



Traverse Theatre Company



by Gary McNair

*Locker Room Talk* received its world premiere  
at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh on 21 August 2017

A Traverse Theatre Company Commission

**'Some Make Trump Look Like A Gentleman':  
What Men Really Talk About When They Talk About Women**

by Gary McNair

In January this year, I began a process of asking hundreds of men about the things they say to other men when they talk about women. I was creating a verbatim play called *Locker Room Talk*, where the real words of men would be spoken aloud by an all-female cast.

All the men that I interviewed knew that they were being recorded and that their words could be used as part of the play. However, I promised them anonymity. With a great sense of camaraderie, I was welcomed in to work and social spaces from office blocks to tower blocks, from the doctor's surgery to the dance floor.

I wanted to know if the misogynistic language exposed on Donald Trump's campaign trail reflected that of modern men. What I discovered is that some modern men can make Donald Trump look like a perfect gent.

My catalyst was what the world dubbed #pussygate: the moment when Trump was caught on a live mic with daytime chat show host Billy Bush, bragging about sexual assaults that he'd committed. That detail is sometimes left out – that he was bragging about committing sexual assault – but make no mistake, that's what he was doing.

In among the outrage there was a small amount of public debate. Mainly, it consisted of people either claiming that what was said was fine because it was only 'locker room banter', or it was sports stars making the point that no-one in their locker room ever talked that way. Within a few days, the news cycle moved on to something else, and a much needed debate was over before it even began.

I was left feeling angry. It wasn't because the language that Trump used had shocked me. Or, at the very least, it was nothing I hadn't heard before. I've sat in many rooms, pubs, parties and workplaces, listening to men around me making sexually inappropriate comments, from the light to the aggressive. What

gets to me is that in many cases, the aim of the comments has actually been to form a bond with me, or with the group at large. In fact I've heard some horrible things in my life, and I'm ashamed to say that I've let many of them fly. I hate it when someone lets me in on a sexist joke, but what I hate more is that I still struggle for a way to show my objection without looking like a stick-in-the-mud.

So I picked up my dictaphone, and I opened conversations with men. It threw up a lot of voices that I recognised, but the speed and the comfort with which people were happy to share their misogynistic views left me surprised. It made me realise that I'd been becoming gradually blind to the problem because I'd been subconsciously weeding those sorts of people out of my life. It took me 31 years to surround myself with people who don't speak like that, but it only took me 4 weeks to find days worth of audio filled with hate and with derision for women, casual sexism and sometimes disturbing violence.

I spoke to at least twenty men who repeated a variation of this statement:

"Of course I want women to have equal rights, but we'll never have equality until a man can punch a woman in the face."

Generally, the guys I spoke to had no idea that they were doing anything wrong. They were making each other laugh when they were saying things like claiming they would take a colleague "back to her virginity and do it right". If challenged, the response was generally along the lines of "when he [Trump] says things it sounded quite rapey and seedy but when we say it, everyone knows it's a joke". And while there was no way of proving that the humour they gave themselves made what they were saying harmless, it's hard to recognise that you're doing something wrong when you're having such a good time. It's also hard to be the dissenting voice in that group, as some guys also observed.

Both the Traverse, the producing company, and I agreed that the resulting theatre piece should be unashamedly relentless in the way it lays bare the worst things that we think and say about women, and we make no apology for that. I set out to prove that this type of conversation exists – within the football teams we play with and support, within the shops we use and the pubs we frequent, in our schools, our universities, on the street and in our workplaces.

Men who think it's okay to reduce women to a set of numbers.

Men who think it's acceptable to shout at women in the street.

Men who laugh at the idea of killing a woman so people don't find out you slept with her.

People have been quick to say to me that this is not all men. And of course, I would agree with that. But I think we have to ask if any amount of men speaking like this is too many.

I don't have any answers, and the performance doesn't answer any questions either. It does, however, create a space for the conversation that was cut short to take place. And the conversation continues. *Locker Room Talk* is designed to be presented with a post-show discussion. Originally this was planned so that we could glean feedback on the performance during its 'work in progress' stage. In each of these discussions so far at the Traverse and then in Dublin, people have cried, they've shared anxieties, worries, confessions and frustrations – at the show, yes, but also at the world around them.

One of the criticisms that surfaced early on in the discussion was that our focus was too working class. The audience had assumed that the kind of language they'd just been privy to only existed in boiler rooms and on building sites. Their assumption was wrong, and when I informed them that one of the most shocking statements they'd heard had in fact been spoken in the company of a group of doctors, their horror intensified.

Their shock and their anger has given me some hope that I'm doing something right to put these words that we'd rather not hear up on a stage. I think it's time that we ask ourselves if it's all worth the laugh. As one New York cab driver said to me:

"All men talk like that. Okay – 99 per cent. Or fine – 95. Alright. 89 per cent. That's as low as I'll go. You just don't want to admit it, man."

But it's not that I don't want to admit it. I know that it happens. It's that I want to know why we think that it's okay.

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NOTHING DEGRADING

THROTTLE

It's not degradin is it, though, to women?

GIGGLES

I'm not too bad for that. (*Laughs.*) Usually!

\*

5ASIDE 1

It's more about the tone that you say something. Like when he's said it, it sounded quite rapey and seedy but when we say it, everybody knows it's a joke.

5ASIDE 2

Aye.

5ASIDE 1

Certain guys that... we both know, if you're in a car with them driving about and then you just stopped at a traffic light and he'd be like, "she's bangin."

5ASIDE 2

You'd go "she's alright."

5ASIDE 1

"Smash her back doors in." That, that is, that is...

\*

GIGGLES

Ahhh... 's good laugh yeah. Not bothered. (*Laughs.*) Might let it fly if I think it's funny. (*Laughs.*) Depends on how serious their face was when they said it! Ha ha ha!

\*

CANNAE

There's things I don't want to say. There's more things I don't want to say. I cannae, I cannae. I wid, know I wid but I cannae. There's just stuff that cannae be says to you.

