

START OF TERM AT GRUNGE HILL

A Short Spoof

by

Roger Poole

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

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THE BUTLER DID IT
START OF TERM AT GRUNGE HILL
&
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NURD KIND

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CAST

<i>Prune Juice</i>	<i>Jane Prune, Head of Grunge Hill High School</i>
<i>007</i>	<i>Robert Bond, Deputy Head</i>
<i>Speak Up</i>	<i>Leonard Clench, an elderly, rather deaf history teacher</i>
<i>Misery</i>	<i>Nicholas Bryant, Caretaker</i>
<i>Collette La Guillotine</i>	<i>The new French assistante</i>
<i>Squawk</i>	<i>Lisa Martin, Head of English</i>
<i>Doggie</i>	<i>Diane Olivia Green, Head of Maths</i>
<i>Attila Bloodaxe</i>	<i>New P.E. teacher</i>
<i>Kermit</i>	<i>Ivan Graham, Head of Geography</i>
<i>Cilla</i>	<i>Annette Black, Home Economics</i>
<i>Amazon</i>	<i>Phillipa Bains, Girls P.E.</i>
<i>Page Three</i>	<i>Elizabeth Paige, Biology teacher</i>
<i>Judge Dredd</i>	<i>Timothy Judge, Music teacher</i>
<i>Kneel Down</i>	<i>Neil Porter, R.E. teacher</i>
<i>Singalong</i>	<i>Gurmal Singh, Physics teacher</i>
<i>Neville Knuckles</i>	<i>A pupil</i>

START OF TERM AT GRUNGE HILL

by Roger Poole

The staffroom at GRUNGE HILL on the first day of the Autumn Term. Upstage centre is a door to the corridor.

(The entire staff of Grunge Hill sit chatting together. PRUNE JUICE stands).

Prune Juice: *(Rapping on a table to gain everyone's attention).* I think we'd better make a start, ladies and gentlemen. *(The noise of conversation fades).* Thank you. First of all, welcome back to a new term, everybody - and to a new school year, in fact. *(Groans from the STAFF).* I hope you all feel refreshed after the summer break. Some of you certainly look as if you found a little tropical sunshine,

Kermit: You can't get all that tropical on a teacher's pay!

007: You're right, Kermit. I could only manage FOUR weeks in Tahiti this year.

Doggie: *(Dreamily).* I stayed with my cousin Dennis in the Bahamas.

Speak Up: *(Cupping his ear)* What d'you say ... played tennis in your pyjamas?

Prune Juice: Quiet, please. We must get a move on. I've asked the caretaker to give a brief report on the state of things. Is everything in order for the start of term, Mr. Bryant?

Misery: The dining hall's flooded, the computers have all been nicked, the gym floor's caved in and somebody left a bunsen burner on at the end of last term so one of the labs has burned down.

Prune Juice: *(Unruffled).* Right, so apart from that, we're more or less ready to start. The pupils will be arriving in the playground shortly, but first, I should like to welcome two new members of staff to Grunge Hill. Madame La Guillotine is to be our new French assistante.

La Guill: Enchante. I am much delightful to mate you all.

Speak Up: *(To KERMIT who sits next to him, though the entire room hears what he says).* She's a bit of all right, eh, Kermit? She can keep me in after school as long as she likes.

Prune Juice: *(To SPEAK UP).* Thank you, Mr. Clench. *(To LA GUILL).* I'm sure your time here will be a happy experience for all concerned, Madame. Secondly, joining the P.E. Department, we have a former star of the wrestling ring, where he is known, I believe as Dangerous Dan Dynamite.

Squawk: *(To her neighbour DOGGIE).* Wow! He LOOKS dangerous, too!

Doggie: And ugly!

Prune Juice: Of course, he won't be referred to by that title at Grunge Hill.

Squawk: No, I imagine not. What's his real name?

Prune Juice: Attila Bloodaxe.

