

Zero

(working script)

OPENING SECTION

Track **PASS GO**

(This is the introduction track, and is paralleled by the epilogue track ENDGAME. These tracks should seem as natural as possible, though the movements should be worked out to be exactly the same. In both tracks, the cast peel off to set up camera and take position for snapshot. Show begins as soon as the flash goes off)

Good evening, welcome to the Pleasance. We thought we'd just get formality out of the way before we get on with the show. It struck us there's a lot of pretense in theatre these days, and we'd like to break that down a bit. So to start, I'd like to introduce you to the cast. We've got (Name), (Name), (Name) and the cheeky one at the end is (Name). I'm (Name) and up in the box we've got Vicky in charge of the technical side of this evening. One or two things about us, we're all about 26 years old, we live in various parts of the country, different social backgrounds, a bit of a mongrel. The show itself, um well, when people ask us what it's about, we sort of say it's about Generation Z, it's about stripping down, it's a snapshot, a kind of flash. It lasts as long as it takes to re-adjust your eyes. Blink and you'll miss it. It tends to get more soundbitye the more people ask. But there'll be a bit of everything in there. Choreography, text, acting (not much of that though), music, lights, the lot. This here is the performance space. We never really use much of a set, but you might have noticed there's a wendy house behind that gauze at the back, and we'll be using that now and then, as well as a few props. It's behind the gauze, by the way, so we can make it appear and disappear when we want it to. If you don't shed any, no, sorry., shine any light on it you can hardly see it through the gauze. That's a trade secret. Right, hang on a sec.

(Presses camera self-time button. Then remembers something else to say)

Oh, and....

(Others are counting down to flash. Speaker only just makes it back in time to take up party pose. Flash goes off. We go into first track - (with prerecorded speech?))

MAIN SECTION

The following tracks are to be placed in an order worked out by the company. There are three types of text track to work with here:

1. **Speeches.** These have no reference to X's significant others
2. **the Zero narrative.** These are built around observations of the 5 people who actually mean something to X, and her/him reflecting on the world through them. Performers to each take on the X texts, and each should perform these as if referring to the performer's own circle of significant others. The people in this circle are Harry (grandfather), mother, Laura and Daniel (X's children), and Hussy, X's lover. X is both male and female (depending on the performer), Hussy (female).
3. **text choreographies** Sections designed to be performed by the company together.

1. Speeches

Track **NOURISHMENT**

There are times I'm sitting here and there's a moment of me not having anything to do. And I'm looking out at you lot, and at the rest of us. (Pause) And I think what the fuck am I doing here? What the fuck is all this? (Pause) And then I remember sitting at this restaurant, and there's this family, like fifteen of them, massive, sitting at the next table. Three generations, maybe four, no there is, there's four. And they're eating and talking, tasting each other's drinks, swapping plates, gab gab gab. And the fogies are thinking about the children's future and the children are thinking about ice-cream, and there's always one person wiping their mouth, and you realize you're scoffing down your food 'cos they're so great to watch, you know, I mean, they fucking love each other. And then there's the lovers at the corner table by the window and they fucking love each other, they don't say a thing, just., feed each other squid or something, I mean squid for chrissakes. And she lights his cigarette before lighting her own and they even look like one another. I mean have you seen how they always look like one another. And they quibble over the wine, white or red white or red for god knows how long and then both give of course and I've finished my fucking pint just listening to them. And I order another., and the staff! They're working for their £2.67 an hour and doing a fuck good job at that, and you hear them laughing at the bar at the end of the evening when they know they've done the works, and they have, and they're friends. I mean isn't that just really special. And the two tourists who've come all this way to see this neck of the woods and they try really hard to pronounce the menu and most of it's in French anyway. And the group of friends, 5,1 single, who've known each other for god knows how long and they're throwing it down them 'cos they want to make last orders. And I'm almost in tears, I mean smiling. And grandpa's gone all silent cos he knows he's not gonna see the little'n grow up and the lovers are playing with each other's fingers and joking with the waitress who in turn is flirting with the guy behind the bar and the tourists are laughing loudly and poking fun at the food. And the little girl drops her dad's mobile and everyone laughs and I'm thinking this is what it's all about. This is what you should be seeing you arsehole politician arseholes, this is what you need to see, this is special, these are real fucking people going about life. Why should this lot be always listening to you? Don't they deserve better than that? Can't we just take the time to stop and listen for a second? Think about it all? Have a moment in which we look out, and look at the others, and think what the fuck am I doing? What the fuck is all this?

Track**ABSENTEASE**

There are times I see people.

Who aren't there.

I'm sitting reading the t.v. pages, and suddenly from the corner of my eye

I see someone crouched on the sofa. As soon as I look she's gone.

And I'm left looking at these cushions scattered around the settee.

And I'm thinking I really long for there to be someone sitting there. And for

a while then there is. In her absence. She is sitting there hugging the

cushions to her chest. She laughs at the television and reads our tabloid

horoscopes and hums quietly. And I imagine the sun in the nape of her

neck. And I feel more comfortable now.

I'm sitting at the kitchen table slogging over my lines. I get a fright when I suddenly catch someone watching over my shoulder.

There isn't but I feel there is, I really want to feel there is someone there.

Watching me work.

I ask myself the questions I imagine he or she would be asking me.

I make myself a mug of hot milk and imagine it's been made for me. I'm not alone. I have someone watch over me.

I'm lying in bed in the morning and I hear next door's kids messing about in the garden and,.. well,.. you know...

And I'm in a cafe

no, an empty bar

and I'm writing some notes or something and suddenly

I'm sitting at the next table, legs crossed, pen in hand, just watching me here.

I look over and I'm gone, vanished, transformed into a barstool leaning up against the wall.

I go back to what I'm doing but I'm., but I'm there again. In the corner of my eye.

No one can see me.

Just me. Completely invisible.

A figment of my imagination.

I'm the only one who is aware of me.

In my absence.

