

GRIDLOCK

Written by
Hugo Kilner

SHOOTING SCRIPT
FEBRUARY 2023

The following is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to real organisations or persons is purely coincidental.

February 2023

BLACK:

O.S. A laptop turns on. Frenetic typing. An occasional mouse click.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A cursor flickers at the top of the search bar next to the words: "university health centre." ALEX BARBER, aged eighteen, in his first year at university, stares back at the laptop screen. Eventually, he presses 'Enter', then clicks the top result: "University Support Group" (USG).

The webpage details what support is provided and how to access it. Alex scrolls down to reveal information about "Drop-in Appointments". Alex scrolls down further to reveal some more information. "Open from 9am on weekdays, first come, first serve."

He inspects a picture of the building. Then, he closes the page and turns his laptop off manually, keeping the screen open.

Beat.

He turns his head to a light-switch next to his bedroom door. He stares in its direction, Eventually, he gets up, walks over to the switch and clicks it on and off.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY, EARLY

The streets are almost deserted apart from a few early-risers. We're fast approaching winter.

OPENING CREDITS

TITLE: *GRIDLOCK*

Alex makes the journey down several different roads and passageways from his accommodation to the USG Building. He walks with a sense of nervousness and anticipation.

Then, Alex arrives at the USG Building. He takes a deep breath and walks in.

INT. UNIVERSITY SUPPORT GROUP, RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Alex stands in an empty reception in front of a desk. A great big poster is displayed on the wall which reads: "We're Always Here to Help."

RECEPTIONIST #1, early thirties, regularly drags her words, sits behind the desk - endlessly typing away at a computer. She has become incredibly disillusioned to the demands of her job.

She fails to acknowledge Alex's presence.

The rattling of her keyboard is the only sound that can be heard.

Alex debates interrupting.

Uncomfortable beat.

ALEX

Err, hi, I was wondering if-

NB: Alex has an ever so slight stutter that will be assumed from hereafter.

She holds up an index finger to cut him off, but her eyes remain fixed on the computer.

RECEPTIONIST #1

One moment please.

Alex tries to avoid eye contact.

ALEX

(mutters) Sorry.

Receptionist #1 sends off an all too important email. Eventually, she switches on and turns some of her attention to Alex.

RECEPTIONIST #1

(forced smile) Hi there. How can I help you today?

The smile lingers.

ALEX

(awkward) Hi. I was wondering if I could do one of the drop-in appointments, on the website? Please.

Receptionist #1 sighs. She then takes to the keyboard again and laboriously searches for an appointment register.

RECEPTIONIST #1

Is it Andrews?

ALEX

Barber.

RECEPTIONIST #1

Have you booked an appointment with us today Mr. Barber?

ALEX

Oh, no. Sorry. I thought you could just, turn up.

RECEPTIONIST #1

Ahhh. Well, I'm afraid we're only taking pre-booked appointments at the moment.

ALEX

(confused) Oh, right. Okay. It's just, on the website it says-

RECEPTIONIST #1

Well there must be some sort of a mistake then Mr. Barber. I'm afraid we're only taking pre-booked appointments at the moment.

She smiles again.

Another uncomfortable beat.

ALEX

(uneasy) Okay. Course. Sorry. Can I book one here instead?

RECEPTIONIST #1

Unfortunately we are all booked up for today and you can only make an appointment on the same day so you'll have to do that when you get home, over the phone.

She picks out a piece of card from a rack on the desk, then hands it to Alex.

ALEX

Thanks.

He looks at the card then puts it in his pocket.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Can you, ring up anytime or-

RECEPTIONIST #1

The line opens at eight a.m. every weekday.

ALEX

Okay. Thank you very much.

RECEPTIONIST #1

Is there anything else I can help you with?

ALEX

No, thanks.

Alex heads toward the exit.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Have a nice day.

The phone rings. Receptionist #1 turns her attention to another caller.

RECEPTIONIST #1 (O.S.)

Hello, this is the University Support Group. How can I help you today?

Alex leaves.

EXT. CAMPUS STEPS - DAY

Alex sits at the top of the Campus Steps, the hub of the University, next to his best and only friend, HARRY, also aged eighteen and very self-absorbed.