Doggie: *(A note of sarcasm in her voice)*. Oh - much more re-assuring!

Bloodaxe: It's nice to be 'ere, folks. Pleased to make yer acquaintance.

Prune Juice: Welcome to the school, Mr. Bloodaxe. The boys need firm handling. I'm sure you'll stand no nonsense from them. And they'll enjoy being taught by someone famous for slinging bodies around the place.

Bloodaxe: They'll love every minute of it or else!

Speak Up: *(To KERMIT)*. Who did Prune Juice say he was?

Kermit: A well-known wrestler - Dangerous Dan Dynamite..

Speak Up: Never heard of him. What's he doing in a place like this if he's a famous wrestler?

Bloodaxe: *(Like everyone else, he has heard this exchange)*. I'm banned from the ring, mate accused of being brutal, sadistic and homicidal.

Cilla: You'll fit in well at Grunge Hill, then.

Prune Juice: I'm sure you were nothing of the kind, Mr. Dangerous - I mean Mr. Bloodaxe.

Bloodaxe: Too right I'm not! I'm as gentle as a baa lamb, normally. I wouldn't hurt a fly unless somebody annoys me, of course

Judge Dredd: Of course.

Bloodaxe: Then I tend to get

Squawk: brutal, sadistic and homicidal.

Bloodaxe: Well, I take after my old mum, you see.

Prune Juice: *(Uneasily)*. Of course, yes. Now, can we move on, please. Mr. Bond, can I ask you to allocate registration groups, please?

(As PRUNE JUICE sits, 007 rises, papers in hand).

007: Well, as usual, I've given a lot of thought over the holidays to the question of who should have which group for registration. I've attempted to match teacher expertise and experience with pupil needs; to co-ordinate personality and social factors, individual specialisms and extramural interests. It's a complex undertaking, and, in the end, it seemed to me that the best course would be for you all to

Amazon: draw names out of a hat!

007: Precisely - though this old crisp box will do, I think. I've written form names on the slips of paper inside the box. If you pick one out as I come round, please *(He begins moving amongst them, holding the crisp box above eye level)*. Don't try to peek.

Squawk: It's time I had a decent form. I thought the jobs I had last year would

drive me to drink.

Doggie: Drive? My lot were too young to drive - well, to drive legally, anyway - but I know what you mean, Squawk. 9D were an ignorant bunch. I could put up with them leaving Semtex in each other's lockers, but when one of them drew a moustache and eye-patch on my picture of the Queen Mother

La Guill: Oo-la-la! I 'ave form 7A. Is that good?

Amazon: You're dead lucky. I've won 11E. Might have known it! Neville Knuckle's group.

Kermit: Oh, no! 10D! Think I'll take early retirement and rear Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs!

Page Three: Well, at least they'd be more intelligent than 10D less ugly, too!

Kermit: (*To SPEAK UP*). What have you got, Speak Up?

Speak Up: (*Reading from the slip he has taken*). 'Lone Ranger in the 3.30 at Chepstow, Zulu King in the 4.15 at Wolverhampton.

007: (*Embarrassed*). You're reading the wrong side. Those are some notes I made on the History of the Horse in British Society. Er - turn the paper over.

Speak Up: 9B. Could be worse. Not much, though.

Cilla: I've got 8A. Don't like Year Eights!

Kermit: Want to swap? I'll give you 10D for 8A and I'll throw in my penknife with 16 gadgets.

Cilla: The one with the thing for getting money out of piggy-banks?

Kermit: Yes.

Cilla: It's a deal!

Prune Juice: Well now, if everyone has a form, we can proceed. At very short notice - only a few days ago, in fact - we learned that the school is to have the honour of enrolling today young Jeremy Foxtrot, the son of Lord and Lady Foxtrot of Cashtower Hall. He'll be in Year 8.

Amazon: You didn't explain just why a nob like him should be coming to a dump like this.

