frightened of losing the brother he raised. In a way, he's a father to him too.

R: Oh definitely. He always accuses Rodney of holding him back, but will never let him go.

*Del and Rodney visit their local pub, the Nag's Head in Peckham where Del meets his friend Trigger who is selling stolen suitcases...*

R: Del orders a half pint of beer each for himself and Rodney. Not the fancy drinks soon to be associated with Del.

G: Good point about the drinks, I hadn't really picked up on this before. Speaking of drinks isn't it your round?

R: OK, but first some pub trivia for you. The woman that says hello to Del as they enter the bar is played by actress Tessa Peake-Jones, who will go on to play Del's wife Raquel later in the show.

G: I'm afraid you have fallen for an Internet myth there, my friend. Tessa herself has confirmed it isn't her. Now stop stalling and get those drinks in! There's the conversation here where Del discusses the barmaid Joycie, calling her an old dog. That's very derogatory of women, but also a bit of an insight into the male mind. She's obviously out of earshot and he's talking to Rodney alone, it's a very brave bit of writing.

R: Unfortunately, probably quite true to life as well. Del says 'I like this life.... ducking and diving, wheeling and dealing! You know, it's exciting ain't it, unpredictable?' This is a bit unsubtle, but sets the tone for Del's character as a bit of a Jack the lad.

G: Yes, Del loves his trade. Sure, he wants to be a millionaire but he clearly thrives on the risky, cut and thrust lifestyle.

R: We get more backstory about why Rodney works with Del. He has a GCE in maths and art, started at art college but was arrested for possession of cannabis and given an eighteen-month suspended sentence. That's a bloody harsh sentence if you ask me.

G: You're right there. You'd have to kill someone nowadays to get a sentence like that! Del makes sure he reminds Rodney of his crime every chance he gets too, it comes up a couple of times in this episode alone, he uses it as a hold over Rodney, reminding him of his mistakes and the fact that he's not that innocent.

R: Del outright tells him at twenty-three you're a social leper. Rodney's face and body language shows how miserable he is at this thought. This is in stark contrast to Del who just described how much he loves their lifestyle.

G: I love Lyndhurst's vacant stare as Del basically tells him

he's got no future. He really nails the depressive look, great acting.

R: In these early episodes, I think the Rodney character in general was more depressed.

*Del's friend road-sweeper, Trigger, enters the pub...*

R: Del asks Trigger if he remembers his brother. Trigger says, 'Yeah 'course I do. How you going, Dave?' This is the first time we will here OFAH'S longest running joke. Del and Rodney looked confused at this, so is this supposed to be an early occasion of them meeting? This will be retconned later to show Trigger as a childhood friend.

G: Go on then professor, what's this retcon lark mean?

R: Retcon stands for retroactive continuity. It's when a writer will, at a later date, give additional information which will revise or impose a different interpretation on previously described events.

G: I see, a bit like when you told me you were once a male model and then you retconned it and told me the truth!

R: As a long-time fan of the show, it's a bit weird seeing this version of Trigger. While not the sharpest knife in the draw, he's not the complete moron he will morph into. At this stage, he's a local thief.

G: Rodney's honesty in correcting Del on his maths is something that plays well against Del's devious ways.

R: There's also a bit of naivety here. He just doesn't realise what Del is doing and is just trying to be helpful.

*Back at the flat Del is on the phone trying to sell the briefcases. One of his contacts, Dougie Sadler tells him they were stolen from his shop and were faulty; combination padlocks with the number to open them locked inside. Del and Rodney get into an argument before Rodney tells Del he plans on leaving to prove he can survive without him...*

G: I love the quick talking from Del as Dougie tells him he's had his suitcases nicked. Del goes from selling to buying in an instant. It all comes so naturally to him. I really like the argument between Rodney and Grandad about the burger here too.

R: Rodney confronts Del about buying the faulty cases. Del

responds with 'That's the way I'm made, innit? You know, crash in and to hell with the consequences. He who dares, wins!' This is a great line which establishes both how Del sees himself and how he lives his life. They are actually one and the same.

G: Our first 'He who dares...'

R: Yep, the first instance of one of Del's famous catchphrases. Rodney thinks he should be Del's financial advisor. Del answers with 'Bonjour Trieste.' His first dodgy French phrase.

G: Are we sure about that, you don't want to get your French dictionary out on that one? Seeing as I couldn't get it right earlier...

R: Well you said it, not me.

G: I love the way Grandad has to get in on Del lecturing Rodney and get his two-penneth in. 'What sort of financial advisor goes out to buy an Emperor Burger and comes back with a cheeseburger.' What do you reckon is in an Emperor Burger? Sounds great, doesn't it?

R: It's an awesome name. Although what kind of a burger gets more expensive and doesn't add cheese?

G: Ha ha, you're right, those little rubber squares do normally make the prices go up! Grandad clearly states he won't eat it as he doesn't like cheese, yet once we see Del try and force feed him eat, he tucks into it fine. Also, I like the action of Del patting the burger back into shape before presenting it back to Grandad.

R: Do you think that was improvised? Lennard Pearce looks like he's about to crack up when Del does that.

G: Yes, he does. If it is improvised that's some brilliant thinking. It's like Del really cares for the burger.

R: For most of the episode all they've done is argue. I never realised how mean spirited it was. Del: 'I hesitate to tell people you're my brother.' Rodney: 'I tell people you're my social worker... you embarrass me. That's why I never bring girls home.' Del: 'The only woman you ever mentioned was old Shanghai Lil from the art college. Even then you had to drug her before you could get your leg over.' Wow. That is some nasty stuff.

G: I'm surprised watching this just how nasty it gets; the comedy really drops and it moves to drama. The comments are really cutting...

R: Rodney says, 'You make my life a misery... With your overbearing, overprotective manner.' This aspect of Del's character will be seen throughout the series, both for good and bad.

G: The scene ends on a good gag though when Rodney comes back for money (as Del knows he will) and produces the bank note. He comments to Grandad, 'He reminds me of you.' Grandad says, 'What, dignified in defeat?' and Del says, 'No, a ponce!' It releases all the tension of the moments before. Clever writing.

*The next morning Grandad tells Del that Rodney left home seven hours ago to go to Hong Kong and find the girl from art college. Del hits the streets to try and sell the cases....*

G: Does the montage music sound familiar?

R: No, wh... wait, that's it! That's the theme from the VHS!

G: Yep, we hear the original theme, so even newer viewers can hear what was and could have been. It just seems so wrong to think that was the theme tune!

R: It's awful. Good thing they changed it.

