

**“THE SHED CREW”**  
**STAGE PLAY BY KEVIN FEGAN**

**ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE FROM THE BOOK “URBAN GRIMSHAW AND THE  
SHED CREW” BY BERNARD HARE.**

**A RED LADDER THEATRE PRODUCTION**

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**kevfegan@gmail.com**

**[www.kevinfegan.co.uk](http://www.kevinfegan.co.uk)**

**07904111671**

**“THE SHED CREW” BY KEVIN FEGAN**

**FOR A CAST OF 8 (4m 4f)**

**LIST OF CHARACTERS & SUGGESTED DOUBLING**

**CHOP**

**URBAN**

**SPARKY / FRANK / SHED CREW**

**SKEETER / SAM / SHED CREW**

**THIEVING LITTLE SIMPKINS / PIXIE / TEEZER / SHED CREW**

**PINKY / GRETA / SHED CREW**

**TRUDI / SHED CREW**

**MOLLY / STELLA / KARA / NATASHA / SHED CREW**

**Cast to play other roles:**

**The Doctor, CID 1, CID 2, WPC, Neighbours, Police.**

**The cast (except for Chop and Urban) form the Shed Crew chorus**

**“THE SHED CREW” BY KEVIN FEGAN.**

**PROLOGUE**

2017. A WAREHOUSE IN LEEDS. THE AUDIENCE ARE  
BROUGHT INTO A HOLDING BAY. URBAN IS ON HIGH. CHOP IS  
DOWN BELOW WITH THE AUDIENCE.

URBAN

Hey, Chop, it's great up here -  
come and see the sights.

CHOP

You know I'm feared of heights.  
Who's is this warehouse?

URBAN

Since when did we care?  
We're two infamous outlaws, us.

CHOP

Urban, come down will you, one last time?

URBAN

Why, what did you have in mind?

CHOP

Good place to tell our story?  
I know it's 2017  
and things have changed -

URBAN

Never be the same again.

CHOP

I know what you mean.

URBAN

Who's gunna start, me or you?

CHOP

You kick off, while we wait  
for the rest of the Shed Crew.

URBAN

When we first met Chop, he became  
some kind of fat bastard spirit guide:  
some of us were ten, some of us were fifteen,  
some of us were mental, some of us were mean;  
we were walking on the wild side,  
feral,  
not like mowgli in the jungle  
befriended by kindly animals,  
more like Lord of the Flies,  
abandoned on some desert island  
in the inner city of Leeds.  
We were totally off the lead,  
we took care of our own needs  
and we grew like rampant weeds  
in the financial flower-bed of the North.  
Yes, we were Thatcher's illegitimate bastards  
but we didn't need saving,

we were children of the rave scene  
and we knew how to party  
in the graveyard of Leeds.

CHOP

They're all my family.

URBAN

Yeah, dysfunctional.

CHOP

Especially Urban, who I adopted from day one.

URBAN

Why did you do that, Chop,  
when I've been in and out of prison  
since the day I was born?

CHOP

You've been like a son to me.

URBAN

Shut up, you nonce, you're embarrassing me.

CHOP

Listen to me for once.

There's something about you, Urban,  
I knew it from the start.

URBAN

Told you before, Chop, you're all heart,  
it'll get you nowhere.

## CHOP

You were twelve years old in 1995,

a cheeky little gobshite,

who couldn't read nor write –

THE SHUTTERS OPEN TO THE WAREHOUSE AND CHOP  
LEADS THE AUDIENCE INTO THE MAIN SPACE.

One thing you should know

about the downtrodden and the poor:

in every slum, there's a natural

conspiracy against law and order.

There's give for those who can give

and there's take for those who take.

You see, when the stakes are high

some people would rather turn to crime

than live with the leftovers of life.

As for me, I see every little crime as a dead rat

in the Tories' water tank;

some of us are just waiting for a chance

to smash and grab, pillage and burn,

turn society upside down

and shake the coins from its pockets,

put a rocket under its arse

and shoot it to the moon

to the thumping beat of an old-school choon.

DANCE MUSIC.

**SCENE 1**

1995. EAST END PARK ESTATE, LEEDS.

URBAN, AGE 12, IS ASKING CHOP TO READ THE  
FLY-POSTERS.

URBAN

What's that say there, Chop?

CHOP

"Uplifting, funky house, every Friday".

URBAN

Wicked. Whereabouts?

CHOP

The Majestyk.

URBAN

What about this one?

CHOP

"Future Wormhole at The Fruit Bowl".

URBAN

What's that mean?

CHOP

Fuck knows, sounds obscene.

URBAN

Make it up.

CHOP

It means: "When you disappear  
up your own arsehole,

the future's pear-shaped."

How's that grab you, mucker?

URBAN

By the bollocks, by the fucking bollocks.

CHOP

Shame you're too young to get into nightclubs.

URBAN

This might come as a shock to you, but –

CHOP

Here, this one's for you:

"Nappy Night at Vibalite".

URBAN

Yes! Fucking choon!

URBAN

Big shout going out to the Eastie boys –

and Eastie girls;

let's hear it for the Shed Crew,

make some noise.

CHOP POINTS TO ANOTHER ADVERT WITH A MAP OF THE  
U.K.

CHOP

You know what that is, don't you?

URBAN

It's a map – you think I'm thick?

CHOP

I'm not taking the mick – a map of what, you div?

URBAN

Don't know.

CHOP

Yes, you do, you know where we live?

URBAN

Eastie.

CHOP

Yeah, but –

URBAN

Leeds, we live in Leeds.

CHOP

What's the name of our country?

URBAN

Ashtrayland.

SHED CREW

Ashtrayland,

home of the damned,

where scuffers and social workers are banned;

where your cash is my command

for drink and drugs, sex and stolen goods,

it's supply and demand in Ashtrayland;

cash-in-hand for the white van man,

let's shake hands on it,

living hand-to-mouth in Ashtrayland;  
hand-me-downs and hand-outs,  
the man from Cairo calls once a week,  
there's nothing grand in Ashtrayland;  
the boys are randy, the girls are manned-up  
or the babies are planned  
for that single-parent flat in Ashtrayland;  
it's out-of-hand,  
everything's either in custody  
or on remand in Ashtrayland;  
the past is a foreign land, the future is town-planned  
and there's no time like the present  
to take a stand in Ashtrayland.

URBAN

Was you brought up 'round here, Chop?

CHOP

Oh aye, that was Mr. Walker's shop –  
all boarded up now with "Eastie curtains"  
and covered in graffiti;  
I can't believe it's closed down.

URBAN

Why, where have you been?

CHOP

London – it's a long story.

URBAN

What did you come back for, you loser?

CHOP

My old man still lives 'round here.

I'm in a tower block up near the cemetery.

Survived the blitz: Mr Walker's and this part of town;

but couldn't survive Thatcher.

URBAN

No, no, she didn't do it,

I burned the fucker down –

petrol bomb through the window.

CHOP

It's your territory now, I suppose.

DANCE MUSIC.

SPARKY ARRIVES IN A TWOCKED CAR AND PULLS A

HANDBRAKE TURN.

URBAN

Wicked, Sparky, man,

excellent 180 degree turn.

SPARKY

Easy now, little bro'.

CHOP

(TO URBAN)

Bit of a showman, your mate.

SPARKY

(TO URBAN)

Get in then, you nobhead,  
I haven't got all day;  
just gunner park the car, then off to the Shed.

URBAN

(TO CHOP)

If you really want to meet the Shed Crew,  
this is your big chance.

SPARKY

Who's the nonce?

URBAN

This is Chop, can he come too?

CHOP

(TO SPARKY)

Don't start on me with that paedo nonsense.

SPARKY

You'd better not be, cos Urban's one of us.

URBAN

We can trust him, he's with my mum.

SPARKY

Like that's supposed to be a reference, you wuss?

CHOP

Bet you wouldn't say that to her face?

SPARKY

Haven't I seen you fencing stolen goods?

CHOP

Who the fuck are you, a Judge?

SPARKY

I've got you sussed.

URBAN AND CHOP GET INTO THE CAR WITH SPARKY.

SHED CREW

There's a cloud of smoke when the back wheels spin,

Smell of burnin' rubber as Urban and Chop jump in.

CHOP'S SEATBELT WON'T FASTEN.

CHOP

Bastard seatbelt won't go in.