Prune Juice: Really, Miss Bains! I hardly think Grunge Hill should be described as a dump. You seem to overlook the fact that no fewer than four of our pupils got into Oxford University last year.

Amazon: Yes - but the police soon caught them when the burglar alarms went off, didn't they?

Prune Juice: You mustn't be so negative, Miss Bains. I haven't had the pleasure of meeting Jeremy yet, but I can tell you that his parents are modern-minded people who wish their son and heir to mix with ordinary boys and girls from ordinary homes

Judge Dredd: whose fathers are in ordinary prison-cells serving ordinary long sentences.

Prune Juice: Mr. Judge, please!

Judge Dredd: Sorry.

Prune Juice: What I'm trying to explain to you is that little Jeremy must be given the same opportunities as every other child here. His parents want him to face the same kind of challenges, with no special privileges.

Singalong: So he's going to mix with the mob?

Prune Juice: Quite.

Kneel Down: Be one of the common herd.

Prune Juice: Correct.

Bloodaxe: Rough it with the rest?

Prune Juice: Absolutely. And so a chauffeur-driven Rolls will deliver Jeremy to school each morning, and

Kermit: A Rolls Royce?

Judge Dredd: Chauffeur-driven?

Cilla: For one of the common herd?

Prune Juice: Those are the arrangements. It will do our image a great deal of good when people see a Rolls Royce drive up to Grunge Hill every day.

Squawk: Especially if all the kids clamber over it and give his lordship's chauffeur a nervous breakdown!

007: Yes, that's an important point. The school's behaviour must be watched. We must do all we can to make sure this boy isn't bullied.

Kneel Down: I thought the idea was that he should rough it - mix with the mob - face challenges and all that?

007: Well - within reason, yes. But, quite frankly, Lady Foxtrot has made it plain that she expects Grunge Hill to maintain high standards. I don't think she'd be over-impressed if her son were to be picked on. She wants his time at this school to be an experience he'll never forget.

Doggie: Oh, it'll be THAT, all right. If he lives to be a hundred and ninety, he'll never forget it!

Squawk: Half an hour at this place is unforgettable!

La Guill: Pardonez-moi, but is not this a 'appy place for les petits enfants?

Squawk: Put it this way: if they put Grunge Hill into a TV series, it'd have to be screened late at night and a warning given to viewers of a nervous disposition.

Prune Juice: You exaggerate, Mrs. Martin, you really do. Things aren't nearly as bad as that. And as long as we can keep little Jeremy happy, the Foxtrots are likely to be very generous whenever the school's in need of anything.

Kermit: Generous?

Bloodaxe: You mean they'll fork out?

Speak Up: Cough up?

Cilla: Splash the cash?

Prune Juice: Precisely.

La Guill: Ooo-la-la!

Judge Dredd: And just think of all the essential things we NEED at Grunge Hill!

Page Three: A new VCR for the staff room.

Judge Dredd: A karaoke for the music Department.

007: The sun-bed in my office doesn't work properly.

Speak Up: We could use a new snooker table.

Amazon: The wine-cellar needs re-stocking.

Singalong: I'd like a rottweiler - for protection in the classroom.

Doggie: We could have a dinner dance at Christmas.

La Guill: Or per'aps buy some books for the library and some new desks for les enfants and some writing paper and some more computers and (*She notices that everyone is staring at her in horror and disbelief*) - (*Nervously*)
Oo-la-la!

Prune Juice: Yes, well - there are certainly a lot of things we could do with.

Kneel Down: All of which could come our way as long as Little Lord Cashtower isn't upset.

Doggie: Ah, we can forget it then. He won't last five minutes in this place.

Amazon: He'll get his noble nose punched before he can hang up his coronet.

007: Not if his minders keep their eyes open.

Squawk: His what?

Doggie: His minders?

Singalong: You mean, bodyguards?

007: That's right.

