



SHORT FOR JAMES

Updated: Now in two parts

A short play by Nick Miller

CHARACTERS (2 or 3 male, 1 or 2 female):

JD - Man in pub reading paper

JIM - Annoying man in pub

WOMAN (first half) at nearby table

MAN or WOMAN (2nd half) at nearby table

(Note: other tables are required on stage
with extras chatting silently)

Part 1 - First Half of Show

JD sits down to read his paper, next to a man he doesn't know, who looks at him and makes a noise

Jim: Tch

JD looks at him but looks back at his paper

Jim: You know what you wanna do ?

JD: I beg your pardon?

Jim: You know what you wanna do ?

JD: What... in the immediate future? My 5 year plan?

Jim: You know what you wanna do to make a fortune?

JD: Well that would be nice. What is it that I want to do?

Jim: Well you know when you get tomato sauce on your trousers like?

JD: Well not really but go on.

Jim: What you wanna do is make trousers that have got like a sheen on them. Like a laminate. And you take a J cloth out with you and a bottle of water. When you go out, like. So when you get tomato sauce on your trousers, right, you pull out the J cloth, wet it with the bottle of water, and just wipe it off.

Pause

JD: That'll make me a fortune will it?

Jim: Cos its got like a laminate. Shiny surface. Bosh. One wipe. Bosh off your trousers. No marks. Simple.

JD: Indeed you are.
So do you get ketchup down your trousers often then?

Jim: All the time. Who doesn't?

JD: Everyone other than you, I'd imagine.

Jim: Make a fortune.

JD: Hang on. Let me give Elon Musk a ring.
He must be really pissed off he didn't think of it first.

Jim: No don't tell him.

JD: Don't tell Elon Musk?

Jim: He'll nick my idea again.

JD: Again? Elon Musk will nick your idea again?

Jim: Electric cars.

JD: Electric cars? Electric cars were your idea.

Jim: 100%.

JD: And Elon Musk nicked the idea.

Jim: Yep. Almost exactly the same.

JD: Almost the same? So what was the difference between your idea and his?

Jim: My one you have to plug it in.

JD: But surely you have to plug in a Tesla.

Jim: Yes but I couldn't get long enough cable extensions for mine.

JD laughs

JD: Oh right. So yours had to STAY plugged in when you drove them around?
Bloody annoying eh? So near yet so far.

Jim: Well not very far as it turned out.

JD: Very frustrating for you.
So anyway... if you're telling me how to make a fortune from trousers...

Jim: Laminated trousers.

JD: Laminated trousers. So why haven't you made a fortune then?

Jim: Too busy.

JD: Too busy? What do you do for a living then?

Jim: Well I'm on the social at the moment.

JD: At the moment? Recently lost your job?

Jim: Yep. 1997.

JD chuckles and goes back to reading his paper

Pause

Jim: You know who used to come in here?

JD tries to ignore him

Jim: Used to come in here all the time.

JD: *(to himself)* This should be interesting.
OK have I got to guess or are you going to tell me?

Jim: Go on then. Guess.

JD: That'll teach me... OK let me think...
Someone famous?

Jim. Very. Very famous. Very very famous.

JD: Oh, I don't know. Someone famous who lives local.
Nick Ferrarri?

Jim: No not her.

JD: Gemma Collins? The Pope? Jesus?

Jim: Don't be stupid. Gemma Collins. As if she'd come in here.

JD: *(to himself)* Why oh why am I even engaging in conversation.
OK. Tell me. Who used to come in here all the time?

Jim: That Lady Diane.

Long pause. JD looks incredulous.

JD: Lady Diane?

Jim: Lady Diane.

JD: Princess Diana.

Jim: That's him.

JD: Princess Diana?

Jim: The Princess... of the Welsh.

JD: Princess Diana, The Princess of Wales. The late Princess Diana.
Used to come in here all the time?

Jim: Yep. Not so loud.

JD: *(baffled)* In case Charles finds out?

Jim: In case Prince Philip finds out.

JD: In case the late Prince Philip finds out that the late Princess Diana
used to come in here a lot?

Jim: You got it. You know what he's like.

