

INT LAKESIDE, MAIN AUDITORIUM - EVENING

The World Darts Championship. Packed. The noisy crowd clutch fags and pints, tension etched on munt-ugly features. PERRY PETERS (18), sporting lurid green and wearing lenses that Unigate would hold the patent on, steps up to throw.

PERRY (V.O.)

11th January 2008. Reliants took first and second in the Dubai Superkings tricycle highjump. Kaykumbi scored a perfect ten in the Dressage section of the European Skateboard Masters. And in Valdazer, Fowler and Ratchet only managed Bronze in the stunt kite mixed doubles. As for me? I was on stage at the Lakeside, Thurrock with three arrows to level the match in the Final of The World Professional Darts Championship.

MATCH REFEREE

Perry, you require thirty two.

Perry puts his first two darts wide of the double sixteen. Match commentator, STIG WARDELL(50's) bald pate and Bobby Charlton 'swope', sits to the side, mic in hand.

STIG WARDELL

Tangible tension as Peters switches to a conventional action.

The crown MUTTERS excitedly.

MATCH REFEREE

Best of order please!

Hush descends... Perry throws his last dart. TWANG. It bounces off the wire, flies off the stage and lands in the Cinzano of a flummoxed PEROXIDE BIMBO. The crowd GROANS.

STIG WARDELL

But still that double sixteen eludes him.

MATCH REFEREE

No score. Jockey, you require 120.

JOCKEY WATSON (30), generously rotund, steps up to throw with the swagger and gait that befits an accomplished bully.

STIG WARDELL

Shanghai on the twenties! That's treble twenty...

Jockey hits treble twenty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STIG WARDELL (CONT'D)  
Single twenty...

He hits it.

STIG WARDELL (CONT'D)  
Double top...

Jockey slots the double twenty. The crowd ROARS.

MATCH REFEREE  
Game and the tenth set to Jockey  
Watson! Watson leads Peters 6 sets to  
4!

STIG WARDELL  
Sensational finish from Watson and at  
the halfway break "The Cock of the  
North" is right in the driving seat.

Perry snatches a green jacket off the floor and rushes  
backstage - past a FLASHILY DRESSED MAN (Talone) and a  
CLASSY WOMAN (Celia) who have been watching in the wings.  
Stig Wardell turns to fellow commentator, JIM MAGARRICK  
(50's), who needs less booze and more sleep.

STIG WARDELL (CONT'D)  
Well, Jim, they say that at the top  
level it's all about handling the  
pressure and Peters is looking like a  
sour grape in a Runcorn wine press.

INT LAKESIDE, BACKSTAGE TOILETS - CONTINUOUS

Perry storms in, locks the door, flings the jacket across  
the room and starts SMASHING the place apart.

PERRY (V.O.)  
The commentator was right. I was  
getting squeezed. But not by Jockey  
Watson's arrows.

INT LAKESIDE, OUTSIDE TOILET DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Talone and Celia rush up and try to open the door.

TALONE  
Perry? Perry, there's really no need  
for this inquietudinous-less-ness?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRY (V.O.)

In my heart I knew I could wipe the floor with that tub of shit, but in my head was this voice that said it could never happen.

INT LAKESIDE, BACKSTAGE TOILETS - CONTINUOUS

Perry is doing a "danse-macabre", pirouetting around the ablution-chamber kicking the bejeesus out of anything not made solely from brick.

CELIA (O.S.)

Look, Perry, look. What's going on?

BANG! One of the strip lights explodes

TALONE (O.S.)

HOLY MACKEREL!

The door handle rattles furiously.

TALONE (CONT'D)

(to Celia)

Don't just stand there ru-ruminating?  
GET HELP!

The other strip light FIZZES as water sprays everywhere from the smashed plumbing. Exhausted, Perry slumps over the basin and stares at his reflection in the cracked mirror.

PERRY (V.O.)

And as I lay there, wondering how the hell I ever got into this...