\*

## BANTER

- BOILER 1 Ha! Naw fuck, I'm not even that talkative. What we dae doon here is slag fuck oot of every other person in the building. "She'd get it. She'd get it. She's a rug muncher."
- BOILER 2 "Definitely would."
- BOILER 1 "I don't like her." Aye, "definitely would," that's a saying that's often used. "Definitely would."
- BOILER 3 Aye, "she'd get it."
- BOILER 1 "She'd get it."
- BOILER 3 "She'd get it, nae problem." The scale is the size of her tits.
- BOILER 1 Aye. Disnae have to be gorgeous, just have big boobies.
- BOILER 2 Or "she's got some arse on her."
- BOILER 1 And then, "she's absolutely barkin'" and fuckin' "I'd pull my dug aff a that." That's where it goes from /
- BOILER 3 "She'd get it."
- BOILER 1 / to "I'd pull my dug aff a that." (She'd get it.) And "you wid need the Finnieston crane to pull me off her."
- BOILER 2 "I'd gie her the most disappointing thirty seconds of her life."
- BOILER 1 "I'd take her back to her virginity and dae it right."

- BOILER 3 What's the other one that I keep saying? "You'd need the sanitary to get me oot of her."
- BOILER 1 Aye.
- BOILER 3 *(Laughs.)* "Wouldn't let my dug near it."
- BOILER 1 Aye, or else "I'd pit my dug doon for doing that."
- BOILER 3 *(Laughs.)*
- BOILER 1 Stop talking noo! Stop talking! There's a woman in company!
- (Whispers.)* She'd get it!
- Naw, she's a beautiful young lady.
- Dial a hooker and get it over wi. Lithuanian hooker – that'd sort you right oot. Suck you in and fart you oot. The last time you seen a fanny it was slidin ower yer face *(laughter)* when you were comin' oot yer ma. That's terrible. I know his mum. He's my nephew.
- \*
- UN-PC Em... I dunno, I think when it comes to inappropriate fe– sexism, I, I actually find that quite funny these days cos everybody's so politically correct. When you hear somebody being inappropriate sexually, I just laugh because I know that, probably nine times out of ten they're no meanin' it. They're just meanin' it to be, what's the word? Em... provocative. They're looking for a reaction. Em... I think I'm

in the minority but I think there is a silent majority. I think most guys would probably have a laugh, but they don't want to dae it too obviously.

They'll have a snigger behind their, behind a lot of people's backs. Know what I mean? I think that's the issue. I think a lot of people try to think before they speak, and whilst that is a good thing, it can also create a very sort of boring environment, d'you know what I mean? Everybody's just sorta worried. I dunno, it's just anything that goes against what's politically correct. Aye! He basically says what he thinks and he doesnae care what anybody else thinks. I actually think he's quite funny. I just, I just think it's one of these situations you're like, "on you go, Donald mate! Say what exactly you think. Don't try and sanitise yourself." *(Laughs.)* It's, you would never say that. It's like, you would never hear that anywhere else apart fae comin oot of Donald Trump's mooth. And the only reason he can say it is because he's the, well, he wasnae the President of the United States then. He's gonna get even worse noo, because he can say whatever he wants and nobody's going to tell him no tae.

\*

GYM 3

But since Trump's been elected, then it might be sorta, aye... cos he's a bit... In a way, like the whole 'hing that came oot wi him, aboot talking aboot the woman, the way he was talking, I suppose it's... that is guy chat. I can understand, that is how boys talk. Y'know? Nights oot, n stuff, they

might see women and then they might talk "aw, I'd like to have a..." whatever, etc. S'the way your mates see a woman walking past, "aw look at her. She'd get it." Aye, aye, she might take offence to it, she might no. Some women might like that.

\*

GYM1

S'fine, don't feel it's any harm to any woman as long as they don't... be offended by it.

\*

TAXI 1

Women are a pain in the arse. A pain in the fuckin arse man. They're only good for one thing. Fuck. A good fuck. That's it. I was with my missus for years. My oldest boy's twenty-four and I'll tell you what, I'll never live with a woman again. No that, I'm no gay or anything like that. Y'know, but I'll no live with a woman. Y'know. She'll have her flat, I'll have my flat. The best thing that comes oot a woman's mooth is your knob. I would say, aye. Cos everything else is fuckin shite. Whether they're moaning or fucking whatever, bitching about something. You stick your knob in there, shuts them up and then when you take it oot they're shut up. And you're happy. Ach I know, there is, listen, women, my kid's mum, she is, she's a cracking woman. We're no together anymair but she's a great woman, great mother and aw that y'know, but they're a pain in the arse.

\*

CABBIE

You don't grab pussy? You never grab pussy? (*Laughter.*) Look. All men are like that. No? Ok, 99% are like that. Ok, 95%. Uh, alright. 89%. And that's it. That's my lowest number. NAAAAAH. Maybe where you're from. In America everybody here is thinking about pussy, "what's next? Look at that ass. Look at those titties," you know, what can you do? It's just guys. That's how we just. That's what a lot of guys do. Most guys I think. 89%. I'm willing to say 89%. (*Laughs.*) You just don't want to admit it, man.

\*

## SCORING SYSTEM

- DOC 1      How many pints it would take you.
- DOC 2      Like, it could be ah, I'd need at least six pints before I went anywhere near that.
- DOC IRONY      A so-many-pint job: a six pint job /
- DOC 2      Yeah! Yeah, exactly.
- DOC IRONY      A ten pint job, a forty pint job.  
(*Laughter.*)
- DOC 1      What if she had, like, the body of Baywatch and face of Crimewatch.
- DOC 2      What is that saying?
- DOC 4      A BOBFOC.
- DOC IRONY      Or a butterface!
- A butterface: "she's, like, bangin', but-her-face..."
- HUBUB      Butterface.
- DOC 2      But-her-face.
- IRONY      A paper bag job.
- DOC 4      Plastic bag so it's...
- IRONY      Plastic bag! Fucking hell mate!
- It's got a whole lot darker mate!
- A plastic bag job!

So she doesnae tell anyone!

Hope you can use some of this!

DOC 1 What's the difference between a paper bag job and a plastic bag job? Still alive after the paper bag job!

*(Laughter.)*

DOC 2 Is there ever a limit? Yeah, murder!

*(Laughter.)*

DOC IRONY Did that cross the line there?

DOC 1 There's the number system.

Ten?

Well if you're going for, you'll probably end up talking about someone like famous that you've found attractive who's been a ten, I would presume, so you're always going to rate someone on that scale.

