

10 00 00 Opening title music (The Cure/Close to Me) and coughing over opening shot. The camera pans along the windows of the smoking room and then over a table of magazines and full ashtrays and then around the room. The opening credits run over this as follows

10 00 01 BBC Logo

10 00 03 The Smoking Room

10 00 0 Written by Brian Dooley

10 00 14 Music Out (The Cure/Close to Me) and character Robin's head is in shot he finishes his coughing

INT. SMOKING ROOM

~~012512(1)-1L.4915(h)L.4915(~~

This little Thai girl, yeah, shot exotic fruit out of her (MIME).
Kiwis – *bop!* Lychees – *bop!* Kumquat Mae, her name was.
She was good.

ROBIN

And there was me – just with Robin (reel) 021 (1-08) 299267 (o) 1.24) 299252

ROBIN

No – you’re thinking of Big Daddy.

CLINT

He wasn’t a cowboy.

ROBIN

No, but he was called Shirley.
John Wayne was called Marion.

CLINT

Like Robin Hood?

ROBIN

Well ... like Maid Marion, yeah. John Wayne was called Marion
and Big Daddy was Shirley.

CLINT

(THINKS) What about Giant Haystacks?

ROBIN

(SHRUGS) I think that was his real name.

JANET IS GATHERING TOGETHER HER STUFF.

JANET

I hope this doesn’t end up like the one in the
foyer!

ROBIN

What – all spelt wrong?

JANET

(DEFENSIVE) What d’you mean?

ROBIN

The one in the foyer says, ‘Pantballing’.

JANET

It doesn’t?

CLINT

It does!

JANET

It’s been up since Friday.

JANET IS MORTIFIED. WE SEE THE POSTER PROPERLY: AN A3
JOB THAT HAS BEEN VERY BADLY PUT TOGETHER ON A PC. IT IS

A JRe(.40126JRe(.4011.150()0126)240(W)-31.90(E(P)450(O)-11.150()0126)01

JANET

Oh, no. It came up as wrong on the spellcheck. I just assumed the computer hadn't heard of paintballing. It hadn't heard of pilates.

No, what I was getting at is - I hope it doesn't end up covered in jokey names. According to the one downstairs, the only people planning to go paintballing are Marge Simpson, Osama Bin Laden, Barbara Windsor and The Bear In The Big Blue House.

ROBIN

Oh! Is Babs going?

JANET

It's for people who work *here*.

SHE WRITES THE MISSING 'I' IN WITH A MARKER PEN.

ROBIN

And ...?

JANET

Barbara Windsor is an actress. Of sorts.

ROBIN

No there's a Barbara Windsor here – in distribution.

JANET

Which one's she?

ROBIN

Oh, God, um well she's.....

HE'S STUMPED. HOW CAN HE POSSIBLY DESCRIBE HER POLITELY?

ROBIN

(CONT'D) She's a lovely woman. Um, always beautifully turned out. Pussy-bow blouses.

JANET IS NONE THE WISER.

(RELUCTANT) A sort of wispy beard?

JANET

Very strong northern accent?

ROBIN

No! That's Stan. She's ... (LOSING PATIENCE) She's got a beard, buck teeth and her eyes look in different directions.

JANET

Is her name Barbara? Oh, for years I've been calling her Carole. I am thinking of the right woman, aren't I? Wears one of those Spice Girl shoes? Orthopaedic?

CLINT

What does it say on that poster? 'Team building', yeah? Now, I don't know about 'team' – that could mean anything – it could be ... football or cricket ... tennis ... rugby ... water polo ...

ROBIN

No!

CLINT

Yeah. And his cobbler, swelled up – whoooooop – like um, well, not like a football, 'cause that's unrealistic ... Like, um ...

ROBIN

A volleyball?

CLINT

I dunno, man. I've never played it. How big'd that be?

ROBIN

(SHRUGS) I dunno. I've never played it either.

CLINT

Let's say a melon.

ROBIN

Honeydew or canteloupe. (THINKS)

CLINT

Canteloupe. It swelled to the size of a canteloupe melon. And *that*, Robin, is paintball.

ROBIN

Well, I wasn't going to go anyway. I hate work functions.

CLINT

Yeah well, I've got to go and do a bodily function.

CLINT PUTS OUT HIS CIGARETTE AND GRABS A NEWSPAPER.

CLINT

And remember: if anyone mentions paintball, you've

BUT SALLY IS LOOKING OUT INTO THE CORRIDOR.

ANNIE NODS AND TAKES A MELODRAMATICALLY DEEP BREATH.

ANNIE

Yeah, I'm getting there. I'll do some yogic breathing.

ANNIE TAKES DEEP BREATHS – WHILE STILL SMOKING,
NATURALLY.

ROBIN

It's not like I'm scared of Sharon or anything but it just might be worth keeping her sweet. I mean the non-smokers are on the warpath – trying to get this place scrapped. Admittedly, it's mainly Frank Gating. And everyone knows he's just thinking of himself. And his emphysema.

ANNIE

So you are going to the paintball are you, Robin?