Track**MADNESS**

I'll be alright, I'll watch tv. Quiet night in, I'll be o.k., I'll be o.k.. I just can't talk. Strange. Strain, can't move my lips, too much weight, no, a cage or a straitjacket. My face is too much, weight, a cloud, heavy, lasting forever. Need some distraction, do you ever watch tv? Shit being shat on. Season of goodwill, and I feel like a tit. I look like one, I look like a tit. Have to get drunk, have to sleep, to dream, to block it out, to black it out, to black out, there's nothing there, nothing this year. Why does there always have to be something there, why is there always something, who says? It can't be normal, not normal, who says? Can't stand it, can't stay in, can't stand it. I'm not alone, surely, it's everyone. Is it? Is what? It's shit being shat on. I'm shit, I'm shit being shat on. Stripped down and shat on. Howzitgaun? Orrabest then. Howzitgaun? Orrabest then. Howzitgaun? You asking my opinion? Orra-howzitgaun? My opinion? Orrabest then. No, wait a minute. Aye, orrabest, beep beep ring ring beep beep ring fucking ring ring. Can't talk, can't stay, can't talk, canna communicate. Not with the tv on, not even with the tv. Naw, we split up, tv and me, long ago. Don't talk anymore, me and tv, tv and me. Went on for too long, wasn't going anywhere, was staying in, not going anywhere, can't do that, not go anywhere, must come out of yourself, get out of it. Deal with it! Our relationship, tv and me, was a blur of images spurting what amounted to Esperanto. I'm not a game show. Play me like a slot machine, shock me, surprise me, wake me, fuck me!! Maybe I just need a slap. Sad bastard. Sad bloody boring the tits off you bastard. Tit. I'm numb, can't get it up, can't get it anyway, canna get it on cable, now can I? You know, you should really take a day off, you know. I'd appreciate you so much more if you took a day off. I'd appreciate me so much more if you just pulled your finger out and said something worthwhile. Everything has to be so gratuitous, football, news, films, it's just a bit of distraction though, just a bit of distraction. Coming to the social? Can I bring my girlfriend, my beautiful portable 12 inch girlfriend? Howzitgaun? Orra-bloody-best, then. Don't talk to me, don't talk to me significantly about significant. Never ask my opinion before. Stripped down and shat on. That's me, boyo. Better bred and buttfuck, no, bread and better buttfuck, no, boom boom, now take my missus, no please do. Law of the jungle, market forces, oh hell I'm sitting here, it's New Year's Eve, I'm...

(Walks into light DS)

Sorry, all this might seem like really chaotic, like madness. But you've got to understand that's what we start off with. We've got this big bang chaotic mess of madness and we try to make sense of it. This chaos, and we try to make sense of it. Our progress is not linear (*starts moving back out of the light*) but that notion seems to undermine all the effort and money invested in our present and future, the world of commerce is not truly designed for curves and blind alleys and has a growing momentum towards its judgement day. It denies the situation, law of the jungle.

2. The Zero narrative

Track **FAG (The smoking scene)**

Choreographed smoking between all who are not speaking

X I'm woken by a couple of frisky pigeons fighting on a window ledge of the building opposite. Although I've only been asleep for thirty minutes or so I'm shocked and immediately aware of the room around me. The sun is now spilling through the opposite window from the one through which it disappeared what seems like a long night ago, and I'm slightly disorientated, like I've been spun around with my eyes closed and thrown dizzy with tiredness back into the chair. Harry hasn't stirred at all, he lies in the same prone position as I., left him, but the sun from behind the bed has given the blankets a strange quality, more delicate, not as heavy as they were during the night, and almost as if they've been given a sense of time. On the table next to the bed stand our two mugs of tea. Neither have been touched and on the surface floats a...a...an...and I can't find the word... but I feel I really need to... skim...skim...scum...skim...I plunge for skim but am not convinced, just content not to let myself get worked up over it.

X I reach over to adjust the sheet behind which Harry's chin has sunk, and which I've decided is restricting his breathing. But this is delusion. His breathing has entered an almost otherworldly stage. This...this torso which was once renowned for its bellowing snor, the gentle man who would roar giants in his sleep, stirs only a faintest of wheezing, and toys with no more than a wedge of saliver on the corner of his mouth. Fucked by years of industrial abuse, from a generation whose employers weren't prone to consider or care about the damage being done, preferring to blinker themselves with the preoccupations of how, as effectively as possible, to extract the maximum of resources in the most efficient way, before the body reached the point where it couldn't sustain the pace any longer. Harry had excelled on this, this long lingering treadmill which had started in adolescence. And had ended at the scrap-heap. Or here.

X I blow at the skim and have a mouthful of cold tea to wash away the stale dryness that always accompanies these short naps. There's a faint acidic smell. Urine.

X Harry has some phlegm in his throat which produces this guttural choking whisper thing, I can't quite describe it. But it's become almost reassuring to hear. Harry's figure has, there's not really any appropriate way of describing it, but it has collapsed into the bed, a frame within a frame, a cage holding a cage. His poorly poultry arms and legs have just ceased to fight the gravity of their situation. Snap him and make a wish, I think.

X But I'm not thinking straight. I'm thinking of coffee. I'm thinking of a man so randily cocksure he would carry the world on his shoulders and still manage a swagger. I'm thinking of a man feasting away in the kitchen, cooking to his heart's content and the family swimming in it. Belly laughter, I'm thinking of ice-cream and gulls and sandcastles built to withstand vikings and tides. I'm thinking about my first drink. And fish the size of the table nextdoor. I'm thinking full. And round. And blustery. X Harry's face has had chunks ploughed away from it. The deep lines that cut into it, and dig into it, and scar into it are an opencast of the years gone by. Sediment layers within which you can see the disrespect. You can see the injustice. And the bottling up. And the young man's frustration at becoming an old man. You can see children. And grandchildren. You can see me, probably the deepest lines of all.

XX When he said the other day to remember him to posterity, I brought in a tape deck.

X I look across the bed and the shapes it's making in the light. And I so want to play plastic soldiers in these folds, germans and americans, ambushes in these trenches and hiding places. Or toy cars

rallying cross-country around these hills and mountains thrown up by his knees. I want the sun to keep shining on him. I want him to drink his tea, and turn over and let me scratch his back and make him laugh. And then it happens. And I know it's it.

(Looks up at control-room. SFX Sound of last wheezing breath. A long silence follows which is listened to)

And then you can hear the central heating boiler fire up.

(SFX on same tape: Central heating boiler fires up) And then a door bang down the corridor.

