

Welcome To Spooktown – Ed Gamble

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: Ah! Oh, ghost!

ED EASTON: Kath?

KATH HUGHES: Yeah?

ED EASTON: It's a really nice walk.

KATH: Right, we're on our way to the gym, right? To meet Ed?

ED EASTON: Yeah, I don't actually know the name of it because I – I, um, I prefer to sort of exercise just, you know, body weight.

KATH: Sure.

ED EASTON: You know, it's nice to do the things I do in my life rather than like having to go somewhere.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: For it.

KATH: Yeah. So like you're just like, 'oh, I walked to the fridge.'

ED EASTON: Yeah. I got out of bed.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: I, um, coughed. Core work.

KATH: Yeah, great.

ED EASTON: I sneezed. Core week.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Change the channel, change the channel, change the channel. Change the channel.

KATH: Yeah, working your arms. Yeah, real nice.

ED EASTON: Working the ceps. That's what I call biceps.

KATH: Yeah, no. I got that, I got that.

ED EASTON: Putting your shoes on. That's for my back. Um –

KATH: Yeah. Taking your shoes off, what's that working out?

ED EASTON: That's my back again.

KATH: Full – is that full body? Taking your shoes off? Full body workout?

ED EASTON: Full body workout, taking your shoes off, yeah.

KATH: I thought it was a lot. Well, if you're stood up doing it. Don't sit down and do it. Stand up and work for it.

ED EASTON: Um, sit down onto the toilet. Leg work.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Shit. Core work.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Stand back up again. Leg work again.

KATH: Yeah, great.

ED EASTON: What were we talking about?

KATH: Put your arms in the air while you're doing it. Arm work. Um, I think we were – we were –

ED EASTON: Take my top off for the shit. That's arm work.

KATH: Arm work, yeah. Lift the soap. Arm work. Great.

ED EASTON: For the shit? Do you fully – fully wash your anus every time you go for a shit? That actually sounds great.

KATH: Um, no. It's more about, um, what most people do is they wash their hands after they've been to the toilet.

ED EASTON: Oh, called me out here, haven't you?

KATH: So I – I'm concerned that your first thought with soap in the bathroom –

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: Would be to –

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: Put it on your asshole. As opposed to washing your hands with it.

ED EASTON: Yeah, yeah.

KATH: Really concerned.

ED EASTON: I mean I've got nothing to defend myself there.

KATH: Yeah. Really worrying.

ED EASTON: Everything – everything you're worried about is – you're right to be worried about that.

KATH: I'm right to be worried. Okay.

ED EASTON: Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: Okay. I can smell your hands from here.

ED EASTON: Whenever we're in a public toilet I'm like, 'fucking hell.' It's hard to get this soap up my anus. Got, um, trousers around my ankles. Waddle out of the cubicle, like [imitates pumping soap] push down the little thing –

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ED EASTON: Waddle back into the cubicle, soap up, flush, hopefully it splashes on, rinses it off, uh, and then I go out and I try and get my, um, full ass into the Dyson Airblade.

KATH: Oh, yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: Well the full body workout. Yeah.

ED EASTON: The full body workout. That pause there after I said 'try and get my full ass into a Dyson Airblade' is the, uh, loudest silence I've ever experienced.

[Both laugh]

KATH: Have you – have you had any nightmares this week?

ED EASTON: Yes. Um, I had a – what they call a coffee refresher at work.

KATH: What's that?

ED EASTON: Where they sort of – so I've been working at a café for about six months in Spooktown. Um, making coffees for everybody. 'Hi, can I have a flat white?' 'Yes, you can.' Make a flat white, give it to them. 'Can I have a latte and a cappuccino?' etc. etc. And then I had a coffee refresh, which is basically we got some new members of staff so it's to teach them and to remind me how to make coffees.

KATH: Got you.

ED EASTON: Turns out I don't have a fucking clue how to make a coffee.

KATH: Oh.

ED EASTON: Everything I was doing was so wrong.

KATH: That's a tough way to find out.

ED EASTON: Yeah. literally had no fucking clue how to make a coffee. Yeah, really bad.

KATH: Oh.

ED EASTON: Bit of a nightmare. Have you had any nightmares?

KATH: Yeah, I had, um, I had one where I continuous – I can't say the word 'continuously' for a start.

ED EASTON: You just did it.

KATH: Continuously kept going for a high-five and it –

ED: Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: And it was just someone waving at someone behind me. But it happened over and over in one dream. Sorry, nightmare.

ED EASTON: This is while you were asleep?

KATH: Whilst I was asleep. Who dreams that?

ED EASTON: That's fucking – that's rotten. Yeah, that's rotten.

KATH: Because it's not even like a, 'oh, that's horrific.' It's just like, 'god, that's just – god.'

ED EASTON: Yeah, social faux pas.

KATH: Yeah. That over and over.

ED EASTON: Um, I'm so sorry I've been eating this Billy Bear meat all on my own. Do you want – I've managed to, uh, buy a wholesale, um, tube or pudding of Billy Bear Ear.

KATH: Oh, great. Yeah.

ED EASTON: So I just was sort of, um, chomping into that like an apple.

KATH: Yeah, give us an ear. But like the whole ear. So the length of the – the pudding.

ED EASTON: The length of the ear, yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: The length of the ear, yeah. That's –

ED EASTON: It's sort of like a pepperoni.

KATH: Yeah. A pepperoni of Billy Bear meat.

ED EASTON: Or a cheese string but it's a Billy Bear ear.

KATH: Yeah. Just don't try and pull it apart. Ugh.

ED EASTON: William Bear on his birth certificate.

KATH: Yeah, of course. His given name.

ED EASTON: Oh, thank god it's Ed.

KATH: Hello, Ed Gamble.

ED GAMBLE: Hello. How's it going? Nice to see you two.

ED EASTON: Oh, it's so good. It's really – it's genuinely really nice to see you.

KATH: Yeah, yeah. Great.

ED EASTON: Yeah, might be the first time I've said 'genuinely' on this podcast, which means I didn't mean it any of the other times.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. 'Genuinely', I find when people say it, um, that that's when they really don't mean what they're about to say. Like if you ever see a comedian go, 'and then this genuinely happened,' that is the absolute key to knowing it's a completely bullshit story.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED EASTON: 'And then, no word of a lie,' he lied.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. If anyone in the story looks the comedian right in the eye as well, you know it's made up. 'He looked me right and the eye and he said' – no, he didn't.

KATH: That's a porky that, yeah. Yeah. So essentially we're not pleased to meet you. I think just read between the lines.

ED GAMBLE: No, that's fine. And I'm genuinely happy to be here.

ED EASTON: That's genuinely nice to hear.

KATH: Genuinely lovely.

ED EASTON: Genuinely can't wait to hear your story.

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: This is a nice, um, gym by the way. Do you – is this – I quite like this gym we're stood outside.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, it's quite – it's quite a nice gym. Stallion's gym, um –

KATH: Stallion's gym, oh.