The strip light cover loosens at one end, then swings down and SHATTERS across the back of Perry's head.

PERRY

... a strange calm descended.

He flops face-first into the overflowing basin, and starts to drown.

PERRY (CONT'D)

And my mind drifted back to where it all began.

TALONE (O.S.)

(muffled under the water)

PERRY! PERRY!

The other light EXPLODES. White out.

## OPENING CREDITS SEQUENCE

Superimpose Main Title: POISON ARROWS and run opening credits.

## EXT LAS VEGAS - DAY

The lights and the action of The Strip. Circus Circus, Starburst, Monte Carlo. Bustling crowds of eager punters. Outside "Electric Avenue" a couple of BLONDES with breasts like cannons are bouncing on a "Dance Dance Revolution" video game. A fluoro green Ford XR3i is parked in front with full body conversion kit and tinted windows. Wait. This isn't Vegas.

## EXT SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, THE ESPLANADE - DAY

This is a crappy English seaside town.

The bespectacled Perry (17), flips Smarties high into the air and catches them, without looking, in the corner of his mouth. He has a naive, fresh quality about him as he skips, avoiding the pavement cracks.

The two Blondes frown at Perry's immature flipping, finish their game and turn to see a TRAFFIC WARDEN walk towards the blinking meter of the parked XR3i.

BLONDE 1

Colin's gonna get a ticket.

Perry seizes the opportunity. He flips an arm out to prevent her from approaching.

PERRY

Fret not, Fox. I'll take care of this

Perry freezes on the spot.

## SPAGHETTI WESTERN MUSIC

He pauses by his pockets (holsters). His bottle-lensed specs seem almost to rack focus like a camera.

The parking meter reads - PENALTY.

Perry focuses on the coin slot.

MATRIX style, Perry reaches for a coin, adjusts his stance and volleys the coin square into the slot. CLICK. WHIRR. CLUNK.

TRAFFIC WARDEN

What the... ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perry wanders past, jabbing the corner of his mouth out, into which his last Smartie lands. The scrunched packet arcs unseen through the air, landing squarely in the warden's pocket.

PERRY  
Should think about glasses, mate.

The girls are impressed.

The doors lift, gull-wing style. Out steps COLIN RUDGE (20), psychotic ginger nut, and his similarly beefy brother DUNCAN RUDGE (20). In Adidas.

COLIN  
Respec'. Aii....

He flips a Benson and Hedges into his mouth. Duncan already has the Zippo open, but clumsily botches the ignition and it clatters down into the drain.

DUNCAN  
Oh... sorry Col. Aw, man.

Colin steels himself. Checks his hair.

COLIN  
You TIT!

Duncan gets a SLAP. The Blondes are tittering. Colin clocks Perry.

COLIN (CONT'D)  
If it isn't old goggle-eyed shrimp-dick.

DUNCAN  
Yeah, g-goggle eyes. Heh eh heh heh.

COLIN  
Shut up, Fats. I'm talking to needle-wiener.

PERRY  
Hi Col.

He winks to the Blondes.

Colin hoists him up by the scruff.

COLIN  
You owe me more than shrapnel, Pee-Wee.

He motions to the drain. Looks grim in there.

COLIN (CONT'D)  
Zippo-fishing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PERRY  
I'd be glad to help, Colin. Sure, now  
where is it...

Perry suddenly points at Colin's car.

PERRY (CONT'D)  
Oi, you can't sit there.

Colin and Duncan turn away, and Perry SCARPERS.

EXT SOUTHEND PIER, ENTRANCE - DAY

A sign reads "The Longest Pier in the World". Perry  
scuttles past the queue of holidaymakers and the butt-faced  
TICKET COLLECTOR.

TICKET COLLECTOR  
Morning, Perry. Not taking the...

A coin lands in his shirt pocket.

TICKET COLLECTOR (CONT'D)  
... train today?

A nod of appreciation.