SHED CREW

Headin' for the by-pass at 90 m.p.h.

CHOP

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck.

SHED CREW

Bus to the right; to the left a truck

as they fly across the road and power into the park

between the kids' playground and the bowling green,

up the hill, dodgin' the trees,

reach the top and scream to a stop.

CHOP FALLS OUT OF THE CAR AND THROWS UP. SPARKY

AND URBAN GET OUT.

URBAN

Come away from the car, Chop.

CHOP

I'm quite happy here, ta,  
lying in a pool of my own vomit.

URBAN

If you don't want to die, I suggest you leg it.

SPARKY PREPARES TO TORCH THE CAR. CHOP  
SCRAMBLES AWAY.

URBAN

Got to torch the twocks, Chop,  
or the Babylon'll get us.  
SPARKY TORCHES IT.

SPARKY

Did I shit you up, mush?

URBAN

Scuffers are comin'. It's on top, let's nash.  
POLICE SIRENS. SPARKY LEGS IT AND URBAN AND CHOP  
MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE SHED.

SHED CREW

Ashtrayland is on fire –  
let's party to the sound of the sirens.  
If you're a glue-sniffin', joy-ridin',  
illiterate little bastard who has spent  
years runnin' away from kids' homes

and you're still only twelve years old;  
if your mum's a junkie  
and your dad might as well be dead,  
then the Shed is the refuge for you;  
we're all the family you'll need;  
crash and burn with the Shed Crew –  
Ashtrayland is on fire,  
let's party to the sound of the sirens.

## SCENE 2

MUSIC. THEY ARRIVE AT THE SHED, WHERE THIEVING LITTLE SIMPKINS AND PINKY ARE SAT ON EMPTY BEER CRATES BY THE FIRE. TLS IS TOASTING BREAD ON A STICK AND PINKY IS ENJOYING A BONG MADE FROM A PLASTIC CIDER BOTTLE.

THIEVING LITTLE SIMPKINS

Urban! My little baby!

SHE RUSHES OVER TO HIM AND KISSES HIM LIKE A MOTHER.

URBAN

(TO CHOP)

Like kin to me, she is –

Thieving Little Simpkins;

known her for years in the kids' homes.

TLS

We've got toast and a bong on the go –

which one first?

SHE NOTICES CHOP EYEING HER UP AND DOWN.

Does your mate want a photo?

CHOP

I think your toast's on fire.

TLS DEALS WITH IT.

TLS

We can't have grown-ups in the Crew, Urbie, you know

they're all nonces and grasses and greedy bastards.

URBAN

He's sorted, he's gunner teach me how to read.

PINKY PUTS DOWN THE BONG.

PINKY

He's a mush, else what the fuck's he doin' here?

TLS

Okay, but he has to have the tattoo

and he has to tell us a story.

Pinky, get your tools.

PINKY PREPARES HER TACKLE.

URBAN

Rest of the Crew get glued-up and pissed;

but not Pinky, she's a first-class artiste.

has a smoke and draws them with a flick of the wrist.

PINKY

It's not that smart, it's only drawing.

CHOP

Never apologise for the arts, especially

if you're from the underclasses.

SKEETER ARRIVES WITH TRUDI AND MOLLY, WHO ARE

DRINKING CIDER.

SKEETER

Who's the fat cunt with the glasses?

URBAN

(TO CHOP)

Skeeter – damaged goods, if you ask me;

stab you soon as look at you.

SKEETER SMILES AS IF URBAN HAS GIVEN HIM A  
CHARACTER REFERENCE.

TRUDI

Don't be so uptight, Skeet.

Hi, I'm Trudi.

MOLLY

And I'm Molly.

Say hello to my bottle of "Quite Frightening".

CHOP

Don't mind if I do.

(INTRODUCING HIMSELF) Chop.

HE TAKES A SWIG.

TRUDI

That's a funny name.

CHOP

Don't you have a nickname?

SKEETER

Yeah, slut.

TRUDI

Fuck you, I'm trying to talk to the nice gentleman.

SKEETER

She'll be sucking his cock next.

MOLLY

Well, there's no point sucking yours –  
she'd have to find it first.

SKEETER

Can't think of anything worse.

TRUDI TAKES A TIN OF BUTANE FROM HER BAG AND  
SPRAYS IT DIRECTLY INTO HER MOUTH. CHOP JUMPS UP  
AND TAKES IT OFF HER.

CHOP

You trying to kill yourself –  
that's fucking poison.

TRUDI

Chill out fat-boy.

MOLLY SNATCHES IT BACK AND TAKES A BLAST.

MOLLY

Spongoliferous dandelions.

MOLLY TRIES TO KISS CHOP BUT HE STOPS HER.

URBAN TAKES THE CAN AND HAS A BLAST.

SHED CREW

Speech! Speech! Speech!

URBAN

Assembled infidels of Zombievoodoo-land: know that my gnu is  
as good as your parrot. Never before have doves and

dashshunds hawked at my trumpet. Never again will carpets and Syria combine. I give you my word. The great god Bokono will provide.

HE TAKES A BOW TO THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.

Let the tattooing commence.

PINKY GETS TO WORK ON CHOP. MOLLY LEAVES.

PINKY

Take off one of your socks and shoes.

Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt you.

HE OBLIGES.

CHOP

Don't any of you ever go to school?

PINKY

Don't think Urbie's been since he was seven or eight.

CHOP

So how come he speaks like a little Buddha?

PINKY

My mum's a Buddhist. My real dad's a Rasta.

CHOP

And you, Pinky?

PINKY

Rasta-Buddhist, naturally.

ANOTHER SHED CREW MEMBER, KARA, ARRIVES TO CHECK OUT THE NEWCOMER. SHE IS DRESSED IN SCHOOL UNIFORM.

Look, she goes to school, she's normal.

KARA

Well, I have the uniform.

CHOP

That's cool.

KARA

(INTRODUCING HERSELF)

Kara.

CHOP

Kara.

KARA

Kara MacNamara, don't wear it out, mush.

CHOP

Chop.

KARA

Chop? Do you work in a sweaty sock shop, Chop? Hickory  
dickory dock, Chop, the mouse ran up the clock.

CHOP

Poetry – I like it.

URBAN

Don't mind her, we call her "a stranger to logic".

KARA

Philistines. They don't appreciate my talent.

URBAN

A legend in her own lunchtime.

PINKY

You got any kids?

CHOP

Not of my own.

PINKY

Why not? You're a grown-up.

SHE FINISHES THE TATTOO.

There, it's done:

a shed and a tree in the shade of the sun,  
it's our trademark.

CHOP

Whose shed is this?

PINKY

Burner Brown's – his mum and dad are junkies;  
they live in the house, he lives in the garden.

Burner's our Joey

so he does as he's told

and lets the Crew kip here when they need to.

URBAN

The initiation is not yet complete.

TLS

You have to tell us our bedtime story.

THEY GATHER AROUND THE FIRE.

CHOP

It was the Dark Ages, a time before Britain, and the land was in

chaos. Armed gangs roamed the streets. The gangs were led by barons, who ran protection rackets, taxing the local farmers and tradesmen.

SKEETER

I'd make a good baron.

PINKY

Shut up, you moron.

CHOP

The barons organised great jousting tournaments where they could test their skill and prowess as warriors. The very best warriors wore shining suits of armour and rode the fastest stallions. They called themselves knights.

KARA

That 'ld be Sparky.

SPARKY

Yeah, that's me.

CHOP

The top baron, Uther Pendragon, wanted to forge all the gangs in all the regions into one big united kingdom, under his rule. He asked Merlin to help. Merlin was very old but he was a magician and a bard. He told stories and told fortunes, but he also acted as judge and jury in disputes. He could turn base metals into gold and create mind-altering potions. Some people believed he was a wise man –

URBAN

That's you, Chop, you're Merlin.

CHOP

Others saw him as a con-man and drug-dealer.

TLS

You're not, are you?

PINKY

He could be our leader.

CHOP

Uther battered all the other gangs into submission, except for the Tsar of Yorkshire, Sir Geoffrey, and his Leodites. The Leodites lived here, in Leeds, which is how it got its name. They were thieves and thugs and vagabonds – so, you see, not much has changed in fifteen hundred years. Now Sir Geoffrey's missus, Igraine, was a real Dark Ages cracker.

KARA

That's me! I have migraines.