ROBIN

I don't know. You see, Clint's been telling me about how your bollocks can swell up,

ANNIE BURSTS INTO HYSTERICAL TEARS AT THE MENTION OF CLINT IN CONNECTION WITH BOLLOCKS AND, HANDING SALLY HER CIGARETTE IN A FLUSTER, RUNS OUT OF THE ROOM.

SALLY TURNS ON ROBIN.

SALLY

Nice one, Robin! Could you be any more insensitive? Why not mention her big fat arse while you're at it?

ROBIN

What did I say?

SALLY

Banging on about Clint's balls.

ROBIN

Not Clint's in particular.

SALLY

Yeah, well.

SALLY BRIEFLY CONSIDERS BEING DISCREET. SHE CAN'T
MANAGE IT.

Annie reckons he's given her the
clap.

ROBIN

How?

SALLY

Now, let's see. Perhaps he sent it round in a jiffy bag.

LILIAN

Aaah, poor Ben.

SALLY

LILIAN
Ben Okinawi?

ROBIN
No – po?B

BARRY

Not particularly. I am worried that terrorists might infiltrate the event, though. And that I'd end up being seized by extremists.

ROBIN

Oh yeah. Fair enough.

BARRY RETURNS TO HIS CROSSWORD.

BARRY

Was there ever a Pope Wayne?

ROBIN

No. Which letters have you got 369(.0126)0126)12.9395(W)-3.9512(h)1.25

LEN

I'll knee cap whoever put my name on that list!

BARRY

'Mercy killing'.

ROBIN

Oh no that can't be right. Knee capping isn't a mercy killing - it's a punishment beating.

BARRY

How many Ks in 'concoct'?

ROBIN

None.

BARRY

Damn!

HE CROSSES SOMETHING OUT.

SALLY

I feel a bit guilty about Annie now – letting her just run off like that.

ROBIN

Do you?

SALLY

Hmm. I mean, she is sort of a mate. And if she really has got the clap ...

LILIAN

Has she?

SALLY

Claims to. But then she claimed to have met Ben Affleck in Safeways. So, I really shouldn't have mentioned anything.

LILIAN

Who?

ROBIN

Clint!

LILIAN

(TO SALLY) Never?

SALLY

Robin! Ain't the poor girl allowed any privacy? As if the itching ain't enough.

LILIAN

Aaah.

BARRY STUDIES HIS CROSSWORD.

BARRY

I think I must have gone wrong somewhere.

ROBIN GOES OVER TO HAVE A LOOK AT BARRY'S CROSSWORD.

ROBIN

Well, for a start , 1. across should be 'Leicester'. There's no such cheese as 'Red Liverpool'.

BARRY

You sure?

ROBIN

Yeah.

BARRY CORRECTS HIS MISTAKE.

JANET RETURNS, CLUTCHING A NEW POSTER.

JANET

Right, let's see if Paintball's more popular than Pantball, shall we? I've run up a new version.

SHE HEADS FOR THE NOTICE BOARD BUT STOPS SHORT WHEN SHE SEES THE DEFACED POSTER.

Who set fire to my face?

SHE LOOKS ROUND FOR AN ANSWER. ROBIN SHRUGS, FEIG.0120(N)T eG.0120

LILIAN (CONT'D)

But new words, like ... 'tossler' – how rude is 'tossler'?

ROBIN

Not really.

JANET

Very!

LILIAN

What about 'beaver'? I don't mean the animal, obviously, I mean when they use it for your doings.

ROBIN

It's more of an American thing, 'beaver'.

LILIAN

Yes, but is it acceptable to refer to it as your 'beaver'.

JANET

I don't see why you have to refer to it at all.

BARRY

That reminds me – there's a programme with David Attenborough I want to see tonight. He's going to Canada to look at beavers.

LILIAN

The animal?

BARRY

I would have thought so.

SHARON ENTERS. SHARON IS THE BOSS. SHE SMILES AN OBVIOUSLY FORCED SMILE AS SHE STRIDES INTO THE ROOM. EVERYONE IS INSTANTLY ON EDGE.

SHARON

Morning, everyone.

ROBIN LEAPS TO HIS FEET AND STUBS OUT HIS CIGARETTE.

ROBIN

No, I'm sorry Barry – but I can't waste time, helping you with your crossword. I've got stuff to do. I can't be hanging round here all day.

HE HEADS FOR THE DOOR BUT SHARON PULLS IT CLOSED.

SHARON

Don't race off on my account.

ROBIN PRETENDS TO CHECK HIS WATCH.

ROBIN

Oh. Well. I s'pose I could just squeeze another one in.

AS HE SITS BACK DOWN INSTANTLY LIGHTS ANOTHER FAG, SHARON LIGHTS HER OWN. SHE SMILES AT THE OTHERS. THEY ALL SMILE WEAKLY BACK, TRYING TO AVOID HER EYE.

SHARON

Are you having a sponsored silence?

THERE'S NO REPLY. SHARON DOESN'T NORMALLY DO SMALL TALK. SHE LOOKS TO JANET – WHAT NOW?

JANET

Keep on chatting, everyone.

NO ONE SPEAKS. JANET PANICS.

JANET

(CONT'D) Please. Keep on chatting.

