

One Screwy Day 11

by

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Morgan and Mental are facing each other on a circular, two seater table. It holds a couple of empty beers and a menu. A dozen or so similar tables surround the officers. All kinds of people sit at them, but all seem friendly enough. (Judging by their lack of mild swear words the duo are sadly more than used to). In front of Mental are a number of tall rectangular windows, with pretty (though not wussy) designs on them. A quiet but not boring (or fun to be fair) road with a few parked cars is seen through the glass and a sparkling, sunlit river with a couple of small boats on it is behind that. Morgan is facing the pub bar, which is also fully occupied by a refreshing lack of nutters. Behind it is a 20 year old bartender serving the customers as his forehead perspires. Morgan raises his voice over the polite hubbub to be heard by the worker: 'Hey can I have another beer please? It's been a rough week...' The worker nods and pours a drink.

Mental starts a conversation with his coworker: 'There's a reason I brought you to this scenic pub, Morgan. It's because I want you to remain calm as I give you some rather upsetting news I got just an hour ago.' Morgan responds with a depressed tone: 'Go on...' Mental puts his hand on his friend's shoulder: 'You remember the Sausage Roll Killer?' 'Yes... Of course I do...' 'He has another relative and he's just as eccentric. And he's not small time either, he's running a whole business...' 'Oh God'. 'Yes. He dedicates his life to ruining people's lives. He dresses up as a Brussel sprout to symbolise the fact no one likes him. His employees all dress the same, too... And do you know what the worst thing is? He's not breaking the law.'

The bartender approaches the duo with a beer in his hand. As he hands it to Morgan he joins in the conversation: 'I hear you're talking about the sprout guy. It may be nothing, but I think I have some info about him you might find useful...' The cops reply in an urgent unison: 'Yes?...' The worker continues: 'I saw a guy in a sprout costume leaving a music shop. But he wasn't carrying ordinary music...' Mental butts in: 'What's that supposed to mean?' The worker replies: 'As I squinted my eyes, I noticed he was carrying some real rubbish. Stuff by the band 'You'll Wish You Were Deth'; A Megadeth covers band who sing in the style of Chipmunks.' Morgan sighs: 'Oh no...' The worker agrees: 'Exactly. He's probably planning on blasting it out of his car or house or whatever...'

A bearded 50 year old swivels to the three and takes part in the discussion: 'Ah, I hear you're talking about The Freakout Sprout...' Mental comments: 'The Freakout Sprout?' The social justice warrior nods: 'Yes, rumour has it he spent hours thinking of that name with no luck, then came across a rhyming dictionary and...' Mental interrupts: 'Never mind his name, what info have you got on him?' 'I saw him leaving a joke shop. I saw him carrying some of the most potent stink bombs known to man. They're simply called 'X'. They make surströmming look like perfume...' Morgan widens his eyes: 'But surströmming smells like ass...' 'Exactly'.

'Do you have any other info?' 'That's it, I'm afraid. Other than the word on the street is the man is actually half sprout...' 'I'm sure that's not true, but thanks for your time.' Morgan then Mental shakes the man's hand. The whistleblower then goes back to his own polite business.

Mental talks to Morgan again: 'Buying crappy music and foul smells isn't really a crime, either. We need good, hard evidence to stop him.' Morgan disagrees: 'Believe me, surströmming IS a crime. A lot of people are going to be very sick...' 'Even the most intense products from joke shops are perfectly kosher, but we still need to act fast in case the...' Mental looks to the floor and whispers: '... 'fish incident' is discovered by the sprouts.' Morgan also lowers his voice: 'The fish again.' 'Right. The fish. You and I both know the Chief of Police killing an innocent animal is pretty explosive stuff...' 'I still can't believe he made it look like the animal died because of the stress caused by us. What a way to guilt trip you back into joining the police..' 'Exactly.'