ED EASTON: Stallion's gym, nice.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, It's for the big boys.

ED EASTON: Big boy gym, okay. Okay.

KATH: Okay. Okay.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, it's a big boy gym. I don't tend to go in here just because it's a bit, yeah.

ED EASTON: Just free weights.

ED GAMBLE: Oh yeah. No – no running machines or anything like that. It's all free weights, baby.

ED EASTON: If you want to run, jog on. Am I right?

ED GAMBLE: That's – I mean that's what it says above the door.

ED EASTON: Yeah. That's what I'm saying. Am I – am I right?

KATH: That it does, yeah. Yeah yeah.

ED EASTON: Is that – have I read that right?

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, you're have. That's correct, yeah, in saying that.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Some of the letters have rubbed off, but you're correct, yeah.

ED EASTON: 'If you want a un, og – og on,' is what it says.

ED GAMBLE: 'Og On.' Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Sort of – you put two and two together there. There's sort of nothing – nothing else that could be, really.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: 'If you want – if you want to fun, tog on.'

KATH: Tog.

[All laugh]

ED EASTON: Weird thing for a gym to say. But, you know, who am I to argue? Um, great. Well thank you so much for meeting us here. Quick – my first question, how was – how was your journey here? How – anyway, I'll see you guys later. Kath, do you want to take over? How – how was – how was your – how – how was your journey here?

ED GAMBLE: It took a while to be honest. I mean I'm sort of, yeah, not really used to, uh, travelling at the moment. And, uh, it – the thought of getting on a train was a lot. And then having to get the eight connecting trains, uh, was a bit of a pain. Um, especially when you get towards the seventh and eighth trains where they're those weird ones where you have to press a button to say that you want to stop. You have to tell the man where you want to get off.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah. Yeah, sorry about that. The infrastructure is pretty dogshit here. Um –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: I'm just going to write down 'train'.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, thank you.

ED EASTON: Great. Uh, no, thank you. Um, no, thank you. Genuinely. Uh, fuck me. Right, so, Ed –

ED GAMBLE: Hello.

ED EASTON: I think that's throwing me. Um, Ed. Did you – hi. Did you – have you seen any ghosts this week? I'm not Ed. See Ed. How many – fucking hell. Um, Ed, how many ghosts have you seen this week?

ED GAMBLE: Hello, Ed. And I think none. But I do a lot of Zoom calls, and I think maybe some of the people I've been on Zoom calls have been ghosts.

ED EASTON: Yeah. Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Because that would be the best way to disguise yourself as a real human if you're a ghost, would be to be on a Zoom call. Because occasionally there's delays, uh, you might freeze, uh, there's little –

ED EASTON: Wow.

ED GAMBLE: You know, little flaws that happen that you might – if you someone do that in real life you'd be like, 'ghost.' But if it was on a Zoom call, could just be the internet, right?

KATH: Yeah, you can get away with it.

ED EASTON: That's great, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: That's a really good point.

ED EASTON: Maybe Zoom's flawless and we all just assume it's the internet that's fucking up.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: But it's just loads of ghost.

ED GAMBLE: Just everyone – everyone's ghosts.

ED EASTON: Just everyone's ghosts.

ED GAMBLE: Also my cat I think is a ghost.

KATH: What has, um, led you to believe that your cat is a ghost?

ED GAMBLE: Well he's white, which is a dead giveaway. And then, um –

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah. Don't even need the ghost sheet when you're that.

ED GAMBLE: No, exactly, yeah. He's a very nice cat, um, but I think maybe the lady who sold it to us has basically got a scam going where she sells sort of spirit of dead cats. Because occasionally you'll catch him round the corner. If you turn off the light you'll look at him and his eyes are see-through and red all at the same time. And it's utterly terrifying. And there's – the only explanation is that he's – he's a dead ghost cat.

ED EASTON: Do you love him?

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah, that's sort of nice then.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: My cat shat on himself this morning.

ED GAMBLE: Oh, no, well that's not a – that's not a ghost, is it?

ED EASTON: Right. No.

KATH: No, it's – it was very - very, very, uh, lifelike.

ED GAMBLE: To be fair actually maybe Pig is not a ghost because he has also done that. Well what he tends to do is shit and then like accidentally sit in his own shit or walk in his own shit.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Or get some – he's a long haired cat so he gets shit around the fur. Around his, uh, around his bum hole.

ED EASTON: Oh.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: And it's very difficult to clean out. And then – so what have to we do is we just cut the hair away. So he's got a completely bare back half.

KATH: And that's – is that the main reason you think he's a ghost, or –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, I think so. Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: More – losing more and more of his hair because of his shit.

ED EASTON: I – I was wondering why my cat's never ever done that, ever. He's never got shit – he got shit on his paws once and jumped on me. But he's never got shit on his butthole.

ED GAMBLE: Right.

ED EASTON: That's because you've both got long haired cats, right?

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: Long haired cats, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: And your cat can wipe his own ass, can't he?

ED EASTON: Yes. Yeah yeah yeah. Got the old opposable thumbs and a tiny roll of toilet roll next to his litter tray. You know there's videos of, uh, hamsters eating tiny burritos?

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: I – I've got loads like that but it's just of the cat wiping its ass with a tiny toilet roll.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, less viral. Less viral, I'd say.

[All laugh]

ED EASTON: Uh, so anyway. Tell us more about your cat's asshole.

ED GAMBLE: Uh –

ED EASTON: Which is weirdly already written down as my next question, so I'm glad you brought it up.

ED GAMBLE: Uh, bright pink until it's not.

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: What is the spookiest thing that's ever happened to you? Ever?

ED GAMBLE: Oh, okay. Um, my girlfriend's alarm went off one morning, uh, and she didn't wake up for it. And I went around to check, um, check her alarm. And in the middle of the night, in her sleep, she had set an alarm and labelled it as an alarm for my funeral.

ED EASTON: Oh, no.

KATH: Oh my god.

ED GAMBLE: 8 am, Ed's funeral.

KATH: Oh. What? Why? Oh god.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, she'd woken up in the middle of the night. She'd clearly had a bad dream that I died, and so – 'well I'm not going to be late for that.' Horrifying.

ED EASTON: That's creepy.

KATH: Wow.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: That's spooky as shit, yeah. Oh my god.

KATH: That's awful.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, we felt bad about that for a few days.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED EASTON: Also I love the idea that you've gone around to turn off her alarm, seen 'Ed's funeral: 8 am', you've gone, 'what's this?' And she's gone, 'I must've done it in my sleep.' Yeah, I fucking – I fucking bet.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, she pushed a knife under the pillow pretty quickly. Well, this is all falling into place now. She was supposed to kill me and she fell asleep.

ED EASTON: Yeah. She slept through the 7:00 alarm of 'kill Ed.'

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Must've been.

ED EASTON: That's very spooky. That's very spooky. And my last question is what's the spookiest thing that's ever happened to your

cat's anus? Nah, nah, I'm messing. That's not a question, please don't answer that. Unless – unless you've got a real doozy.