(SFX This happens)

And I'm sitting there. And I really want to say something. "Grandad", or "Goodnight" or "Be good" or ... But the tape deck's still playing so I feel self-conscious.

(SFX clicks off)

X It's next Wednesday and I'm at the 'do'. I sit in the old armchair opposite the television which is spending its first morning ever switched off. In the kitchen people are laughing and occasionally one of my newfound relatives comes through to check I'm alright. I look at the tray next to me on which I find a chicken leg and a tub of coleslaw, my mother's idea of a concession to my vegetarianism. There are two mugs of tea. The table in front of me has been immaculately laid. An outward show of defiance betrayed only by the irregular triangles of the sandwiches. Beef and chutney. More people arrive and the room is full of smoke and nylon. It's three days after Dunblane and my aunty Caroline is agitated that an instance of collective national grief could upstage her sausage-rolls and punch. Everyone is happy to see me. Mother asks if I want anything. I say would you mind if I had a fag.

X At the weekend, my mother, Harry and I take a trip to the bay. It's a full, round, blustery day. Bright but raining. The sun is shining. My mother and I don't speak much, and when we do it's in a nervous broken conspiratorial way. We give up trying long before we get there. We're shaking. It's cold. I'm not thinking of anything now. On the cliffs we break the makeshift seal and both take a deep breath. As soon as we remove the lid the ash flies up into the air like a genie from a bottle. We're covered in ashes and Harry's all over the place. We shake out the rest of the contents. We're laughing.

(SFX Sound of gulls)

Track CLAIR DE LUNE

Through the keyhole I can just make out Daniel's breathing. It's the breathing of sleep so I quietly steal through the door, which I close behind me, and I sit in the chair which mother has already cleared for me. Laura moves and says "night, night" and sleeps again. I place the candle on the bedside cupboard, and hold my breath until I'm sure they are both asleep. And they are. Sometimes Daniel will stay awake a while and we whisper about the liberties he's taken from his gran, or Shaun nextdoor, until his speech becomes slower and slower and he drifts off. This is my personal space. These are my personal space. These two human beings, who I come

back to, who I come back to every night after finishing the show, and after I've been in the bar till closing time. Mother says it's better when I get back late and they're fast asleep, rather than earlier when they're not far enough gone not to start playing up.

Daniel and Laura each have their own noises. Laura smacks her lips and Danny takes laboured breath and sometimes grinds his teeth. They are noises which make me listen to the silence around them. They are quieter than silence, because I'm more aware of it. It's where I gather my thoughts. I think of the show, but I'm tired of it, so I try to think of the day ahead. Most of it revolves around the children.
(Unfinished)

Track PULSE

Hussy is stood on the raised platform at the back of the dance floor. She is giving me lots of stick. The crowds around me are pulsing like nobody's business but the throb inside my head is reserved for her alone. She is, this moment in time, the single most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my entire life. She smiles my way, and my feet turn to blamange, she points to me and I gulp down half an evian, she winks at me and my twin brother in far away Inverness goes all tingly all of a sudden. This is pure blissful perfection. This is where I am. I'm at a perfect time and it's me and her on this desert island moment. Alone. Together.

Hussy invites me to watch her move. She is platformed and hipstered up to the nineties and I take a deep breath of water and splutter my way across her tummy straights, anchor my stare to her navel compass, then sail home slowly through her buxom fjord, her bannered name brazened across her t-shirt, welcoming this sailor to shore.

(Unfinished)

Hussy's face has changed. I'm closer now and there's tears in her eyes. Her smile is more a grimace and she seems to be dancing beside the beat. She stumbles against the girl next to her, is thrown daggers by the girl's mates, and drifts off into the melee at the back. Her place is taken by Stuart, who grins unbearably at me and claps his hands.

Towards morning Hussy and I find a moment of touching. We hold the briefest of hands as she pushes a passage through the heaving mass. She's smiling again. I touch the firm small of her back and ask how she's doing. She pauses and says "I've just had a fuckin' abortion. And the fat bastard's off fuckin' his ex. D'ye know 'im like? Mark. Naw? You got any pills? Aw, there's Dawn, she'll get me some. See ya."

Track HOUSE

Laura wants to know why old people live so long. I tell her it's because we can keep people from dying a lot longer than we used to. She says "Is that good?" I say "Of course it is". We get home hours later. Laura is playing house. She asks if she will take care of me when I'm old. I ask her if she would like that. She says yes, she wants to look after lots of old people when she's grown up like me. As long as they don't make her angry like me.

Track STOMP

Daniel asks his dad if he's going to have a baby brother or a baby sister. Doug says he doesn't know. Daniel says "why not?" Dougie tells him parents can't choose either way. Daniel says "why not?"

Doug explains well actually these days you can choose, but it's not natural. Daniel says "why not?" Doug says "it's just not natural." Daniel stomps out of the room and says "why does everything always have to be natural. It's just not natural." Harry asks how long will it be before you can program your children not to ask why not.

(Depending on whose lines these are, Doug can be changed to female name)

Track SPUD

We're sitting in the cemented beer garden. Daniel's on all fours playing with his toy cars and Harry is spooning away at the baked potato filling, without the potato, on the table in front of him. This is all very modern to him. He's feeling cheeky with the waitress and is laughing a lot. He tells me of all the flowers he'd have in his parents garden in Lockhaugh before the war. He reels off the names: Gentianella, Euphorbia pulcherrima, Myosotis, that's forget-me-nots, he says, and Amaranthus caudatus, that's Love lies bleeding. He says Love-lies-bleeding were his favorites. They were hard to come by and they took a lot of nurturing. He's looking sad now. And confused. He's forgotten where we are. He doesn't recognize the waitress. Or want his ice cream anymore.

Track JAM

Hussy is dialling the number of the Samaritans. And again. And again. Over and over. It is just after Hogmanay, so she obviously can't get through, the lines are completely jammed. And again. And again. I try to speak to her. I say do you want to talk about it? She smiles sweetly and says no, she's not very good at that kind of thing. I say do you want me to go? She says no, no, no, trying not to bring on the paranoia in me too. Hussy is crying. She says she hasn't had an abortion. She went to the clinic. She is still pregnant. I can see her bra underneath her t-shirt. I go to the kitchen and make us some tea.