Mental jolts: 'I can't believe what I'm seeing!' Morgan turns around to get his friend's view and is stunned into paralysis. Wide-eyed, he observes a man dressed as a huge you know what. Out of the vegetable-style body stick two ordinary arms, two legs and a shifty head. The freakish foodstuff pulls up in a red Ferrari by the river. Strangely, the exotic car doesn't get the most attention. Through his half-opened car window he is seen grabbing a notebook and pen from the glove compartment. It seems he has found a victim: The oddball peaks at sweet old man with a walking stick and smiles. He examines him from head to toes over and over like a deranged computer and scribbles down, with an uncontrolled mania. Eventually Morgan breaks his silence: 'We have to stop this. God knows what that freak is planning, right now...'

Mental rises from his seat in an instant and his friend copies him. They both run out of the establishment, bumping into a couple of visitors and making them spill the drinks in their hands. In the fresh air they try to get the attention of the OAP victim by waving their hands at him, like crazy people. Maybe they ARE going mad. It soon sinks in that the old man is facing away from the two, so Mental shouts at him: 'Hey, you there! Old man! That man dressed up as a vegetable is stalking you so he can work out the best way to irritate you! He's insane but highly organised!' The OAP slowly turns to the twosome looking sad and lost. The healthy snack flails his arms around and shrieks a load of unintelligible words. The super car then speeds away, blasting out perfectly reasonably thrashy guitars and drums. Then the singing comes in. Quite frankly, it shouldn't be allowed.

Mental screams: 'God, that music is terrible! We have to call for backup!' Morgan sighs: 'Whilst it clearly should be, playing bad music loudly from a car isn't a crime as you wisely explained...' 'No, I've changed my mind.'

Have you listened to it?? Thrash metal with a complete fool singing? Do you understand the message that lunatic is giving off? He's clearly showing the world he doesn't care!' 'I know. But we can't really even get him done for taking notes of a passer by... We have to have patience...' Mental punches the air in a rage then stamps his foot on the road.

Morgan looks to the floor where his friend is and comments, intrigued: 'Look what you've just stepped on, Mental...' Mental puts his hands on his mouth and replies: 'The idiot has his own business card? Well that's going to make things easier to find him...' The man picks it up and examines it: 'I'm the Brussel Sprout, AKA The Freakout Sprout, AKA The Sprout of Clout. I can annoy your rivals or indeed anyone you like for a VERY competitive rate!' Morgan zooms in on the card and rubs his chin: 'Who could have anything against a sweet old man?' Mental responds with a regained professional calm: 'There's only one way to find out... Let's phone the number on the card...'

Mental retrieves his mobile from his pocket and makes a call. He comments to his friend: 'God, you wouldn't believe the music you get when you're put on hold... Oh someone's just answered. Morgan gives a thumbs up as Mental speaks into his device: 'Hello? Am I speaking to The Freakout Sprout?' Mental winks to Morgan and continues: 'He's unavailable at the moment? Ok, no problem... Who am I speaking to then? Sproutster 1? How many... 'sproutsers' are there? Right you are, it doesn't matter. Of course not. Why am I calling? Err... I'm trying to really annoy an OAP. I was just wondering... How are getting on with winding him up? You know the one?... You've discovered he really hates thrash metal and the chipmunks? Ah. That makes sense. Oh and by the way, I have dementia, can you remind me why I'm paying you? Because people with dementia annoy me? Ok, just checking, that's all. Bye!' Mental hangs up and continues: 'Let's visit his head office and see how big his crime network really is..'

A motorised boat can be heard getting nearer. Out of simple curiosity, the two turn around to face it. On its deck, a father speaks to his wife and children: 'Any of you have really itchy hair? I don't know what's wrong with me...' The rest of his family replies: 'Yes!' The wife furrows her brow: 'The same thing's going on with other members of the sailing club, too! And god dammit did they smell?' The man continues: 'And what the hell was with those sprouts that were following us around??' The family spot the officers and wave to them. The children jump up and down. Together they shout: 'Hello, Morgan and Mental!' Awkward, the lawmen respond, scratching their noses: 'Hope you're having a good day...' The sailors reply: 'Not bad thanks. But people smell a bit...' Morgan whispers to Mental: 'We have to act, fast...'

It is now nighttime in a quiet suburb. Morgan and Mental are ducking, squashed up by a bush behind a road with a couple of roaming foxes on it.