EXT SOUTHEND PIER - DAY

A red train emerges from the bowels of the pier-front on a  
reluctant journey. The clatter and lurch of this antiquated  
beast seems to threaten the rotted and unsteady foundations  
on which it's track is laid.

INT DRIVER'S CAB, SOUTHEND PIER TRAIN - DAY

Perry sits, chewing gum. His MUM (40's) is at the helm, fag  
in mouth. Years of thankless toil and crud diet have been  
unkind, but through the angst-etched features one can  
discern a woman of some distant allure.

MUM  
D'you bring yer Dad's goggles then?

PERRY  
Yeah.

Perry chews on.

MUM  
Well, you're too late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She nods towards the open sea.

MUM (CONT'D)

He'll have the hump, Perry. Eyes like  
piss-holes in the snow when he gets  
in.

Through the window we can make out a figure thrashing away,  
out on the open wave. It looks mighty cold out there with  
the buoys and abandoned dinghies.

PERRY

Sorry, Mum.

MUM

If you've been playing those video  
games again...

PERRY

I'm seventeen, Mum. It's about time  
you treated me with the respect I  
deserve.

MUM

Shut up, Perry.

EXT SOUTHEND PIER-END - DAY

Timeless seaside charm. A beautiful Helter-skelter stands  
proud next to an ornate amusement stall and a candy floss  
shop. JO-JO (16) is collecting the straw mats the delirious  
KIDS are sliding on.

Despite the staple teenage clobber of low-cut hipsters and  
chunky sneakers, we detect real grace and individuality.

JO-JO

Hong Kong Phooley, number one super  
guy...

KID

Wheee... !

JO-JO

Hong-Kong Phooley...

Perry launches himself at her.

PERRY

FASTER THAN THE HUMAN EYE!!!

Jo-Jo careers backwards sending ice cream and toddlers  
flying.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Yi! Ya! Huya!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO-JO

UGPH!

The pair of them crash to the deck, limbs akimbo. A TODDLER starts BLUBBING. With a scissor action, she double-chops Perry on the neck

PERRY

(choking)

Jo-Jo...

She rolls him over and unleashes a volley of punches millimetres from the end of his nose.

JO-JO

Hi ya! Huh! Hi! HA!

She ends in the "Seated Mantis".

A long, menacing shadow approaches the pile of teenagers. Perry and Jo-Jo turn slowly towards the looming giant.

He's short, got a daft 'tache and is wearing only "crotch-podule" Speedos - it's PERRY'S DAD(40). This is not a man to be taken seriously. Ever.

PERRY AND JO-JO

Dad.

DAD

Perry... you're late. In addition, you've created something of a disturbance and upset not only...

PERRY

Dad...

DAD

...upset not only your sister... but myself too. It's not fanny.

PERRY

(wheezing)

Dad. We were just mucking about.

JO-JO

MONKEY! HUUUUU YA!

Teeth bared she double-jabs Perry's eyes. Then smiles sweetly at her Dad.

EXT SOUTHEND PIER-END - AFTERNOON

A scene of carnivalesque serenity. Jo-Jo is teaching infants elementary Kung-Fu, Dad tends the ride and Perry the stall. This is an old-fashioned fairground at it's very best.

PERRY  
(lacking in enthusiasm)  
Step right up folks. Don't be shy,  
everyone's a winner.

A crowd stands around, mostly with their arms crossed.

PERRY (CONT'D)  
Come on people, there's lizards to be  
won.

Furry Lizards of all shapes and sizes await victors. The crowd seems to be building, but no-one will step forward to play.

CHUBBY KID  
Gaw awn Perry, do the circuit.

FRECKLY KID  
Yeah... Circuit...CIRCUIT.

CROWD  
(chanting)  
Circuit...CIRCUIT.

Perry looks reluctant. His Dad appears, frowning.

DAD  
(silently mouthing)  
Go on!

Perry raises his eyes heavenwards.

PERRY  
Tsk. Oh, okay..