Track BROW

Laura is sat on my lap, straddling a leg either side of me, holding both my hands. She is looking intently at my face. When I ask how many wrinkles she can count she shakes her head vehemently. I ask her again, go on, how many wrinkles can you count? She says she's not saying, because I always look sad when she tells me.

Track ICARUS

Laura asks me do birds get burnt if they fly too close to the sun? Daniel hits her and says no, stupid, their feathers just fall off and they fall down. He then has a thought. Mam, where do birds go when they die? I say to bird heaven. He says don't be patronizing, mum, where are their bodies? Where do they die? Well?

(Mum can be changed to dad depending on whose lines these are)

Track KISS

Hussy is in the bathroom. She's singing, feeling good. I'm watching her from the kitchen. The black sex of her skirt is clmg-hlrning her arse like treacle. She turns sideways to view her tits resting in their

cop hollows strapped up to her shoulders and back, and we both think of the hands of men. She pulls at her t-shirt and blows on her nipples, and watches them sacre-coeur through the cotton. She is asking for it. "Yep, I am, tonight I'm asking for it. Tonight I am definitely asking for it. "Closer to the mirror, she plucks an eyebrow and puckers her lips. She shouts through to the kitchen, "Have you ever noticed how a kissy mouth ressembles an arsehole? Makes you wonder, doesn't it?"

Track REVOLUTION

Laura asks what my New Year's revolutions are. I rattle through them:

(List of resolutions). I also think *(More)*

Laura says no, what are they?! What do they do?!

(List of resolutions can become track in itself)

Track LUNG

Laura is fascinated with transplants. Today, that is. She has already done four drawings of composite animals: a geep, that's half goat half sheep; a heliphant, a horse with a trunk and big ears; a zog, which is a stripey dog; and a fuck, which is a furry waterbird. Laura likes this last one most, and even Daniel is showing some interest in this burst of artistry. I tell him off for repeating he wants a pet fuck for Christmas, to the merriment of his sister who is giggling uncontrollably while trying to swap the arms of her two dolls, one black one white. She says, you could call him Rodger, and all three of us fall about the place. Daniel starts coughing and goes upstairs to get his ventolin. Laura, a doll under each arm comes over and sits on the sofa next to me. She gets me to put down my magazine and look her in the face. "I've decided." Yes, I say. She's looking stern. She says, "I want to give Danny one of my lungs." I hug her and the doll's arm falls off. Laura picks it up. She looks up and says, "Don't get upset, silly. I can fix it easy."

Track TONGUE

Harry is laughing when he comes into the kitchen and sits at the table. "I've told you not to smoke in the kitchen," I tell him and he pulls one of his naughty boy's faces and tries to blow a raspberry, which tends to mean a silent dribbling of spit all over his chin. He laughs again. He hasn't got his teeth in. I say "What do you want on your sandwiches?" He says, "Tongue". I say, "We never have tongue, we've got chicken." He says, "Chicken, then." I say something about me needing to lose weight." He says, "Ballast." What? "Ballast." Daniel comes in and plonks himself down next to Harry, who pokes him and says, "Go on." He's looking mischievous. "Mam," says Danny, "when you were talking to Dad about the youth in asia, who did you mean?" I almost drop my coffee. Harry is wetting himself by now. "I don't know, do you want peanut-butter or marmite?" He says, "Marmite, but what do the youth in asia do, then?" I say, "They ask too many questions. Now eat up." Harry says, "Oh, you can never ask too many questions. You never find any answers if you don't ask questions," and he opens up his sandwich. "What are you doing?" I ask. "Just checking," he says, "Don't want to choke on a chunk of gristle, do I now?" He pokes Danny's arm and they both roar with laughter. I tell him to put his teeth in.

Track WING

The banana makes no sound as I squelch it into the sitting-room carpet with one of my bare feet. "Aw, fuck. Oh God!" Limping to the window, I draw the curtain and find a selection of fruit scattered about the floor. Aunt Ethel's fruit-bowl is on the kitchen table when I go through. A sparrow flaps about in it, one of its wings obviously broken. "Aw, God." I wipe my foot on the tea-towel and Laura walks in with a handful of grass. "Morning." "Laura, what are you doing?" "I rescued it," she says. "He's called Polly." I sit down. "Hello, Polly," I say and Laura tries to feed the sparrow some grass. "Did a cat get it?" She nods her head. "Laura, you know we can't keep it." Laura says, "Only until it gets better." I say, "I don't think it will get better. I think we might have to put it down." She says, "Where?" I say, "Put it out of its misery. I think it's going to die and it's in a lot of pain so it might be better to... kill it." She looks horrified. "To stop it suffering." She says, "No." I'm firm, "We'll have to put it down, darling." She fighting back the tears now, desperately trying to feed the poor bird. She says, "But when I'm poorly, you don't try to put me down or., or Harry. Harry's poorly." She picks up the fruit-bowl and carries it up to her room. I can hear her talking to it. "Pretty Polly. Pretty Polly." Twenty minutes later she brings it back. The bird is dead. We wrap it in kitchen paper and tin foil. She says, "Is Harry going to die?" I say, "Yes, some time." She says, "Is he suffering?" I say, "Come on, let's bury it in the garden, ey? We'll make a little cross for it." I hand the bird over to her. "You can pick some flowers in the play area." Laura walks over to the back door in a sombre procession. Daniel snouts from the other room, "Aw, mum, there's banana all over the carpet!"

Track SPIN

The door slams shut as one of Hussy's tantrums comes to a head. I walk after her. "Look/" I say, "Will you get it into your thick skull that the world doesn't revolve around you!" She's not listening and slams the next door behind her as well.

Hussy and I are in the livingroom. She is watching telly but seems disengaged and flicks through the channels at an agitated rate. She hasn't spoken for nigh on two hours. I'm learning my lines in the armchair by the window. Hussy gets up and mumbles something about going to bed. She says, "And I don't think the world revolves around me. Not even my world revolves around me." She closes the door quietly behind her. The television blurts something about taking real life drama to dizzy heights, and I play a while with the remote.