DOC IRONY It's always down to a nine up close...

DOC 3 Nah but you always leave room for improvement as well, so a ten is, like, unattainable.

DOC 1 A five?

DOC 2 That's the average mark, isn't it?

DOC 1 Aye, that's one that is attainable.

DOC 2 Yeah.

DOC 1 Depends on how desperate you are.

DOC 2 Depends what you're talking about. I mean you wouldn't want to be going out with someone who was like less than, like, a, you'd want to be saying you'd rate them as like a seven or eight. But then you know if you were just gonnae go n' try an shag somebody and you'd maybe not done it in a while and you were out for a few drinks you'd probably...

I'll take a five.

DOC 1 Depends how far you wanna lower your standards.

DOC 2 Yeah, exactly.

DOC 1 Wouldn't go below a five? Wouldn't like to think so, no.

DOC IRONY Probably, probably an... older lady. How old? Depends on how fit.

IRONY Eighty! *(Laughter.)*

Clearing the cobwebs!

DOC 1 So that's a four.

DOC 2 What's a one?

DOC IRONY Maybe one that's pear-shaped.

Looking good and like shapely and then just like... at the bottom or something, totally let herself go.

DOC 1 Aye, pear-shaped I think's a good analogy of it.



- DOC 2 And then their face as well.
- DOC 3 Yeah, their face. Their BMI. *(Laughter.)*
- IRONY Their BMI! Worried about her cholesterol!
- DOC 2 High blood pressure as well!
- DOC 1 BMI would be all over the fuckin place at a two.
- She wouldn't be a looker.
- DOC 2 She might have a nice face at a three but...
- DOC 1 She could have a good personality.  
*(Laughter.)*
- DOC 4 Well, it depends what you're talking about. You can't shag a personality.
- DOC IRONY The man has a point.
- DOC 1 You probably wouldn't take personality into that scale as well cos normally when you're using that scale you're talking about just whether you'd shag somebody or not. You're no gonnae sit there and like "aye, I'd say my girlfriend's a solid like eight or ten." Could hardly sit and do that. But there's logic behind it. There is... one of my mates, this girl, like, fancied the arse off him, and she was, she was probably about a three on the scale, right. And he got pished one night and shagged her. And then he was like "aw I regret it, I regret it" – whatever – and then he kept getting pished at parties and kept shagging her.

- DOC IRONY He definitely didn't view her as a three there, did he?
- DOC 1 He was pretty pished.
- DOC IRONY Oh seeing double, so she's a six?!
- \*
- NO CHANCE For what, birds? Scoring system? Ten – nice arse, nice tits, nice teeth, nice smile, good attitude, no a wee scheme rat.
- A wee ned.
- Can a ned ever be a ten? Eh, naw. No chance. Like, a wee coke fiend's never gonna be a ten.
- Single maws? Definitely not.
- My bird's flat-chested but she makes up for it, aye. She's just got nipples like a wee boy.
- \*
- PHONE This guy, his office is five, four or five guys that work in there. And they invented a new rating system, based on three numbers. I can't remember the order but there's, the first one is just like an on/off switch: a one or a two – would you or would you not shag her? That's it. That's, that's the first one, so you're, you'll start with a one or a two and then out of five you rate the face and the body and so like a "she's a 135" would be: you would have sex with her – obviously in this scenario it's only up to you; and then you think her body is in the middle of what you find attractive but

her face is really beautiful. But one thing he particularly enjoyed about this system is that no one else knew it. So if a girl came in to speak to someone else in their room the other three could, in her presence, discuss their numbers on her.

\*

DOC 2

Now we used to do this thing, it was in like, we were doing a work trip away in China, and our game was just like, you would just say "smash" but, like, the Chinese have no idea what you're saying. *(Laughter.)* So like you would just go "smash" and like for us, it's like, hilarious. *(Laughter.)* Like walk around being "smash, smash, smash, smash," eh and it's basically just like whether she's hot or not and that's it. I dunno, I guess so. Nah, I'm sure actually. I guess it's more they don't know what you mean so it doesn't matter what you say.

\*

## IDEAL WOMAN

TEEN 1

Big personality, is the main one.

*(Laughter.)*

Brunette, big tits, big arse, the normal stuff.

TEEN 2

Not smart. I don't care if they're smart or not.

TEEN 3

You don't want a bird looking like Theresa May. Then again you don't want a bird that cannae do one-add-one.

TEEN 4

You are a bit of a Tarzan.

What's a Tarzan? It's a guy that likes a bit a bush.

*(Laughter.)*

Should women shave themselves? Aye.

\*

BOILER 3

There isnae one.

BOILER 1

Aye Seven of Nine on Star Trek Next Generation. She's the perfect woman.

BOILER 3

There's no a perfect woman.

BOILER 1

There is, you've never seen, did you ever watch Star Trek? Seven of Nine, Chief of Security.

BOILER 3

I've never watched Star Trek at all. Is that one of they ones with the ugly faces?

BOILER 1 No, she's a big blonde thing man. Fucking stunning. Still gorgeous... Denise (*makes noise*) nah forgotten her second name.

BOILER 3 Tamzin Outhwaite.

BOILER 1 Tamzin Outhwaite? Aye aye.

BOILER 3 She's no perfect.

BOILER 1 She's as good's you're gonnae get.

BOILER 3 She's as near as you'll get tae it.

BOILER 1 Cos she's in bed with a perfect man and that's no me.

BOILER 3 Well put it this way: wan'll gie you a blow job, wan'll gie you a ham shank, but nane of the two of them will dae ye the two of them.

BOILER 1 You've not met my wife, have you?

BOILER 3 Eh, but they all open their legs, that's the only thing. Otherwise you wouldnae be here and I wouldnae be here and he wouldnae be here and he wouldnae be here.

BOILER 1 Aw I dunno, I think we might have been able to genetically modify something.

BOILER 3 Well, they've got to open their legs, haven't they?

BOILER 2 But here's the question, what's perfect?

BOILER 3 There's no such thing.

BOILER 2

Cos women are women because they're women so surely the perfect woman would be a woman? That's my theory.

\*

LAYWER

Well, you know, tends to be if you're pointing at a girl in a pub it'll tend to be a girl that's pretty young and hot looking you know and like your stereotypical girl on a night out or whatever.