ED GAMBLE: No, no.

ED EASTON: Okay.

ED GAMBLE: No, no.

ED EASTON: Um, great. That's – that's – yeah, that's all of my questions. Kath?

KATH: Yes, hi.

ED EASTON: Have you got a question to ask Ed Gamble?

KATH: Yeah, yeah. So Ed Gamble, um, okay, so the witches from Roald Dahl's 'The Witches', witches from 'Macbeth', or Which.com. Shag, marry, kill.

ED GAMBLE: Oh, great. Great great great question. Um –

KATH: Thank you.

ED GAMBLE: Let's take it from the top. I mean obviously the witches from Roald Dahl's 'The Witches' – not ideal partners in any sense, really. Like quite – quite sexy if we're thinking in that terminology.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: But then once they get their kit off, not sexy at all, right? Because they're wearing loads of things to disguise – I mean Ed looks offended by this.

ED EASTON: Oh yeah.

ED GAMBLE: But –

ED EASTON: I didn't think about all of that.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: You forgot about that. They're – they're wearing wigs and they're wearing shoes because they've got no toes. They're wearing pointy shoes because they've got square – square feet at the end, right?

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KATH: Yes.

ED GAMBLE: So I guess shag them, but I'm going to have to be quite specific about when they leave on.

KATH: Yeah, okay.

ED GAMBLE: Do you see what I mean?

ED: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: Yeah. So you'd get – you'd get –

ED EASTON: I don't – in the heat of the moment I don't – I don't want anyone popping their shoes off.

KATH: Yeah, yeah. Because even with the lights off you'd know, wouldn't you?

ED GAMBLE: Oh, you'd know.

KATH: Yeah, so –

ED GAMBLE: You'd know. You know, their little stump touching you and then their – their wig flies off and – no, I'm not – I'm not having that.

ED EASTON: How fast are you going?

ED GAMBLE: Well, look –

ED EASTON: And then their wig flies off? Ed's a beast in bed.

ED GAMBLE: Well I've got to get the shag done. I've got – I've got to marry someone and then kill someone. It's a busy day.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: This is all in one day, right?

ED EASTON: Yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah. That's the rules, yeah.

ED EASTON: Ideally within like an hour window.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Um, marry Which.com.

KATH: Oh yeah?

ED EASTON: Great.

ED GAMBLE: Lots of – that's what you want from a spouse, I think. Is sure, love, affection, all of that. But also some, you know, good information on what to buy.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: That's very much – my fiancé provides that information for me. She's very good with stuff like that.

KATH: Oh, that's nice. So you know it's like a good fridge/ freezer to buy, and –

ED GAMBLE: Exactly. She's got all the reviews logged.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: So I think it's got to be marry Which – Which.com. I think –

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: I'd be in – in it for the long haul with Which.com.

KATH: Yeah, you're right. Yeah. Good answer.

ED GAMBLE: Kill – and then I guess kill the witches from Macbeth. They're nasty witches. There's kind of no –

ED EASTON: They're bellends.

ED GAMBLE: I mean – I've not really – I've not read Macbeth in – since GCSE probably. But I don't remember them being good eggs.

KATH: I haven't read it either. I don't think they're good eggs.

ED GAMBLE: They're not good eggs.

KATH: From what I've heard through the grapevine.

ED EASTON: They curse Macbeth.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: But he's a bit of a prick anyway. So maybe – listen, I think you're going to kill them whatever. Because you're going to marry –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, I think – I think I'm – I'm happy with my other decisions and that's really the only option left.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: And I don't – I wouldn't feel bad about killing them, really.

ED EASTON: I – I also – I respect somebody who – I always feel a little fright when you go, 'shag, marry, kill,' and they always go, 'well, I'll kill blank.' When they go like – the glee with which people, um, murder –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Is quite worrying. So I'm glad that you sort of reluctantly murdered the bag eggs. Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, I think it just has to be the one who's left over, right? You have to decide who –

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: You want to shag, who you want to marry, and then –

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Oh dear, odd one out –

ED EASTON: Oops.

ED GAMBLE: You're going to die.

KATH: Yeah. Whoops.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: Soz.

ED EASTON: Oops, witch one, witch two, and witch three. I played witch one in our school's production of Macbeth.

KATH: Oh.

ED EASTON: Because it was an all boys' school.

ED GAMBLE: Now what – what’s the famous line again?

ED EASTON: When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

ED GAMBLE: No, the one about –

ED EASTON: When the hurlyburly's done, when the battle's lost and won –

ED GAMBLE: No, not that.

ED EASTON: Air the place. Something like that. Oh, uh, is it that a dagger I see before me?

ED GAMBLE: No, the –

KATH: Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble.

ED GAMBLE: That’s the one.

ED EASTON: Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble. Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, whenever I remember that, all I remember is ‘hubble, bubble, toilet trouble.’ Because we used to say that if you had diarrhea.

KATH: Oh, sure, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: Also –

ED EASTON: That’s actually in the second act.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: In the first act they do the ‘hubble, bubble, toil and trouble.’

KATH: Oh, of course. Because you've read the whole thing, right.
Yeah.

ED EASTON: I've read the whole thing. A lot of people don't read past the first act.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: It's quite dry. And then the second one, they're – they're all around a toilet. They're going, 'fucking hell.'

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, it's one of the main reasons I – I can't psychologically eat Hubba Bubba. Because I worry that it's going to give me toilet trouble.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Hubba Bubba, toilet trouble.

ED GAMBLE: Toilet trouble. Hubba Bubba, toilet trouble. Yeah.

[All laugh]

ED GAMBLE: I rarely ask this when I'm doing a podcast, but am I doing it right? Is this – is this good – good sort of stuff?

ED EASTON: Uh, well, this –

ED GAMBLE: I always want to ask that when I'm doing a podcast though, do you know what I mean?

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Just want to go, 'is this the sort of thing you're after?'
Sorry, guys?

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, is this – is this it? Yeah.

ED EASTON: Uh, so far from – I mean I don't know. I – I feel like asking that on this one as well. Jo, Sam, is this it?

KATH: I'm always flying by the seat of my pants. Uh, always.

ED EASTON: Is this what you were asking for?

SAM: Um –

KATH: It –

ED EASTON: Thanks, Sam.

ED GAMBLE: Cheers, Sam. If you can just chip in every now and again, that would be great. Cheers, mate.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, no. It's a good thing to ask as well. 'Am I doing this right?' Wake up in the morning, 'am I doing this right?'

ED EASTON: I think when I wake up I know I've done it wrong already.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: As soon as I wake up I'm like, 'fuck that, again.'

KATH: So I wake up with a heavy heart. 'Oh, fucked it.' Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Screwed up already. How have I managed that?

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: Um, right. So we're – we're here outside Stallion's Gym.

ED GAMBLE: Yes.

ED EASTON: If you want to run, jog on. Um –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: We hear you have a – we hear you have a story about –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah I do. I do have a story about the gym.

