

INT. CAR FRONT - DAY

MAN 1 and MAN 2 sit in stationary traffic. MAN 1 sits, leant back half asleep. MAN 2 sits behind the wheel, fumbling with a cigarette which he attempts to light with a pipe Zippo.

MAN 1

(tiredly)
You really gonna smoke that in here?

MAN 2 ignores him and continues.

MAN 1

You know I hate it yet you still do it. Baffling mate, to be honest.

MAN 2 persists with striking the lighter.

MAN 2

(muffled, cigarette in mouth, eyes crossed)
What do you care?

MAN 1

I just said I hate it. It stings my eyes when it's inside.
(beat)
Why don't you just get out of the bloody car, we aint going anywhere anyway. Nothings moving you've got loads of time.

The feeble sparks continue, still no flame. The occasional horn is heard.

MAN 2

(still muffled)
Fucking thing. Hey why don't you leave me alone, it's my hobby and its not hurting anyone now piss off.

MAN 1

(incredulous, eyebrows raised)
What... hobby? You actually seriously calling it a hobby whilst lighting a cigarette with the wrong bloody lighter mate? Christ. Have some self-respect.

The dodgy lighter finally lights and MAN 2 touches the tip of his cigarette to the flame.

MAN 2

(triumphant)
Bugger off mate, look. I got it lit and that's all that matters.

MAN 1

(addressing invisible audience)
Ladies and gentlemen I give you the smoker who cant smoke! It's a miracle, yes I know! He smokes, but knows shit all about his master craft!
(clapping)

MAN 2

What you attacking *me* for anyway, don't act like you know how to smoke better than I do. You don't see me attacking you for shit driving even though I can clearly drive better, I mean c'mon it's not that difficult.

MAN 1

(sitting up, readying himself)
Wow. You really wanna go there now do you? Ok, you wanna talk about things that *aren't that difficult*. I would say that driving is a damn bloody sight more difficult than-

MAN 2

What do you mean 'do I wanna go there'. Go where? You started it, dickhead.

He lets out a long exhale in MAN 1's direction, coughing slightly.

MAN 1

(squinting in smoke cloud)
I would say driving a moving vehicle is more difficult than lighting a cigarette with the right shitting lighter. You call yourself a smoker and can't even smoke! Literally an embarrassment.

MAN 2

What do you mean 'wrong lighter'?
(slowly, patronising)
I spark it, it lights, I use the *flame* to *light* the *cigarette*. Now isn't that something? A *flame*, any *flame*, can *light* my very combustible *cigarette*. It's just wonderful how these things work, what a world we do live in.

MAN 1

(exhausted)

You are using a pipe lighter to light a cigarette.
Cigarette lighters and pipe lighters are whole different
products my friend.

MAN 2

(actually curious)
Huh?

MAN 1

A pipe lighter. You know, one of the ones with a little
hole in the side so the flame can be sucked into the bowl
of the pipe. It's something Zippo used to make I think,
that's what you're holding.

MAN 2

I thought you said you didn't smoke.

MAN 1

I don't. Never have never will. Filthy habit if you ask
me.

MAN 2

Well how the bloody hell do you know so much about
smoking then, you knob. And why are you lecturing me
about it?

(exhaling another large cloud)
I never heard of this stuff.

MAN 1

I don't know, I've always had a passion for lighters,
especially Zippos. It's just something about them, I
collect them actually. I think it's getting on for 30 odd
now... something like that. Quite impressive...

(shaking his head)
Anyway I find it astounding that you can fill yourself
full of rat poison and carcinogens and fucking tar and
not know bloody anything about the kit you're using. It's
just standard industry procedure, if you're using kit for
any job, know what you're using.

MAN 2

Alright mate Jesus, you don't gotta get all sales manager
on me like that. I just use what I use and it works,
alright? Now fuck off.

(beat)
Who is Zippo, anyway. You keep talking about him.

MAN 1

WHO?!