HARRY

(looks ahead) So, then I said to her, Abby, we're just friends. What am I supposed to do if Emily invites me out with her flat? That's just me being polite. I don't get why that's so hard for her to understand. If there's already no trust in the relationship this early on then where the fuck are we supposed to go from here, you know?

He turns to Alex who stares into the distance.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Alex?

Alex sits up.

ALEX
(distant) Yeah. Yeah. Course.

HARRY
I just don't know what I'm going to do
cause don't get me wrong. I like Abby.
But, it's just a lot, to deal with.

Beat.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - LATER

An analogue clock slowly ticks by. The time is "07.59."

Alex sits at his desk. The desk itself is almost empty, apart from his laptop, his phone, and the piece of card given to him by Receptionist #1.

He watches the clock closely.

Beat.

As soon as the clock strikes "08.00", Alex immediately jumps into action and dials the number.

The phone rings for several seconds until a PRE-RECORDED RESPONSE answers.

PRE-RECORDED RESPONSE (V.O.)
Thank you for ringing the University
Support Group. Unfortunately, we
cannot take your call right now as we
are experiencing a high number of
callers. You are advised to call back
at a later time. If you would like to
use another service, press one. If you
would like to continue, press two.

The phone beeps.

Alex presses "2" on the keypad.

The phone beeps again. An AUTOMATED RESPONSE now answers.

AUTOMATED RESPONSE (V.O.)
You are, twenty-second, in the queue.
Please hold.

Hold music plays.

Another beat.

CUT TO:

The sun has just started to rise as hold music plays. Alex sits pressed up against his bedroom wall, motionless.

Suddenly, the phone beeps three times in quick succession. The faint voice of RECEPTIONIST #2 can be heard - a disarmingly nice voice. Alex comes to.

RECEPTIONIST #2 (V.O.)
Hello, this is the University Support Group. How can I help you today?

ALEX
Hi. Sorry. I'd like to try and book a drop-in appointment if that's alright please?

Beat.

RECEPTIONIST #2 (V.O.)
What name is that please?

ALEX
Alex. Alex, Barber.

Receptionist #2 types away on the other end of the phone.

RECEPTIONIST #2 (V.O.)
Unfortunately Mr. Barber, we do appear to be all booked up for today.

Alex quickly darts his eyes at the clock. The time is "08.54."

ALEX
(disappointed) Oh. Okay. It's just that, err, never mind-

RECEPTIONIST #2 (V.O.)
Excuse me, Mr. Barber, I didn't quite catch that.

ALEX
No, it's okay. It's just that, well, the person at reception told me yesterday that the line only opens at eight, so-

RECEPTIONIST #2 (V.O.)
That's correct, Sir. As I said though,

we are all booked up for today so do try and make sure you call up as soon as the line opens tomorrow.

She's losing her patience now.

ALEX

Oh, are you open on weekends too?

A calendar hung up above his desk indicates the day is friday.

Beat.

Receptionist #2 suddenly realises her mistake.

RECEPTIONIST #2 (V.O.)

(chuckles) Oh, right you are. Well, on Monday, try and make sure you call us up as soon as the line opens.

ALEX

Okay. Thank you-

RECEPTIONIST #2 (V.O.)

Is that all for today Mr. Barber or can I do anything else for you?

ALEX

No, thanks. I'll try again on Monday I guess. Thank you-

The call ends.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, LIVING ROOM - DAY, EARLY

V.O. Automated Response updates Alex as to his position in the queue as hold music plays.

AUTOMATED RESPONSE (V.O.)

You are, eighteenth, in the queue.
Please hold.

TITLE: Monday. Six Weeks Later.

Some time has now passed. Alex is more disheveled, forlorn, absent, and he's slightly thinner now.

He meticulously takes every item off the dining table. Then, he puts a few cleaning products in their place. He begins to wipe down the table, making sure to not leave a spec of dirt.

EXT. CAMPUS STEPS - DAY

Alex and Harry sit at the Campus Steps. Harry continues to update Alex on his troubles.

HARRY

So she's there on my bed, just, I don't know, non-stop crying and I'm like, this is the first I've heard of it. I've got shit going on as well. And then she tells me she's been seeing the SWR-

Alex sits up at the mention of the Student Wellbeing Representative (SWR).

ALEX

What's the, SWR?

HARRY

(distracted) Err, Student Wellbeing, Representative, I think. Anyway, turns out she spent the entire time talking about me. So what the fuck am I supposed to think? Why doesn't she come and talk to me about it first?