Judge Dredd: Is he bringing some with him?

007: No.

Singalong: Then who?

Prune Juice: We shall take it in turns. Whenever Jeremy Foxtrot is not in a lesson under the watchful gaze of a subject teacher, one of us will escort him round the school to make sure he's not mugged.

Kneel Down: I don't believe it!

007: It's the only way, Neil. This kid could be very profitable to Grunge Hill but we've got to give him protection or who knows what'll happen. Look, if Kermit minds the boy today and Singalong takes over tomorrow, it'll give me time to work out a rota for the rest of the term. All right? (*There are a few grumbles but no real protest*).

Prune Juice: Good. Thank you, Mr. Bond. Now what time is it? 8.45 the pupils will have started arriving. (*SQUAWK faces the audience, peering as if through a window*).

Squawk: Yes, there's quite a crowd of them. They're always on time first day of term. Pity it doesn't - oh, no!

Doggie: What's the matter?

Squawk: Knuckles!

Prune Juice: Pardon?

Squawk: Neville Knuckles HE'S out there!

Judge Dredd: Suffering stinkbombs! Neville's in Year 11 now, isn't he?

Kneel Down: Nobbler Knuckles in Year 11! He was bad enough in Year 10!

Cilla: I thought he'd gone to a detention centre for burning down the fire station?

Squawk: Well, he's here now as large as life.

Cilla: Must have burnt down the detention centre!

Prune Juice: *(To 007 anxiously).* I'd forgotten about him. He was released three weeks ago.

Page Three: Well, when our infant peer meets the dreaded Nev Knuckles, there'll be blood spilt!

Kneel Down: Weeping and gnashing of loose teeth.

Page Three: We can say goodbye to handouts from the Foxtrot millions.

Kermit: Knuckles will ruin everything!

007: Not while we're keeping our beady eyes on him, he won't.

Singalong: We can't protect him outside school, though.

007: No need to. The Rolls will call for him each day at the end of afternoon school.

Kermit: I hope the chauffeur's got a black belt in judo.

Bloodaxe: How about if I have a word with this Knuckles kid? I could break one or two of his legs.

Prune Juice: Look, there's no need to make so much fuss about all this. Knuckles is in school, so let's get him in and read him the Riot Act.

007: Why not? There's no need for everyone to stay, is there, Head?

Prune Juice: No, those of you who are on duty or have things to do can go now.

(DOGGIE, BLOODAXE, CILLA, AMAZON, PAGE THREE, JUDGE DREDD, KNEEL DOWN and SINGALONG make their way off-stage during the following).

Squawk: Shall I call him?

007: If you would.

(SQUAWK faces the audience and mimes the opening of a large window).

Squawk: Knuckles! Neville Knuckles!

Knuckles: *(From the audience or back of auditorium).* What?

Squawk: Come to the staffroom, please!

Knuckles: Who - ME, miss?

Squawk: Yes, YOU!

Knuckles: NOW, miss?

Squawk: Yes, NOW... though if your diary's full, perhaps you could let me have an appointment some time next week!

Knuckles: *(For whom sarcasm is a foreign language).* Comin' miss.

Squawk: *(Closing the window).* He's on his merry way.

Kermit: *(To PRUNE JUICE and 007).* If you can put the frighteners on Knuckles, perhaps the rest of our villains will take note.

007: Neville certainly sets a bad example. He carries the school's low life along with him like a tomcat carries fleas. He can persuade other boys to do all sorts of crazy things.

Squawk: Not only the boys. Remember when he persuaded some of the Year 10 girls to go to the medical room and strip off ready for a nurse's inspection?

Kermit: The nurse wasn't due for another fortnight. The poor girls were in there shivering for twenty minutes while Knuckles peeped through the keyhole at them.

007: Then old Mr. Groundsel grabbed him and burst into the room to see what he'd been peeking at.

La Guill: Oo-la-la! What 'appened?