(head in hands)

You are... mate, Zippo is a lighter. It's a brand and a style of lighter. It's what you're using. Literally what's in your fucking hand right now.

(beat)

Look on the bottom and tell me what it says.

He flips the lighter over in his fingers and squints to read the bottom.

MAN 2

(slowly)

Zippo... oh yeah! You know, I've never noticed that before.

MAN 1

There you are.

(quietly, mumbled)

Bloody idiot.

MAN 2 continues to smoke the cigarette and now stares at the lighter with a surprised expression.

MAN 2

I've never noticed how cool this thing is. It looks beautiful in a way, I guess. Hand made?

MAN 1

Nah, factory. But still, it's great isn't it? That's why I collect them, they're just cool trinkets and it's fun to restore them, you know, polish them and replace the flint and that.

MAN 2

(coughing)

Yeah that's cool.

MAN 1

They've also often got like a bit of a history behind them too. The army used to commission bloody millions of them for the soldiers in Vietnam and shit, so the ones from wars always got a bit of a story to tell. Lemme have a look.

Still coughing, MAN 2 passes the pipe lighter over and MAN 1 takes a closer look.

MAN 1

(peering closely)

Looks like a pretty old model... brass I think... could be rare. Where d'you get it?

MAN 2

(coughing, tears streaming)
Queen gave It to me.

A few moments pass in silence. MAN 2 stops coughing and flicks his cigarette out of the window. MAN 1 looks over at him, very confused.

MAN 1

You fucking what?

MAN 2

(indifferently)
The queen gave it to me. Gift.

MAN 1

(incredulous)
I tell you, the random bollocks you come out with, I never know whether you're bullshitting me or not.

MAN 2 is now flicking the lighter open and closed.

MAN 2

(casual)
You don't believe me?
(beat)

MAN 1

(ironic)
Oh sorry, should I? Yeah the queen of fucking England gave you a fancy brass pipe lighter for your classy pipe smoking habit that she clearly has some sort of respect for, because she smokes so much herself, famously always has done! And yeah, you smoke pipes day in, day out, clearly you take all this pipe smoking very seriously, just like the queen does! Maybe it was this shared love for smoking pipes that brought you two lovebirds together.

MAN 2

(calmly)
You don't believe me.

MAN 1

Umm of course I do?

MAN 2

(glancing over)
Oh really? That's good.

MAN 1 turns his whole body and stares at MAN 2 with an expression of sincere concern. MAN 2 is making moves to light another cigarette, completely oblivious. Several moments pass in silence.

MAN 1
No mate, I don't believe you.
(beat)

MAN 2
Oh.
(disappointed)
You're so cryptic I can never read you.

MAN 1 throws his hands up in the air, hitting the roof. A car horn sounds, close at hand.

MAN 2
(shouts out of window)
WANKER!

MAN 1
(bluntly sarcastic)
Right. I'm the one who's cryptic. Yeah. I'm always going around telling bullshit stories like... umm... I don't know, like the queen gave me a special lighter when we met the other day!

MAN 2
Fuck you, I don't need your approval of the events that happen in *my* life. It did happen ok? I don't care if you believe me or not.

MAN 1 sits back in his seat and sighs

MAN 1
OK alright, fine. Sorry.
(beat)
No, I am actually curious, what circumstances did you supposedly meet the queen. What prompted you to make that up? It's a very interesting choice of lie.

MAN 2
(folding arms)

I aint saying shit until you say I aint lying. Tit for tat.

MAN 1

(exasperated)
What... tit for tat... the fuck-
(shakes head)
I thought you said you didn't care what I thought?

MAN 2 does not respond. He stares ahead, arms still folded

MAN 1

(sighing again)
Jesus wept man. Fine. I believe you. Tell me how you met the Queen of England.

MAN 2

We bumped into each other at a horse race.
(beat)
I was supposed to be heading over to the paddock but I got lost. I ended up in the section of the stands reserved for the queen and her party.

MAN 1 looks at MAN 2 in utter disbelief.

