

LUNCH CLUB 2020

Written by

Allan B. Hill

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Interconnected Writersroom

INT. WORK-FROM-HOME OFFICE/STUDY - DAY

A huge wide-screen computer MONITOR.

LEATHERHEAD (30) rests at her WFH station. Posh, educated. Slightly anxious with messy brown hair, still in her PJs.

ON SCREEN: CALLING... JIMMY... Cheesy DIALING TONE.

JIMMY (28) appears, slightly pixilated. He plonks into seat. Asian. Born and raised in Manchester. Smart, dry-humoured.

LEATHERHEAD
Can you hear me? Hello...

The bandwidth catches up. Jimmy starts to look like a human.

JIMMY
Hey Leatherhead. Long time no see.

LEATHERHEAD
I saw you a couple of days ago--

JIMMY
Cyber-see. Not 3-D. Why are you wearing the same clothes? Regressi--

LEATHERHEAD
These are my PJs-- Why are you paying attention to my pyjamas?

He mimics the *emoji*:- 'with two upturned palms by his chin'.

JIMMY
It's after midday... Anyways, what's happening down in London?

LEATHERHEAD
Same, still at home trying to survive, with my parents. You know--

JIMMY
Surviving. I get it. Your parents are knob heads... Everyone safe?

A CRACK! A CRACKLE--

Jimmy's face starts to STEAM UP. Like a sauna. Image fades...

LEATHERHEAD
What's going on? Jimmy... Jimmy?

Jimmy's image FREEZES! His voice distorts. Intermitted--

JIMMY
Hell... -ello? Useless-nte-net...

Jimmy comes back, waves his HANDS in camera. Live again...

LEATHERHEAD
Phew. You're back-- Your image went
all foggy and froze for a second.

JIMMY
Did I have a super sleaze peedo-
freeze-face this time too?

Jimmy reveals to camera-- Hot, steamy CHINESE TAKE AWAY.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Was it this perhaps, hot and Spicy
Szechuan Pork?

LEATHERHEAD
What are you eating that for?

JIMMY
Because it's lunch time--

LEATHERHEAD
But you're a Muslim?

JIMMY
Half Muslim. Naughty half Muslim.
I'm working my way down the menu
from Mr Happy's Chinese *slash*
British Takeaway. Out of boredom.
I've got another...
(consults the online menu)
1,2,3,4-- a week. Balls! I'll have
to find a new takeaway then.

Jimmy stuffs pork in his big gob. Immediately COUGHS. A LOT!
Leatherhead is paranoid--

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Crap! Soooo hot-- Soooooo spicy.

LEATHERHEAD
Trying to give me a panic attack?

JIMMY
Just relax you. I'm fine.. Tip-top.
What you got today, something nice?

Leatherhead reveals her PIZZA BOX.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Are you on first name terms with
the delivery guy yet?

LEATHERHEAD
Yeah. You?

JIMMY
Peta. With an 'a'.

Jimmy waggles his eyebrows, close, in webcam.

LEATHERHEAD
A girl? Ooooh! Check you-- She fit?

JIMMY
Come on! Can't see anything
underneath all that protective kit.
She is efficient and that's what
matters. Got big blue eyes though.

LEATHERHEAD
Peta-- Sounds like a sexy person's
name. Just like Francesca. Yeah?

JIMMY
Sure. Why we call you Leatherhead.

Leatherhead flips the BIRD to camera. They laugh.

LEATHERHEAD
You know I don't live there
anymore, not since I got back--

JIMMY
Rather I call you St. John's Wood?

Leatherhead blows a raspberry at her monitor and immediately
has to buff away the SPIT off the lens with her PJ sleeve.
She grabs an enormous slice of take-out PIZZA.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
How is the pizza by the way?

LEATHERHEAD
Ugh... Fine.

JIMMY
Which means it's rubbish--

LEATHERHEAD
It's just, I could do better, but
having to *kit-up* and that all the
time...