G: The bag shop in the montage – with all the bags hanging down the entrance – always reminds me of a shop in South Wimbledon as a kid. Whenever I went past that shop it reminded me of this scene and visa-versa.

*Rodney returns after being gone for six days. He tells Del about his journey to France and his adventures on a yacht with Veronica, the daughter of an English millionaire tax exile....*

R: Rodney trying to lie is a funny moment. He couldn't come up with something plausible and instead comes up with ditching the daughter of a millionaire to return to Peckham.

G: Del's cruelty shows again here as he makes Rodney go through all his explaining just to reveal he left his passport behind. Even though it was Del's behaviour that drove Rodney away he still makes him squirm.

R: Del and Rodney sharing a laugh at the end is the only point of the episode where there is indication they actually like each other. I think Del tussling Rodney's hair as the episode closes is a genuinely touching moment between a big and little

brother, which hints at the bond they share.

G: It's a nice finishing touch to a very tension driven episode. It lets us know that underneath it all is a brotherly love that, despite the macho facade, is very strong. We will see this time and again.

R: So that's the first episode. Not the auspicious start to the series I love.

G: You're right, the episode is by no means a classic. I agree that it's not a great start, but what it does demonstrate is the dynamics of the relationships very well.

R: Yeah, despite being very mean-spirited and low on comedy it does an excellent job of establishing the relationships, personalities and backstories of the three main characters. A good foundation for what's to come.

G: Indeed.

## Go West Young Man

*Del's second-hand car dealer mate, Boycie, has recently bought a Jaguar E-Type for his mistress. Del agrees to hide it away in his garage for a week so that Boycie's wife doesn't see it. In exchange, Boycie gives Del a death trap of an old car costing £25 which Del plans to re-sell. After all, Britain's future lies in second hand cars....*

*Inside the flat, Del is contemplating a move into the car trade while Rodney is moping around as he hasn't heard from his latest girlfriend, Monica...*

G: From suitcases last time to second hand cars this time, Del shows he isn't afraid of trying his hand at anything. We are given another lecture from Del about the state of the country and his theories on the black market.

R: Del's rationale is that the government will have to ban the import of foreign cars to save Britain's car industry, but the unions won't stand for it so they'll have to go on strike. This is Thatcher's Britain here.

G: So, we have a first mention of Mickey Pearce, straight from the off we get an idea of the friendship Rodney shares with him.

R: Del tells him he saw Monica out dancing the night before

with him, but chuckles to himself about it when Rodney isn't looking. I'm not sure if he's lying or telling the truth, but he does appear to be enjoying the opportunity to wind Rodney up.

G: Del loves the chance to wind Rodders up. He just can't help himself. Personally, I can't see the problem here, it's a bit like that time I took your missus out when you were away on business, you didn't mind did you? It's a mate's thing, right?

R: What the hell are you talking about? When did this happen?

G: Don't worry about that now, just keep watching the show.

*The brothers visit Boycie's car lot. Boycie reveals that he's purchased a Jaguar for his mistress's birthday. Del agrees to hide it in his garage, for a discount on the other car of course...*

R: Our first introduction of Boycie. Upon first glance, he seems to be a more successful version of Del. They're even dressed similarly.

G: Yeah, there is a real similarity. Boycie is the success Del wants to be.

R: And doesn't Boycie know it. Del doesn't judge Boycie for having a mistress. Is this because they're good friends or just because Del wants the discount? Del's attitude towards women so far hasn't exactly been healthy, so maybe he sees nothing wrong with it.

G: From the comments in the first episode to these here, Del presents some very negative attitudes towards women and relationships. You could be right though, he could be fronting it to impress Boycie, smooth the deal over.

*When they get their new car home, they find out the brakes don't work. This doesn't stop Del from trying to make a few quid from it...*

G: I love the mark-up on the car, Del paying a mere £25 for it and looking to make £199, the man has some ambition. Then he's into salesman mode which you know will only end with the cash in his hands. Telling the potential buyer, the car only had one previous owner and he was a vicar is good enough for Del; he's planted a Bible in the glove compartment to back it up. To go to these lengths, to think so much detail in a sale gives an insight into his way of thinking. He's not just selling



a car here, he's selling a lie and they both end up being sold. Very clever and equally crafty!

*Later that night, suited and booted, Rodney tells Del he's off out for the night, but penniless, his only option is to invite Del...*

G: Del calling Rodney 'Peckham's Conscience' is good fun. Of course, Del doesn't care for such things, the cash is in his pocket, the deal is done.

R: Rodney telling Del he won't take his 'blood money' shows that he's a man of morals. The problem is in his position his morals will leave him penniless.

G: Del shows who holds the purse strings here, as much as Rodney doesn't want to be involved with such a dodgy deal he has no choice, Del and his deals are his only source of money and he has to go along with it.

R: I get the impression he has to compromise a lot not to end up broke. He's also completely dependent on Del for a night out. At twenty-three years of age he shouldn't have to tag along with his thirty-five-year-old brother just to be able to enjoy his life. Rodney tells Del 'I'm doing what Monica was doing last night.' Del shoots back, 'Oh, going dancing with Mickey Pearce, are you?' I love the realistic nature of this dialogue. Instead of just being one line joke machines, the characters, in this case Del, carries on with a joke from early that he knows will annoy Rodney.

G: Its brilliant writing, Del isn't going to miss the chance of getting another dig in.

R: While setting Del up to take the Jag, Rodney butters him up by saying that he's suave and sophisticated. Del admits that he is a bit ostentatious. I can't believe Del even knows the word let alone uses it correctly.

G: Ha ha, yeah, it's very un-Del-like to understand a more complex word and to use it right, don't worry it won't last long!

R: Rodney tricking Del in to taking the Jag by playing to his vanity is a nice touch. It shows he can be as sneaky as Del if he has to.

G: Rodney playing Del is brilliant and I love the speed of the delivery of Rodney's line 'The Jag! Are you sure, Del? Well upon your shoulders be it, son, let's go,' and with that he's out of the door and Del is left to realise he has been stitched up.

*Finally, out of the flat, the brothers end up in a darkened nightclub...*

R: Del tells the overtly camp waiter he would like an 'Italian stallion.' The waiter responds with 'wouldn't we all.' Grant, isn't that what you're drinking?

G: I've never had an Italian Stallion in my life, not a drink called it either, now can we get back to the show please.

R: Del describes how to make this... yes... ostentatious drink and we have the first occasion of one of Del Boy's classic cocktails.