MONTAGE

Perry attacks. From one side of the octagonal stall at a time, he launches volleys of ping-pong balls which slot neatly into the milk churns they're aimed at. His throwing action, whilst unorthodox, is devastatingly effective.

PERRY (CONT'D)  
(bowing)  
I thank you.

As the crowd descends, eager to lose their money, Perry sees his father having an argument with OLD MAN RUDGE(50's), a prune-like man, wizened by years of envy of the good fortune of others.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAD  
NEVER! I'll never give in!

OLD MAN RUDGE  
Stanley Peters. You'll not stand in my  
way. DARTS IS THE FUTURE!

Perry intrudes.

PERRY  
Dad?! What's going on?

OLD MAN RUDGE  
YOU'RE FINISHED!

Rudge slopes off.

PERRY  
Dad. What did Old Man Rudge want?

DAD  
It's nothing son. Just another crazy  
rant. He's nothing but a drunk.

The sun is setting, and he puts his arm around Perry as they watch Jo-Jo teaching her karate and looking back at them, smiling.

DAD (CONT'D)  
Everything is going to be just fine.  
D'you get me goggles?

EXT SOUTHEND PIER-END - EVENING

SPLASH! Perry looks over the railings and waves to his Dad as he heads off. Jo-Jo closes the Helter-skelter door.

MUM (O.S.)  
PERRY! PERRY!

She's leaning out of a small outbuilding.

MUM (CONT'D)  
Get in here you two.

INT FAMILY HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The Peters Family actually live on the pier. This is a cosy room, which even has the sweetest balcony overlooking the open sea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MUM

It's Friday night, and your Dad needs his supper. Now look lively and get down the takeaway. Here.

She hands him some money.

MUM (CONT'D)

Set Menu for four with an extra portion of sweet and sour.

PERRY

Can you drive us?

MUM

No chance, Pier's closed.

EXT SOUTHEND PIER - MOMENTS LATER

Perry and Jo-Jo's faces are vibrating. The puny tyres on their clanking bike are cack. But the wind is in the hair and they are having fun. We can make out the Helter-skelter behind them, about half a mile back down the planks.

JO-JO

You know what we should do, don't you?

PERRY

What?

JO-JO

Run away from home.

PERRY

I think we're a bit old for that, sis.

JO-JO

How about China? We could join a Dojo and perfect our skills in the mountains.

PERRY

I've got bigger fish to fry myself. You should grow up a bit.

Jo-Jo looks horrified.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Easy, I was only kidding ...

JO-JO

PERRY!

A stick is rammed into the spokes, sending the pair of them flying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They come to their senses looking up at Colin Rudge. Behind him, Duncan Rudge is drawing in chalk on a wind shelter.

COLIN  
Chinky run again?

DUNCAN  
Yeah... heh eh heh. Chinky.

COLIN  
(hissing)  
Leave it.

He picks Perry up. His glasses are broken.

PERRY  
Arrgh, my leg!

COLIN  
Specs look a bit pissed too, Perry.  
Shame.

Duncan has drawn the outline of a head and shoulders with an apple on top the wall.

COLIN (CONT'D)  
Do the honours, Dunc.

A hand reaches round and ignites a bic lighter in front of Colin's face

COLIN (CONT'D)  
The bird... You TIT!

Jo-Jo has banged her head quite badly and is too groggy to resist when Duncan hoists her into position, William Tell style.

PERRY  
What... what's going on?

Colin suddenly grabs Perry's balls.

COLIN  
You see, we've been worried that you pack of gypsies might be considering leaving town. Permanently. So we thought we'd drop by and show you how welcome you are. Show how much your fancy tricks are appreciated.

He holds up a fistful of darts.

COLIN (CONT'D)  
Only this time, under pressure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PERRY

You must be joking? I'm not chucking  
it with her there.

COLIN

Well if you don't, I'm gonna chuck  
you... over there.

He motions towards the sea.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Then, me and Donkey Dunc here are  
going to treat your little sister to a  
spit-roast.