And you're less like "she looks like a really interesting and classy and different type of attractive," you know what I mean.

It tends to be – the girls that get pointed out tend to be more or less of a type eh... and so aye, the older you... the further in age you get away from them the more you start to look a bit like you're just being a perve.

You would be less likely, as I say, to point out to somebody, "oh look, there's a girl that's in her mid thirties that's kind of the same age as me but she looks like she'd be really – she's got a cool sense of style."

Maybe you would but it wouldn't be the same PHWOAARRR kinda you know, the lads.

\*

PAN 1

If you're still recording: my bird. (*Laughter.*)

\*

CABBIE

If you go to some parties and some women, pretty women are always you know looking for you know the next big fish... you have those types of women that they will, you know, let somebody like that take advantage of themselves... for money or for positions whatever but there are also a lot of women that are not gonna put up with that shit.

It's not that they let themselves do it, get sexually assaulted, but they... they take advantage of the situation too. Women use their sex... their sexuality also to get what they want plenty of times. So he being the rich guy that he was, you know, he probably took advantage of it a couple of times, you know, why not? You wouldn't do the same thing? AH HH, you're gay man.

\*

GET EXCITED

SQUIRREL

My favourite subject. Righty. Anonymous? Keep it that way.

I'm quite outspoken, quite confident in what I say. I'm no scared about what people think about me cos... It's my, I'm in my centre. It'll take a lot to move me. Eh... Yeah, so.

I think just, in terms of romance, I think women are just fascinating to me. I just like them, I like that they're so... different in each kinda way but when you get to know some ae them they end up following the same kinda attributes that you see. I follow the whole, like, women are like cats, men are like dogs, if you know what I mean. You need to let them come to you... Like a cat. If you try and do that and grab a cat they want to get away from you. If you sit there and kinda relax they'll come to you. Know what I mean? Eh, so yeah, I kinda see that, I enjoy the kind of process, how women follow certain - how they think they're in control but they're really not.

Do more of this, do more of like face-to-face, chat, having a joke. Aye, we're getting on right now! That's it! I'm gonna ask for your number after this!

Don't do that like, "aw, how's your day getting on? Aw, you having a ni-" cos then that's what their girlfriends dae. That's what all your wee pals dae. They don't want that. They want tae obviously know that when they come to see you they're either,

1 – going to have fun, 2 – they know you're gonna be like direct with them and 3 – you're gonna set like a time to make sex to happen. Women, they want the alpha male. They want know that whenever they go to bed with you they're getting the best.

It's like, there's something that I read somewhere that made so much sense to me. The good thing is that, see when you're confused? Get excited, because you're about to learn something. Men are like an oak tree and come hell or high water or wind or any storms, you need to stay strong in your centre. Women are the squirrel that run about that tree. Soon as you start to break away or anything like that, they're gonnae swap. Does that make sense?

Eh, I'd say they are equal but I'd say there's always an aspect where a guy should have that extra one percent. And what I mean by that is, see when it comes to, say, when a woman starts flapping, or when a woman comes in and she's like, "aw, I've had a terrible day. What we gonna do about this? I've got this bill? Oh my god I'm stressed oot," it takes a guy to come and just say, "calm doon. It's gonna be alright. This is what we're gonna do. Everything's fine."

It's like when, it's like when a young girl goes to her dad for a cuddle, d'you know what I mean? They feel safe. That's what they're doing with you. They're coming to you to feel safe, so you should have, I would agree that they should have that one percent, in the right times. No all the time.

Don't be, don't be a dick. D'you know what I mean?

\*

## EQUALITY

TAXI 2

They rule the world, don't they? They do. Well, in every way actually. Nothing happens unless they say it's ok. Have you got a girlfriend? Right so ok, when she wants sex, do you ever say no? Very rarely. But, when she – when you want it, I bet you she says no loads of times. And there's nothing you can dae. She rules the world. It's gonnae cost you after, the manipulation of your good nature. Most of the time, there's something in it for her, whether you like it or not. The next day you'll be paying for something or other, she's got something that you might not be too happy about.

\*

TEEN 2

Obviously I want people to have equal rights and that. But it's when it's shoved in your face.

TEEN 3

I think women have more rights here, to be honest. They feel like they're higher up, like... They feel like they're better people than boys, like, men. Arrogance. The way they speak to people. Normally it's girls that are pure right up themselves in the first place. Basically a girl who treats guys like shite feels like they should be treated the best way, like the best and all that.

\*

UN-PC

Depends who's grabbing them. I worked wi a lassie that was sixteen, and she took offence at an older guy saying, he'd said something about, like "wouldnae mind shaggin her" but she was sixteen.

I mean she wasnae under age or anything. But she was a lot younger than her, him. So he said that to a work colleague and then it came back to her. She was totally affronted and she went to the manager and made a complaint about it. And he got hauled over the coals for it, right? But, what, what I was thinking was, what would happen if that had been a sixteen year old guy that she fancied that had said that about her? Would she have been so affronted? Or would she have just thought "there's a guy trying to chat me up? He fancies me." Know what I mean? That's maybe ageism then, rather than sexism. I don't know, it's individuals, it's, it all depends on an individual. I mean if I was sixteen and a forty year old woman said she wanted to have sex with me, you'd probably take it as a compliment. I'd take it as a compliment, if some– if somebody wants to sleep with you. But it depends where you are in your ain self as a person. Maybe she's quite sheltered in a lot of ways.

\*

## COOKING

Sexism? No, I mean... It's mostly guys that does the cooking and things like that now so a lot of the elements that were originally eh... labelled as eh, that's a woman's job, in the kitchen or whatever, are no longer the case, as far as I can see.

\*

LAWYER

Erm... it's... I suppose... It's generally fine, you wouldn't generally notice a difference between... you wouldn't see it as being the guys and the girls. We're not divided in anyway. You know, we're not in different eh... there's never a point where you're in a changing room or whatever with the guys so there's not really that same... like physically we're not on our own... often. I suppose the only times that it comes up is probably ermmm... now and again... I suppose you might hear golf days and these types of things. There might be some grumbling for the girls that there's a guy / what's seen as a men only event with clients or whatever it might be and on the flip side... they now have a... a lunch; a Glittery Lunch.