(MORE)

LEATHERHEAD (CONT'D)

Last time I went out *ahem* two weeks ago-- I'm getting fat too-- I was only able to get 4 things out of 9 on my list. Pasta sauce, salmon, one aubergine and, well I'm not telling you the last--

JIMMY

Was it anus cream or something?

LEATHERHEAD

Or something...

JIMMY

Check it out, Ben's online. Haven't seen him since erm... Canada. I'll conference him in.

The screen splits-- CALLING... BEN... Cheesy DIALING TONE.

LEATHERHEAD

Please. No don't-- Don't! I beg--

BEN (30) appears in his quadrant. He's Cockney. Conservative. Games tester by trade. Got a flash HEADSET on. Unshaven.

BEN

Alright? Jimmy! Hey-- Leatherhead, haven't seen you in your PJs since we got snowed in that time at the Canadiana Hostel. RIP.

JIMMY

R.I.P.

LEATHERHEAD

R.I.P.

DING! Ben leans back in his chair and glances to the side.

JIMMY

What was that?

BEN

That's lunch. Hang on...

Ben removes his headset and leaves. Can see his messy room. Leatherhead fumes. She shakes her head at Jimmy as she stuffs her face with an enormous slice of pizza.

LEATHERHEAD

You've ruined my lunch--

JIMMY

Come on! We were part of the pub quiz A-team back in T.dot. Ah... Good old days.

Ben returns on screen. With a READY MEAL. Headset back on--

JIMMY (CONT'D)
What you got for lunch Ben?

BEN
Erm, last thing left on the
shelves. Some foreign shit. Paella?

They all watch each other eat their lunch, in silence.

BEN (CONT'D)
This sausage thing is well nice.

LEATHERHEAD
That will be chorizo, you idiot.

BEN
Chorizo? Never heard of that stuff.
Trust Jamie knows what he's doing--

JIMMY
Debatable... How are you coping
with all this "bollocks" then Ben?

BEN
I'm testing Cod now so work's work.
Pubs are all shut, so I get lonely.
I miss the drinking, the banter.
Feeling bit trapped if I'm honest.

JIMMY
Like that time we were trapped
inside the hostel for ages?

BEN
That snow storm was only a week and
at least we were together. I mean
physically. You know--

JIMMY
I know *exactly* what you mean--

LEATHERHEAD
What do you mean, *exactly*?

JIMMY
Come on. I know you guys did it.
Everybody there knew you two were
at it like rabbits, all week.

LEATHERHEAD
Ben! You're an arse-hole--

BEN

Arse-hole? I swear, I never said--

JIMMY

Doesn't matter. Past is the past.
It's funny, it's all a story now...
Where are you living these days?

BEN

I'm in Ardwick now.

JIMMY

What, in Manchester? Bollocks! I'm
in Stockport. We're on the same
line. How come I didn't know that?

BEN

We don't talk anymore. Do we?

JIMMY

How come I never see you on the
train then? I take it always.

BEN

Work from home innit...

LEATHERHEAD

How's your twin brother Ben?

Ben chokes up. The conference session gets awkward...

LEATHERHEAD (CONT'D)

Oh no. Did he get ill as well from,
you know, this "bollocks".

BEN

No... He died before everything
properly kicked off. His prostate.

JIMMY

I'm sorry, I didn't know mate--

BEN

Well it's not like I post all over
Facebook. Is it? I'm not like that.
All people do now is *follow*, it's a
passive relationship-- Then it's
like, "Sad to hear your brother
died, chin up." Some follower you
haven't seen or heard *boo* from in
years, only sunny "LOLs pics" of
some mid-January self-tanning in
Tenerife. All fake. All bullshit!
(eats paella, rants more)
(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

It was better before this epoque of
face-in-phone, swan necking, with
headphones in, thinking they were
connecting with friends-- Matrix...

LEATHERHEAD

We know the Matrix isn't real...
Morpheus.

BEN

Until you run into a pole-- Then
you know what's real. It'll be the
end of us, this. Emzed phenomenom.

LEATHERHEAD

The what?

BEN

Millennial-Zuckerberg phenomonon.
Made it up.