Track TRICK

Out of her fake leather handbag mother takes a small rectangular parcel the size of a postcard. "This is for you," she tells Daniel. Laura has already had hers so I know what it is. Mother invariably buys the two kids the same gifts. "I bought it in Majorca." Danny's eyes are wide as he picks at the sellotape. The present is a holographic image of Christ on the cross, so I know already that Danny will be mortally disappointed, but will say a few polite words to his gran, and the picture will never see the light of day again. Daniel finally removes the framed glass from from the wrapping and for a moment looks baffled. But then his eyes light up. "Aw! Mean! Aw! How do they do that?" He turns the picture over, studies the back, then checks its depth by measuring it between his finger and thumb. He looks into it, studying the effect of the crucifix when he moves it around. He says, " There's nothing behind

it. It's a trick. Daniel reads the words at the bottom : Blessed are the pure at heart, For they shall see God. He says, "Aw, that's wicked," and runs out of the room. Mother is smiling. She says, "Aw, I can always tell when he's pleased with something. He forgets to say thank you."

Track CRUNCH

The Greek guy with the funny name next door has given Daniel an old calculator. Daniel says its solar-panelled and I ask how many batteries is that? He says, "You don't know anything, do you?" I tell him I have other things to know about.

Daniel is fascinated by numbers. He asks my age and multiplies it by his own age and then tells me the answer. He multiplies that by Harry's age, then tells me the answer. He divides it by 1234567 and I tell him to do his homework. We play a game. He works out how many times the world has spun round since the first aeroplane flight: (*Number*). How many times since the outbreak of the First World War: (*Number*). The first man on the moon. Harry's birth: 29897. He says, "Cor! 29897 spins. He's going to be 30000 spins in minus 113 days!" He then works out how many spins since the beginning of time. I say, "What was the beginning of time?" He says, "Well, the year zero." I say, "Well, what happened before then?" He says, "Well, they didn't have time then, did they?"

Track FOUNDATION

Hussy's head is resting on my stomach. I can feel her hands move on my chest. Not visibly, but with minute internal flexing and releasing of her fingers. She is blowing a draught through my hair. It's cold. I reposition the sheets and blankets around us. "I don't often let people get this close to me," she lies. "No, really," she insists, "I'm not a slag." I didn't say she was. She digs her nails into my chest and says/'Good." We laugh. There's lipstick on the pillow and a brush of foundation. She says, "Is that my foundation?" "Plural," I say but she doesn't understand. After a while she asks, "You haven't got any diseases, have you?" I say, "No, of course not." She whispers, "I didn't think so. Not the type, are you?" I say no and stroke her hair and rub her neck. "You okay?" I ask. She smiles and says, "Mm." She adjusts the position of her face against my body and says, "There's something really honest about this. Not wearing any clothes. It's like I can tell you anything now." She tells me some of her bad habits. We laugh loudly. "They're secret, mind," she says and grips my balls. "Okay! They're secret!" Hussy looks up at me. She's sleepy and smiling. Suddenly she spots the lipstick smudges on the sheets. "Aw, no." Her face crumples and she dives beneath the blankets. "You can see what I really look like now!" I try to pull the sheets away but she screams "No!" and bites my leg. I dive under the sheets. We laugh and kiss.

Track AHUM

Hussy wants to buy Laura a Hussy t-shirt. I'm not too sure.

Track IGNORENCE

Daniel's world has collapsed. He is not speaking. He is in a mood. Mrs Atkins from the school has confirmed he is dyslexic. I joke that even I can't spell that word. Danny assures me that's not funny. No one else is dyslexic in his class. Now it's my fault. I come to my defence. "Lots of people are dycilix," I

tell him. Daniel is a whizz on the piano, he can already play Schubert (now there's something I can't spell). He excels at sport and has shown an aptitude for arty things as well as science. But it's not good enough. He can't spell ignorance as well as everyone else. I know how wrong it is.

Track JERICHO

We are straddling a greystone wall above the city. Hussy is facing me. Her legs are wrapped around my waist. She's resting back on her hands. There's a thin sheen of sweat covering her shoulders. I look at her bare midriff and think "Fuck, there's a kid growing in there." I'm about to say something but she leans forward and kisses me. I'm mildly embarrassed. A group of tourists are walking past and I'm not normally prone to public displays of affection. Hussy says, "Make a wish." I ask why. She says, "'Cos I say so." I close my eyes and pretend to make a wish. I smile and look out again over the city. She says, "Go on, what was it, then?" I say, "I'm not telling." She laughs, "That's the deal. Come on, what was it?" I'm desperately trying to make something up now. I say, "It's about the future." She seems content with that answer. I think, "There's something really naive about this. I haven't done this, sat like this and played games since... I was a teenager. I think about the differences between my outlook then and now. How strange there was no such thing as future, and now it follows me around like a shadow. How I would think candyfloss, and now muesli. How I would stay up late, because I could. Not because I couldn't sleep. And day-dreaming was a favourite pastime, and there was no doubting you were always right, and being perched on the back of a motorbike was a metaphor for whatever you wanted, and we were all budding musicians, and we'd never played an instrument, and learning a new language was just the easiest thing. N'est-pas? "What are you looking at?" Hussy asks. "Your belly-button," I say. She says, "Well, I wished you'd buy me an ice-cream."

Track TWIST

Daniel wants explaining the difference between right and wrong. I think he's challenging my somewhat absolute perception of the distinction between the two, and the way I take authority when presiding over moral issues within the domestic sphere. "Well, who tells you what is right and wrong?" is the question. "Lots of people," I say. "Who?" "People who know about things, (I'm putting on my condescending voice) The government, the police, the judges, the church, teachers, parents. All their opinions are brought together so we know what we know. It's like somewhere down the line right and wrong were decided like... right and left. We know now that that's right and that's left. And people don't argue about it. He immediately turns 180 degrees and says, "But what if I turn my back on you. Right and left changes, doesn't it?" Touché, I suppose.

Track PLUG

A car radio is playing at the traffic lights in the square. Across the street a young woman is mouthing the words to the song. Three girls jolt past on rollerblades. They're wearing walkmans, or walkmen, whatever, but laugh to each other. A frisbee narrowly misses the one at the back. She doesn't notice. My magnum drips down the inside of my sleeve and for a moment or two I resemble some slap-stick

street artist. Hussy says, "Have you ever had the feeling you've been living in a fucking tampax advert all along?" Her face clouds over when she realizes what she's just said.