TRUDI

Shut up, you slaggy bitch.

KARA

That's rich, coming from you.

CHOP

Uther begged Merlin to help him kill Sir Geoffrey so he could get into her knickers. Merlin said he would do it, on condition that any child born of the union between Uther and Igraine, would belong

to him. Uther agreed so Merlin gave him a magical sword, called Excalibur.

CHOP TAKES A MACHETE AND SLAMS IT INTO THE SHED.

Uther killed Sir Geoffrey, seized his castle and took his wife to bed. A child was born to Uther and Igraine and Merlin took him away from the couple, like a self-righteous social worker. Merlin named the boy –

URBAN

Urban!

CHOP

Arthur, actually. Now, when Uther died, there was no heir to the throne and the kingdom descended into chaos again. Merlin returned Excalibur to its sacred stone and said, “Whoever pulls the magic sword, Excalibur, from the stone, shall be the new king of the Britons.” But no one could pull the sword from the stone. That is, until little Arthur Pendragon took hold of the sword and pulled with the strength of ten men and released the sword from its stone.

And that, people, is how Britain got its first true king. Today, we remember Arthur’s kingdom as a golden age, a time when justice ruled and chivalry was all the rage. Legend has it that, one day, when Britain is in its time of direst need, Arthur will come again to rescue us from our trouble and strife...

ALL THE CREW LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND MAKE A MAD DASH FOR THE MACHETE. URBAN REACHES IT FIRST AND

HOLDS IT ALOFT.

CHOP

All hail our glorious leader!

Urban, King of the Shed Crew!

SHED CREW

Screw you!

DANCE MUSIC.

### SCENE 3

URBAN

I was born in jail.

SHED CREW

Happiest time of his life.

URBAN

Bonfire Night, H.M.P.Styal.

SHED CREW

There were fireworks all right.

URBAN

I'm a child of 1984.

SHED CREW

He'd never heard of George Orwell,  
but Big Brother was there in that prison cell.

GRETA

Jail wasn't so bad: free board and lodgings  
and nobody trying to force their cock up me minge –

SHED CREW

She was nineteen years old  
with two kids in the care of the local authority -

GRETA

And no argy-bargy cos women up the duff  
are left alone in prison by all and sundry.

CHOP

The thing about Greta is you couldn't help

but take drugs and drink with her.

All right, when I first met her, I confess

I did have a slight problem meself.

SHED CREW

To his credit, Chop came back to Leeds

when he quit as a Social Worker in London.

CHOP

I started a van hire business.

SHED CREW

Until the VAT man hit him

with a £12k bill.

CHOP

And I lost the will to live.

SHED CREW

He decided to hit the bottle and neck drugs

and not give a flying fuck.

CHOP REMEMBERS MEETING GRETA.

NIGHT-TIME. CHOP AND THE DOCTOR ARE RETURNING

HOME.

SHED CREW

It was a wet and windy midnight:

Chop and his mate, the good Doctor,

half-cut after a good session,

returning home from the Chess Club,

come across a sight for sore eyes:

and she's spoiling for a fight.

GRETA APPROACHES.

GRETA

Oi nonces! Seen my book?

CHOP

What's that you say, love?

GRETA

Fuckwits! A book?

DOCTOR

(TO CHOP)

You comin' or what?

CHOP

No, this looks too good to miss.

What kinda book?

GRETA

Well I'm not traipsin' 'round in the pissin' rain

for "War and Peace", you wankers.

Hello? Am I talking to a plank?

My social security book, durr...

SHED CREW

Greta: oozes raw sexuality,

a little ragged around the edges,

with a borstal spot on her cheek; but Chop

is falling for those sparkling green snake-eyes.

DOCTOR

I'll see you at the club next week.

GRETA

(SHOUTING AT THE UNIVERSE)

I want me book back you bastard spanners!

DOCTOR HOLDS HIS HAND OVER HER MOUTH.

DOCTOR

You wanna wake the whole block,  
you foul-mouthed cock-sucker?

GRETA

(BREAKING FREE)

Rape! Help! Murderers! Call the scuffers!

DOCTOR

Forget it,

“the woman’s a whore and there’s an end on it.”

SHED CREW

He likes to quote Dr. Johnson.

CHOP

“As I know more and more of humankind,  
I expect less and less of them.”

GRETA

What you ogglin’ at, Uncle Fester?

Standing there like some kinda frigid monk.

CHOP

I’ve got a bottle of vodka in the fridge

and a big pot of skunk back at my gaf –  
care to join me for a nightcap?

GRETA

Don't mind if I do;  
but don't think you're noncin' me up.

CHOP

How old are you?

GRETA

Thirty-one.

CHOP

So how the fuck can I nonce you up?  
Come on.

GRETA

Yeah, well, no nonsense.

DOCTOR

(TO CHOP)

Use a condom.

SHED CREW

So Chop took her home...

and nonced her up.

END OF HIS MEMORY.

CHOP

I tried helping Greta but she was nuts.  
She'd shag anyone she took a fancy –  
don't get me wrong, it's her body

and she's free to do as she pleases.

SHED CREW

But it's not what you need from a partner.

CHOP

Exactly.

When I met her, Greta hated

Social Services more than I did.

She had six kids in care –

GRETA

Stolen by Social Worker nonces –

CHOP

According to her.

SHED CREW

Greta and Chop agreed her two middle boys:

Urbie, twelve, and Frank, fourteen,

would be the easiest to reclaim.

URBAN

I met this bloke with eyes, who came with mum;

the worse for wear, the pair of them.

CHOP

I first met Urban under staff supervision.

He was in his jammies all day,

for no good reason.

URBAN

You seem like a good bloke,

so a bit of advice:  
don't trust my mum,  
she'll destroy your life.

CHOP

I let Greta stay at mine  
and arranged home visits for Frank and Urban.

FRANK

(TO URBAN)

You been sniffin' nail varnish again, you little puff?

URBAN

Fuck off.

Where's mum, knobhead?

FRANK

Out. Better get that green shit off your face  
before she gets back or you're dead.

URBAN

Make me, you big puff.

FRANK BATTERS URBAN. CHOP DRAGS HIM OFF.

CHOP

Whoa, Frank lad! That's enough!

SHED CREW

Chop made appointments with the authorities,  
but Greta usually missed them, on the piss  
down the pub or getting smashed in the flat.  
Frank thanked him by robbing his cash.

GRETA

Give it back, you thievin' little twat.

FRANK GIVES HIM BACK THE CASH.

GRETA

Urban, I need a drink.

Frank, go and wash up –

I hope you've not been pissin' in that sink?

Skin up, Chop, Frank's got some dope.

FRANK HANDS IT OVER AND THEY ALL DO AS THEY'RE  
TOLD.

CHOP

I tried to make it work,

but I came back one day

to find her naked with some other guy.

SHED CREW

So Chop found her a house and paid  
the deposit to get rid.

CHOP

I don't want to see you again, Gret,

or the kids.

SHED CREW

Urban went ballistic.

URBAN

I thought you were different,

you're just the same as all the others,

you fucking beer-monster;  
don't worry, you won't ever see me again.

CHOP

No one had ever liked me that much before;  
maybe you saw in me the dad you never had?

URBAN

Maybe you saw in me the lad you never had?

CHOP

Did I ever tell you about my mate Judo?

URBAN

No.

CHOP

A long time ago, I had a best mate -  
mates like you can only have at twelve years old.  
We were the local scruffs at Grammar School  
where we broke all the rules -  
teachers called us "the terrible twins".  
We did everythin' together:  
We took our first birds to the flicks,  
fumbling at sex and having a good time;  
we went on our first camping expeditions,  
drank ourselves sick;  
committed our first crimes;  
stood in the Boys' Pen at Elland Road,  
pretending to be hard men.

Then, one day, Judo didn't turn up for school.

Teacher said, "It's terribly cruel

but, last night, your little friend

was run over and killed."

Nothing could be done:

that was an end to my childhood.

#### SHED CREW

Maybe Urban was a way for Chop to rewrite Judo's story?

#### CHOP

Either way, I decided I was in it with Urban

for the long haul, not for the glory.

## SCENE 4

CHOP'S FLAT.

CHOP

I run a Van 'n' Man removals service:  
cash-in-hand, distance no object,  
insurance no bother –  
I'm always careful not to smash owt.  
I land a job to Aberdeen  
and agree to pay Urban to assist;  
but the night before, the whole team  
decide to pay me a visit.