KATH: Great.

ED GAMBLE: Um, do you want a title? Do – do they have titles normally?

ED EASTON: Oh, that's such a good point. Um, hi, Ed. Does your story have a title?

ED GAMBLE: Hello. It does actually, yeah. It's called 'Gains'.

ED EASTON: Nice.

KATH: Real nice.

ED EASTON: Nice. With a 'z'? With a z or an 'n'?

ED GAMBLE: 'S'.

ED EASTON: 'S'.

KATH: 'Mad Gains'.

ED GAMBLE: 'Mad Gains'.

KATH: 'Mad Gains'.

ED GAMBLE: Don't try and add a 'z' to my story, please. Okay, here we go. I feel like I'm at school. This is so weird. Right.

ED EASTON: You will be graded on this, so.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. This – this also made me remember, um, we were given – we had to write a story at school once, uh, and we were given the title. You know when you get given the title? And, um, the story was, uh, ‘The Boy Who Was Born in the Bubble’. Um, and, uh, I wrote a three-page story, um, and, uh, my friend Jack Holroy wrote a story that I still remember by heart, which was, um, ‘one day there was a boy born in a bubble. One day he landed on a pin in France. The end.’

[All laugh]

ED GAMBLE: it was about 25 words long and ‘one day’ came up twice. I absolutely loved it.

ED EASTON: That’s astonishing.

KATH: That’s great. That’s great.

ED EASTON: It’s got everything. It’s got absolutely everything.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED EASTON: It’s better than a Bond film. It’s got France, it’s got jeopardy. It’s fucking amazing.

ED GAMBLE: Oh my god.

ED EASTON: It’s got a beginning, middle, and an end.

KATH: A tragic end, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: It’s got a beginning, middle, and end in that the beginning is, ‘there was a boy born in a bubble,’ which is the title.

ED EASTON: Yes.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Um, middle, 'landed on a pin in France.' And the end is just the words 'the end.' It's perfect. It's a perfect story. Okay, let's not put off the inevitable. Here we go.

[Spooky music]

ED GAMBLE: [upbeat music] Marcus hammered on the door urgently. [knocking] It was 6:31 am and the doors of Stallion's Gym should've been open one minute ago. He had of course been here since 6:29 but decided to give them a minute's grace period so as not to seem too desperate. Ever since Stallion's has opened in Spooktown three years ago, he hadn't missed a day. He was the only person who'd managed that. There had been others but they'd dropped off along the way. Todd, Graham, Linus. All of them used to be the 6:30 boys, but they were weak.

[nasally voice] 'I'm coming, I'm coming,' said a muffled voice from inside.

Marcus saw the silhouette of Kevin, the gym's owner, trotting down the corridor towards the reception area. Kevin was a thick-set pink man with a body that was almost perfectly cylindrical. You certainly would never have seen anyone as cylindrical as Kevin before, so it's difficult to truly imagine what he looked like. Imagine a baby that had been forced to grow inside a Pringles tube until it was 12 and you might be getting close. If Billy Bear ham was a man might be a better way to describe him. In fact, let's just change his name to Billy to make things easier.

Billy fumbled with the lock and threw the doors open. [door opening] He looked up at Marcus in a huff, [door closing] his processed meat face an even more unnatural shade of pink than normal.

‘No need for that there, is there, Marcus?’ he spluttered, mouth full of porridge.

‘Sorry Billy, but you’re late opening. There’s customers to think of,’ said Marcus, barely concealing his disdain.

‘Customer,’ snapped back Billy. ‘It’s only ever you here at this time. Next person here will be the postman, and he only ever pops in for a shit.’

‘I’ve got the competition in three weeks, haven’t I? Every minute counts.’

Oh yes, the competition. The annual Spooktown Bodybuilding Olympiad was all that had occupied Marcus’s mind for the last year. ‘Weak arms’, the phrase that was burned into his mind. [repetitive music] ‘Weak arms.’ It rang in his ears from the moment he woke up to the moment he went to sleep. And in his sleep, to be fair. All of the time might be a better way of putting it. All the judges had commented on was his weak arms. Every day since then, Marcus had been at Stallion’s at opening time. Even when they were closed for building works during the addition of the ladies’ gym Ponytails, Marcus was there. Offering to help the builders lift the equipment in the hope of getting a vital bicep pump.

‘Oh yeah, the bodybuilding comp,’ said Billy. ‘I’ve entered that actually.’

Marcus squawked out an offensively loud laugh. [laughing] ‘You? I’m sorry, Billy.’ He wasn’t. ‘But do you think that’s a good idea? You’re not really built for it. You’re about 5’2”.’

‘I’ll have you know I’m 5’1” ½,’ proclaimed Billy. ‘And it’s not about size or strength. It’s what you’ve got up here.’ He tapped his big red skull, the skin momentarily turning white where his fingers had just

been before the blood panicked and rushed back. 'I'm a man of science. And it's that what will beat the likes of you is.'

When Billy says he is a man of science, he means what all athletes when they say 'science.' Sports science. [metal music] All in all, a useless degree with no practical application in the actual world. He had a degree from Spooktown University, formerly Spooktown Polytechnical College, formerly the Spooktown Butcher Training School for Wayward Teens, formerly the Spooktown Asylum for Medically Annoying Women, formerly a field.

Marcus scoffed at Billy and brushed past him into the weights room. His workout that day went as he'd hoped. He was progressing well and the work he had been putting into his arms was starting to show. They were almost ready for competition day, and if he got his diet right and remembered to rub on the yak oil for shine, he was guaranteed the win. On his way out, he stopped by reception to buy a protein shake. When he approached the desk, Billy seemed startled. He was drinking a protein shake of his own, [car revving] but he chugged this as soon as he saw Marcus coming and quickly and clumsily grabbed something and hid it in his desk drawer.

'What's that you've got there?' Inquired Marcus.

'Don't know what you mean,' burbled Billy. 'Just the usual, is it? Two scoops of the big man banana pump juice?'

Marcus knew something was up. He instinctively knew that he had to see what was in that drawer. He'd have to play it smart. Turns out he didn't have to play it at all, because just at that moment there was a cry from the toilet.

'It's happened again.'

Billy jumped up from his seat. 'That fucking postman. He blocks the blog every time.' He bobbed off down the corridor towards the bathroom, cursing as he went. [grumbling]

As soon as he disappeared from sight, Marcus shot around the desk and flung open the drawer. [drawer opens] There, nestled amongst some paperwork, was a bag of protein powder that he had never seen before. This in itself was an unusual enough occurrence. Marcus considered himself extremely up to date with the world of protein, even subscribing to 'Protein' magazine, not to be confused with 'Pro-teen' magazine, which he accidentally subscribed to and caused an embarrassing incident at the news agent's. This was a black bag with blood red writing emblazoned across the front. 'Hydraulic muscle powder.' [car revving] The name was certainly intriguing. Marcus flipped over the packet. The reverse promised that the powder made the most revolutionary protein shakes to hit the fitness world with a real chocolate flavour. Marcus skim read this. He was used to these sorts of claims and knew from experience that real chocolate flavour meant it would taste like if a toddler ate a Freddo bar and then spat in your mouth. Besides, his attention was drawn to something else on the packet. 'The ultimate arm gains. The only protein on the market to give you that extra arm pump.' [car revving] This was exactly what Marcus needed. No wonder Billy was trying to hide it from him. He was trying to gain the edge in the competition. Without a second thought, he thrust the packet into his gym bag and quickly made his exit, weaving past Billy, who was too busy reprimanding an embarrassed postman to notice.