Track WILDERNESS YEARS

Mother's at the bottom of the stairs. She shouts, "I think I've broken the seedy." I switch off the vacuum cleaner and follow her into the livingroom. "I can't get it to play," she says and hands me the offending item: Elvis, The Wilderness Years*. I insert the disk into the CD player but just before I hit the play button she says, "No. It's the other side I wanted to listen to." I say, "What?" "I've listened to that side. I want to turn it over." I feel superior as I explain this new technology to her. As I leave the room she says, "So where's the rewind button then?" True story.

Title may change to track used in soundtrack

Track TOUT

Hussy is being very boisterous. I've never heard her sing before. She smiles at me every time we meet in the hallway or the kitchen. She spends a lot of the time in the kitchen now. All the dishes get done. Even the set we never use. My underwear has never been so well ironed. She's throwing lots of things out. And she's so looking forward to the party. She keeps telling me how relieved she is she's bought her ticket already. Doesn't have to worry about it now. She knows she can't afford to go really. But then it's only once every thousand years. She'll dance till dawn, bop till drop, drink all her worries away, get out of it, or off her head, wasted. I nod in agreement. She won't be there. I'll sell her ticket on to Stu or someone at the door. Hussy tells me over breakfast that it hadn't hurt as much as she'd thought it would. It wasn't an amputation after all. Was it? She chews on her cornflakes and says it's difficult to gage which was colder. The doctor or his instruments.

Track FASHION

A waiter brings in a small cake with three candles. It's Harry's something-th birthday, he certainly can't remember and I'm to pissed to work it out, and the entire family have got together, mother's idea, for a meal at the posh place in town. Fourteen of us. This is the first time Hussy has met the relatives and she's doing a sterling job. She's moved round to the seat between Harry and one of the nieces. Harry is smitten with Huss, and she's playing him like a plaything, calling him gramps and grumps, which makes him laugh every time. She's had the entire table in stitches and even mother is on the brink of warming to her. "Why is she wearing sunglasses on her head?" she asks. I, other the other hand, just love watching the way she sips her Bud with a straw. And how she's stuffs so much salad into her mouth. I love her sleepy eyes and her big nose and her croaky voice and hairy arms. And her hips, they're just great. And the way she uses her crucifix key-ring to clean the wax from her ears. Mother is not impressed. I look at her and think, in the past few decades we've doubled our life expectancy. When once we'd die at 45, we now die at 90. Where once we expected to be grown up by 18 or 21, we've extended teenagehood well into our thirties. And the natural generation gap is just getting wider and wider. And we're losing our moorings. From one generation to the next we're no

longer disagreeing, we're living in different ages. Laura drops her uncle's mobile and everyone laughs apart from Laura and her uncle. Daniel shouts, "You have to make a wish!" and Hussy perks up and whispers something into Harry's ear. He grins and blows out the candles. Hussy runs over to the bar and gets him a cigar. He starts playing chopsticks on the empty bottles.

Track SAND

There's a framed snap-shot on the mantelpiece of Harry and mother when she was little. She is in a one-piece bathing suit and is planting a union jack in the tower of a sand-castle, and she's covered in it. Underneath in faded ink is printed Ilfracombe, July... I can't make out what year. In the background Harry is holding a towel up for her. He's beaming at whoever is taking the photo. He's so handsome in the photo, healthy, beaming, he's still got hair. I show the photo to Laura, who's been quiet since this morning when she found a bird which had been savaged by a cat. I say, "Do you want to go on holiday?" She says she doesn't know. She then says, "Why isn't the little girl wearing sun block?" I say, "They didn't have that then." She says, "Didn't they get cancer?" I say, "Not as much as these days." I explain we're a bit closer to the sun now. People burn easier. I say, "Do you think the sand-castle's still standing?" She shakes her head. She says, "I wonder if the bird's happier now we've buried it."

Track BLACKOUT

I'm slumped into the sofa. A Hooch in one hand, a fag in the other. One of Hussy's friends is kneeling in front of me, slurring on about methadone or something. I think, "I'm not interested," suppress a belch and feel sick. There's something going on in the hallway. The party's in full swing. A dj is here from the club, his gear taking up half the livingroom. Hussy's crashed out upstairs. Two people are dancing, I don't know either of them. Some kid comes over. He laughs, "There's someone at the door asking for a blackout." I get the giggles and belch after all. I'm wasted. I say, "Who is it?" He says, "Some old geezer." I think 'police' and make my way through to the hallway. There's a crowd in the doorway. I hear a girl's voice say, "This isn't the war, you know? We don't have blackouts anymore these days." People laugh. Harry is crouched on the step. He doesn't recognize me at first, he's shivering so much. I say, "Harry, what are you doing here?" He mumbles, "Blanket. I'd like a blanket, please.'

Track DREAMTIME

Hussy's sense of time has changed since I first met her. It is compressed. Future and past seem to stretch no further than ten or so minutes either way. She doesn't know what she'll be doing tomorrow. She can't remember what she did yesterday. Or an hour ago. This is not a mental disorder. It's because it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what she might be doing tomorrow. What matters is what she'd doing now. How she's feeling now. At this moment. Not how she will be feeling in the future. Or how she has felt in the past. Hussy says, "You're playing Doctors and Patients again. You're going all intellectual." Time to her has become a matter of geography, determined by place, what club nights are on. Friday for example is not Friday, it's Pussy Willy Winkle. Saturday is Moist. She didn't see you on Sunday. It was at Taste. She charts time by navigating the club scene she knows. I tell her that

that's the same as how Australian Aborigines think about time and place. That they call it Dreamtime. She says that that's a good name for a club.

Track GRIP

Danny is helping Mother fly his new bird kite. She's just about got the hang of it. Laura's tiny hand is clinging on to mine. She's a bit scared of the kite and the sound it makes in the wind. She doesn't understand how it works. I say, "It's the air that carries it." She says, "But it's heavier than the air." I say, "But when the air becomes wind, when there's enough wind it can carry things." She says, "Oh," and I tease her, "If the wind was strong enough we could tie some string to you and you'd fly like that." Her grip tightens. The kite crashes into the sand. Mother laughs like a fishwife.