SHED CREW

Chop has this two-bedroom penthouse suite  
on the top floor, with neat views over the cemetery.

CHOP

The Shed Crew sleep in one room  
while me and Gret have a toot in the other.  
Greta performs like a musician crossed  
with a precision engineer,  
playing the lighter in her right hand,  
the foil in the left and the tooter  
in her mouth, chasing the fumes.  
The operation is too delicate for me  
so Gret does the honours.  
I con myself into thinking

if I can't run it,

I won't become addicted.

As I lay on the couch, I know my world is in ruins,

but just before the inevitable gouch,

I feel overjoyed as I hear my guru,

Lao Tzu, whisper across time and space:

“Much speech leads inevitably to silence;

hold fast to the void.”

THEY ALL SLEEP.

CHOP WAKES UP THE NEXT MORNING.

At the crack of dawn, I feel like death warmed up;

the wise removal man does not toot smack

the night before a long drive.

HE PUTS ON THE KETTLE AND THE FRYING PAN.

I give Urban a shake

and he shoots up straight away

to the smell of bacon.

URBAN

I lost my cherry last night.

CHOP

That's nice. Sandwich?

URBAN

Molly and Trudi – twice.

CHOP

Sauce?

URBAN

Pretty good at twelve years of age?

CHOP

In my day, it was one girl, once,  
at sixteen, if you were lucky.

URBAN

Times change, so does fuckin'.

CHOP

Aberdeen!

I leave Greta the keys to the flat  
and some food for the kids.

(TO URBAN)

Do a good job and you'll earn yourself twenty-quid.  
Shall we take the tent and the air-gun?

URBAN

Yeah, man.

CHOP

The big love of my life is "Elsie" –  
my yellow box van, Sherpa, three and a half tonne;  
done more miles than the Starship Enterprise,  
no tax, no insurance, no MOT.  
It's a dodgy relationship, but needs must;  
a man has to earn a crust.

URBAN

Chop is as crooked as a politician,

but he gets my vote for his “can do” attitude.

CHOP

Urban is a little thief and a sniffer,

but his heart is true.

## SCENE 5

THEY LOAD UP AND SET OFF FOR ABERDEEN

SHED CREW

The mood is singalong, loading the wagon  
with all the worldly belongings  
of a young family, heading  
for a dream life in bonnie Scotland;  
the plan was to meet them in Aberdeen  
the following morning.

URBAN

Can we stop for something to eat?

CHOP

We've not even rolled to the end of the street?  
Aberdeen's half-way up my arsehole,  
they've got oil rigs there, for fuck's sake;  
we have to make it on time.

SHED CREW

They plough on to the Forth Road Bridge

URBAN

Wow!

CHOP

The Humber's best.

URBAN

That night we camp in a "carnivorous" forest.

CHOP

“Coniferous”.

SHED CREW

At the foothills of Mount Blair.

CHOP

Apparently, Labour has a new leader, Tony,  
daring to challenge twelve years of Tory rule.

SHED CREW

Next day the cam starts knocking like hell:

tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-tut...

CHOP

Elsie is not well.

SHED CREW

Chop pulls into a garage at Spittal of Glenshee,  
while Urban checks out the local church scenery.

URBAN RUSHES BACK WITH A BOX.

URBAN

Quick! Let's do one! Get out of this place!

CHOP

He's only gone and robbed the donation box –  
last thing we need on our case is the Jock Babylon.

URBAN

What's all this poxy money?

CHOP

It's foreign currency.

SHED CREW

They quarrel their way up Devil's Elbow,  
in first gear, into the Grampian mountains  
and on to Balmoral.

CHOP

Let's stay here with royalty.

URBAN

At Her Majesty's pleasure.

SHED CREW

They pitch by a river and try, hopelessly,  
to catch fish with homemade harpoons,  
until Urban produces two fresh salmon  
he'd stolen from a supermarket in Braemar  
while Chop was on the toilet.

WHILE CHOP COOKS THE FISH, HE TELLS URBAN A  
STORY.

CHOP

When I was about your age,  
a bit older, in the seventies, a strange  
thing happened to me on a school trip  
to the Lake District, when I slipped  
into a bookshop in Ambleside.  
I spotted these Chinese symbols  
on the cover of a slim volume,  
called "Tao Te Ching" by Lao Tzu.

I tucked the book inside my coat,  
it didn't feel like stealing,  
and followed a waterfall into the hills.  
I still remember the thrill of sitting  
on a dry-stone wall and reading  
the book that changed me forever.  
All this time, the Tao had been staring  
me in the face; barely visible  
in rapacious cities like Leeds,  
now I had a name for it: "ch'i",  
the energy blazing through every living thing.

#### SHED CREW

That night they lie down, looking up  
at the aurora borealis.

#### CHOP

So this is how the other half lives.

#### URBAN

It's like the sky is dancing;  
this makes up for everything.

THE NEXT MORNING THEY ARRIVE IN ABERDEEN.

#### CHOP

We've made it, Urbie, at long last.

#### SHED CREW

They arrive in Aberdeen, two days late.

## CHOP

Well done, Elsie lass.

## URBAN

Watch it!

## SHED CREW

Crash! Urbie's face hits the windscreen,  
Chop's ribs crack against the steering wheel;  
a low bridge rips the box unit clean off its chassis  
and furniture smashes across the tarmac  
like matchstick models attacked by hydraulic hammers.  
Elsie chugs along as if nothing's happened,  
refreshed by a lighter load,  
as Chop and Urban make a u-turn  
and head back home via the coast road.

## SCENE 6

CHOP AND URBAN, LADEN WITH BAGS, CAMPING EQUIPMENT AND AN AIR-RIFLE, ARRIVE BACK AT CHOP'S FLAT, ONLY TO FIND THE FRONT DOOR HAS BEEN BOARDED UP WITH METAL SHEETING.

URBAN

Told you not to give mum the keys.

CHOP

(CALLING)

Anyone home?

Do you think they're all dead?

URBAN

Tracking mum down can take weeks;  
best kip in the shed.

THEY ARRIVE AT THE SHED AND DUMP THEIR BELONGINGS. CHOP TAKES THE BOTTOM BUNK, URBAN THE TOP AND THEY CRASH TO SLEEP.

NEXT MORNING, CHOP WAKES UP TO FIND MOLLY AND TRUDI TOP-AND-TAILING IN HIS BED. HE LEAPS OUT, AS IF ON FIRE.

CHOP

Aaaarrgh!

MOLLY

Morning, fatboy; you got a light?

CHOP

Molly!

TRUDI RISES.

TRUDI

Hey, I hope you wasn't fiddling with us last night?

TRUDI FALLS BACK TO SLEEP.

CHOP

You two climbed in with me, I was fast asleep.

MOLLY

No smoke without fire, fatboy.

CHOP

Molly, don't call me that;

how would you like it if I called you slagheap?

MOLLY

I don't give a shite.

CHOP

You don't have to blow someone else's light out

for yours to shine, you know?

Besides, I drink with your dad in the Slip.

MOLLY

And I know your dad, he's always in the bookies.

CHOP

What'd he say if he knew you kipped here?

MOLLY

What'd yours say if he knew you were a kiddy-fiddler?

CHOP

You take that back, Molly.

MOLLY

I won't grass if you don't.

Anyway, he's not my dad, he's some sad-ass Irish bloke.

CHOP

Let's get some breakfast and smokes.

THEY LEAVE.

SHED CREW

Turns out it wasn't Gret who trashed the flat,

it was the Babylon, looking for Urban.

Before they went to Aberdeen,

there'd been an incident with Burner

and the machete Excalibur;

Urban totally denies trying to murder him.

CHOP

Greta has a new Joey in Chapeltown

and everyone is hiding down there.

I get a new door from the council

and buy a new box for Elsie.

I hide Urbie in my store room

every time the Babylon pays a visit;

a young WPC gets right in my face:

WPC

I hate people like you, sir;

you're a disgrace to humanity.

#### SHED CREW

When Burner's mum pulls the plug on the shed,  
the whole Crew descend on Chop's place  
and we become the "Penthouse Posse".