\*

BIAS

I think it depends on the degree of what the feminist then wants to go to. Which can then often be like a bias then against the male.

\*

READER

I believe when it comes between men and women there are certain things men are better at. There are certain things that women are better at. I mean I've read most of this stuff, ok?

Em, men apparently have better spatial awareness than women so therefore then would kinda go towards suggesting men maybe are better drivers. Maybe they're not. Again, everyone is different. There's seven billion people on the planet.

There's probably gonna be some contradictions here, there and everywhere. Em... Say, for example, em, you offer to help a woman with your bags and then that particular woman says "why, do you think that's because I can't do it?" I find that to be, well, I am a larger human being than you. I can probably lift that easier than you could. I don't see that as sexist. I don't see that as being anti, y'know, equal opportunities or anything like that. I'm just saying that is solid fact.

\*

BIOLOGY

As much as eh people want equality, it might not happen because, em, it's cos of biology. In the past, right, let's say ten thousand years ago, like when we were cavemen, like biology, it was, men went out to hunt and the women were always at, back at the camp and everything like that. And through biology, some of those em, primal instincts and stuff like that, evolved with us. And so that's still in our heads, so from a DNA and biological point of view, it might not always be possible.

\*

## HE'S GOOD FOR THE WORKPLACE BANTER

CAFE Aw god, just, just workin in a gym, you would... obviously you just have a high turnover of attractive girls coming into the gym. So, every boy that works in the gym would, would be chatting about the attractive girls that would be, be coming and, y'know, "check out that arse" or "check out her tits" or, "she's quality, she's brilliant" or, y'know, it'd be things like that and then, y'know, you'd be then chatting with punters that come into the gym, about, y'know, who's who, and, y'know, they'd be, "wonder who she's pumpin" and all that. Y'know, like, lad chat.

\*

PHONE A few years ago, I was, had a female boss startin, eh... and eh, I was out for a drink with a colleague on a business trip. He was asking me what I thought about it and I, y'know, said I heard she's quite good. And he said he wasn't too happy, cos he wanted someone else to be the boss. And his suggestion was that someone should get her pregnant.

\*

BOILER 1 He's good for the workplace banter.

BOILER 4 What's that?

BOILER 2 We're talkin about banter towards women.

BOILER 1 Workplace banter about women, towards women and in the presence of women.

BOILER 4 Women should be... in Tesco's workin n aw that, oot the road. Behind a till. That's my kinda hingmy. Just get them behind a till. Keep 'em in the kitchen, in the hoose. Take back the vote...

Aw aye, they don't know what they're fuckin daein hauf the time, eh? You try workin with four ae them, you come in here, you don't know which one of them's on their fuckin period.

BOILER 1 PMTed oot their fuckin napper.

BOILER 4 You don't if you're gonna get Mother Theresa or fuckin /

BOILER 2 I was told it all lines up after a while.

BOILER 4 / Rosemary West, know what I mean? That's what you've got with women. Nope. Fuck 'em.

\*

LAWYER Sometimes you get into a discussion about like careers and people being promoted and the sacrifices that people might make... Or eh, why aren't there as many girls that are partners at the moment and whether that's just a sort of delay in them catching up with guys because of the numbers coming through university or whether it's actually it's more tied to... there's elements of eh... families and practical reasons why a lot of the girls maybe don't want to be senior person in a law firm because of the amount of time that they need to commit to that and then you get the more sort of



feminist view which would be well, it's it's it's unfair that they are / girls aren't given that (*big breath*) opportunity as much often as guys are because they might want to have a family as well and I suppose, yeah, the argument against that might be "well, you've got choices to make" and if you choose you want to have a family and you want to spend that much time with them then maybe you aren't gonna progress as quickly in your work.

\*

TAXI 3

They would maybe run it better but they would never have the chance to run it better because guys are better than women.

But would you admit it to a woman? *You're* number one. *You're* the best of the best. No matter who you're up against. That's the way you always need to be.

Women are worse than guys. I'll tell you that right now. I've had more bother or hassle off of women in this car. Well, not this car, but doing this job, than I have had off of guys. I've had women hitting me, scream and shout at you. They just are not rational enough because they think they're better. They just need to be put in their place. "Shut the fuck up, I'm no taking you home" basically. That's the way it goes, that's it. Naw, god's honest truth, I've had mair hassle off of women in the last six years than I have guys, aye.

\*

CABBIE

I had a woman in here once. She was eh.. she started talking about politics and then I said "yeah I voted for Trump." She wanted to fucking rip my head off. "What's wrong with you? You see the way he talks to women? Ergh." I said, "listen," she was younger so I... I said, "listen uh, do you have a dad?" She was like "yeah I have a dad." "Your dad sounds like the same way." She's like "nah he doesn't." Well, not in front of you. But that's the truth.

Some people ask me "hey man, don't you have a daughter?" I say "yeah, I have two daughters." "So, why you vote for him?" I say "what's that got to do with anything?" It's not like he was doing that when he was the president. This happened to him when he was just a, you know, just some rich guy. No, it's not that we validate... validate the behaviour. And it's not really like he... ye know... raped somebody or something like that.

\*

## A TOXIC IDEALOGY

GYM 2 Eh, is that n- feminism, it's something to do with like sexism, er, and a lot of things em at the minute are like sexist towards... and I think is it not like women having like equal sort of as men, equal rights as men and I'm not too, I don't really know much about feminism so...

\*

GYM 3 I'd say it's like women... who just try and pick at everything so if like a woman mebbe disnae get as high a position and as much money as a guy who might, they might see that, some women probably find that sexist.

\*

READER Say for example, you've got your militant feminists out there or something like that, men are apparently the enemy. You know, if they are, to a lot of these people, I would say that is just sexism towards men, you know what I mean? That's nothing to do with men thinking they're better than women, that's them just being blatantly pissed off at men for whatever reason they may have, it might be something that happened in their past, it might be recently so on and so forth. But, em when it comes down to the facts of life there are certain things that men may be better at and there is things that women are better at, it just depends on the issue at the time. But it doesn't apply to everyone. You know what I mean? I mean, there's women that come in here and lift heavier weights than I can.