DUNCAN

Heh, eh heh heh. Spit Roast. Mmmm.  
Tasty.

COLIN

Using pricks of a somewhat blunter  
variety.

Colin presses the dart into Perry's palm.

PERRY

Arrrgh!

COLIN

On three.

Colin grabs Perry's ear.

COLIN (CONT'D)

One!

Perry and Jo-jo exchange fearful looks

PERRY

I can't!

COLIN

Two.

PERRY

My hands shaking!

COLIN

Three!

PERRY

Oh sod it. Easy peasy.

Perry throws. CHULP! Gasp! Horror.

COLIN

You. Plonker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The Rudge Brothers scarper as Perry's eyes trace the movement of Jo-jo slumping to the floor.

EXT SOUTHEND PIER-END - EVENING

The Helter-skelter looks menacing in the evening light. A doctor shakes his head grimly and leaves. Dad, in his towel, turns and punches the wall in anguish.

DAD

No!!

Mum goes to comfort him but he pushes her aside and turns on Perry.

DAD (CONT'D)

W-What the hell did you think you were playing at?! Are you completely stupid or what!?

MUM

Stan. It's not his fault.

The fag dangling from his mouth is spilling ash everywhere.

DAD

Not his fault? How d'you work that out? He threw the damn thing didn't he? Well, didn't he?

Perry is now cowering behind his Mum.

DAD (CONT'D)

Well, I'll tell you this much for nothing, lad. If I ever catch you so much as looking at another dart again, so help me God, I'll break every bone in your body! Do you understand?! Do you?!

PERRY

Yes, Dad.

DAD

Good. Now out of my way, Bel.

Dad chucks his smouldering cigarette aside. It lands on the pile of straw mats, unnoticed...

He pulls a belt out. Mum hugs Perry protectively.

MUM

Stan? What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAD  
 Something I should have done a long  
 time ago.

MUM  
 Stan, no!

To Mum's surprise Dad doesn't thrash Perry. Instead, he fastens the belt round his waist to hold the towel up and sprints off down the pier towards the shore.

MUM (CONT'D)  
 Stan?

JO-JO  
 Mum!?

MUM  
 Perry, quick, you go after your Dad  
 and bring him back! I've got to take  
 care of Jo-jo.

She shoos Perry off. Two paramedics are transferring Jo-jo onto a stretcher.

JO-JO  
 Mum!?

MUM  
 What is it, Love?

Jo-jo casually lowers the hand mirror, in which she has been admiring her eye patch cum field dressing.

JO-JO  
 What's a spit-roast?

EXT. PIER TRAIN PLATFORM -- MOMENTS LATER

Dad is quite a sprinter and is now nothing more than a flapping white speck in the distance.

PERRY  
 (screeching)  
 DAD?! DAD, WAIT!

Perry is limping badly. He can't run.

PERRY (CONT'D)  
 Damn!

He pauses in frustration. The driver's door of the waiting train is open...

INT PIER TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER

The train is thundering along at quite a lick. Perry, grimly determined, has the "dead man's handle" at full twist.

PERRY  
Come on you heap of crap.

EXT SOUTHEND PIER-END - CONTINUOUS

The SCREECH of the train in the air. Mum looks up.

MUM  
Oh... sweet Jesus.

Behind her, unseen, the Helter-skelter is smouldering gently...

EXT PIER - CONTINUOUS

Dad is pounding the planks with Olympian determination

DAD  
Mother... frrr.... basta....

We can make out the train approaching behind....

INT PIER TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Perry, one arm on the handle leans out of the door.

PERRY  
DAD! STOP! WAIT!

EXT PIER - CONTINUOUS

Dad pounds on, Perry and his screams falling on deaf ears. This looks like the last run he'll ever make

INT TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

The end of the pier closing fast.

EXT PIER - CONTINUOUS

Dad strides up the ramp as the train heads into the station.

INT TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Too fast. Perry slams on the anchors.