MAN 2

Basically, I was all flustered because it was obvious that I wasn't where I was 'posed to be, you know? So I was like looking around, bustling through the stands and trying to find a place to sit down. There were so many faces and I couldn't focus, I didn't want to look anyone in the eye, I just wanted to sit down as soon as possible to get out of the way.

MAN 1 is now gently shaking his head, mouth slightly open.

MAN 2

I was like 'fuck this' and just sat down in a seat without looking at anyone. I just stared at the floor for a while, you know, really embarrassed and all.

MAN 1 nods his head slowly, eyebrows raised but squinting slightly.

MAN 1

(slowly)
Okay...

MAN 2

Funny situation right? Anyway, must've been a few minutes later when I heard a little voice on my left say

(in posh accent)

'Hello dear, are you alright?' I looked over and there she was. The queen was like, sat next to me, dressed all fancy to watch the horses.

(chuckling)

Ill tell you, I wasn't half stunned. I was like 'fuck me man that's the queen!'

MAN 1

(still incredulous)

You said 'fuck me man that's the queen', to the queen? You've got a set haven't you?

MAN 2

No, no, I only thought that. What I actually said was 'im alright thank you Mrs, how've you been and all?' then we started to have a genuine little convo, it was quite nice actually.

(smiling)

A couple of those 'special branch' blokes, dressed in black, you know, they come up to us to check I wasn't a terrorist or a rapist or nothing like that.

MAN 1 rolls his eyes and puts his head in his hands.

MAN 2

She was saying, like, 'oh, I'm not too bad, just had a little chat with Phil', she meant Phillip, you know, her husband. Anyway, she said 'I've been chatting to Phil about his smoking, you know'.

(serious)

She was real concerned actually, kept talking about cancer and how much she hated smoking.

MAN 1

I'm gonna guess you didn't tell her that you smoke, yourself?

MAN 2

Oh yeah, no, of course not, it's the queen of bloody England. I'm not gonna do nothing that upsets her, obviously. I was like 'yeah I agree with you ma'am, those smokers make me sick'. Gotta stay in the good books of the queen, you know?

MAN 1

(stunned)
You're serious, aren't you?

MAN 2
(frustrated)
Bloody hell man, how many times, YES I'm serious. Christ.

MAN 1
Go on then, continue. I'm hooked.

MAN 2
Right, so she was going on about Phil's smoking, and she says, 'I took his lighter from him earlier, its his favourite one. I do feel a little guilty but that boy's got to learn!'

MAN 2 pulls out the brass pipe zippo.

MAN 2
So, all in all, she said to me 'hey, why don't you take the lighter, then you can throw it away or sell it or something. I'll say I lost it.' I mean come on, how am I gonna say no to a free, *royal* lighter from old Phil himself.

MAN 1 glances several times between the Zippo and MAN 2, an incredulous look on his face. Several moments pass in silence.

MAN 1
(hesitantly)
You do realise that Prince Philip gave up smoking in 1947, shortly before he was married to The Queen, don't you?

MAN 2
Huh?

A sly smile grows across MAN 1's face.

MAN 1
He quit smoking back in 1947.
(beat)
You mean to tell me that- she's been carrying that lighter around for...
(counting)
Like 70 years? As a piece of memorabilia of her husband's treasured smoking habit from before they were married- oh WAIT! She fucking hated his smoking habit. So why would

she carry around one of his old fucking lighters to a random horse race?

Another car horn sounds behind them and the traffic starts to move off. MAN 2 hurriedly puts his cigarette out and starts the car, not looking at MAN 1.

MAN 2

Bloody finally we can make some progress on these stupid roads. Been stuck here for ages.

MAN 1

(with glee)

I FUCKING KNEW IT! I fucking knew you were shitting out utter bollocks you sly son of a bitch. DAMMIT you almost had me though.

MAN 2 grins and glances over at MAN 1, then back to the road without saying anything.

MAN 1

Prick.