Harry consults his phone momentarily.

Beat.

ALEX

I've actually been meaning to tell you that, err, I've been trying to talk to someone at the-

Harry completely ignores Alex, instead showing him text messages from Abby.

HARRY

You see what I mean?

Alex looks at Harry's phone.

HARRY (CONT'D)

This is what I have to put up with. Literally every day.

Alex remains silent, but hands the phone back to Harry.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex storms into the Living Room, past THREE FLATMATES, all engaged with their phones.

He then walks upstairs.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex walks into his room which is noticeably more untidy now.

He sits down at his desk and opens his laptop. He emails the SWR, asking for advice on what to do.

He reaches for a can of lager on his desk and takes a swig. It's empty. Then, he chucks the can in the direction of his bin. The cans are now starting to pile up.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - LATER

A phone rings. His MUM is calling.

Alex sits on his bed, staring at the phone. We see the extent of his pigsty of a room.

Eventually, the phone stops ringing.

His Mum then leaves a message: "Hi darling. How've you been doing? Please get back to me when you see this, we haven't heard from you in a while. Hope everything's well. Love Mum x"

Alex fails to react.

INT. UNIVERSITY SUPPORT GROUP, RECEPTION - DAY

Receptionist #1 sits behind the reception desk, concentrating on the screen in front of her.

Alex walks into the reception. He wastes no time in approaching her. She immediately recognises him.

ALEX

(defeated) Hi. Look, I just, need, to talk to someone. Please.

RECEPTIONIST #1

I'm sorry Sir, but we are all booked up for today-

ALEX

Yes. I know.

Receptionist #1 is slightly taken aback.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The thing is, I've tried ringing every day for the past three weeks and that's what I keep being told-

RECEPTIONIST #1

Well, if you'd like to book an appointment then you will have to-

ALEX

Try again. (beat) Right?

He's desperate now.

Another beat.

RECEPTIONIST #1

(uncomfortable) That would be correct, Sir.

ALEX

(withdrawn, mutters) Okay.

He takes out his phone and dials the number for the reception; one he knows off-by-heart now. He reads the number aloud.

ALEX (CONT'D)

07496973349. Right?

RECEPTIONIST #1

Sir, we can only take calls at-

He rings the number. The landline on the desk in front of Receptionist #1 rings.

The most uncomfortable beat. All that can be heard is the ringing of that phone.

RECEPTIONIST #3, mid-thirties, sat behind a desk on the other side of the room, glances up from his computer. Receptionist #1 deliberates on whether or not to pick up the phone.

Alex eventually ends the call before she has a chance to answer.

RECEPTIONIST #1 (CONT'D)
 Sir, I'm afraid there's nothing I can
 do to-

ALEX
 Please!

Beat.

Receptionist #1 glances in the direction of Receptionist #3
 before returning her attention to Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. (looks at Receptionist #3)
 I'm sorry. But, please. I understand
 that you're busy but I just need to
 speak to someone. That's all I'm
 asking for. Just ten minutes.

Beat.

RECEPTIONIST #1
 Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to
 leave now.

ALEX
 (incensed) What? But, I
 haven't, I didn't do
 anything wrong. Why can't
 you just listen to what I'm
 saying!?

RECEPTIONIST #1
 Sir, you can try again
 tomorrow over the phone but
 if you continue with this
 aggressive manner, I won't
 have any choice but to call
 University Security.

Silence.

ALEX
 University, Security?

RECEPTIONIST #1
 That's correct Sir.

Beat.

He takes a step back - finally, fully, accepting defeat.

ALEX
 Okay. I get it.

He slowly retreats out of the room.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex collapses into his room. He struggles to breathe. Helpless.

Beat.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, BATHROOM - NIGHT

TITLE: *Two Weeks Later.*

Alex showers. Eventually, he turns the tap off and steps out of the shower.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - LATER

Alex lies on his bed, staring at the wall opposite, surrounded by junk. Suddenly, his laptop pings - a new email.

Beat.

He ambles over to his desk, sits down and opens his emails.

The message is from the SWR - KATY. It reads: "Hi Alex. Thanks for reaching out. I can meet tomorrow at 15.00 if you're available. Kind Regards. Katy. University Student Wellbeing Representative."