G: I like the way this cocktail exists and, as we go on in the series, they will become more and more bizarre combinations of drinks. Mostly that no one in their right mind would drink! There is also a nice mention of Reg Varney here, star of 'On the Buses', which is one of my other favourite comedies.

R: Rodney reveals his secret uniform fetish. The delivery of the line, 'She thought I was weird. Well not weird, warped' cracks me up. He mentions that his favourite is a police uniform. There must be psychological diagnosis for someone who is essentially a criminal fantasising about police women?

G: I love this piece of dialogue. Rodney is getting so excited explaining it. Del's horrified reaction to wanting a woman to dress up as a policeman is brilliant too, he just can't understand it. As he puts it, 'Policewomen? But they nick you.'

*After attempting to chat up two 'women' at the bar, Del and Rodney discover the women are men in drag and that they are in a gay bar. Hastily they make their way to a second nightclub where Del and Rodney chat up two real women by pretending to be a famous tennis player and his coach...*

G: This nightclub is so '80s it hurts! Check out the guy dancing behind them. I've been trying to place that dance for years and I've finally got it! He dances like you at a wedding!

R: That's funny, I've been trying to place who the transvestite in the last scene reminded me of... This scene is where the show finally starts to show its comedy chops to me. Before approaching the girls, Rodney says, 'Let's be ourselves this time. No embarrassing lies, and don't put me down.' Del adds, 'Don't you say I'm thirty-five.' They approach the girls and Del drops Rodney's Jag keys in front of them, followed by,

'We're only using it while they service my Ferrari.' And then 'He's thirty-five!' says Rodney without a beat.

G: Ha ha, brilliant scoring off each other to impress the girls, they just can't help themselves. Can I just ask here, was it an '80s thing to compliment women on the quality of their names? I might be missing a trick here, but I've never used the line 'that's a nice name' as a chat up line. What's the deal with that?

R: No, I don't think it was exclusively a 1980s thing. It's just a way of trying to build a rapport with someone quickly. You probably did use it, but don't remember because the 1980s was the last time you asked a girl out.

G: Funny you should say that, I've always liked your girlfriend's name...

R: Here's a nice little touch; while Del is trying to trick the girls into believing they are rich and famous, 'Do the Hustle' is playing in the background. As Del continues deeper with the lie the music switches to 'Ain't no stopping us now'. Both songs mimicking the conversation taking place.

G: You know, I've never notice that before, great spot, that's really smart.

R: There's a great exchange here:

Del: 'We're just getting 'Hot Rod' fitted for his new bat.'

Girl: 'It's a racquet.'

Del: 'It is. The bloody prices they charge, darling.'

G: This scene has the best dialogue of the episode and the most laughs. I love it when Rodney zones out and one of the ladies asks him if he prefers to play tennis on grass or Astroturf and he replies: 'I don't know. I've never smoked Astroturf.' Brilliant.

*The Trotters drive the Jag home, celebrating their success with the girls. Rodney throws the cigar box with the girl's numbers written down out the window. Del slams on the breaks only to get rear ended by the car he sold earlier...*

G: A clever ending which ties the episode together well and another ending that proves Rodney was right; Del shouldn't have sold the car in that condition just like in episode one where he said he shouldn't have anything to do with the briefcases.

## *Cash and Curry*

*Del and Rodney become involved in a dispute between two parties acting as intermediaries as of course, there is money to be made. But are they being played for fools and could they end up out of pocket because of it...*

*Rodney has been summoned by Del to collect him from a dinner/dance event...*

G: The opening music here is a bit different, it's like it's been lifted from a cop show!

R: It reminds me of the type of music that would be played during a safe cracking scene.

G: You're right, it's to add some mystic, some suspense I guess but I'm not sure why. There's a nice continuity touch here in that they have the Vauxhall Velox still from the last episode 'Go West Young Man'. Presumably Del offered a refund after smashing into the back of it.

R: Definitely. This is the first instance of the show having an ongoing narrative. The actions in one episode are not just forgotten about by the next.

G: I love 'drunk Del' here, his mispronunciation of 'Velox' to 'Vellocks' is very amusing. Though you've got to feel for Rodney. There is nothing more annoying than a drunk when you are stone cold sober. That's why I never learnt to drive, that's using me loaf, eh?

R: Yeah, the fact you failed your test seven times in a row had nothing to do with it. You're right though. Jason's acting here is quite subtle, he's not completely smashed, just a bit tiddlyboo as your aunt would say.

*In the car park Del's new business contact Vimmel is confronted angrily by Mr Ram and his sizable friend...*

G: Del really show's his front here. He acts so calm in the face of a scrap.

R: Del Boy is truly fearless. You can tell this isn't the first time he's been put in a position like this.

G: David Jason's delivery on the line 'And I'm a black belt in

origami, now get out of the way!' is brilliant, the little flick of his eye as he says it, excellent.

R: It really is. He still has a slight drunken slur to the delivery, but then as 'odd-job' approaches him, you can see Jason's acting subtlety shift as he sobers up in the face of danger.

*Having been abandoned by Rodney, Del accepts a lift with Mr Ram to talk over his dispute with Vimmel, all over a curry...*

G: Del doesn't miss the chance to fill his face here, ordering everything going, while Mr Ram explains the dispute and the reasons why he cannot speak with Vimmel and obtain his statue back.

*Rodney enters having been in every curry house throughout London to find Del...*

R: Mr Ram tells Del he owns eighteen restaurants and a huge amount of land. In reference to the kick in the balls he gave him earlier Del says, 'Yeah Odd-Job's got a couple of acres an' all.' It's refreshing to see both Del and Rodney laugh at this joke. One of the things that separates OFAH to other sitcoms is that they acknowledge and respond when something funny has been said. The joke isn't just for the audience it's for the characters as well.

G: There's a great little moment here where Rodney tries to help himself to some of Del's food only for Del to whack his hand with a spoon, watch as Rodney licks the back of his hand where the spoon has been, great touch.

R: I have to be honest, the episode so far hasn't done much for me. There's a lot of plot exposition but none of it is that exciting.

G: There is a lot of set-up until to this point, although there's a funny visual gag here though, as Del crushes the poppadum in shock when told Mr Ram is willing to pay £1,000 for the statue.

R: Sorry this joke doesn't really work for me, you can see Del holding the poppadum for about ten seconds in anticipation of the set-up line. You can tell what's going to happen from a mile away.

