

DAN: Hello listeners! Let's cut to the chase, this time it's me who has to make an apology. I really would like to say this immediately as I have feelings.... James. So, sorry Ben for accusing you of burning my shed down. It should have been obvious who it really was.

BEN: How could you think it was me???

JAMES: I wrote 'Ben woz ere' at the crime scene, haha.

BEN: Why would anyone write their name at the crime scene??

DAN: It's like people revisiting the scene of a crime, that's all!

JAMES: Yes, I do that all the time. It's like nostalgia but more hostile. It's hostalgia.

BEN: But you're my friend, Dan!

JAMES: A feeble argument there. I'm Dan's friend and I burn his sheds down...

DAN: No, you're not my friend.

JAMES: Sure I am.

DAN: How do you show your friendliness towards me, then?

JAMES: I tested your cars for you... They're not bad! Very safe. Absorb crashes. I didn't like the feeling of crashing your cars, by the way, it was too scary. Just so you know. I liked the feeling of stealing your possessions, but it wasn't all good. Because... we're buddies. Best buddies.

DAN: I see.

JAMES: And I tested the quality of your shed.

BEN: Was it a good shed?

JAMES: No, it burned down! :)

DAN: Have you ever said 'hello, how are you?' to me?

JAMES: No, but I will tell you this...

DAN: What?

JAMES: Your stand up routine was rubbish.

DAN: And how is that you being friendly?

JAMES: It was honest, well thought out feedback. Something you're incapable of. You idiot.

DAN: And what didn't you like about it?

JAMES: It wasn't daring enough.

DAN: You're suggesting I should have started a fire?

JAMES: Yes.

DAN: Why didn't you then in your routine?

JAMES: They wouldn't let me.

DAN: And may I ask why?

JAMES: I filled out the risk assessment form as an act of 'kindness', really I knew people wouldn't be having my ideas, so I knew I had to break my plans to them gently, through written words. I filled out the form and they still weren't having it. The people running the show looked me straight in the eyes and said 'No' to me coldly. As cold as ice. Really chilling, actually.

BEN: So they suggested you burn someone's shed down after the show?

JAMES: Yes, that's what happened!

BEN: They knew you have a compulsion, then?

JAMES: Oh, definitely. I try not to show it, but it's actually quite frightening being me. Fire this, fire that, it doesn't leave me.

DAN: So if you were to buy a shed for yourself, you'd burn that down?

JAMES: Sadly, yes. It's a compulsion very much like sneezing. Scary.

DAN: I don't believe you. I think you're just trying to get sympathy, you're gaining my trust so I think it's safe to buy another shed and you're going to burn that down too.

JAMES: That was creepy.

DAN: I'll take that as a yes, then.

JAMES: Do you have a shed, Ben?

DAN: Don't answer that.

JAMES: Well it doesn't matter anyway, as I'd only burn Dan's.

BEN: We all know you must have had an upsetting childhood, James, but no one can work out what's gone wrong.

JAMES: What do you mean?

BEN: You just seemed to have a very warped view of what friendship is. An odd way of behaving.

JAMES: Eh?

BEN: Why do you think arson is friendly?

JAMES: It's a house warming party but more extreme!

BEN: Stop smiling James, you look like an idiot.

DAN: You think I live in my shed?

JAMES: You want me to burn your house down? Is that what you mean? I'm confused.

BEN: See, this is what I mean. If you were to say that kind of stuff to anyone else but us two, well, people wouldn't have it...

JAMES: I'd provide a risk assessment form...

BEN: Oh good. Anyway, it's funny you've brought up risk assessments, because me and Dan have come across YOUR risk assessment.

JAMES: What do you mean?

BEN: Does this sound familiar? Patient James Ziegler: Risk: Annoying the other patients until they snap. Level of severity: Extreme. Risk: Spamming staff computers. Level of severity: Extreme. It just goes on and on...

JAMES: How did you get that?

BEN: Mental health nurses have been handing that stuff out on the street to passers by...

JAMES: That's not legal...

DAN: We know.

BEN: Remember the time you were flying, it was night and everyone was sleeping?

JAMES: Yes?

BEN: And you had a nightmare and were screaming?

JAMES: Yes?

BEN: People thought they going to crash and die...

JAMES: Not my fault, is it?

BEN: I'm just trying to say people don't like being around you even if they're sleeping. It's upsetting.

JAMES: No, no, no.

(A phone rings)

DAN: Hello?

CALLER: It's Simon!

DAN: Oh. Hello.

CALLER: Yes, I have a new bee joke you might be interested in...

DAN: We've been through this, I don't want to speak to you anymore. Not now you've been writing for James.

BEN: Give him a chance, it might be good.

DAN: Fine.

SIMON: No not a bee joke, thyme, I mean thyme!

DAN: You've written lots of jokes about thyme as well...

SIMON: Yes, that's where the confusion was. It sounded random, but it wasn't. Anyway, here goes: Why did the man who shot herbs do meaningless tasks? He was a thyme waster.

DAN: Not funny.

SIMON: Yes it is. I have a joke about Ben, too.

BEN: Oh God.

SIMON: Why did Big Ben collapse during the pandemic? Because of the clock down.

BEN: Well it's dated now, so...

SIMON: You can remember the pandemic, can't you?

BEN: Oh no. I sense an epic James-style argument coming up.

SIMON: Touche. Anyway, bees, thyme, Ben, any topic you like, hit me up and we can talk performing my work!

DAN: All your standup routine features are a long list of jokes...

SIMON: Not true, I'm an expert at witty putdowns. For example, you're not an audience, you're a poordience.

DAN: That's sounds like something James would say...

SIMON: Yes, that's why we work so well together!

JAMES: I've got a joke about you!

SIMON: Great stuff! Go on!

JAMES: What do you call John Petrucci with worsening schizophrenia? Progressive mental! :D

SIMON: That's not funny. And it's mine, anyway.

JAMES: Oh. Even so, I could perform it at the next gig? If I'm allowed to, I mean...

SIMON: Sure.

JAMES: What should the gig be like?

SIMON: Just repeat lots of jokes and insult the audience. Any other ideas really are out of my area of expertise.

JAMES: Oh. So no observational humour?

SIMON: I've noticed that Summer is hotter than Winter but whether that qualifies as humour, I don't know...

DAN: Can you make a joke about the weather?

SIMON: Isn't it funny how the weather changes??

DAN: So this is your routine? 'What do you call John Petrucci with worsening schizophrenia? Progressive mental! You're a poordience. Isn't it funny how the weather changes?'

SIMON: Something like that, yeah.

DAN: It sucks.

SIMON: Well that's why I collaborate with people like James.

DAN: I'm sorry, I'm just going to hang up.

BEN: We're out of time anyway...

DAN: Yes, but the main reason I hung up was because he's annoying.

JAMES: Bye, liste...