#### CHOP

Okay, it's a safe house for violent,  
alienated, disturbed, homeless delinquents;  
but we also paint and play chess,  
write poetry and discuss things like happiness.  
Kara is the poet, Pinky the artist,  
Frank the chess champion, Sparky the reader  
and Urbie the World Teacher.  
I suppose my home becomes  
an emergency service;  
but, believe me, if mine is the quiet zone,  
Greta's is the mad house.

## SCENE 7

GRETA'S HOUSE. TRUDI, FRANK AND SKEETER ARE TOOTING HEROIN. GRETA IS SMASHED. URBAN IS WATCHING THEM FROM A DISTANCE. IN ANOTHER ROOM, PINKY AND MOLLY ARE DANCING TO RAVE MUSIC. CHOP IS IN HIS OWN FLAT.

CHOP

At the end of the millennium party,  
you can tell our youth apart  
by the colour of their drugs:  
the Whiteheads are party animals  
who like to talk at 100 m.p.h.  
and dance all night with big-bug eyes;  
the Brownheads are couch potatoes  
who like to sit down and be anaesthetised.  
While the government is busy trying  
to stop the Whiteheads dancing,  
with their Criminal Justice Bill,  
they don't seem to notice the Brownheads  
are filling the void in every  
devastated British community,  
in every town and every city.  
If Whiteheads fan the flame of crime  
and make it grow a little higher,  
Brownheads are exploding like empty

aerosol cans tossed on to the fire.

Pinky is a Whitehead;

Trudi, Frank and Skeeter are turning to brown.

Urban has seen what brown has done to his mum  
and he has his own way of dealing with it.

URBAN

I keep this live cable by my bed:

if I find a smackhead sleeping in it,

I zap him and watch him stagger into the street.

(ON THE PHONE)

Chop, I need to come and stay.

CHOP

No, Urbie, you can't keep running away;

sometimes you have to face your demons.

URBAN

It's Frank, he's with Skeeter and Trudi and –

CHOP

I don't want to know;

they're not doing anything against their will.

URBAN

You don't understand, they're –

CHOP

They're not my responsibility.

URBAN

Fuck you, then; if you won't do anything, I will.

URBAN SETS FIRE TO THE PHONE AND LEAVES.

CHOP ARRIVES AT GRETA'S TO FIND FRANK, SKEETER  
AND TRUDI GOUCHING IN THE BEDROOM.

CHOP

Shite, not all three of yous?

TRUDI

You can't say owt, you do it.

CHOP

I might have a hit the odd evenin',  
but I'm not at it every day.

FRANK

Trudi's right, man, no different  
to how you and mum behave.

CHOP

The only way you can be paying for it  
is by prostitution and thievin'.

SKEETER

So what?

CHOP

It's like that, is it?

Do you not give a shit about yourselves?

FRANK

He's not impressed.

CHOP

Frank, you're a good chess player:

think a few steps ahead.

This can only lead to being locked-up or dead.

GRETA STEAMS IN.

GRETA

I'm gunner kill that little bastard –

fix me a scotch, will you?

CHOP

This is happening on your watch.

GRETA

He torched the fuckin' phone –

it's all your fault for not letting him stay.

CHOP

He's your son, this madhouse is his home.

GRETA

Piss off with your moanin',

he thinks more of you than he does me.

CHOP

I'm a free agent with no responsibilities.

GRETA

Then what the fuck you doin' messing with his head

and hanging 'round the Shed Crew?

TRUDI HANDS HER A DRINK OF CIDER IN AN OLD  
POT-NOODLE CONTAINER.

TRUDI

Here, Gret, get your laughing-gear 'round this.

GRETA

Great – cider in a pot-noodle.

TRUDI

Hey, be grateful, you.

CHOP LEAVES, FOLLOWED BY GRETA. URBAN WATCHES AS THE REST OF THEM LEAVE. HE HAS A PETROL BOMB IN HIS HAND AND CHECKS TO MAKE SURE NO ONE IS WATCHING BEFORE HE APPROACHES THE HOUSE, HE LIGHTS IT.

## SCENE 8

CHOP'S FLAT. PINKY IS SHARING A SPLIFF WITH CHOP.

PINKY

How come you let me stay here?

CHOP

Thought you had a row with your mum?

Long as you don't mind sharing Urbie's room.

PINKY

Am I your favourite?

CHOP

Well, you did give me my first tattoo.

PINKY

Thankyou.

SPARKY ARRIVES WITH NATASHA.

SPARKY

Natasha, Chop; Chop, Natasha;

she's my new bird. You've met the girls.

NATASHA

I've heard a lot about you.

SPARKY

'Tasha's family.

CHOP

Easy now.

NATASHA

Easy.

SPARKY

(TO CHOP)

She's loaded. And very horny.

CHOP

Jammy bastard.

THEY SIT DOWN.

I want a word with you, Sparky:

have you nicked my Shakespeare?

SPARKY

You don't mind, do you?

I'm reading his plays, one at a time.

CHOP

Happy days.

SPARKY

I'm on number ten: "Merchant of Venice".

CHOP

What do you reckon?

SPARKY

Fucking brilliant, man.

(QUOTING)

"If you prick us, do we not bleed?

If you tickle us, do we not laugh?

If you poison us, do we not die?

If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"

SF/X OF CAR BEING BURNT-OUT IN THE STREET BELOW.

SPARKY

That'll be Urbie burning that Cavalier.

NATASHA

Ouch!

CHOP

Have you ever been to the theatre?

SPARKY

What you sayin? I'm not queer.

NATASHA

I can vouch for that.

URBIE ARRIVES WITH SAM AND PIXIE.

SPARKY

Have you been twockin' again?

URBAN

Not me, boys.

CHOP

So what's all that noise, then?

URBAN

Fireworks.

CHOP

That smell like burning tyres?

URBAN

What the hell?

Meet Sam and Pixie,

junior members of the Shed Crew.

PINKY

Urbie, you're thirteen; hardly a senior.

CHOP

How old are you two?

PIXIE

Ten.

SAM

Nearly eleven.

CHOP

They're not even teenagers,  
what you brought them here for?

PINKY

Don't be mean.

CHOP

Haven't you got homes to go to?

SAM

We're on our own.

PIXIE

All the grown-ups are wasted.

My mum's in jail – best place for her;

I'm living with my uncle on the estate,

if you can call it living.

SAM TAKES A BLAST FROM AN AEROSOL CAN.

CHOP

What're you doin'? Are you insane?  
Butane is a super-cooled liquid gas,  
it fast freezes your lungs and larynx –  
what, methinks, does that do to your breathing?  
Hand it over or out of my place.

SAM HANDS OVER THE CAN.

CHOP

Thank you; welcome to the human race.  
You can stay 'til nine,  
then it's going home time, the pair of you;  
that's the rules, take it or leave it.

SAM

You got a weed for me, Urbie?  
Nowt else to do.

URBAN

Sam's written a poem;  
I told him he should show it you.

PIXIE SITS WITH PINKY.

SAM READS HIS POEM.

SAM

I saw him, I did,  
I know that I did.  
He said, "It's a dream,"  
But that was no dream,

Cos I know what I saw,  
If you know what I mean?  
Cos I know what I know  
And I know what I mean  
And I see what I see,  
If you see what I mean.

SAM IS LOOKING AT PIXIE. SPARKY IS LOOKING AGITATED.

CHOP

What's it about, Sam?

SAM

Nowt.

CHOP

Come on.

SAM

Can't say, bro'.

CHOP

Everyone else seems to get it.

SAM

You don't want to know.

PINKY

It's upsettin'.

PIXIE

It's about me. I'm bettin' Sam saw  
my uncle in my room, that's all.

CHOP

That's all?

SPARKY

(TO CHOP)

If Pixie's getting nonced-up,  
we'll have to do something about it, Chop.

CHOP

I could tell the Law.

SPARKY

They're a disaster; no, this is our war.

CHOP

It's not grassing with nonces;  
scuffers hate them as much as us.

SPARKY

No grown-ups, they're the real problem.

Me and the lads'll deal with it.

You get us a name, we know her address,

CHOP

I'll do my best.

SPARKY, NATASHA, PIXIE AND SAM LEAVE. PINKY GOES TO  
URBAN'S ROOM. PHONE RINGS. IT'S GRETA.

GRETA

He's only gone and set the fuckin' house on fire.  
The Yardies next door are trying to keep a low profile  
and the scuffers are on top big-style;

he's lucky he didn't burn down the entire street.