*Del and Rodney visit Vimmel to attempt to persuade him to part with*

*the statue...*

G: So, Del sees the chance to get in on the money as the two parties can't speak by saying Mr Ram is willing to pay £2,000 giving him a cool £1000 profit. He really kicks it up a notch in trying to get Vimmal to part with the statue saying he thinks it is cursed.

R: Echoing the events of the first episode, Rodney tries to tell Vimmal how much Mr Ram actually offered. He confronts Del with, 'It's immoral, it's illegal, it's fraud.' Del asks, 'Are you in?' 'Yeah, alright' says Rodney without a beat. We've touched on this before, but does Rodney break so easily because he needs the money or is it more that his convictions aren't as strong as he makes out? Sometimes it seems like he takes the opposite opinion to Del just as a way of rebelling.

G: This episode for me really cements Del's lack of knowledge and refinement, in this scene alone he wrongly refers to Ming, and calls it 'the bacon and the egg' situation. He always says things with such assurance though.

R: Absolutely right. In the restaurant scene, earlier when he identifies Kuvera as an Indian wicket-keeper and is corrected about him being the God of wealth, he says, 'Oh yeah, there were two of them.' He would never admit that he was in the wrong.

*Vimmal will not part with the statue without the money and Mr Ram will not part with the cash without the statue, with the deal going nowhere Del hits upon the idea of raising the money himself and sealing the deal...*

G: Another montage scene which is becoming a bit of a regular feature in the early episodes, on original broadcast 'Money' by Pink Floyd was used here but due to copyright the home releases have some jazzy music instead. Can't help but feel it's a bit like swapping a BMW for a Skoda, a very rough deal.

R: The music is awful! It's worse than hearing you play the guitar. I notice that the montage is done in a stop motion style similar to the 'label peel' in the intro.

G: While on the subject of the opening credits, I just want to give a shout-out to graphic designer Peter Clayton who came up with these, not only is it memorable it also has a meaning;

the idea was that the labels peeling away act as a metaphor for the vagaries of the Trotters lifestyle, reflecting the coming and going of money. Very clever.

*Having raised the cash by selling most of their possessions, it's back to Vimmals, to hand over the money and collect the statue...*

G: Just for a minute as Del drops the statue, you think this is where the deal is going to go wrong. In that moment, I can see the statue smashing and Del and Rodney having to either fix it or produce an alternative to convince Mr Ram. Instead though we see Del somersault down the steps and catch the statue, bloody impressive manoeuvre too.

R: This is actually my favourite part of the episode. The last episode saw the Trotter's come out on the bottom because of stupidity on their own part and it looks like this will be the generic plot for the series. They have a scam, it looks like it's going well, they mess up and end up with nothing. The fact that Del catches the statue breaks this convention and adds a false finish to the episode. The twist for them losing this time will be far more interesting.

*With the statue, intact it's back to Mr Ram's curry house to collect the money, but it's revealed Mr Ram isn't the owner and is nowhere to be seen...*

G: Rodney's face, when he realises they have been done out of the money, is a picture. It's wonderful reaction acting from Lyndhurst again, he really nails that sickened look. There's a really funny line here where the restaurant owner states, 'I am sorry, you all look alike to me', flipping the stereotypical view on its head, very smart.

R: Especially for the early 1980s. Now there is some discussion to be had about the casual racism in the earlier episodes, but that's for another time.

*Cut to Mr Ram and Vimmel in the back of a car heading north, where the details of their scam are revealed...*

G: There will be another couple of examples of Del being suckered into a scam but in those he comes out on top, yet in

this episode he is completely fooled and is left £1,000 out of pocket.

R: Not just out of pocket, all their belongings have gone as well.

G: It's a clever concept for a scam and I like the emphasis being on the ignorance of other people's cultures and beliefs. Del, like the other victims, sees his chance to make a markup on someone else's troubles and pounces.

R: It subverts the expectations set up earlier in the episode. Del thinks that he's got the perfect scam because the nature of their culture wouldn't allow them to speak.

G: It doesn't make the con OK, of course, but it's a clever concept and justification.

R: Yes, very clever, although I have to say on the whole a bit of a dull episode.

G: I tell you what, I could really go for a curry now, you up for it?

R: Yeah go on then. But hands off my poppadums.

## *The Second Time Around*

*Del's old flame, Pauline Harris, is back in town and asking after him. After a messy break-up before, surely, he won't be stupid enough to get involved again. He won't if Rodney, Trigger and Grandad have got anything to do with it...*

*Del and Rodders are selling their wares down the market...*

G: The opening really reflects real life here. Kids of today won't understand this with their eBays and Amazons online, but in the 80s if you wanted a bargain you went down the market. If you wanted to get something even cheaper you looked for the guy with the suitcase.

R: Bloody hell, now who's the grandad?

*Thirsty from his hard work Del heads to the Nag's Head for some refreshments...*

G: It's a blackcurrant and Pernod for Del this time, we are getting more exotic with the combinations.



R: This also marks the last appearance of Joyce the barmaid. I get the impression she was supposed to be a regular character, almost filling the role that Mike would take later on in the series, but it wasn't meant to be.

*Joycie and Trigger warn Del that Pauline Harris is back in town and asking after Del. Despite his friends concerns he's chats her up...*

G: Another appearance of Trigger and already he is dimmer than the first episode, the con-man front has been dropped or lessened.

R: It has for now, although we build on Triggers and Del's relationship here. Trigger says he remembers what happened last time Pauline and Del dated. When Pauline and Del meet in a few minutes she says she hasn't seen him in twelve years. We know from episode two that Del is thirty-five, so he and Trigger have been friends at least since their early twenties, if not earlier. This makes Rodney's reaction to being called Dave in 'Big Brother' even more perplexing.

G: And now we meet the first of Del's ex-fiancés, Pauline. The instant change of Del's persona from 'geezer' to sappy school boy in love is hilarious.

R: I don't know if this was a coincidence or a bit of subtle acting by David Jason, but when Pauline kisses him hello, he adjusts the crotch on his jeans before he sits down. A nice little touch, literally.

G: I love the gag here were Pauline says, 'You never married yourself?' And Del responds with 'No, I never fancied myself.' It's one of those crazy in love kind of lines, it shouldn't be as funny as it is, but the characters reactions to it adds to the joke well.

R: David Jason's body language in this scene is excellent as well. When Pauline excuses herself to go to the bathroom he stands as well and nervously plays with a napkin, not knowing what to do with his hands. It's such a shift for the Del Boy character which is usually based entirely on confidence and bravado.

G: There's a mention of Blackshaw Road Cemetery in Tooting here, my dear nan and grandad were cremated there, a little personal connection to the show for me.