Kermit: Mr. Groundsel nearly had a heart attack. Poor chap wasn't feeling too well as it was. The sight of screaming nudies nearly finished him off. Had to take early retirement.

(There is a knock at the door. KNUCKLES has made his way backstage).

007: Our good friend, Neville!

Prune Juice: *(Shouts).* Come in!

(KNUCKLES enters).

Knuckles: Somebody want me?

007: I doubt it, Neville. I very much doubt it. However, we'd like a quick word ... where's your school uniform, by the way?

Knuckles: Me uniform? Oh, er - I lost it.

Prune Juice: You LOST your uniform?

Knuckles: Yes - at least - er well, when I say I LOST it, I mean I, er, left it somewhere.

007: Where?

Knuckles: Where?

007: Yes, WHERE did you leave it?

Knuckles: Oh, er - by the, er - by the canal.

Prune Juice: YOU - DID - WHAT?

Knuckles: I left it by the canal.

007: What on earth for?

Knuckles: Er - I went for a swim.

007: Neville, the whole school's been warned repeatedly NOT to swim in the canal.
It's not safe and it's polluted.

Knuckles: Right, yes, I know. True. But, well, I had to jump in, you see...
(*Suddenly inspired*). to rescue somebody from drowning.

Prune Juice: Rescue who - I mean, rescue WHOM?

Knuckles: Three old ladies.

007: Three old ladies?

Prune Juice: In the canal?

007: What the blazes were three old ladies doing in the canal?

Knuckles: Well one was doing the butterfly stroke and the other two were dog-paddlin' sir.

007: (*In barely restrained fury, to PRUNE JUICE*). I'm going to murder him! So help me, I'm going to murder him!

Prune Juice: It's a tempting idea, Mr. Bond, but I'm afraid it's not really an option.
Let's get on to the reason we sent for him.

007: (*Calming down slightly*). Yes, right.

Prune Juice: Now then, Neville, starting school at Grunge Hill today are 116 boys and girls whom we call our new intake. They will form the new Year 7. Do you understand?

Knuckles: So far, miss.

Prune Juice: We expect you, Neville, to be a friend and comforter to all these children.

Knuckles: Oh, yes, miss. I always take care of the younger kids, miss.

007: We're aware of that, Neville. Until we put a stop to it, some of them loved you so much they gave you their pocket money every week, didn't they?

Knuckles: Sir?

007: So that you'd be their best friend.

Knuckles: Sir.

007: Instead of bashing them up!

Knuckles: Yes, sir - I mean, NO, sir!

Prune Juice: Anyway, THIS year, Neville, you are to be the UNPAID friend of a Year 8 pupil, too - a new boy named Jeremy Foxtrot.

Knuckles: Who?

Prune Juice: Jeremy's parents are bigwigs, Neville. VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE, right?

007: And you are to be an associate, buddy, chum, companion, mate, pal, partner and sidekick of this young person.

Knuckles: (*Sourly*). Is that an order, sir?

007: It's an alphabetical order, Neville!

Prune Juice: And if you let us down, Neville, your probation officer will receive displeasing reports, the angels in heaven will weep, and your father will be told what you did on the safari park outing!

Knuckles: (*Horried*). Oh, no! Not the safari park outing! Don't tell him about that!

Prune Juice: You obviously understand the situation, Neville. Excellent! Now, I want you to go with Mr. Bond who'll introduce you to your new friend. He'll be arriving at the school gate any moment.

007: Come along, Neville.

(Exit 007 and KNUCKLES).

Speak Up: (*Cupping an ear*). What was that boy saying about a dog and a butterfly paddling in the canal?

Kermit: (*Ignoring him*). It'll never work.

Squawk: Neville Knuckles, protector of the weak and innocent? No way!

Prune Juice: Let's not dismiss Mr. Bond's idea out of hand.

Kermit: Knuckles will probably skive off school after today, if you ask me.