He forces a tiny smile.

INT. CAMPUS, MEETING ROOM - DAY

Katy, aged twenty-one, sits behind a large table with her laptop. Her appearance suggests that student life is unusually sweet. STUDENT #1 sits opposite.

KATY
(typing) Well, if you need anything else, as the SWR, just let me know!

STUDENT #1
Thank you.

KATY
Have a nice day!

Alex replaces Student #1. Katy takes to her phone automatically. Her upbeat aura immediately fades away.

KATY (CONT'D)
(texting) Hi.

ALEX
(quiet) Hi.

KATY
It's Barber, right?

She puts the phone down, facing up, on the desk. Finally, she addresses Alex.

ALEX
Yeah.

She reassumes her upbeat approach.

KATY
How can I help you today then?

ALEX
Well, I've been having some trouble trying to get an appointment with the USG so-

Katy's phone buzzes on the table. LOTTIE, her friend, is calling. She instantly picks it up and answers.

KATY
Just a second.

Alex stares past her.

KATY (CONT'D)
(excited) Hi! How are you?

She laughs.

Beat.

KATY (CONT'D)
Oh, that's amazing. So it's all sorted then?

She waits for a response.

KATY (CONT'D)
Yeah.

She waits again.

KATY (CONT'D)
Yeah.

She waits again.

KATY (CONT'D)

Yeah.

She laughs.

KATY (CONT'D)

That's brilliant! I'm absolutely over the moon for you! Anyway, look-

She waits. Her tone becomes more serious.

KATY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm actually with one of them now.

She waits.

KATY (CONT'D)

Yeah, one of the advice thingies. (chuckles) So, shouldn't really be on the phone.

She laughs.

KATY (CONT'D)

Yeah. Yeah. I'll catch you in a bit okay?

She waits.

KATY (CONT'D)

Of course! I want to hear everything.

She waits, then laughs.

KATY (CONT'D)

Okay. Love you. Bye!

She puts the phone down again.

KATY (CONT'D)

(unapologetic) Err, where were we again? Something about the USG?

Alex come to.

ALEX

Yeah. I've been struggling to get an appointment.

KATY
And what is it you want to talk to
them about?

Alex looks stunned.

ALEX
Err-

KATY
No, you're right. None of my business.

She lets out an awkward laugh, then consults her laptop.

KATY (CONT'D)
(elongated) Okay.

ALEX
I was just wondering if you had any,
advice, on what to do?

She ponders.

KATY
Hmm.

She ponders some more.

KATY (CONT'D)
Have you tried Mens Sana?

ALEX
Mens, Sana?

He shakes his head.

KATY
(bewildered) Oh. It's a private group.
It's latin for a healthy mind.

She smiles, rips a piece of paper out of her notepad, grabs a pen, then writes down the phone number for Mens Sana.

KATY (CONT'D)
They're amazing. I know so many of my
friends use them.

She hands him the paper.

KATY (CONT'D)
There you go.

He takes the piece of paper.

ALEX

Thank you.

KATY

Just ring that number and you should be able to get an initial consultation in the next few days.

He looks at the number, then back at Katy.

ALEX

(surprised) The next few days?

KATY

Oh, yeah. I'm sure they'll see you quite quickly.

ALEX

Do I have to ring at a certain time or-

KATY

Any time during the day should be fine.

Alex lets out an ever so slight sigh of relief.

ALEX

Okay, well, thank you, I guess.

KATY

My pleasure. Is there anything else I can do for you?

ALEX

No. Thanks.

He gets up.

KATY

Well, if you need anything else, as the SWR, just let me know!

ALEX

I will. Thanks again. Bye.

Alex is immediately replaced by ANOTHER STUDENT.

KATY (O.S.)
It's Andrews, right?

The student sits down in front of Katy. Alex walks past a line of a DOZEN OTHER STUDENTS waiting to talk to her.

BEN (O.S.)
Yeah.

KATY (O.S.)
How can I help you today then?

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex sits at the end of his bed, phone in-hand, laptop balancing on his lap with the Mens Sana Webpage open. The phone rings for several seconds before...

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST answers. She has a slightly older and warmer voice than the PREVIOUS RECEPTIONISTS.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Hello, this is Mens Sana. How can I help you today?