*Rodney enters the pub in search of Del and his requested pork scratchings, he isn't pleased to see Pauline back...*

G: Rodney's coldness towards Pauline lets both her and the audience know where he stands with her; he is clearly protecting Del and doesn't want to see him go through what he did before.

R: Both Rodney and Trigger have been extremely protective over Del in this scene. We also get another reference to Del being a Mod. He says Pauline left him because she found a bloke with a faster Vespa.

*Later at the flat, Grandad and Rodney discuss the return of Pauline, enter then a very drunk Del...*

R: Rodney is laying on the couch reading the 'The Lady' magazine, which I understand is Britain's longest running women's magazine. Do you think he bought this thinking it was another type of lady's magazine...?

G: If he did he will be gutted when he sees the centrefold is an old English mansion! There is some nice writing here, which allows the viewer to be brought up to speed on Pauline and Del's past through Rodney and Grandad's chat.

R: He insinuates that Pauline was the first girl Del met since his mother died and his dad left. He goes on to say that before he met Pauline, Del used to be a strong believer in God, but after they broke up he lost faith. I find it hard to believe that his mother dying and his dad abandoning him didn't affect him as much as breaking up with Pauline. Maybe Del was in a bad place at the time and his love for Pauline was exaggerated as a way of filling the gap left by his parents. It would explain why after the initial meeting and engagement announcement he actually doesn't seem to really care for her that much.

G: I love Del's arrival, the fanfare, that's how I announce my return from the pub sometimes, the missus doesn't seem to approve though, one day she will appreciate it...

R: She loves it.

G: So in the space of the afternoon/evening Del has proposed and Pauline and he are to be wed, that's one fast mover!

R: Yep. In the pub scene earlier Trigger mentions that Del's ex-fiancé is here. Del answers with, 'Oh yeah, which one?' It

sounds like a flippant remark at the time, but seeing how fast the man works we'll soon come to realise that he's a serial proposer.

*Pauline has moved into the flat and is making her presence very much felt. She is also moving fast with engagement rings and mentions of life insurance, the black widow looks like she's going to strike again...*

G: The control Pauline has over Del is amazing. He's helpless, he's a completely different person. Everything is 'my love' and 'my petal'. I mean he's not even allowed to drink!

R: Speaking of which, it's your turn to get them in. Grandad tells Del that Pauline has hidden his false teeth. She says that he gets them back at mealtimes. My question is, what then? After mealtimes does she forcibly remove them from his mouth?

G: Well, that's grim. Why can't you just think like a normal human, eh, what is your problem?

R: When Pauline mentions that Grandad may be better off in a home Rodney says with such convictions, 'He's already got a home!' For the Trotters family always comes first.

*Unable to live under the same roof as Pauline, Rodney and Grandad are packed and ready to leave. Before they do, Trigger calls and warns Del that Pauline's ex-husband died of food poisoning...*

G: Here's a nice show of Del not wanting to lose front. He really lays into Trigger telling him to mind his own business but is obviously starting to piece things together about Pauline and her previous husband's deaths.

R: Yeah, he doesn't blink at the chance to leave, which goes back to my point earlier about how much he actually cares for her.

G: You're right; he certainly does change his mind quickly.

*Leaving a note for Pauline in the flat giving her five days to leave, the Trotters head off to Auntie Rose's house to stay...*

G: The reaction from Auntie Rose is great, she obviously isn't sure who they are when they arrive, but she greets them the same and lets them take baths and cooks them dinner before we get the very funny reveal that Auntie Rose has moved and

she isn't related to the family at all!

R: Although Del does bung her a few quid so that she doesn't have to spend her own money. This is an interesting character trait with Del. He's constantly trying to scam money out of anyone and everyone, including his own brother, yet he will always make sure that everyone is taken care of when they need it. It truly is honour amongstst thieves.

G: I love the way Del walks into the living room and tells Grandad to change the TV channel, talk about make yourself at home, I mean if you went anywhere near the remote for my TV I'd have you!

*With the five days up Del and co return to the flat...*

G: Del briefs Rodney and Grandad in the hallway, warning them to be alert and look out for anything, then as he opens the door he shoves them both in with a shout of 'Go on, my son' and shuts the door again to protect himself. Brilliant.

R: That's how I psych you up when you go home drunk. One day she will appreciate it...

G: She loves it.

*Pauline has left and has left a note for Del, which isn't exactly a love letter...*

G: There is a great piece of comedy here, a fill-in-the-gap style of joke as Rodney reads the letter over Del's shoulder and points out a line, remarking 'Is that true?' As the audience, we can only guess the disparaging remark, which is a fun game in itself.

*Rodney and Grandad reveal that they put Trigger up to the phone call, to save Del from Pauline...*

G: Rodney's conscience gets the better of him again; he can't help but tell Del the truth. Del's reaction is lovely; family at the end of the day is his life, even over love.

R: Grandad says, 'We don't need no girls,' and Del's response of 'if you say so, Grandad,' is so genuine. This is family that has survived loss, desertion and poverty, but they've done it

all together.

*Pauline hasn't let Del off though, she has kindly phoned the 'talking clock' in America and left the phone call connected...*

R: A bit of unrelated pub trivia. When the talking clock was introduced you had to dial 846, which correspond to the letters TIM, hence the name.

G: Does Tim still exist anymore? Again, that must be strange for kids of today to think you can or could phone a digital voice to tell you the time. They would just Google it I guess.

R: If they had access to a computer or smartphone they wouldn't need to Google the time. You know what, let's have another drink and I'll explain how all this works before the next episode. We may even get you on some 'eBay's and Amazons online' while we're at it.

## *A Slow Bus to Chingford*

*Del Boy has a dream. And the first step of that dream is to make his money by getting involved in Britain's burgeoning tourist trade. All he needs is an open-top-bus and the ability to bluff the punters...*

*Rodney is trying his luck on with a girl in the flat...*

G: First off, a little trivia, the name of this episode is a play on the song title '(I'd Like to Get You on a) Slow Boat to China'. Sorry, carry on...

R: We've seen Rodney's lack of prowess with chatting up girls before, but this time it's different. Without Del around Rodney comes across as confident. Talking on the subject of art, for which we know he has a GCE, Rodney actually comes across as quite knowledgeable. Too bad his date, Janice, doesn't seem to know what he's talking about.

G: Yes, Rodney does come across knowledgeable and is very confident; some of this might have something to do with the fact that the actress playing Janice was Nicholas Lyndhurst's girlfriend at the time.