\*

UN-PC

Feminism? I don't think it really exists any mair, really. I think, they're talking equality aw the time so, the way I look at it is, we're aw equal, when it comes doon to it. So, feminism, I think is just over-stating, really. It's like saying "masculinism", it doesn't really make sense to me. Mebbe in the sixties and seventies feminism would have been a big issue, when obviously women didn't have as many rights as men. But I don't really relate to feminism anywhere, I just look at it as being just everybody doing the right thing.

They must still feel that feminism has a role to play, I suppose, they must feel there is still inequality to some extent. Which I suppose there might be, em, in certain areas... but fae my perspective it just seems like everybody is just doing the same job, getting the same work done and sexuality I don't think really makes a big issue these days I don't think. Not as much as it used to.

\*

BOILER 2

Now it's gone a bit too far - wanting more rights. I know they probably don't see it as them wanting more rights than men but they're actually kind of doing that.

BOILER 1

Like Miley Cyrus and Madonna and all that kicking up a stink cos Trump says something, they're the ones sitting in the pictures like that. Inspiring young girls to sit like that with their nipples hanging out

and their tits hanging out, and legs up there and everything. Touching people's crotches on stage and all that. But they're up in arms when Donald Trump says something about women twelve years ago.

That is feminism. "I'm gonna burn my bra cos I want the same rights as you" and then "what do you mean you're fucking not going to hold the door open for me," "oh don't step on the bus before me" – that does my nut in. You're standing there one or two minutes waiting for a bus and a woman comes up besides you, then passes by right in front of ya. You wanted equal rights hen, get tae fuck. You wait until you're offered to go on the bus, just don't assume that everybody's going to let you go on the bus afore you – cheeky bitch.

BOILER 3      Aye, well they can stick their feminism right up their arse.

\*

FAJITA 1      Right, why d'you get knocked back?  
Come on doll!

FAJITA 2      D'you want to come make my dinner?

FAJITA 1      What d'you think about feminists?  
We don't– shh! Stop!

FAJITA 2      Shut wan ae your mooths. D'you want to make my dinner since you're a woman.  
(*Laughter.*)

FAJITA 1      Aaaaah! Hurry up.

FAJITA 2      Get in the kitchen!

FAJITA 1      OOOOFT. They're alright for the bedroom.

Naw, they too – haw! HAW! OW'R HERE.  
C'm here!

FAJITA 2      But is she a, is she a male – a maleist, is that a word? Maleist?

FAJITA 1      A maleist?!

FAJITA 2      Right, it's no a hingy but they pick and choose when they want to be feminists.

FAJITA 1      I can hear what you're saying...

FAJITA 2      D'you know what I mean? They want to, the right to be equals, and then they go, "we're no getting paid the same amount" but then it comes to, aw... aw... a man's a man, he's stronger he's hingy, but if that's the case /

FAJITA 1      They're only good for being in the bedroom and in the kitchen.

FAJITA 2      Suck me off.

FAJITA 1      Make my dinner then gie me my hole, and then go to your bed.

FAJITA 2      In the kitchen, hen. Make my fajitas.

\*

FAJITA 1 Feminists, am... I don't agree with them but I probably am one myself. Does that make sense? It is a fascinatin sentence because you can be something that you don't want / Hey, big boy! Aw!

FAJITA 2 Bend her over, rover!

FAJITA 1 You can be something, right, you can be something that you don't agree with, do you know what I mean? How can, I agree with it, but, naw... I'm one but I don't agree with it, that make / How does that not make sense? Because you're no always, you're no always what you want to be. Does that make sense? It's like, it's like, naw... but it's like I don't agree with it but I am are one. D'you know, it's like, I don't think Hitler wanted to be the way he was.

FAJITA 2 He went about it the wrang way!

FAJITA 1 It's no a set of beliefs, a feminist. Somebody that doesn't agree with women's rights? Oh, that *does*? Ah... I'm no one then.

\*

BIG GUY What's a feminist? A nazi. *(Laughter.)*

\*

GENUINELY I genuinely don't give a fuck. I don't know about you? Yeah?

\*

STAG 1 Personally I'm of the opinion that feminism is a very toxic idealology. There is equal, equal rights. The gender pay gap is a lie.

STAG 2 Feminism is women bitching about shit until shit gets real and then they go "oh, can't do that no more!" That's feminism in a nutshell.

STAG 3 We are going to have a pro-feminist night out! *(Shouts and laughter.)*

STAG 1 He's going to express female empowerment and discover female empowerment by going to strip clubs and looking at their boobs.

Like I said, name one right that men have that women don't. Y'know. What you doing when you ask complex political, ideological questions to a group of guys on a stag do from Belfast and not expecting random responses.

STAG 2 Feminism – bunch of fucking ugly lesbians. *(Laughter.)*

\*

CAMPUS 1 Women, I don't think they're they're taking over fuck's sake but there's a lot of slags in Campus, I'll tell you that.

CAMPUS 2 What you talking about?

CAMPUS 1 It's women, the birds in Campus.

CAMPUS 2 What about them?

CAMPUS 1 They're slags.

- CAMPUS 2 I thought you said flags.
- CAMPUS 1 Flags?! Slags.
- CAMPUS 2 I was like "what are you talking about?!"
- CAMPUS 1 Naw, slags. Slags. In my opinion Trump got president because he was street smart. He knew exactly how to speak to /
- CAMPUS 2 Trump wasnae street smart...
- CAMPUS 1 Naw he was...
- CAMPUS 2 He came from a rich family.
- CAMPUS 1 But when you think about it, Hillary's just the fuckin wife of Bill Clinton fucksake. I think obviously some stuff he's saying is inappropriate, but... S'not very professional, in any job. In any job.
- So, me speakin to my pal /
- CAMPUS 2 But see if you're having a laugh with your pal /
- CAMPUS 1 Not in any job.
- CAMPUS 2 And you've known them for years and you...
- CAMPUS 1 Imagine I walked up to my boss and I was like "I'm gonna grab that bird by the pussy," I'd get sacked instantly - fuck.
- If it was me as an individual, I would say that to someone if, I mean...

- CAMPUS 2 I mean, well you've said to me for example, you've been like that to a bird when we've been in- "fuck up or I'll shag you" /
- CAMPUS 1 Aye, I've said that.
- CAMPUS 2 / stuff like that.
- CAMPUS 1 Aye.