ALEX
(apprehensive) Hi. I've been told I could book a consultation with you.

He's on tenterhooks throughout now.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Okay. Can I have your name please?

ALEX
Alex. Barber.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Okay Alex, we've got a free slot available on Friday at three o'clock.

ALEX
Next Friday?

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
No. This coming Friday.

Beat.

Alex is taken aback.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Is that okay, or would you prefer
another time?

ALEX
No, no. I mean, yeah. That's great.
Thank you.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You're very welcome. All I need is
your email address and then you can
fill out an initial question form
online.

We pull out as Mens Sana Receptionist's voice fades away.
Alex gives his details over the phone.

INT. BUS, MOVING - DAY

Alex sits near the back of a bus, heading towards Mens Sana.

Beat.

EXT. MENS SANA - DAY

A car rushes past. Alex stands opposite a huge, old structure
- the Mens Sana Building. He takes a deep breath before
crossing the road and heading toward the entrance.

INT. MENS SANA, RECEPTION - LATER

Alex sits in the reception. It's a much warmer place than the
USG. TWO PATIENTS, separate, wait quietly. He coughs.

Only the faint noise of a clock ticking can be heard.

Beat.

O.S. A door opens. THERAPIST enters the reception.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Alex Barber?

He looks up.

THERAPIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hi Alex. Right this way please.

He gets up and follows Therapist.

EXT. CAMPUS STEPS - DAY

Alex and Harry sit at their usual meeting place. Both look ahead.

HARRY

So I'm literally sat there waiting for my lecture and then she just fucking ambushes me out of nowhere and starts shouting at me like (imitates) "why didn't you answer my messages!? I've been calling you all day!" And I'm trying to explain to her that I don't get any service on campus but she just keeps talking over me and I'm like what the fuck does she want?

Beat.

ALEX

I went to go and see a Therapist on Friday. By the way.

Another beat.

HARRY

Wait, what?

ALEX

Yeah. I've not been feeling too good, recently.

HARRY

Oh that's really shit man. You should've said.

Another beat.

HARRY (CONT'D)

But anyway, now she's just completely refusing to speak to me. As if I've actually done something wrong.

Harry shows a string of unanswered messages on his phone to Alex. It's as if you could replace Alex with anyone in the world.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Like, what the fuck am I supposed to think? You know.

Alex continues to look ahead.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TITLE: *One Week Later.*

Alex walks into the living room, past his flatmates, too occupied with their phones to notice. There's a slight spring to his step now. He then goes upstairs.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - LATER

Alex lies flat on his bed, staring at the ceiling.

Beat.

Suddenly, the phone rings. He quickly answers it.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Hello. Am I speaking to Alex Barber?

ALEX
Yes?

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Hi Alex. I'm calling from the Mens Sana Group. We've noticed that you're yet to book further appointments after your initial consultation on the 9th December.

Alex gets up and begins to pace around his room.

ALEX
Yeah. Of course. Sorry. Do I just book them the same way over the phone or-

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
No need to apologise Alex. And yes, you can book them right now if you want and then the payment will be at the end of each session.

ALEX
And it's the same rate as the consultation plus the student discount?

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
(confused) Well, yes, it is the same rate but I'm afraid we don't offer a

student discount anymore and we only have sixty minute appointments after the half-hour consultation so it'll be sixty pounds in total, per session.

Alex is numb.

Beat.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Hello? Mr. Barber, are you still there?

ALEX
Yes. Sorry. How often are the sessions again?

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Well, you can have as many or as few as you'd like but we usually recommend at least once a week.

Further silence.

Alex sits back on his bed.

ALEX
Okay. Look, I'm sorry, but I just, I just don't think I'm going to be able to afford that.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
(surprised) Oh, okay. Well, I'm afraid that's the standard rate so theres's not much I can do unfortunately. Maybe a parent or a guardian could help with the finances-

ALEX
No. No. It's fine. But, thank you for letting me know.

MENS SANA RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
That's absolutely fine. I hope everything works out.

ALEX
(abruptly) Ok. Thanks. Bye.

Alex puts the phone down.

Beat.

All hope is seemingly lost.

EXT. CAMPUS STEPS - DAY

The sun is just beginning to set but you can tell it's going to rain soon.

Alex sits at the Campus Steps, completely alone. A GROUP OF SEEMINGLY HAPPY STUDENTS pass him by.

