

NATHAN: Next!

*REG exits up the steps and across the gantry.*

*An elderly black man walks in through the upstage doors. DAVE hastens over with a chair.*

GERALD: Great. Can barely stand up. Come on, let's pack up.

HORSE: Oh, thanks, kid.

GAZ: So, it's Mister Horse, is it?

HORSE: Just Horse.

GAZ: Right, err, Horse. Just a minute, my colleague on the panel.

LOMPER: (*Whispering.*) Ask him why he's called the Horse.

GAZ: You bloody ask him. It's not cos he does the Grand National, is it? A big lunchbox could be just what we need.

GERALD: That's all very well, but what use is a big wanger if you need a zimmer frame to tout it about? He can barely walk. We're wasting our time.

GAZ: So, Horse, what - err - what brought you in today?

HORSE: I was out walking the dog and I saw your poster and I thought, why not?

LOMPER: What kind of dog?

HORSE: Whippet.

LOMPER: Oh, I love whippets, me. Bring it in.

HORSE: I can't.

LOMPER: You can.

HORSE: It's dead.

LOMPER: Oh. I thought you were walking it ...

HORSE: I was. I mean I used to. It died last year. Now I just walk. Doesn't sound so bad if you've got a dog. Nothing else to do, is there?

*DAVE mimes picking up a phone.*

DAVE: Hello, Samaritans?

*GAZ tries to get the audition back on track.*

GAZ: Right. So. What -what can you do?

HORSE: Don't know, really. I've got arthritis in me hip, sciatica and a rare form of lumbago. It's not as easy as it used to be.

GERALD: What did I tell you? Waste of time.

HORSE: There's the Stomp, the Bump, the Bus Stop ... My break-dancing days are probably over but I reckon I could try a Funky Chicken.

GERALD: Now you're talking, mate.

HORSE: I came up from London for the Northern Soul scene, you know, in the Seventies. Then the soul left and - I'm still here. I've got this dodgy hip - makes me Booty Shake a bit tricky right now, but -

DAVE: A booty what?

HORSE: Booty shake. Y'know.

*Despite the obvious pain in the joints, HORSE does a beautiful booty shake.*

GAZ: Oh. Yeah. Stick the music on, Nath. Do your worst, pal.

*The HORSE limps over to NATHAN, gives him the record. NATHAN cues up the record. It's a creaky start but then HORSE's old bones begin to loosen and he is really in the groove. The rest of the room is in awe of his spinning, twisting and cranking. The dance ends with a splits and a bout of lung-wrecking coughing.*

HORSE: Like I said. Me hip.

GAZ: Sod the hip, mate. You're in.

*GAZ helps the HORSE to a chair. HORSE puts out a hand to steady himself. Nearly pulls the sprinkler lever.*

LOMPER: For God's sake don't touch that.

*From nowhere comes a wolf whistle. They all look up to see GUY, hunky plasterer, sitting high up on the crane.*

GUY: Alright, fellas.

GERALD: Oh Christ, it's Guy. He knows me. He knows Linda. Did our bathroom a while back. Get rid of him, he'll blow me cover.

*GUY slides down the pole and takes to the floor.*

GUY: What you lot need is me. Guy's the name. Talent is the game.

GAZ: I like what I'm hearing. So, what you got?

GUY: I'm a plasterer by trade. And part-time hairdresser. But it's dancing that's really my thing. Me favourite film's Singing in the Rain. They do that walking up the wall thing. Bloody ace it is.

DAVE: What walking up the wall thing?

GUY: I'll show you. I'm Donald O'Connor, right? And that is the wall. Move back please, gentlemen.

*GUY takes a run at the wall, attempts to run up it and comes crashing to the floor. GERALD lowers the paper.*

GERALD: Oww.

GUY: Alright, Gerald? Didn't recognize you there. I plastered his bathroom a while back. How's Linda?

GERALD: Alright, Guy.

GAZ: Do you do any dancing on - floors?

GUY: No, not at present.

GAZ: So. You don't dance.

GUY: No.

GAZ: Do you sing?

GUY: Well, I - no.

GAZ: Hope you don't think I'm being nosy, but what the chuff do you do?

GUY: There is this.

*In one movement, he whips the belt from his trousers and pulls them down. Awe from the assembled panel as something unfeasibly long swings free.*

*LOMPER covers NATHANS wide eyes. HORSE stumbles backwards, puts his hand out to steady himself, pulls the red lever on the wall.*

*The fire alarm is triggered. The sprinklers go off, cascading water onto the stage. Everyone - including GUY who pulls up his pants - runs for cover except GAZ who stands triumphant in the rain and announces into the tannoy.*

GAZ: Gentlemen, the lunch box has landed.