Prune Juice: Well, that would remove any likelihood of trouble between him and Jeremy Foxtrot.

(Enter AMAZON with BLOODAXE, followed almost immediately by DOGGIE).

Amazon: It's five to nine. Shall I break out the rum ration?

Prune Juice: Yes, see to that, will you, Miss Bains?

(From a cupboard, AMAZON produces a large bottle and plastic cups. She starts pouring as MISERY enters).

Misery: Some of the Year 10 jobs are setting off the fire extinguishers!

Prune Juice: The duty staff should be at action stations any minute now, Mr. Bryant. Meanwhile, go and stand guard over my car, please.

Misery: (*As he exits*), Huh! Teachers! Useless!

Prune Juice: (*Taking a cup from AMAZON*). I'm glad you've given us doubles, Miss Bains. Looks as if we're going to need them. (*Drinks*).

Amazon: How soon can we ask the Foxtrots for some cash?

Prune Juice: Well -

Doggie: I want to take Judge Dredd's A-level Music students to a concert at the end of the month.

Prune Juice: Any particular concert?

Doggie: Yes, (*She names a current pop-group*).

Bloodaxe: I could use some cash for sports visits.

Prune Juice: What sort of sports visits do you have in mind?

Blodaxe: Newmarket, Epsom, Haydock Park. Mate o' mine's a trainer and 'e reckons the best way to pick a winner is to

Prune Juice: Yes, well, I'll bear all that in mind, of course. But until we've earned the confidence and goodwill of Cashtower Hall, we may have to economise.

Squawk: Economise? Couldn't we sell something?

Doggie: Remember what happened when we sold the grand piano!

Prune Juice: The Music Inspector wanted to know what had happened to it. I don't think he believed my woodworm story. I showed him part of an old door and said it was all that was left.

La Guill: Did zat satisfy him?

Prune Juice: Not really. He said he'd never heard of a grand piano with a 'Gents' sign on it before.

007: (*Entering briskly*). Little Lord Foxtrot's late and I've got to take assembly. I've left Knuckles at the gate to roll out the red carpet.

Prune Juice: Are you sure that's wise? You made it quite clear

007: that there's to be no trouble. Absolutely! Knuckles knows what'll happen if he lets us down.

(*The school bell rings*).

Prune Juice: Right, let's get to our posts and start a new school year. Oh, by the way (*She opens another section of the cupboard*). I got these during the holidays. Picked them up at a course on Improving Behaviour in the Classroom.

(*From the cupboard she produces rounders bats, broom handles, corner posts, coils of rope, a javelin - anything visually alarming; perhaps even a realistic-looking sword. If the cupboard has a false back to it, these can be 'fed through' from backstage*).

Prune Juice: Remember the golden rule: Use only in self-defence.

Kermit: Understood. (*Exits with SQUAWK*).

Doggie: What happened to that protective headgear we used to have?

Prune Juice: Didn't Mrs. Martin use it for Roman helmets when she produced that Hammer Horror Shakespeare thing?

Doggie: JULIUS CAESAR HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE?

Prune Juice: Either that or the other one she did.

Doggie: ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA MEET THE VAMPIRE WOMAN FROM MARS?

Prune Juice: Probably - yes - look, does it matter? It's time we were all....

(The door is flung open and KNUCKLES staggers in. He is in a terrible state - black eye, torn shirt, bleeding nose, etc.).

007: Neville, you've been fighting!

Knuckles: Yes, sir - but -

(CILLA and JUDGE DREDD enter).

Cilla: { What's going on?

Judge Dredd: { What the blazes!

Prune Juice: I should have known better, Neville. Can't you keep the peace for five minutes? All you had to do was stand at the gate and meet Jeremy Foxtrot.

Knuckles: I did, miss, honest. But when his Rolls pulled up

007: Rolls? You mean he's arrived?

Knuckles: Yes.