PERRY  
Aaaarrrrgh!

The train buckles the bumpers at the end. Perry's head CRUMPS into the wheel, leaving him dazed.

EXT PIER ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The CRASH echoes from below, and Dad stops in his tracks. He pauses. Shakes his head. Then continues. Wheezing.

INT TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Perry shuffles out, bruised.

PERRY  
DAD!

EXT THREE FERRETS PUB -- MOMENTS LATER

Est 1961. Soon to be demolished.

Dad pauses to steel himself, then heads in.

INT. THREE FERRETS PUB -- MOMENTS LATER

Inside the two Rudge boys are playing darts. As Dad walks in, they panic and dive behind their Dad, for protection.

Old Man Rudge is serving at the bar and chatting with two heavy-looking customers.

DAD  
Rudge!

Dad takes the belt off and slaps it grimly into his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAD (CONT'D)  
I've come to teach those bastard boys  
of yours a lesson.

Everyone looks round. Beat. Then Dad's towel falls down  
around his ankles.

EXT. THREE FERRETS PUB -- MOMENTS LATER

Perry runs up outside and hears hysterical whoops of  
laughter and the sound of yelping as leather cracks on  
flesh.

Dad comes flying out through the pub window naked and lands  
in the road. The Rudge boys, their brutish father and his  
friends, walk up to the broken window and look out at him.

OLD MAN RUDGE  
And let that be a lesson to you,  
Stanley Peters!

Old Man Rudge tosses Dad's towel and belt out after him.

OLD MAN RUDGE (CONT'D)  
No lap dancing on a Friday!

Everyone in the pub laughs.

EXT SOUTHEND SEAFRONT - MOMENTS LATER

Perry and Dad stagger along, arm-in-arm. Passers-by stop  
and stare. They look the walking-wounded.

PERRY  
We'll laugh at this one day, Dad.

DAD  
Everything's fucked now. Fucked.

PERRY  
Come on Dad, it could be worse.

His Dad's face has gone ashen.

PERRY (CONT'D)  
Dad?

Perry follows his hollow gaze.

The end of the pier is ON FIRE.

Dad lets out a SCREAM the scale of which Edvard Munch would  
be proud.

INT LAKESIDE, BACKSTAGE TOILETS - EVENING

Bubbles rise from Perry's open mouth as he SCREAMS in the overflowing basin.

EXT CHESTERLEA BAY CARAVAN PARK - DAWN

A monstrous oil tanker in all its gargantuan glory. It's FOGHORN BLAST sends tremors across the bay.

Seemingly metres in front, on the filthy ocean's edge, is a ramshackle row of urine coloured caravans.

Real estate at its most heinous.

The last flaccid-walled erection on the left's door begins to wiggle, then flaps open ineffectually.

Perry Peters emerges with a thunderous BELCH. He's twenty, and chubbier.

PERRY

Morning, Mum.

At his feet his mother lies, can of Special Brew in outstretched hand. She didn't quite make it inside last night.

MUM

Pthlorning... thun.

PERRY

Mum, this is no good.

He hands his beleaguered Mum a cup of tea.

PERRY (CONT'D)

We've got to get the pier concession back. The answer lieth not at the bottom of a beercan.

MUM

Yeth... you're right.

Strange THUMPING noises.

DAD (O.S.)

Go on, love. That's it. Belter.

Around the side, Jo-Jo is slapping and kicking away at a makeshift punchbag.

PERRY

You've left Mum lying on the doorstep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JO-JO

Huya! Ya!

DAD

What was that, son?

PERRY

Mum's out cold on the floor.

DAD

You didn't wake her, did you?

JO-JO

Hi Perry.

PERRY

Well... That's not the point.

BEEP BEEP!

A white van marked F.W.SPORTS is having trouble in the mud.

Kindly-faced FRANK WILLIAMS (50), emerges, looking a tad spooked by his surroundings.

WILLIAMS

Mr. Peters?

Dad looks round. His face is now crossed with faded scars.