[choir music] As soon as he was home, he made himself a shake from the hydraulic powder. As expected, the flavour was nothing to write home about. But he could have sworn that as soon as he took his

first sip, he felt strength and energy pulsating around his body. [car revving]

‘Probably psycho-semantic,’ he laughed to himself, ‘but it can’t hurt.’ [mysterious music] He had one more shake later with his plate of night meat, and bedded down around 10. His night was peppered with sweaty fever dreams. He had no memory of what the dreams were about, but he awoke on several occasions, flinging himself upright in bed as if propelled by an unknown force. At 5:30 am, his alarm punctured through his consciousness and he fought his way out of bed. He didn’t feel good, but Stallion’s beckoned. He went through his normal morning ritual. Shower, eggs, teeth, skincare, one more egg, bath. If there was anything Marcus liked more than exercise, it was being clean and eggs. He went to pull on his t-shirt, but something was wrong. Rather oddly, it wouldn’t go on. [car revving] His arms and head went through the usual holes, sure. But whenever he tried to pull it down, it just wouldn’t go. [repetitive music] He took it off and tried again, but every time the same issue. [car revving] He knew he was tired, but this was insane. Maybe it had shrunk in the wash. He rushed to the bathroom to get another t-shirt from the dirty linen basket. And as he bent over to grab one, he noticed something utterly bizarre in the mirror. Protruding from between his shoulder blades, as proud as he liked, was an arm. It was about the size of a baby’s arm and hung there limply pointing towards the floor. Marcus fell backwards in shock, tumbling towards the lino, woozy headed and overwhelmed. But rather than hitting the deck with a sick thud, he found himself back on his feet. The arm had somehow cushioned his fall and pushed him back upright.

‘Impressive,’ thought Marcus, before returning to his previous state of utter panic. ‘What does one do in this situation? Call an

ambulance? Try and cut it off with a bread knife?' Marcus didn't have a bread knife. He didn't eat bread.'

This swirling mass of ideas was interrupted suddenly when Marcus saw the time. 6:09. He had to go. There's no way he could break his streak at Stallion's, it was nearing competition day. The competition. A stampede of panic came charging towards Marcus. He would have to be topless. Everyone would see the little arm. He wasn't aware of anyone in bodybuilding history who had an extra little arm. Or in general history, come to think of it. Then came another rush of panic. 'Weak arms.' All this time he'd spend developing his incredible arms, and now he had another to contend with and it was anything other than incredible. He examined it in the mirror. Pale, shapeless and soft. One look at that and no matter what the other two did, he knew the judges would mark him down. [repetitive music] But there was no time to think of that now. He negotiated on a t-shirt, hunched himself over his car's steering wheel, [car starts] and sped off to Stallion's.

Once there, he grunted 'hello' to Billy, hoping he wouldn't mention the stolen protein powder. Remarkably, Billy didn't bring it up. [upbeat music]

'Perhaps he hadn't noticed yet,' thought Marcus. The workout was, as expected, tricky. Marcus tried his hardest to focus, but when you've got an extra little arm on your back it tends to consume the majority of your brain power. For the first time in his life, Marcus decided to call it a day early. He stood up from the weights bench, replaced his dumbbells in the rack, [clanging] and began to walk towards the exit. But as he did, he felt something pulling him back in the direction of the gym. It didn't take him long to realise that the little arm had begun to heave, point, and thrust towards the weights.

It wanted him to go back. [car revving] The further he got away from the gym, the more insistent and desperate the arm's movements became, until it was urgently thrashing inside his shirt. He couldn't risk Billy seeing what was going on, so in order to placate the arm he walked backwards in the direction of the dumbbells. The arm led him to an area he didn't frequent, the lighter weights. At this point he had decided to just do what the arm wanted. [metal music] He still wasn't convinced that this was happening in real life, and that he wasn't in some sort of coma, so he felt like he may as well lean into it until the doctors working on him could get him into surgery or whatever.

As always at this time, the gym was empty apart from Billy, who was facing away. He knelt down beside the weights and pulled up his shirt, freeing the little arm. It immediately stopped flinging itself about, cracked its tiny knuckles [cracking], and gripped a five kilogram dumbbell. It hoisted it up and began to curl it rapidly. Marcus was, to be fair, surprised. It's difficult to imagine that on a day that he had grown an extra arm that there would be any more surprises in store, but here we are. The little arm was now in the full throes of a workout, veins popping out and a sheen of sweat forming on the triceps. Marcus decided it was probably best to let it tire itself out, so he sat backwards on the bench and prayed it would be over soon. Eventually, after 30 minutes or so, the arm dropped the weight with a thud [thudding] and fell suddenly limp, slapping loosely onto Marcus's spine. He slowly got up from the bench, being ever so careful to not wake the arm, and headed to the showers. What he was confronted with in the mirror was not the arm he had seen this morning. It was distinctly bigger, more defined, and bulging. [car revving] A half an hour workout had given it what Marcus would estimate as six months' progress. Suddenly an idea occurred to him.

This didn't have to be what lost him the competition. This could be his winning flourish. There would be no other competitors on the day who could spin around and show the judges an extra fully developed arm. He would win this competition and he would do it with arms cubed.

Every day after that was arm day. His whole life became gym, protein shake, gym, protein shake. His focus increased, his passion tripled, and his eyes were well and truly on the prize. The extra arm grew at an insane rate. It was only a week until it was the same size as the two he was born with and after that it only got bigger. Concealing it from Billy had become difficult. A few days in, he had started wearing a large puffer jacket to disguise it, and told Billy it was a new training technique that he had read about online. Billy, true to form, came in the next day wearing one as well, desperate as he was to beat Marcus in the rapidly approaching comp. The arm continued to come on leaps and bounds. It got to the point that Marcus could do pull-ups with the extra arm whilst texting and do press-ups whilst the extra arm did bench press.