Prune Juice: Amd the first thing he sees is you fighting?

Knuckles: Well, not exactly

007: Neville, I think you'd better explain very carefully what's happened.

Knuckles: I'm trying to, aren't I? (*He dabs at his face with a handkerchief*). There was me at the gate like you told me.

Prune Juice: Yes?

Knuckles: And this Rolls stops outside and a chauffeur bloke nips out to open the passenger door - for this kid in the back

007: Go on.

Knuckles: Well, the kid gets out and I goes up to him and says, "Are you Jeremy Foxtrot, 'cos I been told to keep an eye on yer and show you round the dump?"

Prune Juice: (*Sarcastically*). Most impressive, Neville. Yes, then what?

Knuckles: The kid takes one look at me and says, "Out of my way, Ugly, or I'll push yer nose through the back of yer head!"

Prune Juice: The son of Lord and Lady Foxtrot said that?

Knuckles: Cross me heart! Anyway, I thought he was jokin' and just stood there, like. But then he does an impersonation of Mike Tyson tryin' out a new punchbag.

007: Don't tell me - YOU were the punchbag?

Prune Juice: Despite what we told you about fighting, Neville, I think we should have understood if you'd stopped him hitting you.

Knuckles: Stop him! Don't think I didn't try, mate - I mean, miss - but he's a killer, that kid. He'd knocked me down before I could get me hands out me pockets.

Amazon: Knocked you down?

Doggie: A little Year 8 boy knocked down a big lump like you?

Knuckles: (*Humiliated*). He might be in Year 8, but he's bigger than me and he can fight like - like -

007: Like Mike Tyson?

Knuckles: I didn't do nothing to him. It's not fair. He wants locking up before he murders somebody!

007: Strange, hearing such sentiments from your lips, Neville!

Prune Juice: He has a point, though. I think we should have a word with Jeremy at once and

Doggie: (*At the window - i.e. gazing into the audience*). Holy Moses, look at the size of him! Neil and Page Three are bringing him into the building now.

Cilla: (*Joining her at the window*). No they're not - HE'S bringing THEM! He's got them both in a half nelson.

La Guill: (*Stepping forward to look*). Oo-la-la!

Bloodaxe: (*As all the STAFF gather front of stage*). Blimey! He'll have a great future in the ring!

Doggie: They're out of sight.

Cilla: Where's he taking them?

(During the following, everyone moves gradually away from the door. KNUCKLES stands near to SPEAK UP who is still sitting trying to hear what is being said. 007 stands next to AMAZON. The others [PRUNE JUICE, LA GUILLOTINE, JUDGE DREDD, DOGGIE and CILLA] gravitate towards BLOODAXE and gather behind him for protection).

Judge Dredd: Hope he's not coming here to announce his arrival!

Doggie: He looks mean and moody, doesn't he?

Amazon: *(To PRUNE JUICE).* How did he get on at his last school?

Prune Juice: *(Avoiding her gaze)* Well

Judge Dredd: Do we know why he left?

Cilla: How many schools has he been to?

Doggie: He was thrown out of them all, wasn't he?

Prune Juice: *(Very uneasy).* I didn't actually enquire into all that

Judge Dredd: No other school will have him! That's why the Foxtrots turned to Grunge Hill. Mixing with ordinary boys and girls from ordinary homes has got nothing to do with it!

007: *(Lamely).* We'll have to give the boy a chance!

Prune Juice: And think of the Foxtrot money!

(They hear the sound of heavy footsteps and protests coming from KNEEL DOWN and PAGE THREE. There is silence in the Staff room and the protests outside stop as the footsteps halt at the door. Slight pause. Then, a hammer-like knock! The group around BLOODAXE cling to him. 007 jumps into the arms of AMAZON, KNUCKLES cowers down by SPEAK UP'S chair).

Speak Up: *(To KNUCKLES).* What was it you were saying about some animals in the canal?

THE END