DAD

Who wants to know?

WILLIAMS

Frank Williams. F.W Sports. You ordered a size 10 women's Karate kit?

JO-JO

Oh, Dad, you didn't!?

Dad smiles at Jo-jo.

DAD

Who's Daddy's favourite?

Perry frowns, a little hurt.

JO-JO

Yeeha!

Jo-jo throws here arms round Dad and kisses him.

DAD

Happy Birthday, Love.

Mum sits up, groggily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MUM

Is it here? Oh, Happy Birthday, Love.

Jo-jo tears open the package and pulls out the outfit for all to admire.

JO-JO

Oh, look, it's brilliant!

A book drops out from inside and Dad picks it up.

DAD

Hold on a minute. What's this then?

Jo-jo leans over his shoulder to see the cover.

DAD (CONT'D)

"The Philosophical Sayings of Confu...?"

WILLIAMS

Confucius. The famous Buddhist?

Dad and Jo-jo look none the wiser.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

It comes free with the outfit. Part of our summer promotion.

DAD

Oh. Right.

WILLIAMS

I think I might be stuck.

He motions to the back wheel in the mud.

DAD

Go on Perry, be useful for once.

Perry wanders towards the back of the van. A glint of reflected sunlight draws his eye, to a display rack of darts lying on the front passenger seat.

For a moment he is transfixed by the spangling shafts and metallic flights.

WILLIAMS

Beautiful, aren't they?

The moment is broken. Perry looks up to see the returning Williams open the driver's door and get in.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Ajax Pirates. Twenty-eight grams of ton-up touting tungsten. You can't buy a better dart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Williams turns on the engine and hands Perry his card.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

You should drop round my shop sometime  
and try them for size.

PERRY

I don't think so.

WILLIAMS

Why not?

PERRY

I... I just can't that's all.

Perry glances nervously across at Dad and tries to hand the card back. Williams sees there's a problem.

WILLIAMS

I see... Well, why not hang on to it  
anyway, in case you change your mind.  
After all...

Perry is now pushing from the back. Williams hits the gas.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

(to Dad)

...IT'S A FREE COUNTRY!!

Dad looks puzzled. The van tears off SPRAYING MUD all over Perry.

DAD

You really are an arch plonker, Perry.

Jo-jo is falling about the place giggling like a lunatic.

EXT. SPORTS SHOP -- AFTERNOON

Perry looks across the road at the F.W.SPORTS shop. He takes a deep breath then walks over and in. Ding! Ding!

VOICE OVER

That day I entered the annals of school history by becoming the first student to take the advice of their schools career office. Just as well I wasn't listening properly.

INT. SPORTS SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Mr. Williams is just cashing up at the till. He looks up and recognises Perry.

WILLIAMS

Changed your mind already?

PERRY

There's something I have to find out.

Williams smiles and pulls down a blind on the front door. 'Closed'.

INT. SPORTS SHOP BASEMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Williams closes the door behind them.

WILLIAMS

Darts, my boy.

He flicks on a row of spot lights that pick out a series of framed photos on the walls of the descending staircase.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

The noblest sport of the common man.

As they descend, Perry examines the gallery of darts heroes.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

No finer test of hand to eye coordination. No greater test of nerve. From the bowman of Sherwood to the Archers of Crecy and Agincourt, I give you the most ancient heritage of every free-born Englishman...

At the bottom of the stairs Williams flicks on a spotlight that illuminates a shrine-like Dartboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 ...refined into its most singular  
 expression.

Williams chalks the number 501 on the scoreboard next to  
 it.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 The game they call 'Five-O-One'.

Perry looks on, spellbound.

MONTAGE

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 Two opposing players take it in turns  
 to throw three darts each.

Williams throws 3 darts at the board.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 Each dart thrown scores the number  
 hit...from one to twenty.

He circles the board with the point of one dart.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 Outer circle scores double. Inner  
 circle treble. Single Bull scores  
 twenty-five and double Bull scores  
 fifty.