A line of semi-detached houses is behind that. Mental asks his buddy a question whilst whispering: 'So, here we are; the street of a madman. Are we sure we know which house is the one we're going to storm?' Morgan responds just as quiet: 'Woah there, Mental... Who said anything about storming anybody? You're emotions are all over the place, you know that? Let's just take it easy for a while and gather information. Anyway, the house of the mad sprout is the one with the windows open. Unless the card was lying, which now that I think of it, it could be.'

Suddenly loud music blasts out the suspect abode. My God is it bad. It's brutal death metal, but the shouting is chipmunk style. The undercover officers put their hands on their ears, then realise they need to hear each other. Mental speaks first: 'This is not good music.' Morgan nods: 'I'm trying to make out the words...' 'No, don't do that, there's no point.' 'I have to know. Ok, so we have 'kill' I think we can safely conclude that's what was shouted...' 'Doing this will drive you insane, the frontman can be saying anything, trust me...' 'Wow, that was a long 'killllll'...' 'Look out, a couple of sprouts have left the building and are walking towards us...'

The sprout on the left casually talks to his associate whilst rambling: 'I'm really going to annoy Captain Mental one of these days...' Sprout 2 replies: 'How?' Mental clenches his fists and presses himself even harder against the shrub. The vegetables walk past the still-as-rocks-officers but are still heard by them. Sprout 1 continues: 'I've actually written a song about him. It goes: 'Mental is mental, Mental is mental' over and over...' No. 2 replies: 'How do you keep the interest up?' 'Ah, in the middle of the song is an epic guitar solo. Think 'Crazy Train' by Randy Rhoads, it's totally insane. The drumming is pretty good, too. Very flashy, but not over the top. At the end of the song it just goes 'Mental is a prick!' A car door is heard opening and shutting. The engine revs and it drives away.

Mental can barely contain his rage and twitches: ''Mental is mental'. These people need to grow up'. His friend agrees: 'They're childish, aren't they? How they run a business is a complete mystery...' Mental rubs his eyes: 'And what kind of demented business is it?? You know what? I've snapped. I'm just going to run into the so called 'head office' and demand them to turn that crap off. It's noise pollution.' Mental stands straight up, military style and without a trace of fear. Morgan tries to pull him back down, but Mental has found a new strength. Morgan is desperate: 'Mental, no! It's too dangerous.' Mental charges towards the house and Morgan follows, as if automatically. As the latter runs, he pulls a mobile from his pocket and presses a button three times. Loosing all self-control, he shouts into it: 'This is Constable Morgan! We need backup now at the Brussel sprout base!' He then gives the address with a motormouth.

The duo kick the door open together to see something they don't know how to respond to. They just stare, with no emotion. In the hallway are ten sprouts bobbing up and down to the racket. Smoke machine vapour covers the floor and multi-colour disco lighting shows the wallpaper to be peeling. Mental shouts over the obscene music: 'Everyone here, it's over! You're not going to noise pollute anyone any more!' The sprouts laugh in hysterics. One of them screams: 'What are you gonna do, huh?? Arrest us?? For partying too damn hard?? Right fellas??' The vegetables only laugh more. Another troublemaker raises his voice over the pandemonium: 'Hey, I'm sure our boss would like to speak with you. Let me take you to him...' The thug leads the way up the splintered wooden stairs as the officers follow, always checking their backs.

More disco lights show the decrepit nature of the first floor surroundings. (Second floor surroundings for the perhaps more logical Americans). Three doors are seen and the sprout opens the tackiest one. The trio enter the room and the thug shuts the door behind him. This room is lit up by rapid strobe lighting. It is in total darkness for miniscule periods. A man a few meters away in a sprout costume turns to the three on his swivel chair, with his fingers clasped together. By his side is a desk-mounted computer and a large stereo system. He presses a button to turn the extreme metal off. Eerie silence follows for a few moments. The boss talks with a disturbing calm: 'I know why you're here. I'm only providing a service. Just like you.' Mental grits his teeth: 'You're providing a NASTY little service, that's the difference!' 'And arresting the Sausage Roll Killer wasn't nasty? He is a great man...' Mental scratches his head: 'Why did you just admit to liking a notorious super criminal? You're law abiding, right?' Somehow noticing a chill in the air, the cops back away slowly. Mental twists the knob behind his back and opens the door, still making eye contact. He lets in more light. Morgan continues: 'You're acting like you have nothing left to lose...' The lesser sprout shakes his head to his employer: 'You don't have to do this...'