JD: I hate to be pedantic, but I'm not sure if you're aware:
This Wetherspoons was built in. what, 2005 maybe?
And Princess Diana died in a car crash in 1997.

Jim: Or did she?

JD: Well I think it's fairly well documented.

Jim: Or was it?

JD: OK I see where this is going now. So in your world of conspiracy Princess Diana didn't actually die in a car crash in 1997?

Jim: Doppelganger.

JD: Doppelganger?

Jim: She paid for a lookalike.

JD: A Lookalike? So she, what, paid for a lookalike to die in a car crash for her?

Jim: It would have been good money. Loads of it.

JD: Yes but... what would be the point... oh never mind.
So why did she like coming in here?
I suppose it was the ten quid pie and pint offer was it?

Jim: Curry night.

JD: Of course it was. She loved a curry did she? Princess Diana?

Jim: Loved it. Loved it.

JD: Fascinating. What was her favourite?
I bet it was Chicken Korma. Or did she like the hot stuff?

Jim: Lamb Bada.

JD: Lambada. Isn't that....? Oh it doesn't matter.

He looks at his watch.

JD: Ooh crikey. Is that the time? I have to... get... my... wife... from the... garage.

Jim: You keep her in the garage?

JD: No she's having her car ...
He decides to go along with the misapprehension
Yes I keep her in the garage. I only let her out on a Thursday.
Anyway thanks for the... trouser idea.

JD leaves.

Jim moves to another table and tries to sit next to a lady looking down at her phone

Jim: You know what you wanna do to make a fortune?

The woman doesn't look up

Woman: Fuck off, Jim.

Jim shuffles off.

Part 2 - 2nd Half of Show

*This time JD is already sitting down with his paper.
Jim appears and makes a beeline for him and sits down.*

Jim: Alright?

JD: Oh Jesus.

Jim: No not Jesus. Jim. We met last week.

JD: Oh God... I mean hello Jim.

Jim: The name's Jim

JD: Yes I know... I just said hello Jim.

There's an awkward pause as JD tries to hide himself in his paper.

Jim: I'm thinking of starting a new pop group band.

JD: *Reluctantly responding*
A pop group band?

Jim: Yep. All these so-called pop group band popstars make loads of money. Rolling in it. Rolling in it.

JD: Well not all of them.

Jim: Well most of all of them.

JD: Well not most... Anyway why are you telling me this?

Jim: Well all these pop group bands make loads of money.

JD: Yes you just said that and I said not all of them make money. Only the really famous ones

Jim: Ah yes... but I'm gonna start a famous one.

JD: Jim, you can't just START being famous.

Jim: Yes but I've got it all planned. Big marketing campaign. Big.
He makes a gesture to reference 'big'

JD: Really? What does that involve?

Jim: I put a card up in the Post Office. On the notice board.

JD: Oh yeah. That'll do it.
Pause
I know I'm really going to regret asking you this but what sort of band will it be.

Jim: A Pop group band

JD: A pop group band?

Jim: Yep

JD: What sort of music?

Jim: Pop group music

JD: Pop group music?
He looks frustrated with himself for asking
OK. So what are you gonna call the band? You pop group band.

Jim: I thought about Take That

JD: Take That?

Jim: Yep.

JD: Well obviously you can't call it Take That

Jim: Why not?

JD: Because there's already a band called Take That.

Jim: Really? Who?

JD: Take That.

Jim: Blimey. I must admit that is quite similar.

JD: No it's not similar. It's the SAME. It's exactly the SAME.
Anyway... oh god why am I doing this... so what instrument
can you play?

Jim: The racket type one.

JD: The what?

Jim: The one with like a round bit at one end a like a stick sticking out
with some wires.

JD: A guitar?.

Jim: I think it's called a bingo.

JD: A banjo?

Jim: That's it. A bingo.

JD: So... you can't actually play anything!
And what band ever used a... a bingo?

Jim: O2.

JD: O2? You mean U2?

Jim: That's it. O2. With that bird. Bonio.

JD: Bono. But they don't use a... anyway. I better be off.
Good luck with the new career. I better...

JD leaves. Jim gets up and shuffles off and sits next to someone at another table.

Jim: That bloke keeps his wife in the garage.
He makes a gesture to imply that JD is crazy.