He throws 20. 20. 20...

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 After each throw...

...picks up the chalk and deducts 60 from 501 to leave  
 441...

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 ...the player's score is deducted from  
 their total until such a time as they  
 can...

...crosses out 441 and writes up 32.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 ...by means of a single throw to a  
 double...

He throws a dart just outside the double 16.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
 ...match their remaining score...

He throws another dart just outside the double 16.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
...exactly.

With his third dart Williams hits the double sixteen.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
At which point they are declared  
...the winner. Any questions?

PERRY  
Yeah. Who's that guy in the picture?

Perry points to a black and white photo of a smiling darts player from the seventies.

WILLIAMS  
That, lad, is 'Gentleman' Johnny Pollock. Last of the amateur Champions; six times winner of the world title and the greatest player to ever grace the ocky.

PERRY  
The ocky?

WILLIAMS  
The area of play, lad, the gladiators arena.

Williams looks up at the photo almost dewy eyed.

PERRY  
Did you ever see him play?

WILLIAMS  
Did I!  
(nods nostalgically)  
Blackpool Pleasure Beach, 75. We were there on a day trip from college when I rounded a corner and saw this big powerful man, arms like tractors and soft kind eyes. He was doing a road show - taking on all comers for a two bob bit. Straight 501 and if you could break 100 before he checked out you won a nicker. I was a pretty handy player myself but not in his league so I was just happy to watch the master at work. That was until some local lads started teasing me to have a go, hoping to see me humiliated. But good old Johnny, he saw my predicament, hauled me up, gave me sly wink and then he let me beat him. Ha.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

You should have seen their faces when he turned round and told everyone I was the finest young player he'd ever come across. And that's when he gave me that.

Williams points up to an old shirt in a cabinet next to the photo.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

The very shirt he wore when he won his first championship.

Williams sighs again.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

You see, lad, that was the measure of the man's greatness. He loved darts and he loved the men who played it.

(pause)

Not like that poisonous tub of lard.

Williams points to a contemporary poster in a dark corner of the room. It features an obese darts player, punching the air in grim faced victory. Several darts are stuck venomously into it and it is heavily defaced.

PERRY

(reading the name off the corner)

Jocky Watson?

WILLIAMS

The current World Champion. Winning's all that matters to him. He'd sell his own Grandma for a nine dart finish. I tell you, it's the likes of him who'll be the death of this sport. That's why we need nice young fellas like yourself coming through, to keep the old spirit alive.

Williams hands him his darts and points to the board.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

So, come on, lets have that left foot behind that line and these little beauties as close as you like to that treble twenty.

Perry takes the darts, steps up to the ocky and starts rehearsing his bizarre throwing action.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Not like that! What do you think this is, Table Tennis?

Williams repositions the darts in Perry's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Here.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Between thumb and forefinger, from the shoulder, looking down the line of the flight. That's better.

Perry rehearses the orthodox action.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Now, breath, settle, bend and release.

Perry throws. Clang! Doof! Clatter! The darts go horribly awry. Williams ducks as the last bounces back past his ear. Pause. Williams regains his composure.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

So.

(cough)

What are you like at croquet?

Williams turns off the ocky light.

PERRY

Look, Mr. Williams, if you don't mind, I'd like to have a go doing it my own way?

WILLIAMS

(unenthusiastic)

What? Oh, yeah. Course. Carry on.

Williams puts on the light again and gives the darts back to Perry.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

I've got some clearing up to do, anyway.

Williams turns away. Perry goes back to his man-lizard throwing style. Thud! Thud! Thud!

PERRY

There. How about that?

WILLIAMS

(without looking up)

Yeah, not bad.

Williams turns and double takes in astonishment.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Not bad at all!

Williams walks up and puts his arm on Perry's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

But you know what you could do with,  
though, don't you?

PERRY

Something under my arm to stop them  
snagging on my jumper?

WILLIAMS

Nope. A manager.