R: Rodney talking about how they are kindred spirits in a broken world as the set up to asking Janice to take her bra off

is classic comedy writing. The set up makes Rodney sound profound and sophisticated, only for the reveal that he just wants to get his end away.

*Del enters like a bull in a china shop, ruining Rodney's night...*

G: Del's entrance is brilliant, the lights go on, the candle goes out, he helps himself to a drink and the music goes off. Date over.

R: Del's comment, to be careful of Rodney's bruises from where the girls keep pushing him away with ten foot barge poles, is a typical big brother put down. There's no need to embarrass Rodney like that, but Del loves it. Rodney seems genuinely disgusted with Del's lack of appreciation for art and culture. It's awful having to dumb yourself down so that someone else can understand you. Isn't that right, Grant?

G: I will have you know that I, like Rodney, also have a GCE/GCSE in art... but I failed maths.

R: We get a piece of dialogue reflecting the state of Britain at the time. Rodney and Janice bemoan the fact that there are three million unemployed in the country. So, what chance does Rodney have? The first series of OFAH has more of a political slant to the writing than it would in later years. Similar to his previous series *Citizen Smith*, John Sullivan used this show as a social commentary of contemporary Britain.

G: This is a very neat piece of writing here, not only is John Sullivan offering the viewer a commentary on the state of the country at the time, he is doing so, so that Del can present Rodney with the news of his new employment under such unlikelihood.

*Del tells Rodney he's got him a job as a nocturnal security officer for a new security company called 'Trotterwatch'...*

R: Tricking Rodney into accepting the job by questioning his masculinity in front of Janice, shows how easily he knows how to manipulate Rodders. He knows just what buttons to push.

G: It works with you too though, I mean you're too chicken to go and get the shots in aren't you...?

R: Challenge accepted! I'll be back in a minute.

G: It wasn't enough Del putting Rodney down earlier, he goes

one further with the suggestion of him being into bondage that prompts Janice to make a swift exit. You can't help but feel for Rodney here. How can he hope to keep a girlfriend with Del about?

*Later that night, Del takes Rodney to the bus garage where he'll be working...*

G: I like the way Del manages to convince Rodney that taking Janice out while Rodney does the night work is in his best interest. Talk about the master of manipulation.

R: There are two really nice camera shots in this scene. The first is an overhead crane shot which frames Rodney in the bottom right of the screen, surrounded by buses and darkness. It serves to subliminally convey to the viewer that Rodney is all alone. The second is a brief shot from Rodney's point of view. The camera scans left to right looking at the buses, just waiting for something to jump out. We get an intimate sense of Rodney's fear and isolation in these two shots. This is confirmed when he takes off running when Del, off camera, finishes the tune Rodney was whistling.

G: These are nice shots with effective uses of angles. It's the first time we have commented on the direction so far too. I love the way Del has waited for his chance to spook Rodney and he gets his reward with the whistling.

*Back at the flat, Del is telling Grandad and Rodney about his latest plan to take tourists on a tour of ethnic London...*

G: Apparently John Sullivan got the idea for this episode from his father's favourite pub the 'Duke of Devonshire'. It wasn't a successful pub in terms of business, but the guy who ran it billed it as 'ethnic English' and the owner's name, Boycie!

R: Peckham was, and still is, one of the most culturally diverse areas in Britain, especially after the high-rise tower blocks were built in the early 1970s. However, the show portrays the locals as being predominantly white. Apart from the Indian gentlemen in episode two, who were not locals, we haven't had any sight of 'ethnic London.'

G: That is a very good point. In the early episodes we haven't been shown '80s multi-cultural London. Things will improve,

but it has been a bit of a missed opportunity so far.

R: Del says the new company will be called ‘Trotter’s Ethnic Tours.’ Add this to ‘Trotter’s Independent Traders’ and ‘Trotterwatch’ as company names. For someone who doesn’t want the government to know about his business, Del isn’t shy about plastering his name everywhere.

G: He sure isn’t and there will be more of them to come too.

*Rodney’s night watchman job has secured Del an open-top bus for the tour, but at 11:30am no one has turned up yet...*

G: This episode really highlights how Del uses people. He’s got Rodney working nights in a job he didn’t even want, so that he can use the bus during the day, Grandad has delivered the leaflets, and all the while Del has been taking Janice out!

R: Del is charging the punters £17.00 each. Rodney and Grandad looked shocked, which they should, that’s the equivalent of £58.19 in today’s money.

G: You say that though, the price of the buses in London nowadays. That would be a cheap little trip!

R: I have to be honest, Grant, while the jokes in this scene are funny they do get somewhat repetitive. It’s essentially ten minutes of Del explaining how he will bluff the punters, should they ever turn up.

G: No, you’re right. There are some funny lines but this episode is very thin.

R: The only part of real interest is when Del tells Grandad ‘This time next year we’ll be millionaires,’ giving birth to one of the most celebrated catchphrases in British TV history.

G: It’s funny to think that those famous words were spoken in a throwaway moment and in such an unflattering episode.

R: Del mentions that if this is a success, it’s always been his dream to register Trotter’s Independent Traders as a legit company. This would seem contradictory to what we know about Del, but maybe that has been his dream all along? Maybe the state of the economy at the time really was to blame.

G: Would he, or wouldn’t he? It’s an interesting one to ponder.

*Del decides to give up on the business after no one turns up...*

R: Del imparts some wisdom from his mum onto Rodney, ‘It’s



better to have known you've lost, than not to know you've won.' He follows this with, 'dear old Mum. She used to say some bloody stupid things.' This may be the only occasion of the whole show when Del disagrees with something his mum has told him. He usually has an almost zealot's opinion of her. G: Yes, considering the high pedestal Del put his mum on, this remark comes as a bit of a surprise. It is a bloody stupid thing to say though!

*Going to the communal bins Del finds the 'Trotters Ethnic Tours' leaflets Grandad was supposed to deliver and the bet Grandad made earlier suddenly makes sense...*

R: The ending is a nice payoff to the episode, but it suffers from the scam of the week-type mentality seen in the earlier series. Now that Del has found the binned leaflets, couldn't he just re-distribute them and try again?

G: Well... we *could* think like that or we could not want to ruin the show for ourselves or others. Maybe Del couldn't do that as the night watchman's job was just a one off for the loan of the bus and the leaflets were printed with that date alone. Phew, you nearly messed everything up there, you plonker!