I'm gunner have to disappear for a while,

I'm dead meat;

he'll have to stay with you for a week or two.

SHE RINGS OFF..

CHOP

I don't believe you –

what d'you think that's achieved?

URBAN

Don't care; Frank won't be tooting

there any more, will he?

CHOP

What's to stop him using somewhere else?

URBAN

Is that it? Are you done?

CHOP

You could have killed someone.

URBAN

I made sure no one was in.

CHOP

You can get Life for Arson, you know?

URBAN

Chill out, Chop, I'm too young to go to prison.

CHOP

You can't stay here unless you behave:  
that means no murder, no arson and no twockin'.

URBAN

I can't promise about the twockin'.

URBAN GOES TO HIS ROOM.

CID ARRIVE.

CID 1

Mind if we come in for a word or three?

CHOP

Take a seat. Cup of tea?

CID 2

No thanks. It's about a serious assault  
last night in East End Park:  
a man was beaten half to death by young thugs.

CHOP

Why is that my fault?

CID 2

Your name's been mentioned.

CHOP

Oh?

CID 1

Strange coincidence, you asking  
about the victim at the Slip Inn?

CHOP

Let me see, there was somebody  
interested in buying my van.

CID 2

If this chap dies, you could be looking at Life –  
Conspiracy to Murder.

CHOP

If I knew anything, I'd tell you.

CID 1

Do you share this flat with anyone, sir?

CHOP

No; but, er, there is someone staying in the spare room.

CID 2 NODS FOR CID 1 TO TAKE A LOOK.

PINKY EMERGES FROM THE ROOM.

CID 1

How old are you, miss?

PINKY

Sixteen, why? What's this all about?

CID 2

(TO CID 1)

Could be a complication?

CID 1

I think you'd both better accompany us to the station.

## SHED CREW

At first, CID thinks Chop  
is involved in a paedo ring with Pixie's uncle;  
but Pinky puts them straight, once and for all:  
whatever Chop is, he certainly isn't a nonce.  
and as Sparky appreciates, neither is he a grass.

## SCENE 9

DANCE MUSIC. CHOP, STELLA AND THE SHED CREW ARE ALL ON A BOUNCY CASTLE.

SHED CREW

Meanwhile, Greta is in hiding  
and the Crew have tied ourselves to Stella,  
who has four kids of her own;  
but a heart as big as Roundhay Park.  
It's May Day and the flowers are in bloom;  
Stella has green hair and Chop wants to shag her;  
Frank and Skeeter are turning fifteen any day soon.

CHOP

And Labour has finally returned to power.  
Time to party.

FRANK & SKEETER

No presents please – just booze and drugs!

SHED CREW

Chop turns up with this bouncy castle  
he's storing for the council;  
he's on a mission for the poor  
to have a good time.

STELLA

Ah, aren't you a sweetie, fetching  
a bouncy castle for Frank and Skeet?

SHED CREW

Whizz and e's flow like wine,  
joints are consumed by the ounce;  
Sam and Pixie are self-appointed stewards,  
charging modest entrance fees  
to the whole estate and her off-spring,  
who've turned out to bounce and sing.

CHOP AND STELLA SLIP AWAY TO HER PLACE.

CHOP

Stella offers to read my Tarot,  
so I slip into her bedroom  
with a bottle of brandy on the go  
and wait for a bright future to blossom.

SAM INTERRUPTS THEIR PASSIONATE READING.

SAM

Chop, better come quick, Urbie's losing it.

CHOP

Fuck off Sam, can you not see I'm busy?

SAM

Please yourself.

SAM LEAVES AS FRANK ARRIVES.

FRANK

Urbie's gone mad.

CHOP

Jog on, what's new?

THERE IS A LOUD CRASH OF VEHICLES SMASHING  
NEARBY.

FRANK

All I said was, "Mum's sold your dog".

CHOP GOES TO SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED.

CHOP

What have you done, Urbie?

No, not Elsie!

(TO STELLA) How come you didn't see that in the fuckin' cards?

SHED CREW

The neighbours are not impressed.

NEIGHBOUR

Is that your bloody van? Was it you driving?

CHOP

What's it to you, lard-arse?

SHED CREW

Things are not going according to plan.

CHOP JUMPS BACK ONTO THE CASTLE AND THE  
NEIGHBOURS FOLLOW. THEY TRY TO FIGHT AS THEY  
BOUNCE AND ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

SHED CREW

Sparky leads the Crew, charging to the rescue:

Pixie is trying to bite one guy's ear clean off

while Kara has her thumbs in another bloke's eyes.

NEIGHBOURS LEG IT.

CHOP

Who's is the fucking van, you bastards?

I'm the man driving the van.

SHED CREW

Which is when the police arrive...

POLICE TRY TO FIGHT AS THEY BOUNCE.

So we chuck the bastards off the castle,

until they spray us with C.S.Gas.

SMOKE AS EVERYONE CHOKES AND EXITS.

CHOP

Last I remember is a clout from a baton

at the back of the head, before my lights go out.

## SCENE 10

CHOP IS ALONE IN HIS FLAT.

CHOP

The van is a write-off  
and, if that isn't enough,  
I'm slapped with a £2600 fine  
at £10 per week for the rest of all time.

The list of offences includes:  
resisting arrest, assaulting the feds,  
ABH, GBH,  
causing a public nuisance;  
no van insurance,  
no MOT, fraudulent display  
of a stolen tax disc;  
affray,  
possession of Class "A" drugs,  
drunk and disorderly  
and embezzlement of one castle – bouncy.  
Sparky's gone down for the attack on Pixie's uncle,  
Skeeter's down for twocks;  
Urban got jack-shit  
for wrecking twelve cars with Elsie  
before slamming her into a bus shelter;  
and I'm in a state of shock.

URBAN ARRIVES.

URBAN

Sorry about the van, Chop.

CHOP INVITES HIM TO CUDDLE, WHICH URBAN ACCEPTS.

SHED CREW

He has no money, no job,  
and Greta takes the child benefit  
while Chop has Urban to fend for.

CHOP

I go see me own dad and ask:  
"I'm not being funny but could you lend us a tenner?"  
He says, "Does tha think I'm made o' money, lad?"  
I'm not complaining, he was always there for me  
when I was young and gave me my love of poetry.  
He used to say, "That money talks, I can't deny;  
I heard it once, it said 'Goodbye'".

URBAN

It doesn't matter if we're skint,  
Bokono will provide.

CHOP

Have you been sniffin' again,  
I can smell industrial peppermint?  
Who, or what, is Bokono?

URBAN

Do you know nothing?  
The Great God Bokono,

the Bringer of Fishcakes.

CHOP

Okay...

URBAN

When you're glued-up,  
the High Lord Zombulglast reveals the truth:

Bokono will provide.

You can eat well for fuck all;

I've lived on nowt all my life.

CHOP

Now, I've always hated paying for razor blades,  
so the next morning I begin my new trade  
by stealing £200 worth from Morrisons –

URBAN

we pay for the milk and bread; then on  
to the sandwich shop with the suits and ties

CHOP

to purloin "b-l-t's" and two fruit pies,

URBAN

followed by a new pair of Levis

CHOP

for Urban, and a leather belt for me;

URBAN

finishing off back at Morrisons

CHOP

with a tasty joint of minted lamb for tea –  
best meal we've had since Elsie died;

URBAN

Bokono will provide.

SHED CREW

The official religion of Ashtrayland  
is Bokononism and Urban is a World Teacher.

CHOP

My appearance helps with my new career:  
short hair, glasses, chubby, "clean-shaven",  
like a Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The trick is not to be greedy:  
only take what you need to survive –  
well, plus a little extra for tobacco and drugs,  
because bartering is back in vogue.

Okay, so grafting puts a penny on a loaf,  
but that's less than supermarkets do;  
if society can't find a use for me,  
let's see if it can catch me.

URBAN

While I teach Chop to thieve,  
he teaches me to read;  
but the letters in the words  
move around like dodgems on a stick.

CHOP

He's dyslexic, he needs specialist support.

I bite the bullet

and contact the Pupil Referral Unit –

URBAN

but they aren't taking referrals today.

CHOP

I ask Social Services for financial help –

URBAN

but they give us fuck-all.

CHOP

I try to register him with a G.P. –

URBAN

but they can't find my medical records.