Track NOW, HAVE I TOLD YOU EVERYTHING?

Harry's got a cold. Whenever Harry has a cold we go through a routine. Today is no different, We're sitting in his kitchen looking through his photo album. He explains each photo in great detail while my mind wanders to foreign regions. I've heard it all before, countless times. When he gets to the end of the album, he takes me through the arrangements he's made. The name of his GP; who's dealing with the funeral, which has been prepaid because of inflation; what taxi firm to use for the guests, private car hire being so expensive these days; who'll provide the sausage-rolls and spread, Aunty Caroline of course, she does all the do's; who's the executor of the will, me; where to find the solicitors since they moved back in '86. I used to pretend to take notes, now I just nod. When he says, "Now, have I told you everything?" I say, "I think so." I authenticate it by saying, "What was the solicitors' address again?" "St. Anthony's Road." "Aw yeah, I remember." He says, "It's good to get things organized. Then you're not landed with the shit afterwards, pardon my français." He blows his nose. "Can't seem to shift this cold," he says. "I lost my teeth again last night."

3. Text Choreographies

Track MIND THE GAP (on the fear of flirtation in an age of anxiety)
(a physical scene)

X Between person and person
X Between lover and loved
X There's music and fancy
X And flirting
X From here where I dance to there where you watch me
X Laughing
X Stealing
X Glancing
X Falling in
X Bracken and shyness between there where you stand
X And here where I look for you
X Sweetness
X There's honey and light
X Flightiness
X Flying
X A mixture of whisper and haste
X There's waste in the space between there where you siren
X And here where I long for you
X Hold me
X Hold me close
X Hold tight
X Tit to tit
X Between me and you
X There is God and there's nothing
X In that space
X There's suburbia
X Concrete and smoke
X Where no words left unturned bricks hang in the air
X Between me and you
X There's leaves on the track

X But no, in this space there is hope and belonging
X Between where you dance and here where I watch you
X There's a future
X There's change
X A day and a lifetime
X Between here where my chest burns
X And there where you bury me
X There's maybe ten years
X Or maybe a moment
X There's folly
X From here where I sin
X To where you have faith in me
X There's change in the making

X An air of mistrust
 X And fear for what's happening
 X There's willingness
 X Hold me tight
 X Unwillingness to know
 X On our yellow brick road
 X Our shame and indifference
 X Shared

X
 X Between person and person
 X Between me and my loved one
 X Only an endless smile away
 X The smell of sex
 X And total disinterest
 X As we wield one language
 X But watch helplessly on as interpretation falls thick and heavy
 X Like nightengale's tongues to this dead ground
 X endless miles away
 X But in these fields where we harvest each other
 X And our foods of abundance rot our insides
 X There's pestulance in the breath between us
 X There's poison at our roots
 X A store-ful of seed
 X A store full of my hunger
 X My pining for you forest thick
 X As you cut me down and parch these hands that need
 X With your bull-dozing cow-dozing dog-singeing summer

X
 X But no, between where you are in full flow
 X And here where I slur I can drink I can sink
 X I can quench drench my punch drunk curiosity
 X Between here where I drift and where you wash over me
 X There's weightlessness
 X Floating
 X In the surfing breaking roaring crowd from which I view you
 X And from which you stand aloof
 X Perspires the acid taste of fog pungency
 X Weighing into me
 X I'm being eaten away
 X From my positions of need to your greeds and derisions
 X My charity runs low
 X My reservoirs dry
 X On this riverbed where here I flounder in dust
 X And burn and tighten unprotected in your attention
 X In this drought between here where I squander your trust
 X Hold me tight
 X The doubts that we the philanderers must
 X Have and to hold
 X Tight

X And there at your table where we'd drink and be sorry
X And toast to the coolness of spring that trickles from memory

X In that space between me and you there is judgement
X There's a day and a lifetime
X There's a moment
X With judgement

X Between here where I dance and there where you watch me
X Person to person
X Between here where I stand and here where you torch me
X Arson to arson
X Between touch of hand and grip of passion
X Where I clutch you to my chest
X Ashes to ashes
X In confusion in that fusion
X In that fraction of space between where me and you
X Hold on tight as we can
X There's a room full of candles and shadows and strangers
X There's carpeting wallpaper and carpeting noise
X And beer and fag-end and stench and abuse
X There's God and there's nothing
X And as if it's for us
X We avert our eyes
X Break the spells
X Call it a day
X Not a word left unturned or a sigh left unspoken
X And retreat back into our shells
X Alone, frightened, very much smaller
X And you only a phonecall away

Above marked for change

Track MODERN LIVING, I LOVE IT (Possible track for Rant?)

X The marvellous marble formica of our pillars and cornerstones
X and how well you tart up our concrete lawns
X with tropical plastic and continental coffee
X and light fantastic and muzakophonies
X I really admire that

X The way in which this disused bomb-shelter
X sunk into the waste-ground houses so many in so small a space
X and for them still to call it home
X and how we can still make love and mate and breed
X in this retirement home
X this hospice morgue
X which smells of moth and shit and war
X without thinking thrice about it

X I really admire that

X And when these worlds we're presented with
X and which we long to dream of aspiring to
X every night for five hours before bedtime
X when we fill in the gaps of what we humbly think of as lifestyle
X with alter-egos who can afford
X lunch at bistro
X a place in sun
X clothes for children
X and even afford not to watch the glamour box
X but can do something more interesting instead
X the colours they manage to bring to our lives
X I think that's great

X And the way all these frayed edges are just breaking off into the rivers
X and this Titanic we call purpose is being bled into the seas
X when we hail the navigational skills that got us here in the first place
and we turn up the heating
X lower our expectations and stand to attention
X as you raise our hopes high above this shipwreck
X diverting our gaze from the undertow beneath
X I think that's admiral

X The way you induce such pride and respect
X for this whore no one desires hunched under
X the streetlamp no one uses (sees)
X all front and fur coat no knickers
X this knacker's yard which you ride right through us
X and which you name authority
X I love that. No, really.

X Yes, and the way your roadshow goes to town
X the circus fodder with the highfliers and clowns
X the animals and whips and cages
X the knockabouts and routines
X make-up and music
X pomp and pomposity
X that really makes me laugh
X Ha!