## *The Russians are Coming*

*Del's latest purchase appears to be a pile of bricks but he has been more clever than it seems. Under those bricks are lead, more to the point they are lead fallout shelters...*

*Del and Rodney arrive to collect the goods...*

G: Let's have a chat about that three-wheeled van. We haven't spoken about it yet. The idea behind the van was to bring Del back down to earth, for all the front he has, the clothes, the lingo, etc, he still drives around in a clapped-out van. Sure, he would like it to be a Roller but the reality is he isn't successful enough. I love the print under the logo 'Paris, New York, Peckham', again it brings it back to reality.

*Back at the flat Rodney makes the discovery that what they have in*

*fact is a nuclear fallout shelter...*

G: This episode is a true reflection of life at the time, the relationship between the US and Russia was at an all-time low and the possibility of a nuclear war was at the forefront of everyone's mind. Pretty damn scary really!

R: Definitely. The early episodes of series one has focused on family problems, the economic depression in Britain and now on the global threat of nuclear war.

G: It won't be the last time that we see a staunch defence of Britain from Del, as much as he disagrees with the country's laws he is still a proud man.

R: He won't pay his income tax to support the country, yet he staunchly defends it if someone else bad mouths it. It's another layer to Del's character. He's full of contradictions.

*Del sees profit and wants to sell the shelter as scrap lead. Rodney convinces him that they have something more valuable on their hands and that they should build the shelter on their allotment plot, but first they must make sure they can make it there in four minutes...*

G: We have a first mention of the allotment plot that the Trotters have which will feature heavily in the later episode 'Mother Nature's Son', though we do not go as far as seeing it this time. I have to say, Rodney is really dressed for the occasion in this episode, with his army surplus gear on complete with kaftan. If he had an AK-47 he would be away.

R: It must have been a conscious decision to subtly reflect the theme of the episode, although he wouldn't be out of place with the hipsters of Peckham in 2016.

G: Is that why you're wearing that sappy thing around your neck?!

R: It's a little thing called style, you should try it sometime.

G: All of a sudden, Del's really thrown himself into this. He's gone from wanting to sell the lead for profit to racing around in the van trying to beat the four-minute warning in a dummy run, from a business perspective that's a lot of lost time!

R: I was thinking this. It's during the day which would be peak trading hours, why is Del mucking around with this? I assume it's just to placate Rodney a bit. Maybe finally take an interest in something he's enthusiastic about? Although more likely it's

something he can remind him about when he wants something back later.

*While attempting to reach the allotment within the time limit Del is pulled over by the police...*

G: So far, Del has portrayed the police as the mortal enemy, but here we meet Eric who is an officer that Del is friendly with. I suppose it doesn't hurt to have some friends on the inside.

R: The fact the policeman says, 'Hello' to Grandad who replies with, 'All right, Eric boy' makes me think that he's a long-time friend of the family. Either that or it's just the fact that everyone in Peckham knows the Trotters.

G: I love the moment where Eric mentions that he is on the lookout for some summer clothes. Del assumes he means the police are on the case of some stolen ones, but in fact he means to buy, as he and his wife are heading off on holiday to Corfu. This is another good example of the times, even the police officer is looking to buy some cheap clothes, rather than pay the inflated shop prices. Never once does it cross my mind that Eric is a corrupt copper, he is merely just someone who is trying to make an honest living and still does not have the money to live.

R: Don't worry, we'll be seeing actual corrupt coppers soon enough.

*Having failed in their attempt to reach the allotment, Grandad comes up with a new location to house the shelter. We return to it built and the Trotters inside having a practice run at living inside for the weekend...*

G: Look, I really don't want to nit-pick but Grandad has brought the telly along and has it on. Surely they don't have electricity in the shelter, right?

R: Good spot. I guess Grandad's telly is not the only thing that's switched on.

G: Del's theory on the frustrations behind the Brixton riots are that the young people have not been allowed their birth right of a war. This is quite a shocking way of thinking. I think I will just keep my frustrations pent up for now, thanks!

R: Again, there's a wonderful contradiction in Del's character here. He says that he's the one who goes around the estate every Christmas making sure the old people have enough to eat and drink, but then admits that he sold paving stones to the rioters. He's both caring and ruthless in the same breath.

G: Lennard Pearce's face while Del delivers this bombshell is wonderful in a shocking/disgusted way. His dialogue about the war is incredibly well acted. The line, 'They promised us homes fit for heroes, they give us heroes fit for homes!' is genius.

R: It's an incredibly powerful line and easily Pearce's best performance of the show.

G: The direction aids the drama by slowing and moving behind Del's shoulder into a close-up of Grandad as he portrays all that passion; that sadness is brilliant. It's great that the series can slip from comedy to hard hitting drama, then back to comedy as Grandad ends on a joke that is equally clever.

R: In my opinion it's the best thing I've seen on the show since we started this. Del's line, 'Mine is not to reason why, mine is but to sell and buy' is just as clever. It paraphrases the line 'theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die' from the Lord Tennyson poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. The line refers to the six-hundred soldiers who rode to their death at the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War. Del's line reflects his view on life and keeps in line with the war motif being discussed.

*Later, Del is changing into his pyjamas as the family prepare for the night ahead...*

R: I've never seen the point of pyjamas. Why do you need a chest pocket? If you were to put a pen in that pocket at night you'd likely roll over and stab yourself in the heart. The mise-en-scène on the scene is very interesting though and it encapsulates Del and Rodney's personalities at a glance. Del's wearing monogrammed pyjamas and has three pillows with a quilted duvet, while Rodney is content with a single pillow and a t-shirt. In another nice touch, Rodney is wearing the t-shirt of punk band 'UK Decay'. The name being another subtle reference to the potential nuclear fallout.

G: Rodney is certainly well-educated in the dangers of radiation and he clearly knows his stuff. What with this and

an insight into his understandings of art in the last episode, we are starting to see the levels of intelligence between the brothers. R: Del is infinitely more street-smart, while Rodney is book smart.

*As the Trotters settle down for the night, the camera shows the outside of the shelter and its location – suggested by Grandad – on the top of Nelson Mandela House...*

G: This episode empathises the power of John Sullivan's writing for me in every turn. After all, Del, Rodney and Grandad are normal people trying to survive in life, while the threat of something completely out of their hands, like a war, could change their lives forever. The message is strong, at times it is in your face, but playing for laughs makes it feel safer, unrealistic but really, it's not, and each character has their moment in this episode when they know it isn't. Extremely clever writing.

R: Well said. Easily my favourite episode of series one.

G: Blimey, let's get some drinks in...

R: OK, but can we move to the garden? I've got the urge to get some fresh air.