CHOP

I take him to a dentist –

URBAN

but there's no room on their list to fix my teeth.

CHOP

I try to hand him in to the police –

URBAN

but they've already done Sparky for Elsie.

CHOP

We could always fuck off to The Lakes,

if we had transport or money?

URBAN

We can travel for nothing –

CHOP

don't tell me...

CHOP & URBAN

Bokono will provide.

CHOP

He's right, of course:

we hitch a ride to the M61

where the police pick us up

for making their motorway look untidy

and drop us off at the service station,

where a nice sales lady takes us to Kendal

and we jump a train to Windermere.

I love Bokono –

URBAN

Bokono is love.

We stay in the woods for a couple of nights,

before relieving an Audi of two mountain bikes

and riding home in beautiful sunlight.

BACK AT CHOP'S FLAT.

SHED CREW

Back at the flat again, Urban paints

his room bright green and decorates it

with Ordnance Survey maps of The Lakes.

URBAN

I love having my own space.

Later.

URBAN LEAVES.

CHOP

I've never seen him happier.

SHED CREW

With only twelve shoplifting days to Xmas,

Chop is nicked in M&S.

CHOP

I'm not a known shoplifter – yet;

so it's another fine to add to my debts.

With no money to pay bills,

they've cut off our lecky,

but the candles are very atmospheric.

SHED CREW

Sparky is still on remand;

Skeeter's spell in D.C. has slammed

shut the door to his soul;

he is immune to all forms

of human contact, except violence.

Thieving Little Simpkins

has been excluded from school

and Kara simply refuses to go.

Sam and Pixie have grown

into their criminal careers.

Trudi lands on the doorstep,  
in tears and in the family way.

TRUDI ARRIVES WITH NATASHA.

CHOP

How could you? What did I say?

You're still a kid yourself.

TRUDI

I'm not getting' rid.

I'm nearly sixteen –

you know how it works?

I'm allowed a flat on the housing schemes.

CHOP

Who's is it, Trudi?

TRUDI

How the fuck should I know?

CHOP

Have you never heard of the population explosion?

TRUDI

Could be Frank's. Or Skeeter's. Or Urbie's, or –

CHOP

Shit, here's a key to the front door;

you'll have to crash in with Urban.

TRUDI

Chop, I'm frightened.

CHOP

I'm not surprised, you're just a child.

TRUDI

Will you be with me? You know,  
when I have the baby? Please?

CHOP

I'd be honoured, Trudi;  
I can't believe you've asked me.

SHED CREW

It takes them a week to wean her off smack;  
last thing she wants is the baby born an addict.

TRUDI NURSES HER BUMP.

NATASHA AND CHOP ARE ON THE SOFA. THEY ARE  
TOUCHING BARE FEET.

SHED CREW

Molly's not very happy  
about Urban sharing with Trudi;  
but he's met a new girl –  
URBAN RETURNS WITH TEEZER.

URBAN

Easy 'Tasha; you heard from Sparky?

NATASHA

Fascists won't give him bail.

CHOP

Who's this?

TEEZER

Teezer.

CHOP

Pleased to meet you.

URBAN

This is the Penthouse Posse –  
what used to be the Shed Crew.

CHOP

What about Molly?

URBAN

She'll find someone else.

NATASHA

Where are you from?

TEEZER

Nowhere – been in care since I was three.

CHOP

Better make yourself at home.

URBAN AND TEEZER GO TO URBAN'S ROOM.

SPARKY ARRIVES, FRESH FROM JAIL. HE CLOCKS THE  
INTIMACY BETWEEN CHOP AND NATASHA.

SPARKY

This is all very cosy.

NATASHA

Sparky!

SHE JUMPS UP TO GREET HIM. HE PUSHES HER AWAY

AND CONFRONTS CHOP.

SPARKY

What the fuck do you think you're doin'?

CHOP

Sparky, lad, it's not how it looks.

NATASHA

We weren't doing anything.

TRUDI

You're out of order, Sparky.

SPARKY

That's my fucking bird.

NATASHA

Give him a break, there's Trudi or Molly  
if he was that desperate.

TRUDI

Oh thanks. I take it that's a joke?

SPARKY

Know something? You're the hardest bloke  
in the world to smack.

SPARKY PUNCHES CHOP ONCE AND EXITS WITH  
NATASHA; BUT THEN RETURNS.

CHOP

Back for more? Not hurt me enough?

SPARKY

Stop blubbing, you perverted, foot-fucking nonce;

come on, I'm takin' you down the pub.

We'll have to organise a proper lay for you.

CHOP TAKES HIS ARM.

SPARKY

Sorry Chop, it's just I want kids with this one, you know?

CHOP

(THROWING THE LINE TO NATASHA)

I suppose this is how it is, having  
relationships with career criminals.

'98 is going to be a tough year.

## SCENE 11

LUCY SCREW-LOOSE'S FLAT.

CHOP IS PAYING A VISIT. FRANK AND SKEETER ARE  
GAUCHING IN THE CORNER, UNAWARE OF CHOP AS HE  
LOOKS AROUND AT THE SQUALLER.

### SHED CREW

Frank and Skeeter have gone AWOL.

Stella has hoofed them out for robbin'

forty quid from her knicker-draw;

it was the last straw.

They've been spotted dossin' down Chechnya

with Lucy Screw-loose in Lucifer Towers,

overlooking The Kremlin – D.S.S. H.Q.

### CHOP

Grafters are like robotic crime-machines:

they wake up in the morning feeling sick

and needing gear, which costs money,

and they need it quick.

Any trick within reach is fair game:

laptops in car windows,

shops with designer clothes,

kids with mobile phones or trainers,

grannies with handbags,

gardens with gnomes...

It's not a pretty sight when you're rattling;

it's a cliché but you can't possibly know  
what it's like unless you've been there.

Nothing compares. It's like drowning -  
no, water-boarding:

you're bent over backwards, choking  
to death and the bastards are pouring

water down your throat,

drop by brutal drop,

and you'll do anything -

I mean anything - to make it stop.

FRANK AND SKEETER BECOME AWARE OF CHOP'S  
PRESENCE.

SHED CREW

They are graftin' for half a dozen bags a day,  
plus rocks on top.

CHOP

Bad news. Very bad news.

FRANK

Aw right, Chop?

SKEETER

What's happening?

CHOP

So this is where you're existing?

Wow, Bohemian chic, man.

FRANK

Glad you like it.

SKEETER

Welcome to oblivion.

CHOP

What's the attraction?

FRANK

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

FRANK AND SKEETER LEAVE CHOP ALONE.

CHOP TAKES A SYRINGE AND INJECTS HIMSELF

CHOP

This is not like tootin'.

I am looking into oblivion:

I can see the whole of mankind's destiny

and it scares the shit out of me.

MUSIC.

## SCENE 12

CHOP'S FLAT.

CHOP

Get your coat, you're going to school.

URBAN

Fuck that.

CHOP

New rules, I'm not taking "no" for an answer;

I've got you a place at the Mandela Centre.

URBAN

No way, I'll be the only "white bwoy".

CHOP

Stop that noise, you're going.

You've lived with your mum in Chapeltown,

they know you 'round there.

Besides, I thought Teezer's dad

was a bit of a lad in the West Indian community?

URBAN

He is, and her mum's as fierce

as any Zulu warrior, even if she is white.

That's where Teezer gets her fighting spirit.

THEY LEAVE. CHOP DROPS URBAN OFF AT THE CENTRE.

CHOP

The teachers say he's as sharp as a knife.

I say, it's a crime

he's missed out on school all this time.

Kids need to feel someone is looking out for them.

Isn't that the least we can expect from government?

We get the kids we deserve, that's the deal.

CHOP GOES TO SEE STELLA.

MEANWHILE, IN HOSPITAL, TRUDI IS HAVING HER BABY.

CHOP

It's doin' my head in, Stella; they're all nuts  
and there's so many of them to worry about.

STELLA

You love it, being street-cred;  
tell you that for nowt.  
You collude with them.

CHOP

Do I?

STELLA

Drugs, drink, thievin'; condoning violence.

CHOP

I don't think so.

STELLA

You knew Sparky was goin' t' batter Pixie's uncle.

CHOP

Sparky took matters into his own hands;  
I didn't know he was goin' to be so brutal.