Soon it was the evening before the big day, and Marcus had never felt more confident. He climbed into bed at 9 pm, showered and moisturised all over. The process had become much quicker now he had a willing extra hand to reach the previously elusive areas. [choir music] He settled down onto his side, which is how he slept now for obvious reasons. Just as he began to drift off, he began to get the distinct sensation of not being able to breathe. [car revving] Every time he gasped for air, his throat got tighter. [mysterious music] His eyes snapped open but it was useless. All he could see was the veins behind his eyeballs and red spots as he gulped needily into his pillow. After a few more seconds, it was over. [car revving] The arm felt his body go limp and released him. After slapping him around the face

and taking his pulse [slapping] to check that it had done its job, the arm began its long and arduous journey. [car revving, metal music] It dragged itself and its lifeless cargo out of the bed, grabbing onto the bedside table and yanking the whole lot onto the carpet with a massive crash. [moaning, crashing] And slowly and painfully it hoisted Marcus across the living room and out the front door. It dragged him along the street, into the park and across the grass with grim determination. [groaning] Eventually it reached an industrial estate where it finally rested outside unit ten, 'Hydraulic Protein Enterprises'. The large garage door rattled open. [creaking] Billy emerged, loaded the corpse into a trolley, [grunting] and took it into the back room. There he began the painstaking process of removing the arm. [groaning, ripping] The bodies of the rest of the 6:30 am boys lay nearby. Todd, Graham, and Linus. Each one of them with an extra impressive protrusion. Two legs and an arm, to be precise. Billy smiled and began to prep himself for a long night. Tomorrow was competition day after all, and he didn't have long to attach these new limbs in place of his own. But if these judges were to learn anything, it's that Sports Science is actually quite a useful degree. The end.

[Spooky music]

KATH: Now – so this all happened here, did it? In Stallion's?

ED GAMBLE: Yes, Stallion's gym.

KATH: You don't go to this gym though?

ED GAMBLE: No, but I know – I know a couple of people who go to the gym and they've heard about it.

KATH: Oh, so this is all hearsay then.

ED GAMBLE: No, they know it happened and then they told me. Yeah.

KATH: So is – is Billy still owning the place?

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, Billy's still there, yeah. But he's got –

KATH: So he's just hench as fuck now?

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, he's really massive now. Yeah.

ED EASTON: Can I ask a – a question? When did this happen?

ED GAMBLE: This was about five – five years ago.

KATH: Okay.

ED EASTON: Did he – did he win?

ED GAMBLE: The competition? Yeah, only he – well they thought he looked a bit weird.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: He – if anything he was too – he sort of did the arms and legs but he didn't do the rest of his body, which was an oversight.

ED EASTON: So it's the Pringles tube.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: With muscly arms and legs, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

KATH: So just neglected the core.

ED GAMBLE: He forgot about the core, poor old Billy.

KATH: Right.

ED GAMBLE: Um, just because he hadn't worked out the best way of surgically removing someone's core and popping it on. Because there's quite a lot of bits in there that you need.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: Feel like you need a PhD in Sports Science to do that.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah exactly. I think he left it a bit late, really. Because he should've done the arms and legs like a couple of months before and then just worked out his core naturally, but um – but yeah, he saved it for the night before.

KATH: Yeah. So how did Billy know that the powder was going to create an arm on Marcus and a leg on Todd, you know? Or whatever. How did he tailor it?

ED EASTON: Gosh, yeah, he could've come up with five – five right arms, yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Well it's different powder for legs and arms. Um –

KATH: Okay.

ED GAMBLE: So I'm not – I'm not a sports scientist, so I don't really know. But he developed two different powders.

KATH: Sure sure sure.

ED GAMBLE: There may have been years before where, you're quite right, he probably had to hone – hone the powders and, you know,

probably ended up with someone just all covered in ears or whatever.

KATH: Useless.

ED EASTON: Really hench ears.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. Yeah. Massive muscley ears. Um, I think this is the sort of – the culmination of all of Billy's hard work to get to this point.

KATH: Yeah, interesting. I wonder if he's working on the core now. And is he working on a core powder perhaps?

ED GAMBLE: I just can't – I'm sure he is but it's very tricky to imagine someone growing an extra core.

ED EASTON: Oh yeah, it has to be an extra core.

KATH: Yeah, but I'd argue it's very tricky to imagine an arm on someone's back as well.

ED GAMBLE: No, but then you just – that just sticks out, right? That just sticks out like one of those mice with the ear on their back.

KATH: Okay, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Whereas a whole core, how's that going to grow? Yeah.

KATH: Where would it go?

ED EASTON: Why not – why not just kill Marcus and take one of his arms?

ED GAMBLE: Because they're – his – his arms weren't as good as the extra arm. Um, so he knew that if he added the arm to someone like Marcus, they would end up training the little arm, and the little arm

was always going to become a more magnificent and bigger arm than Marcus's ever was.

KATH: Okay.

ED EASTON: So what then – in that case why not just grow the arm on your own back?

ED GAMBLE: Because he didn't want to work it out. He – and he doesn't have the genetics to produce that. So it's the – it's the combination of the – the host and the science that grows the little arm that creates that perfect arm.

ED EASTON: That's –

KATH: Got you.

ED EASTON: Ed, you had me at genetics.

KATH: But I'd argue that Marcus also didn't want to work the arm out. The arm was its own thing.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: Marcus was pulled back to the gym and had to awkwardly squat down whilst an arm worked out on his back.

ED GAMBLE: Yes.

KATH: So –

ED GAMBLE: Yes.

KATH: How did the arm and the other things that were grown on the other lads, how –

ED EASTON: Legs.

KATH: Who killed the other lads – legs, yeah. Thank you, Ed.

ED EASTON: It's alright.

KATH: Um, how – why have they not killed Billy? Why have the arms and legs not turned on Billy?

ED GAMBLE: Oh, because Billy – because Billy created them. He created the powder, so if anything he's sort of in charge of him.

KATH: So they know their creator?

ED GAMBLE: They know their creator. Yeah, of course they do, Kath.

KATH: Okay.

ED GAMBLE: They know – they know their creator.

ED EASTON: Kath, it's genetics.

KATH: Sorry, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, it's genetics. It's all science. Because a lot of these questions you're asking me are about science that I don't understand. You know I can only give you the basics, you know?

ED EASTON: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED GAMBLE: If I'd made this up I could tell you – I could tell you exactly what – what was going on and the science behind it, but I've not. So all I can say is that – is that it happened.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: And I know – I know sort of why it happened. I just don't know necessarily how.

ED EASTON: You know the postman who blocked up the toilet with his shit?

ED GAMBLE: Mhm.

ED EASTON: Was he a ghost?

ED GAMBLE: Not that I'm aware of, but, uh –

ED EASTON: That's fine.

ED GAMBLE: There's some – there's some rumours going around.

ED EASTON: Just cross that out. That's fine.

ED GAMBLE: Okay.

ED EASTON: Um, I've written down 'when did he', and then I haven't finished that question. Um –

KATH: When –

ED EASTON: When did, um, Ed, when did he?

ED GAMBLE: Shortly after.

KATH: Ah, of course.

ED EASTON: That adds up actually, yeah. No holes there.

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: So when he – when Billy, uh, when Billy chopped off the arms and legs of the, um, 6:30 boys –

ED GAMBLE: Yes.