THERE ARE SOME AWKWARD LOOKS EXCHANGED AS THE SMOKERS WONDER WHO'S GOING TO RESTART THE CONVERSATION.

LILIAN

'Wanker'?

SHARON STOPS DEAD IN HER TRACKS. SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GOING TO KNOCK LILIAN OUT.

SHARON

I beg your pardon?

JANET

It's alright, Sharon, she's not talking to you – and, yes, Lilian, *very* rude.

SHARON LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.

SHARON

D'you know I should come down here more often.

SALLY

Oh, Sharon. When you've got that lovely balcony to stand out on?

SHARON

I don't want to seem remote. I mean, when all's said and done, we're just co-workers. (RUEFUL) According to Head Office.

THE OTHERS DON'T LOOK SO SURE.

In fact, I'm told there was quite a get together at the, er ... the ...

SHE SHOOTS JANET A DESPERATE, ENQUIRING GLANCE.

JANET

The Nag's Head.

SHARON

Why's that? It's going to be-

SHE CHECKS THE POSTER TO REMIND HERSELF WHAT IT'S GOING TO BE AND SEES THE WORD, 'FUN!'

-“fun”! There'll be a disco. And a hog roast.

SALLY

I'm vegetarian.

SHARON

There'll be quiches.

BARRY

I can't eat pastry. I'm gluten intolerant.

SHARON'S PATIENCE IS BEGINNING TO WEAR THIN.

SHARON

Are you all fatty eaters?

LEN

I've got irritable bowel syndrome.

SHARON

The food's just an extra.

LILIAN

Will there be champagne?

SHARON

What makes you think there would be?

LILIAN

Nothing particularly. I just like it. (TO LEN) Hey, do you remember all the champagne at Sheena Parson's wedding.

LEN

LEN

And the veil just went Fuck Off!

LILIAN

I had a real seventies wedding. Big flared trousers. Bit of a hat. Poncho. I looked fantastic.

SHARON

(MORE INSISTENT) If we could just return to the subject in hand?

BARRY

Which is what?

SHARON

The paintball!

BARRY

Oh I'm sorry, I didn't realise there was an agenda. Are you taking minutes, Janet?

SHARON PRETENDS TO LAUGH.

SHARON

Ha, Ha, Ha. No, but to be serious ...

IT BRIEFLY LOOKS AS THOUGH SHE'S GOT THE ROOM'S ATTENTION. THEN THE DOOR OPENS AND ANNIE RETURNS. EVERYONE IS DELIGHTED TO SEE HER (EXCEPT SHARON) – SIMPLY FOR REASONS OF GOSSIP.

SALLY

Annie - are you okay?

LILIAN

Are you okay?

ROBIN

You okay, Annie?

LILIAN

(STANDS) Annie - are you okay?

SALLY

You okay?

LEN

You okay, Annie?

ANNIE DOESN'T KNOW WHY THEY'RE SO CONCERNED, NOT KNOWING THAT SALLY HAS DIVULGED HER SECRET.

ANNIE

Yeah. Has anyone got a fag?

LEN

Have one of mine, girl.

ANNIE TAKES A CIGARETTE AND SITS.

ANNIE

Ta.

SHARON

Right shall we come to some sort of decision about the paintball!

LEN

This *is* our break.

SHARON

I am well aware of that, Len. And my issue is not with you. At least you've had the manners to let us know you're coming ...

LEN

Am I fuck! Someone put my name down for as a piss take.

SHARON

(TO JANET) Are any of the people on your list going?

ROBIN

Babs Windsor is.

JANET

That is a sick joke. You can't have a cross-eyed woman playing paintball.

ROBIN

Yeah, um this is the thing, actually Sharon I've heard that! your e-11.15

SHARON

It's what we could do with more of in this company. Team spirit.

ANNIE

And I'll tell you someone else whose name you can put down there. Clint!

ANNIE MIMES SHOOTING AT HIS BOLLOCKS.

JANET

Yes!

SHE SHOOTS A LOOK AT THE DEFACED POSTER.

LEN

And whatever fucker signed my name up for it.

LILIAN

Yeah - snap happy Ranjit. There's a paintball with his name on too.

SALLY

Oh, well – if we're all chipping in – put that Gordon Evans down -from upstairs.

ROBIN

What's he ever done to you?

SALLY

(SHRUGS) I just don't like him.

SHARON

No, no. The paintball is meant to be a bonding exercise - to boost morale. I'm not having it abused by people just out to enjoy themselves.

ANNIE LETS HER IMAGINARY GUN FALL. JANET IS ALSO THWARTED.

ANNIE

But ...

SHARON NARROWS HER EYES.

SHARON

Did you not consider all this Janetc991260J h
I

ANNIE

Oh, I'll come with you.

SALLY

No, no, no, you take your time.

SALLY HURRIES OUT. LILIAN GATHERS UP HER BAG AND HEADS OUT.

LILIAN

Oh Christ! I'd better get gone myself. (TO ROBIN) What are

ANNIE

10 2 · 0

End card
Producer Pete Thornton
Director Gareth Carrivick
BBC logo and website

10 2 · 12

Music out (The Cure/Close to Me)