Eventually, he takes out his phone and messages Harry.

ALEX (T.M.)

Hi mate. At the steps. How long you gonna be? Literally sat here on my own!

Beat.

Eventually, he receives a notification: "Harry is typing." He picks up the phone again.

HARRY (T.M.)

Sorry mate. Completely forgot to say can't make it. But good news. Sorted things out with Abby! Thanks for the assist bro x.

ALEX (T.M.)

No worries. That's great.

Alex is then left on "read" by Harry. He remains seated.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's pissing it down now. Alex, drenched, walks down a lonely and dimly-lit street. He grips a four-pack of beer under his arm as he returns to his accommodation.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex's flatmates, non-stop laughter, eyes glued to the TV, ignore Alex as he slowly climbs the stairs.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex opens his door, then places the beers on a small table and locks the door from the inside.

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - LATER

Alex sits on the floor, surrounded by empty cans. He picks up his phone and calls his Mum.

The phone rings. Eventually she answers.

MUM (V.O.)
Hi darling.

He struggles to keep any semblance of composure now.

ALEX
Hi Mum.

Mum immediately realises that something is wrong with Alex's tone of voice.

MUM (V.O.)
(concerned) Alex? Is everything okay?

He wipes his face before attempting to feign a sense of levity.

ALEX
Yeah. Everything's great Mum. I'm fine.

MUM (V.O.)
Are you sure? You don't sound very well darling?

ALEX
No, I am. Just tired that's all.

MUM (V.O.)
You're not in any trouble are you? You know you can always tell me if something's wrong. I won't mind if-

ALEX
No. Mum. I'm not in any trouble. I was just wanting to see how you guys are doing. How you're doing.

MUM (V.O.)
Oh, well, you know. (coughs uncontrollably) Never mind that. How's it going down there? Are you going out tonight? We hardly even hear from you anymore.

ALEX

I know, I should call more. (slight pause) Sorry.

MUM (V.O.)

Don't be ridiculous. You're young. Too busy having fun! That's how it should be. Anyway, me and your Dad are just about to have his special cottage pie.

ALEX

Oh no.

They both chuckle ever so slightly

MUM (V.O.)

Don't start! He's been at it all day. (laughs) Have you already had something to eat?

ALEX

Yeah, yeah. Just had some pasta.

MUM (V.O.)

Oh Alex, don't you eat anything else?

ALEX

Yes, don't worry, I do.

MUM (V.O.)

But you promise you're okay?

ALEX

Promise.

MUM (V.O.)

Okay, just so long as you're alright. That's the most important thing. (slight pause) You know you'll always be my baby.

ALEX

I know.

DAD calls out to Mum in the background.

MUM (V.O.)

(to Dad) Yeah, okay. (to Alex) Dad says hi. He's just got his hands tied at the minute. But I think dinner's on the table now so I better get going

darling.

ALEX
Okay. Say hi to Dad for me.

MUM (V.O.)
Of course. Love you sweetheart. Try
and keep in touch okay.

ALEX
Love you too Mum.

MUM (V.O.)
Okay. Goodnight!

ALEX
Night.

He puts the phone down and cries.

EXT. UNIVERSITY SUPPORT GROUP - MONTAGE

Alex sits on a bench opposite the USG Building.

He watches the building from afar over the course of an unspecified timespan - another few weeks - occasionally spotting Receptionist #1.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. UNIVERSITY SUPPORT GROUP - DAY

Alex sits opposite the USG Building, again. Some time has passed now.

Receptionist #1 cuts short a conversation with Receptionist #3 outside the building and tentatively walks over to Alex.

Avoiding eye contact where possible, she takes out a pamphlet and hands it to him.

RECEPTIONIST #1
Here. Take this.

He pauses for a moment before taking the pamphlet from her.

RECEPTIONIST #1 (CONT'D)
They're called the Wellbeing Network.
They just opened. Call them.

She smiles. A genuine smile. Then, she walks away.

Beat.

O.S. A phone rings.

CUT TO:

INT. ACCOMMODATION, ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex's phone continues to ring. Eventually, he picks it up, ready to end the call, but then...

WELLBEING NETWORK RECEPTIONIST answers.

WELLBEING NETWORK RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Hello there. This is the Wellbeing
Network. How can we help you today?

THE END