ED EASTON: Love that. I once, um, went on a couple of nights out with some friends every Wednesday. And I jokingly started saying, 'Wednesday boys, Wednesday boys, fucking fucking Wednesday boys' in a taxi to sort of make fun of the kind of people that would do that.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: And by the time I got out of the taxi they were all sincerely chanting it.

ED GAMBLE: The Wednesday boys.

ED EASTON: Yeah, the Wednesday boys. 'Wednesday boys, Wednesday boys, fucking fucking Wednesday boys.' And they like started genuinely chanting that. Oh, no, I've created a monster. Much like Billy. Um – so to come back to Billy. Um, when he chopped off the arms and legs of the 6:30 boys, um, and attached them to him. So he must have chopped off his own limbs.

ED GAMBLE: Yes.

ED EASTON: And then attached the supreme limbs. Um –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. Are you wondering how he removed his own limbs and then put some other limbs on?

ED EASTON: Weirdly no.

[All laugh]

ED EASTON: Bizarrely that wasn't going to be my question.

KATH: So can he not feel his legs and arms?

ED GAMBLE: No.

KATH: So they are –

ED EASTON: A split second decision and he went for no.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. No he can't. They're dead.

KATH: So he – so he is fully – fully controlled by his legs and arms.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, but he controls – he can – he can stop them doing stuff.

KATH: Oh he can, okay.

ED GAMBLE: But he can't – he can't feel them.

KATH: Okay.

ED EASTON: What's he done with his original, um, A's and L's.

ED GAMBLE: He sewed them back onto the bodies. Then he just threw – threw everyone – threw them all in a big bin.

KATH: So – and he was never caught? Because I don't remember this hitting the news, I'll be honest.

ED GAMBLE: No, he was never caught. No, he's still – he's still at large.

KATH: Well he's just in there. I can see him. I can see through the window.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: I – I love that you pre-empted the question when he – when you said 'big bin', you pre-empted the question, 'they couldn't all fit in a bin.'

ED GAMBLE: It was a big bin. It was a big old bin.

ED EASTON: Nipped that question right in the bud. 'It was a big bin before you ask.' Oh, god.

KATH: Big bin for the big boys from the big boy gym. Got you. Noted.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED: Um –

KATH: Can I ask – so again this – this not making the news is weird. Because I think somebody would've seen an arm dragging a man

through – from his home to an industrial estate. Someone would've followed and gone, 'what's going on here then?'

ED GAMBLE: Well I was quite specific about that it was 10 pm, to be honest, which definitely feels like a mistake. But no – you know for a start lots of stuff goes on in Spooktown, right?

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Quite often people don't want to be out at night because who knows what you're going to see.

KATH: Okay.

ED GAMBLE: And although it took a while – it takes a while for the arm to sort of hoist the – hoist the body across – across the park, etc. Um, avoided all street lights, uh, stuck to the undergrowth.

KATH: Oh, okay.

ED GAMBLE: Uh, quite good at distracting. So if the – if the arm could see someone at the end of the street, say, it can pick up a rock, it can throw it in a different direction to get –

ED EASTON: So, sorry, Ed. If the arm – if the arm could see –

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, someone. Yeah.

ED EASTON: Do you want to unpack that a little? Or are you sort of – are we fine? We'll just let that go?

ED GAMBLE: Have you heard of sonar?

[All laugh]

ED EASTON: I have. I have heard of sonar.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Good.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Okay, yeah.

KATH: So that's, uh, that answers that. Okay.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: So the arm has the abilities of a bat.

ED GAMBLE: I don't – I can't go too deeply into the experimentation process that Billy used. But there were – I think there were bat genetics involved.

ED EASTON: Right, yeah.

KATH: Okay.

ED EASTON: You've got to bulk out the powder with something, haven't you?

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, exactly. Wings.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Wings.

KATH: Bit of talc.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

KATH: And some wings.

ED EASTON: Oh, that's why it came – it appeared on their back. That makes sense.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. Cheers, mate.

KATH: Here's a – here's a spooky thing. How's the gym still running if he – it he's killed all his customers?

ED GAMBLE: Oh, there's more – there's always more customers. He impressed people in the competition. He didn't win because of his weird core. But obviously he was wearing – like he – the little trunks he was wearing were advertising Stallion's gym and, you know –

KATH: Okay.

ED GAMBLE: All the interviews he gave he went, 'come to my gym, Stallion's.' People obviously saw that and thought, 'well I want arms and legs like that.'

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: 'So I – I'm going to start going to Stallion's.' So he has a constant new customer base.

ED EASTON: I do remember seeing that. There was a video of him on Youtube in the competition. Because it went viral because his head is – looks exactly like a Billy Bear meat.

KATH: Yeah, yes, it does. It does. I remember you showing me that now, actually.

ED EASTON: Yeah. I don't know whether, um, I don't know whether I've said this before, but my, uh, I grew up in Sandbach and my brother went out for a slap-up meal at the local restaurant. And they've got a charcuterie board and one of the meats on it was Billy Bear meat. It's Mortadella. Wild.

ED GAMBLE: Love that.

ED EASTON: Um, should we have a conflab, Kath?

KATH: Yeah, okay. Yeah. I mean do we go in?

ED EASTON: Uh, bare with us, Ed. We're just going to go in and chat. Yeah, let's go into the gym. Say hi to Billy. Or his name's Kevin, isn't it?

KATH: Should we go in to do that or –

ED GAMBLE: Shall I come with you?

KATH: Um, I mean you can if you want. It's a bit awkward. We're going to talk about you as if we're talking behind your back.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Okay.

KATH: But you will be there, you know.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, alright.

ED EASTON: No, come in. Come in.

ED GAMBLE: Alright, I'll come with.

KATH: You can do that if you want though.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah yeah yeah, I'll come.

KATH: Just sort of don't make eye contact with us when we do it I guess.

ED GAMBLE: I'll close my eyes.

ED EASTON: Yeah, that would be great.

KATH: Okay, thank you.

ED EASTON: Um, I loved the story, Kath.

KATH: Yeah, great story. Enjoyed the story.

ED EASTON: I can't find any holes in it. But I do think it's absolute horse shit. Is that weird?

KATH: Um.

ED EASTON: Do you know what I mean?

KATH: No – yeah.

ED EASTON: Like that's great. Yeah.

KATH: I don't – I don't think it's weird because we're – he's just going, 'yeah, my mates told me. Yeah, my mates said it.' We – we don't know his mates. We don't know. How do you know this is real? 'Oh, just my mates said it.'

ED EASTON: Do you know what? I think it's more for me, I'm just like – yeah, but it didn't happen, did it? Do you know what I mean? I'm like, 'oh, that sounds amazing.' But also like, come on, mate. I just think it's like, 'oh yeah, you're full of – full of shit.'

KATH: Um –

ED GAMBLE: I'm not sure closing my eyes helps here.

KATH: You know that is your fault, though. You opted to come in.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, that's true.

KATH: And sat next to us.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, I might pop out.

KATH: Okay, just give us a sec.