STELLA

Exactly. They keep their best for you;  
now you're seeing their darker side.  
Frank and Skeeter, inside again;  
Thieving Little Simpkins is in prison;  
Urbie's on a two-year supervision order -  
caught outside West Yorkshire Playhouse  
with a glue-bag, abusing the general public.

CHOP

At least he's under the Pupil Referral Unit.

STELLA

And if you don't get your act together soon, Chop,  
you're in for a very long drop.

CHOP

I give those kids everythin'.

STELLA

Yeah, and what do you get in return?

Know what I'm sayin'?

CHOP

How to be a child again,  
live in the moment,  
be at one with the universe;

STELLA

Kids are good at running wild.

CHOP

I love the madness: not giving  
a flying fuck about anything.  
I feel alive with them, like I belong,  
for the first time in a long while.  
TRUDI IS HAVING HER BABY.

STELLA

Sounds like your godchild is on its way.  
CHOP GOES TO HER SIDE.

CHOP

Trudi squeezes my hand tightly  
and tells me –

TRUDI

everything will be all right.

SHED CREW

But on closer inspection, it's not all right  
and the doctor orders a section.

CHOP

I almost faint when Trudi's baby  
is ripped from her belly like a magic trick.

SHED CREW

The baby doesn't cry, she rattles;  
the nurse sorts her with her first fix  
as she battles her way into life.

## CHOP

Baby Hope has already been betrayed;

I look into the eyes of that baby girl

and I know I have a duty

to do some good in the world.

## SCENE 13

EAST END PARK. CHOP IS WALKING WITH URBAN.

SHED CREW

Whisper on the streets:

there's a "misper" Angela;

have you heard the news?

They've found a body on the rec,

buried in the ground – catalogue of abuse:

abducted, robbed, imprisoned, tortured,

enslaved for 24 hours,

locked in a cupboard,

beaten with an iron bar

in a wave of attacks,

hair set on fire,

depraved behaviour,

forced to drink disinfectant,

fags stubbed out on her face, before

a plastic bag placed over her head

and strangled;

buried in a shallow grave,

someone's brave and beautiful daughter,

dead.

TEEZER APPROACHES.

TEEZER

They've arrested another Eastie crew:

five of them, aged 16-22;  
two lads and three lasses  
(two of them sisters).

CHOP

We should be ashamed of ourselves:  
us, the Shed Crew, Ashtrayland,  
the whole nation – we're all to blame.

TEEZER

What d'you mean? We didn't do it.

CHOP

I'm embarrassed to be a human being.  
Please tell me my time with the Shed Crew  
has not been in vain?

URBAN

A couple of years ago  
it could have been us, who knows?  
You've been a good influence.

CHOP

Have I ever told you I'm very proud of you?

TEEZER

You'll give him a complex.

CHOP

Come on, Urbie, let's go and pay our respects.

TEEZER LEAVES.

SHED CREW

They see a film crew on the rec,  
making a programme for the BBC,  
"Forgotten Britain",  
presented by Fergal Keane.

CHOP

See near that line of trees,  
that's where Angela's body was dumped -  
there's a makeshift shrine.

URBAN

That gold cross and chain you gave me from your nan,  
well, I know it's a family heirloom,  
but do you mind if I leave it  
here for Angela, on her tomb?

HE TAKES IT FROM AROUND HIS NECK.

CHOP

Some bastard 'll come along and nick it.

URBAN

If they do, that's for them to live with, innit?

CHOP

A noble gesture, young sir.

HE PLACES IT OVER A MAKESHIFT CROSS.

URBAN

Chop, there's summat I'm stressin' bout tellin' you.

CHOP

Here it comes, hell or high water.

URBAN

It's Teezer, she's havin' my daughter.

CHOP

Thought it would be somethin' like that.

URBAN

You mean, you're not mad?

CHOP

Well, you are fourteen.

URBAN

We'd like you to be an honorary granddad?

CHOP

What the fuck! Congratulations, son.

If you were a bit older

I'd take you out for a pint; well done.

URBAN

There's summat else, Chop:

I'm not King Arthur

or a World Teacher

or any other weird creature;

so stop harpin' on about it.

I can't do all this weird shit for you;

my head's fucked up with madness

about mum and our Frank and being a dad

and everythin' else with the Shed Crew.

CHOP

But you've taught me so much, you could teach others;  
you could change the world, if you've a mind to.

URBAN

You like being strange, not me;  
maybe you need the attention?  
Like mum, Attention Deficiency Syndrome;  
maybe your whole generation's got it.

CHOP

See? You're teaching me as we speak,  
you're a natural.

URBAN

It's not my job,  
I just want to be normal;  
I'm not like you, Chop.  
I quit, I can't make the grade;  
I liked it better as a removal man,  
at least I got paid.

SAM AND PIXIE ARRIVE IN A TWOCKED CAR, THEIR HEADS  
BARELY VISIBLE ABOVE THE STEERING WHEEL.

SAM

Yow, Urbie, Mr Chop! What's happenin' here?

CHOP

(TO URBAN)

I've got an idea.

CHOP (CONTINUED)

(TO SAM & PIXIE)

You two, will anyone miss you

for the next couple of days?

PIXIE

We do what the fuck we like,

no one's lookin' out for us.

CHOP

Let's pick up the camping gear.

And if you're serious about quitting,

bring Excalibur.

THEY GET IN THE CAR WITH SAM AND PIXIE.

Move over, Sam, I'm taking the wheel:

less chance of being pulled by the Babylon

and less chance of killing anyone.

## SCENE 14

THEY ARRIVE AT THE LAKE DISTRICT IN THEIR STOLEN CAR AND MAKE CAMP.

SHED CREW

They park up at Lake Windermere  
and recky the lie of the land.

They camp in the woods nearby  
and sit around a warm fire making plans.

The pitch has good voodoo.

CHOP

Right, you all know what we have to do.

THEY PUT ON BALACLAVAS AND GLOVES. URBAN  
CARRIES EXCALIBUR, CHOP CARRIES THE  
BOLT-CROPPERS, SAM A PETROL CAN AND PIXIE AN OLD  
RAG AND MATCHES.

SHED CREW

At midnight, they return to the lake.

CHOP

Me and Urb will nick a rowing boat;  
you guys be quick torching the car.

SAM POURS PETROL OVER THE CAR AND PIXIE LIGHTS  
THE RAG AND THROWS IT IN. THERE IS A WHOOSH AS IT  
CATCHES FIRE. CHOP CUTS THE CHAIN TO A ROWING  
BOAT AND JUMPS IN WITH URBAN.

URBAN

Let's row to the island  
and watch the fire engines.

THEY ROW.

CHOP

It's time, Urban: throw Excalibur  
into the lake while the flames burn.

THE BOAT WOBBLER AS URBAN STANDS UP.

It's a real shame, Urbie,  
I was hoping you'd change the world for me.

URBAN THROWS THE MACHETE INTO THE WATER.

URBAN

Chop, man, that's your job;  
you're the only one can read and write properly;  
you're the teacher, not me.

CHOP

What exactly have I showed you?  
How to get locked-up and knocked-up?  
How to get twatted on drugs?  
Stuff like that?

URBAN

Yeah. And how to be decent  
with each other, and kind;  
how to chill out and not be  
fucking lunatics all the time.

You have to tell our story:  
get in touch with that Fergal Keane,  
tell him how it is for real.

CHOP

Maybe I will; what the fuck,  
maybe I'll write him a letter,  
maybe I'll write him a book.

REST OF THE SHED CREW JOIN THEM.

SHED CREW

We lived it, we couldn't care less;  
most of us are still here to tell the tale:  
some of us are addicts  
and some run our own business,  
some of us are in jail  
and some are as straight as a vicar's dick  
and some are completely off the rails.  
But look at us: we're all in a book.  
Deal with it, we did; this is for real.

A STORM BREAKS. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

URBAN

What about me, Chop? What became of me?

CHOP

What can I say? It's 2017, Urbie,  
you've left the scene.

URBAN

But we'll always have our story.

CHOP

Some things can't be undone;

I'm gunna miss you, son.

URBAN STARTS TO LEAVE.

All that energy has to go somewhere:

you'll always be in the "ch'i" -

the energy blazing through every living thing.

I'll not mourn;

but instead, when it thunders and lightning

and kicks up a storm,

I'll think of you, Urban, kickin'-off up there

without a care in the world.

URBAN HAS GONE.