JIMMY

But you're in gaming mate. Virtual--

BEN

Job. Innit. Don't mean I'm happy...

JIMMY

Toni's online! This new app is ace.

BEN

Sorry-- That's it. End of rant...
Positivity has to win the day...
But for the record, we've got
bloody terrible at communicating.
It's true, we're all... Too busy--

LEATHERHEAD

Too selfish--

JIMMY

Too much wanking--

LEATHERHEAD

What?

BEN

What?

BOTTOM QUADRANT: CALLING... TONI... Cheesy DIALING TONE...

TONI (25) appears in her allocated square. Scouser.
Firecracker of a girl. Optimistic. A lovely, dear soul.

LEATHERHEAD

Hi Toni! It's like all the old crew
have found each other again, in
cyber space--

TONI

Hello? Hey guys, AH! The A-Team!
You look happy-know-what-I-mean
under the current state of things--
Wow! Like your pyjamas Francesca.
What do think of mine?

Toni models her PJs. She's like that. 3 THUMPS UP to camera.

TONI (CONT'D)

Amazon gift card. Don't mind me,
you caught me having lunch.

Toni shows off her BURGER'N'CHIPS. The others copy and pose
in front of their webcams with their lunches too.

JIMMY

Wait! I'm gonna screen shot this.
I'll send it to all of you. OK?
Cheese...

Jimmy CLICKS the screen shot. 4 friendly smiles. 4 lunches.

TONI

Would you believe it, the chicken
shop ran out of chicken?

JIMMY

Believe it... OK. Check your inbox.

TONI

I've missed you guys. So nice to
see you, even if it's like this.
Imagine if it was pre-war days.
That would have been brutal... Pre-
streaming... Would've had to read a
book, or something. In my area, we
can't leave the house unless we get
permission from the government.
It's like being back in boarding
school when you needed to ask the
teacher for a slip just to go to
the toilet...

LEATHERHEAD

Sounds like--

JIMMY

Bollocks!

BEN

Utter toss!

TONI

Awww. Your face Jimmy, so many teeth... I had a fight with my sister yesterday so we're not talking, even though we're locked in... But those teeth just make me want to smile. Love this gallery view, kind of like the Brady Bunch.

LEATHERHEAD

Has a certain nostalgia, I guess.

TONI

We should all meet up again in real life-know-what-I-mean?

The screen gets really LAGGY...

JIMMY

Good idea. When all this is over?

TONI

It will. One day. Trust it--

The screen completely freezes. All four of the friends have gone frozen-super-sleazy-peedo-face.

LEATHERHEAD

Guys? Guys?? Hello! Damn!

Nothing... Internet's failed. Leatherhead bashes her fist. Then suddenly they're back. Pixel-like... Then human again.

LEATHERHEAD (CONT'D)

What happened?

BEN

The USA have gone online.

JIMMY

You guys wanna make this a thing?

BEN

Lunch club? Why not?

TONI

Great idea Jimmy!

JIMMY

How about Mondays, Wednesday, Fri--

LEATHERHEAD

We're all flexible these days yeah?

BEN

Book it!

LEATHERHEAD

Maybe when we get through this,
"bollocks" shall we meet up, maybe,
somewhere in the middle?

BEN

The midlands?

All four faces ponder that tragic thought for a moment.

LEATHERHEAD

Nah--

TONI

Nah.

JIMMY

Try again.

Toni leans forward to check her fake EYELASHES on screen.
Reveals a little too much cleavage to camera...

LEATHERHEAD

North, then South? We'll take it in
turns. Since we're all here, we
should do some reminiscing?

JIMMY

I'm reminiscing right now...

LEATHERHEAD

Toni, can you not distract the boys
with those braless boobies. Please?

Toni adjusts her top.

JIMMY

Travelling! Were the best of times--

LEATHERHEAD

And were the worst of times...

BEN

I wasn't that bad-- Was I?

TONI

What are you guys talking about?

ON SCREEN: Four old friends catch up with each other--
Proper, not fake, for real-- but in an *ON SCREEN* world.