ED EASTON: We'll come with you. We'll come with. Let's go, Kath.

KATH: Yeah, so Ed, I think, um, there's literally zero evidence of Billy other there, to be fair. That – that, um –

ED GAMBLE: I'll go and speak to Billy while you do that, okay?

ED EASTON: Okay.

KATH: Okay okay okay.

ED GAMBLE: [nasally voice] Oh yeah, no, it's all true. It's all true. Every word of it.

KATH: Was that –

ED GAMBLE: Hey, guys.

KATH: Oh, oh, I guess – I mean that's wild of him to admit to committing that many murders.

ED EASTON: Kath –

ED GAMBLE: [nasally voice] Don't tell anyone, you lot.

ED EASTON: Kath, you can't – we –

ED GAMBLE: So he says he – he said it's true but we're not allowed to tell anyone.

ED EASTON: We didn't hear the question. You could've said, 'do you open at 6:30?' And then he's gone, 'yeah, it's all true.'

ED GAMBLE: [nasally voice] I'll deny every word of it in a court of law.

ED EASTON: Maybe he's not allowed to open at 6:30.

KATH: Yeah, maybe. Yeah, maybe it's against Spooktown rules.

ED GAMBLE: Oh yeah, it says 7 on the door.

KATH: Um, well that's – that's put a spanner in the works.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: What do you think, Kath?

KATH: There's no proof. There's no proof that this happened.

ED EASTON: Billy's hench arms and legs and tubular core – and not in a, um, surfer way. In a, um, geometry way. Tubular.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED EASTON: Um, geometric? Uh, that's pretty solid evidence that something weird's happened. Because you can't get arms like that without working your core. That's sports science. But I still don't believe him.

ED GAMBLE: Check the big bin. Check the – check the big bin.

KATH: Check the big – and he's – he's right, we haven't checked the big bin. But you – but Ed, we're going to bring you into this conflag now.

ED GAMBLE: Oh, hi guys.

KATH: Uh, hey.

ED EASTON: Oh hey, Ed.

KATH: You didn't check the big bin, you know? Have you checked the big bin?

ED GAMBLE: I trust my friends implicitly in everything they tell me. And I feel to check the big bin would be a big big betrayal.

KATH: Well now I think it's definitely not real. Now I think it's not happened.

ED GAMBLE: Why?

ED EASTON: It happened five years ago. If there's still four corpses and four limbs in there, that's fucking insane. That's not a bin.

ED GAMBLE: It's a really big bin. I don't know what that means.

KATH: Takes a long time to empty it. They're at the bottom.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah. It takes years. Takes a long time to fill it up. They won't come and get it until it's full.

KATH: Is it – um – I think, yeah, you just blindly trusting your pals is not enough.

ED EASTON: Yeah, okay.

ED GAMBLE: Says a lot.

KATH: In my – Ed, second Ed.

ED GAMBLE: Yes.

KATH: Ed Gamble.

ED EASTON: I'm first Ed. Fucking take that.

ED GAMBLE: It's your podcast, mate. Come on, that is pathetic that you're excited about that.

KATH: I feel that yes Billy is there but he is just chatting shit. I don't know what he's talking about. He looks weird but he's a weird guy. He's got a Billy Bear head. A Billy meat Bear head.

ED EASTON: Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: Like with – he's not going to look right.

ED GAMBLE: [nasally voice] It's Mortadella.

ED GAMBLE: Sorry, he gets quite sensitive about that.

ED EASTON: For a head shaped like Billy Bear meat, he's got great hearing.

KATH: Yeah. So I think we can't be like, 'oh yeah, no, definitely this happened because look at his core and look at his legs.' Look at his fucking face, do you know what I mean? So therefore it ain't going into Spooktown lore. Because we can't prove it. Genuinely.

ED EASTON: Well done, Kath.

ED GAMBLE: Then you guys are next, I guess. You guys are next.

ED EASTON: What?

ED GAMBLE: He's going to come for you.

KATH: I'm not hench. There's no – there's nothing hench going on here.

ED EASTON: Also what for? He's already got arms and legs. Our – our fucking gennies, what's he coming for?

ED GAMBLE: Yeah, he's entering in the Spooktown Genny Olympiad.

[All laugh]

KATH: I forgot that we had that.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yeah. Fuck, I guess we're next then.

KATH: Oh. Oh, shit.

ED EASTON: Well, um, on that bitter note, thank you so much for telling us your story.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: And for showing us Stallion's gym. Can't wait to sign up to that and never go.

KATH: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: You are most welcome. I think it's a shame that you've lost your trust in the world, uh, and, uh, in your friends and your friend's friends.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Yes.

ED GAMBLE: But I very much enjoyed sharing with you that truth, um, and it doesn't make it any less true because you have decided that you don't believe it.

KATH: Yeah. And you are entitled to that –

ED GAMBLE: Truth.

KATH: That lie. I think you should hop on – on your train and, you know, leave. Leave. Get out. Get out of Spooktown.

ED GAMBLE: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Thank you so much for coming, Ed.

ED GAMBLE: It's been lovely to see you both. It's been lovely to be here and it's nice to have a trip out of the house.

ED EASTON: Yeah.

ED GAMBLE: Even if I've essentially turned up here, you spat at me and I've left.

ED EASTON: Yes. Yes.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: And sorry about that. But thank you for coming, um, sorry the story didn't make it into Spooktown. We loved it all the same. Uh, it has no bearing on the quality.

KATH: Excellent story, excellent company.

ED GAMBLE: Thank you.

ED EASTON: Uh, see you later. We're going to leave now.

ED GAMBLE: Bye.

ED EASTON: Bye.

KATH: Bye.

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: That was nice.

KATH: Yeah, that was nice. What are you up to now?

ED EASTON: Thanks for asking. Um –

KATH: That's okay.

ED EASTON: I can't really say who I'm meeting, but you know the song, 'Do You Believe in Love'?

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: You know how it's like auto tuned?

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: Well she says it wasn't auto tuned. It was that her mouth was haunted.

KATH: Oh, shit. Okay.

ED EASTON: Yeah, so, um, I'm going to go –

KATH: Fuck, it's been like 20 years.

ED EASTON: It's been ages. She's been trying to tell everybody. But I'm going to go meet her at Spudulike and she's going to sing for me at the Spudulike.

KATH: Yeah.

ED EASTON: And I'm going to listen. And if it sounds auto tuned just, you know, out and about, haunted mouth, isn't it?

KATH: Yeah. Well good luck.

ED EASTON: Thank you.

KATH: Cher.

ED EASTON: Yeah, you can come if you want. But –

KATH: I mean –

[Spooky music]

This has been a Little Wander production. Music from Rhodri Viney. Local artwork from Suze Hughes. Voice by Melanie Walters. With special thanks to Beth Forrest, Steve Pickup, Sam Roberts, Henry Widdicombe, and Jo Williams. Other podcasts from Little Wander include Here To Judge and I Wish I Was An Only Child. Subscribe now on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.