But, but she's just, she's just went "ha ha! Fuck up." So she's took that as a joke. Aye, that I've known for ages. I wouldnae go to a randomer, "hu, fuck I gonna shag your cunt in." D'yknowwhattamean? I'm wouldn'y say that, personally. Well, I might. If I'm mad wi it. I might do it tonight. But... It all depends on the action. If I get punched I know they didn't take it properly. If... I get my hole then...

\*

## THERE IS NO LINE

GIGGLES

The way you're saying it is making me feel horrible, like, I'm like sitting here like, probably aye I would laugh at that but, now I feel like I shouldn't. *(Laughs.)*

\*

DOC IRONY

I would argue that the line is different with different people. There's some shit that we would say between us guys that we would never want our, like, my girlfriend's a solid eleven, can I just put that on so it's on the record!

*(Laughter.)*

But there's things that you could say that as long as it doesn't, like, you know, you need to be responsible about who your audience is, who you're speaking to and where it comes out. So, like, if you're in like a public office or that you shouldn't maybe be like using that sorta shit. You should always be on guard and maybe sometimes you would only say it between your best mate or whatever, you'd say it between us knowing that it would never go anywhere or that.

So, I'd say maybe that's being responsible.

DOC 1

Like, it's banter, to that point when you're just like, saying stuff like that in front of your mates, but it would be beyond the line of being banter. You're not just gonna walk up to some girl and go, "you're a fuckin three," you know what I mean? *(Laughter.)*

DOC 4

I think my line would always be drawn at them not, eh, you not causing offence to the person, em, that you're talking about. And it's, I don't think you should ever, em, talk about them in that way obviously, but em, I think sometimes in those circles you sometimes end up saying what you would never want them to know, em. So because you don't want to hurt people's feelings.

\*

UN-PC

Just lots of things. First of all, it depends whether she's drunk or no. Cos if she's drunk she might take, she might be slightly mair relaxed about the language. If people are sober they seem to take offence mair easily. See with a few drinks in you, you might let it go. It, it's, it depends on the person. Some people take offence very easily, like the lassie I worked with. Then you've got other people that are just, you could say anything to them. So there's nae line that you could draw. It's just case-by-case.

\*

TEEN 1

Absolutely we're dicks in the chat. One, because it's your friends and two, because it's sorta like normalised nowadays, like. It's not seen as bad as it would have been ten years ago. So for us, growing up with, like, YouTube and, like, all the stuff, we just find it normal between our friends? But obviously not outside. It's like when we're saying it, it's like obviously like, really hurtful, but we're just, like "aw no it's not," in that moment.

\*

CABBIE

No no. I never said it was alright for men to talk like that. I said WE DO IT. I didn't say it's ok or "yeah that should be the model" or you know "we should be, you know judged based on that." No, I just said "guys talk like that."

I'm not gonna say "why you talking *like* that." I say "Why you doing that if you're dating my daughter?" Or or but anyway I don't give a shit if he talks like that if... you know, my daughter is eventually gonna probably date somebody like that... that talks like that. But I'm saying if it happens in front of me, like if I hear it or he does it in front of me, that's personal, I'm a take that personal.

\*

## CHALLENGING IT

PHONE

The same way I react to anything that's bad. It's like, non-confrontational, and just a "ah, awright." Like, hopin that in some way that me not laughin is enough, which... is probably quite weak.

\*

CAFE

Everyone just kinda accepts it, don't they? Everyone just kinda accepts it for what it is and no one challenges it. If you're just in a group of guys, it's all a laugh. So, everyone, someone make a joke and then everyone'll kinda laugh but if you then condone such behaviour and you're with a group of lads... the chat that you would get would be like... "are you gay?" D'you know what I mean? It would be, like, "what you doin that for?" You'll get someone that'll say, aw, y'know, "you poof." You would be slagged or bullied for... voicing your opinion. I think you would then be, demasculate yourself, to an extent.

\*

SCARED

You know I find myself questioning a lot of things cos, like sometimes somebody'll post something... shockingly misogynistic on Facebook or something... and I go to respond to it? And then I stop myself, cos I'm aware that I have female friends on Facebook, who remember when I behaved like that. Y'know, and I stop myself cos I'm like, "I'm not going to post calling this person out on this, because, I have friends who would call *me* out on it."

\*

AUSSIE

Um and I think the problem especially for a lot of guys is they think it's casual and especially if they're in a social situation. I mean, I was, two nights ago I was playing a drinking game, Waterfall, uh and if you turn over a card, 4, it's you know "whores" have to drink, which is the girls. And speaking to the girls after that um this wasn't sort of a rowdy party going bunch this was just you know people who'd come in on this game and I actually thought, ah ok, actually made me feel very uncomfortable. But the guys who brought the game umm... had no idea of that. They thought you know "the girls are laughing as well, we're calling the guys dicks, obviously this is fine." Umm so that's what worries me most of all is this casual sexism and because it's so widespread guys don't realise it hurts and girls often can't stand up to it, they just think "ah, it's institutional, I don't wanna, don't wanna fight this."

But just the casual attitudes to girls – things like calling them bitches. Like if a guy gets a um new haircut they'll say "fresh cuts for the sluts."

A lot of guys think, the only people who are standing up to this are you know the really out there, feminist, really strong passionate women who speak out about it; running Facebook posts, talking about it on the news.

And they don't realise that a lot of the women they spend time with are actually offended as well but sort of "ah, I don't know whether I should stand up to that because that's my friend Nick" or "that's my friend Joe." But yeah, so that's more of a problem I think.

\*



## IF YER MAW HEARD IT

CAFE

I'd be intrigued to know how they felt.  
How, how the female felt. Ehm...  
It could go either way, couldn't it? Y'know,  
she might be, also, I think she probably,  
more so, she'd probably be equally  
embarrassed, em, by the situation. But I'm,  
I'm then not sure once they were over that  
embarrassment, would they be, then proud of  
the fact that people were chatting about them.

\*

DOC 2

Well it depends who actually, yeah,  
actually. Yeah, that's the thing, like your  
mum and your sister and stuff like that  
would be disappointed but I think everyone  
else is kinda like... Guess that's what they  
imagine happens.