The head sprout sighs: 'The truth is there is little money in annoying people, Mental. I'm starting to find that out. However, when there's a will there's a way.' Mental replies: 'What do you mean?' 'I'm also a drug dealer. Everyone here is off their faces. I am too. And you know what?' Mental stutters: 'W... what?' The sprout crosses his arms: 'I'm going to keep dealing drugs.' The sprout pulls his desk drawer open and grabs a pistol: 'Bye, fellas...' As the boss takes aim, the cops scream and make unpredictable jumps and movements to dodge the laser sight. Think a couple of basketballs going crazy. The weaponised madman points all over the place. The lesser vegetable has no idea what to do. Both rampant cops pull flash bang grenades from their pockets and dash out of the room as they go off. Like super-strobe lights. Leaving the (almost certainly) stunned minion and megalomaniac behind, they sprint down the stairs, shouting a rather creative range of expletives as an English version of a ten strong S.W.A.T.

team (let's call it a Power Police team) storms the building's entrance. They have pistols mounted on their legs and wear helmets with visors that cover the whole face.

Would you believe it, they swear their heads off too? What is the world coming to? They demand the nine sprouts face the walls with their hands behind themselves, but their huge rounded costumes makes such limb actions impossible. But the snacks try. Just as nine (makes sense, right?) of the special forces pull out their shooters and press them against their foe's backs, a loud, tortured voice is heard from above: 'Aaargh!' The sound of some huge object falling down the stairs is heard. Mental shrieks to the remaining Power Policeman who is kind of just hanging around: 'Watch out for the guy coming down the nutcase, I mean staircase, he's armed!' The specialist waits for the leader to finish tumbling as the others handcuff the lesser sprouts by their ankles. It's better than nothing. Once the head veg is squirming at ground level, he gets tasered to the sound of very fitting inhuman shrieks. The second he stops convulsing, he has his weapon ripped off him and gets ankle-cuffed. He is then made to face the floor. A gun points at the back of his head.

Mental asks the Power Men: 'How are we going to stop them all from hurting anyone? Are you sure bound legs are enough? What if they turn around and steal your guns?' A specialist answers, coolly: 'Tear gas will keep them out of trouble, whilst we leave and wait for some more vans. You should have said there were ten of the wackos...' Morgan joins the conversation: 'Actually there should be another upstairs, but you'll get him. Anyway, you mean us good guys are all going to leave the building then gas the criminals through a letter box?' 'Yeah, lolz...' 'Great stuff. It's good to be safe, right? 'Exactly'. A Power Dude opens the house door. All the goodies including the cops leave the baddies indoors whilst walking backwards and waving their handguns at them. The last Power Man to exit shuts the door and does indeed gas everyone inside through a letterbox. Many screams follow. But justified screams. In the cool night air, a Power Guy speaks to Morgan and Mental, with a warm smile: 'Us super troopers (ah, that's what they're called) will stay here for a while. You two can go back to the station...' Morgan replies: 'Thanks, we really appreciate what you've done...' The Power, I mean Super troopers all give a small bow.

Mental and Morgan are alone in a moderately sized room, with the SRK and the Brussel Sprout Boss in front of them. The criminals have small, slightly swinging cages to themselves that hang from the ceiling by chains. On the side walls underneath the cages are a number of constantly firing flamethrowers. Consequently, the whole area is rather warm. Underneath them are several rows of six foot tall, ultra-sharpened metal spikes. The cops stand behind the last line. Mental speaks over the sound of the flames to the two felons: 'Your days of terrorising people are over, buddies! And pulling a gun on me? That was a BIG mistake.

' Morgan interrupts: 'My God it's warm here, isn't it? I couldn't stand being here for too long...' Mental replies: 'But on the plus side, I bet you two have very... WARM feelings for each other right? I bet it's not TOO bad. Oh wait... It IS!'