## *Christmas Crackers*

*It's Christmas Day in the Trotter household and the spirit of the season is in full swing...*

G: So, the show's first Christmas special and to mark the occasion this episode is five minutes longer.

R: I have to be honest with you, Grant, I haven't been looking forward to this one. This is not one of the good ones.

*While Grandad prepares the dinner Del and Rodney relax in front of the TVs...*

G: Rodney just mentioned Mickey Pearce again, he's been name checked so many times, but we will not meet him this season. It seems strange to think that.

R: Good point. In fact, the cast for the whole first series seems

very small. We haven't seen the main three characters interact with anyone apart from themselves for the past two episodes, and before then appearances from other, soon to be regular cast members such as Boyce and Trigger, have been minimal. G: Grandad's cooking takes some hammering here. It's been mentioned before that he's not very competent in the kitchen, but we get the full effect. I really can sympathise with Del and Rodney though. My mother-in-law must have gone to the same catering school at Grandad.

R: Rodney says he may pretend he's on hunger strike to avoid eating it. Del says the last time Rodney went on hunger strike was to protest the American cruise missiles being stored in the UK, but he ordered a curry after a day and half. This is another addition to Rodney's established character trait. He will stand up for something he feels is morally wrong, but only until it gets a bit difficult.

G: I like Del trying to act refined here, testing the wine, and the way Grandad waits for his opinion as if Del is educated in such ways.

R: Del is definitely the patriarch of the family. It's almost like dinner can't begin until he's given his blessing.

*Grandad mentions they have received a card from Brenda and Terry, yet no one can recall who they are...*

G: OK, I'm going to say it now, this isn't a good episode. It's very light, not too many scene changes and not that many solid gags, but here is what it does best for me, it reflects real life in terms of Christmas. We all get cards from people we don't remember, the TV broadcasts the same shows every year, and people tend to get bored and fall asleep in their chairs.

R: Yeah you could look at this episode as being a template for shows such as *The Royle Family*, who would also explore the idea of family mundanity. The problem is, it's just not very exciting to watch. Rodney makes a comment on how boring things are, repeating it over again, before shouting out the window in frustration. If the main characters in a show are bored, imagine how that translates to the viewer.

*Rodney is bored and wanting to go out but Del won't leave Grandad alone at Christmas. Then Grandad appears and says he is going out...*

G: There is a nice build to this punchline, Rodney annoying Del with his boredom and his dislike of the circus on TV but Del does not waiver. He is in 'family' mode and will not go out and leave Grandad alone. Then we get that punchline of Grandad not wanting to stay in all night with them and going out.

R: My turn to nit-pick now. While the punchline is good, I always find the reveal strange. Grandad bursts out from the hallway and announces that he's off out for the night. The problem is, Del and Rodney have just been talking for the past five to ten minutes. We know the hallway is just a tiny room consisting of a coat rack, so what was Grandad doing in there the whole time?

G: OK, I will give you that one, that's a poor bit of stage direction. He should have appeared from his bedroom and announced he was going out. Well, that's that joke ruined for me!

*Del and Rodney hit the Monte Carlo club for drinks. They bump into Del's mate Earl, whose Dad is in hospital unwell...*

G: Del advises Earl to ask the hospital for antibiotics for his Dad. This shows the person he is; he loves to give hope to people.

R: Del even explains that he's only done it because Earl has been through some rough times and he wants to give him a bit of light at the end of the tunnel. Rodney is convinced it's just Del acting flash, which leads to quite an honest revelation from Del about how he sees his clothes and jewellery as his 'plumage.' He's completely aware of how he looks and acts and it's all for a reason. What's not so clear, though, is how aware he is on the type of ladies he attracts in return. He tells Rodney that he always attracts the air hostesses and part-time models, but we've seen how Del's seduction technique is just to lie to women about how successful he is, so maybe that's also what happened to him? Either that or it's a lie he tells Rodney just to keep up appearances.

*After Earl leaves, Del and Rodney get the drinks in before searching for some ladies and, more importantly, some seats...*

G: Hold on, did I hear that right? That round that Del just got in was 98p?! Go and ask the barmaid what we can get here for 98p...

R: Right, standby.

*Rodney attempts to move in on some woman seated across the dance floor...*

R: OK, I got us a packet of crisps to share, £1, so the 98p didn't even cover it. But check out the flavour, 'cider vinegar and sea-salt'. How poncy is that? Who's ever been offered a crisp and said 'is it cider vinegar? Because that's all I'll eat.' I think we should go somewhere else for series two.

G: 'Cider vinegar' la-di-da, God knows what you'd have got if you had asked for a bag of pork scratchings?!

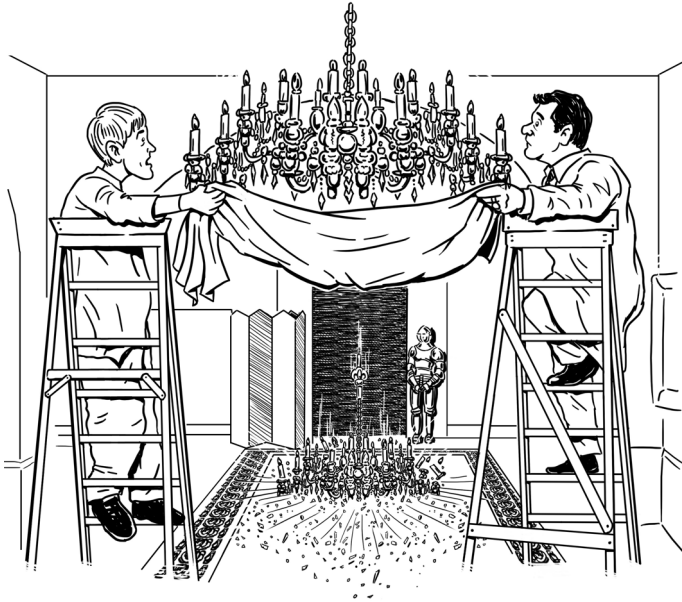
R: Having missed out on the woman Del and Rodney turn their attention to the less attractive ones. Del approaches and asks if they are leaving, the girls, thinking they have pulled, stand and Del delivers the line, 'Oh good, we'll have your chairs then' ...

G: This for me is the best moment of the episode, a great gag. Otherwise this isn't a good episode, though to be fair I'm not sure you will hear that from me again, so one out of a lot isn't bad.

R: Yeah, I agree. This was the only episode that I was worried about, but you're right, there are great things ahead.

G: Overall the episode is a good commentary on a real Christmas, but it just doesn't create the pacing or laughs that the other episodes have. A shame.





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