X And when you do that thing where you spin out this legend
X this myth set in tinsel-time
X the Inherit-age
X in a land called empire lost
X and when you let us contribute to this set-piece museum royal
X and keep alive these music-hall traditions as true expressions of our
life and times
X it is such a privilege
X you can't imagine!

X And listen
X how would we survive if we didn't have you to simplify things
X like when you turn the most pressing debates into playground rhetoric
X and complex issues into talkshow soundbites fit for the uniform
uninformed
X I mean who else could teach us about politics and government
X it's just so considerate of you

X And the way you grade our status
X write the annual rulebooks
X and categorize the deviance
X and bring about an understanding of what is law and order
X how well we learn about life from your perspective
X however else would we gain that wisdom?!
X So for that, I, for one, am grateful

X Nay, I tell a lie, let me get this right
X I'm really grateful!

X And behaviour which is an example to follow
X if only we had the energy
X or the ability to deal with our conscience
X or hormone levels
X it's admirable
X how do you keep it up?!

X How do you keep up this consistency with which you judge
X the feebles and foibles of today
X with ethics and structures from before it all went to pot
X from a time of world war and barbarism and torture
X a time when we knew our right from our wrong
X what was decent and proper
X what a man really stood for and before a woman's place was so
confused
X you're an island standing proudly in this spree of delusion
X you're a rock to rely on
X a micro-chip of the old block
X I just want to be you, d'ye hear?! I just want to be you!

X Roll in antiquity
X Sell me your cracked crystal!
X Play me like a slot-machine
X You fag-end butt of a joke
X I just...I just want to kiss you!!!

Track **CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT Physical scene**

- X The clock strikes twelve
- X The clock strikes twelve and all has changed
- X All looks different
- X Ring out the old
- X Sound in the new
- X The clock strikes twelve
- X I'm full of hope
- X I'm full of beer
- X I'm at my peak
- X I'm on my own
- X Single
- X But madly in love
- X When the clock strikes nil
- X I'm relatively famous
- X I'm feeling dirty
- X I've found myself when the clock strikes nil
- X When the clock strikes twelve
- X Strikes zero hour
- X The end is nigh
- X But we've bags of choice
- X I'm skint
- X No money
- X I've finally cracked
- X I'm high as a kite
- X But weighed down with work
- X I'm a firework
- X Off into the night
- X The clock strikes up
- X And I know about things
- X I'm having a nightmare
- X We're having a gangbang
- X We're having a ball
- X The clock strikes nought
- X It's a weight off my mind
- X We're living in the future at last
- X It's the past already
- X I'm still not happy
- X I'm flirting my pants off
- X I'm passing through
- X When the prozac kicks in
- X I'm post coital
- X I'm post industrial
- X Pre-menstrual
- X Passive
- X I'm big business
- X I'm having a big bang black hole of a night
- X I've found God
- X I've lost it

X What?
X It, of course.
X The clock strikes us down
X X I'm in Madagascar I'm in discord
X Hospital
X X I'm passing through m dying
X Dead
X I'm deceased
X I'm diseased
X In cryonic suspension
X I'm playing the endgame
X The clock strikes false
X I'm frightened
X I'm in the money
X I'm a father
X Lesbian
X Alone
X With you
X With child
X Well adjusted
X The clock strikes zero
X It dawns on me
X The final furlong
X The clock
X We're pumpkins
X We're changed

END SECTION

Track **Rainbow**

This track starts off in blackout, the lines whispered and "Somewhere over the rainbow" playing quietly. The lines lifted need not be the 'denouement' lines. The lines are interspersed with the lines "Can you see it?", "I'll tell you what you'll hear" and "I'll tell you what's going on".

As a parcan very slowly fades up from behind, the music gets louder and louder, and the lines become louder.

During this scene, all performers have water spray cans which they use to create as much spray as possible in the path of the light. From time to time one of the performers runs up into the audience to see whether or not they can see a rainbow yet.

This goes on until the music is deafening, and the lines are being shouted out. The light goes to full. The fairground siren screams over the top of the music.

Track **FLASH**

Suddenly OW blinding light snaps on from front (Rainbow light off). Everyone is stood, looking out at audience, eyes adjusting, drenched through, make-up all over the place.

Parallel introductory speech (different text: ENDGAME), perhaps copying exactly the minor movements done in opening track.

Track **ENDGAME**

(Light snap up. All come to the front)

Imagine a computer game. It's called Millennium, for marketing reasons obviously. It consists of 26 levels. In each level, you must develop certain skills and have to navigate your way through these situations, and battles and quests. And every time you succeed, you gain a chunk of armour, or a weapon or something and you pass on to the next level. And you go deeper and deeper into this labyrinth world, which is always changing, and you have to keep up, and really concentrate. And it's amazing! You really get into it, it's like it's really exciting. You develop this suit of armour like you're some kind of alien robo-machine, you've got layer on layer of protective tech stuff, and each thing does something different. It's brilliant. But then you get to level Z. And it's just questions. No fireworks or anything. Just questions. About yourself, about the world around you. Simple. And if you get something wrong, right, there's a flash on the screen and you're immediately stripped of all your armour and shit, and then it waits for a second, and then it just powers down the computer. Just switches you off. Nothing, zero, all gone. So you have to start again. Go through everything again. And you reach this endgame again, but it's changed the rules, it's moved on. And you get it wrong again, and the same happens, flash, and you're stripped, and you're powered down. And you do it again, and again and again. And then you realize you've been playing it for absolutely ages, you don't know what time it is anymore, and you don't even know what you'll win or get anyway. You don't know what pot of gold is at the end of level Z. But you're addicted.

(Presses the self time button on the camera. The others quietly start counting down. The speaker remembers something)

It's just a bit of distraction, though.

(Goes and takes position for party pose just in time. As soon as the flash goes off Finale scene commences. SFX Into the party speech. SFX "Game over" mixed into music)

Camera is set up. Flash. And:

Track ZERO

Finale. Physical section (obviously). During this we snap through all lighting states, getting increasingly quicker. The feeling should be that it is getting increasingly darker, as lights are switched off (bug). Last light fades with final image, and SFX of computer powering down.