DOC 4

I think, the thing is, a lot of girls our age,  
that's kind of, they will have heard the stuff.  
Ehm... unfortunately, so... But I think if... I  
would hate my mum hearing stuff like that.

\*

GIGGLES

Like, you can't really do much about it once  
you've said it, you need to... Can't really  
feel bad about something if you've said it.  
(Laughs.) You know what I mean? If you said  
it then you're, like... you've been willing  
enough to actually think it. So you can't then  
take it back after that. Well, you can, but  
most people won't accept it. Aw, I think if  
I, if I got caught I wouldn't do it again, nah.  
Keep out of that chat! (Laughs.)

I wouldn't call everyone else out, naw!  
I'd just, (laughs) I would just, yeah, (laughs)  
just wouldn't get involved. Try not to laugh.  
(Laughs.) Put a paper bag over my head.  
(Laughs.) Put a paper bag over my head!  
(Laughs.)

\*

GYM 3

It's quite intimidating, I suppose, for  
women to walk by a group of... guys,  
whistling. Personally when I've done it  
tae my mates... I'm in college so it's full  
of good-looking girls so, when you say it,  
they're no close enough tae hear.

What if a group of girls behind hear you  
talking about another girl...? How do I think  
they feel? If it's a woman, aye they'd feel  
pretty... if your ma heard it, say heard it by  
accident, she'd be really offended of course,  
because, she's a woman, and you're talking  
about other women, like that, I suppose.

\*

## IT'S JUST MORE FUNNY, ISN'T IT?

DOC 2 It's almost like there's a need for it to go there.

It's a universal, universally understood cheap laugh. Yeah, you could be hurt by it. Yeah... But it's never anything malicious. You don't actually feel any, eh, any worse towards someone that's shagged a three.

\*

READER I think they're getting mostly humour. There are some people who are clearly very uneducated, and take this kind of thing seriously but that's down to someone's education and upbringing so on and so forth. I would probably say that lies with the parents more than anything else and if they start acting in that way as they grow up further and further into adulthood and then teaching the same thing to their kids then that's just bad edda-cation. Education.

\*

GYM 3 So back to when you're just with a group, boys and stuff. Aye some boys do, I've been around boys when they talk about stuff like that aye. Daein stuff to a woman, sexual, it's just boy banter, innit? Really, it's a subject, and then you go on to something else like, start talking about football after it. I don't know, what do you really get out of it? Nothing. Really. It's, aye it's just chat.

\*

PAN 2 We're just serial perverts.

PAN 1 You just don't want to grow the fuck up. Just like Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up, still talking the same shite you were in secondary school.

\*

DOC 4 Aye... If you're in a pub with a group of friends and everyone, everyone's laughing you're not going to be the one that says "right that's unbelievable, that...we know this girl, we all know this girl." It's not going to happen, is it?

DOC 1 Like, if you're going real deep and stuff, like that when you're watching like movies and tv shows and stuff like that, that's the way, like, they're always talking about stuff like that. So you just kind of pick it up.

DOC IRONY I've never heard paper bags or polly bags in a tv show to be fair man ...

DOC 4 Well it is society. It's what society allows.

DOC 2 I think maybe, I think maybe is what we're saying is it's where society draws the line.

\*

## GIRLS ARE WEAK AND BOYS ARE STRONG

*(Long pause. Giggling.)*

- BOY 1 *(To classmate.)* You go. You go! Just go!
- BOY 3 They, they, they have long hair.
- BOY 4 They get scared of dogs. Dogs are nothing scary. That's all.
- BOY 3 Girls cannot run fast.
- BOY 2 They can run fast.
- BOY 3 Boys run faster than girls! I always go faster than girls.
- BOY 2 I'm faster than everybody in the whole class. *(All laugh.)*
- BOY 3 They wash dishes. And look after babies. *(All laugh.)* The men have to go to work and get money... to... *(All laugh.)*
- BOY 1 Em... they, they cannae, they em they cannae, they cannae...
- BOY 2 They cannae what?
- BOY 1 They can't take a run. *(Hysterical laughter.)*
- They can't take a run.
- BOY 3 Boys are better than girls.
- VARIOUS Yeah!
- BOY 3 Because... Cos girls are more slower than, and boys more faster than girls.

- BOY 2 So like the women they have to work all day but the men they ha- they get to go home from work whenever they want so the... men are lucky. Cos girls are weak and boys are strong. *(All laugh.)*
- BOY 1 Sometimes... sometimes... men can be older?
- BOY 2 Girls cannot keep up with boys. But boys are fast but girls they, like, girls only sometimes they do exercise but boys always do exercise.
- BOY 3 That's why boys are strong.
- BOY 2 Girls cannot keep up with boys.
- (Laughter.)*
- BOY 3 Girls speed are zero metres! Whenever they run fast they just bump into walls. *(Laughter.)*
- Girls are bad at sport.
- BOY 2 Even though they beat the boys in the... boys v girls football.

\*

## NOTHING DEGRADING

THROTTLE      It's not degrading is it, though, to women?

I'll maybe have a moan about the missus, "women are fuckin aliens." Or something like that. "I've been in the house ten minutes and I want to throttle her," stuff like that. That's genuinely... a concern. I dae want to do that.

MURDERER      Aw aye, I murdered mine so I don't give a fuck. Didnae like her. (*Laughter.*) What would you dae if you caught her in bed wi somebody. Seen a bare arse jumpin out a windae, that's all I know mate. Coulda fuckin been her da for all I know. (*Laughter.*) I choked her. And that was it. Party's ov /

I didnae mean to dae it. Just got... Carried away wi it... Other than that, they're good for one thing, that's aw. Cooking.

\*

DOC IRONY      So I was thinking like, when you're over for this interview here and like you've said it's like for this play and all that and you want to hear this banter and that, but in actuality with the climate of like Trump and all that it's about misogynistic chat and all that, and how like we all just think it's banter and it's fun and all that, but actually like the harm it's doing and you say would you talk that way about your daughter?

How would you feel about your daughter getting spoke that way, like women close to you in your life and all that? How can we turn round and justify and say like you know that, "I'm a feminist and I believe in equal rights for women" and all that and then be describing paper bag jobs and all that. All I can say to that is that I'm a walking irony of a man and that's it.

\*

PLAY ENDS