

RED VALLEY TAPES: SEASON 1 EPISODE 5

'Moriō Invictus'

by

Jonathan Williams

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Character List

Warren Godby

Gordon Porlock

Karen Godby

Aubrey Wood

Waitress

Mr Aloha Eternity

Interviewer

SEASON 1 EPISODE 5

'Morior Invictus'

SCENE 1

GORDON IS INSIDE THE GOLDEN BULLET.
THE ENGINE IS RUNNING. AFTER A FEW
MOMENTS HE HONKS THE SAD LITTLE
HORN. A MOMENT AFTER HE TAPS THE
WINDOW.

GORDON: Hey. Over here.

EVENTUALLY THE PASSENGER DOOR
OPENS.

WARREN: Can I stick this somewhere?

GORDON: Yeah, back seat.

WARREN OPENS THE BACK DOOR,
THROWS HIS BAG DOWN. SHUTS BACK
DOOR, DROPS LIKE A SACK OF POTATOES
INTO THE PASSENGER SEAT.

GORDON: Morning.

WARREN: Hey.

GORDON: Feeling alright?

WARREN: Yeah.

GORDON: Really?

WARREN: No. I feel like a nutsack. Can we put on some air conditioning or...

GORDON: She doesn't have air con man.

WARREN WINDS DOWN THE WINDOW,
LETTING THE BREEZE IN.

WARREN: This isn't a hangover by the way. It's a migraine.

GORDON: ...Is that true?

WARREN: My pills bring them on sometimes. It's always worst in the mornings.

GORDON: Probably didn't help being pissed up last night though?

WARREN GIVES UP.

WARREN: I think that's reasonable, yeah.

GORDON: You just going to leave your car here?

WARREN: Uh, yeah. I'll come back for it. Unless you'd rather go in my car?

GORDON: Do you want to drive?

WARREN: Please don't make me do that.

GORDON: Don't worry about it. I picked up muffins if you want muffins.

WARREN: Oh man, I love you.

WARREN GREEDILY STARTS RUFFLING
THROUGH A PAPER BAG.

GORDON: Road trip then?

WARREN: Yup. Road trip.

GORDON: Okay. Let's do this. We're going to go to Red Valley, solve mysteries -

WARREN: Mm-hmm.

GORDON: - uncover secrets, blow this shit wide open, stand in the shadow of the mighty Ball Bag -

A CAR HORN HONKS BEHIND THEM.

WARREN: I don't think you can stop here actually.

GORDON: Oh yeah hang on.

GORDON GOES TO PULL AWAY. STALLS.

GORDON: Lol. Whoops.

OTHER CAR HONKS MULTIPLE TIMES.

GORDON: Oh, fuck off -

CUT.

SCENE 2

GORDON AND WARREN ON THE ROAD.

GORDON: Did that say -

WARREN: Yeah yeah, left. Up there.

GORDON: I don't really know how to get...like I'm probably fine once we're on the motorway but I don't actually know how to get to the motorway.

WARREN: Do you have a sat nav?

GORDON: No.

WARREN: Well my phone does but I don't have the data to get us to Scotland. We can use it for now though.

GORDON: Cool. There's a map behind your seat for the rest of it.

WARREN: Oh.

**WARREN RUMMAGES BEHIND HIM AND
PRODUCES WHAT IS CLEARLY A VERY
OLD MAP. THE PAGES ARE STUCK
TOGETHER. THERE IS A STICKY, CRISPY
SOUND AS HE HANDLES EACH PAGE.**

WARREN: Christ, how old is this?

GORDON: As old as the car I expect.

WARREN TURNS THE PAGES WITH
DISDAIN.

WARREN: Why is it so crispy?

GORDON: Because its old. Don't look like that, I don't wank off over diagrams of the M25 circular. Sniff it if you must.

SATNAV: Keep left at the fork.

GORDON: Wait what did it say?

WARREN: Keep left. No no no, now, there -

CUT.

SCENE 3

DRIVING IN SILENCE.

GORDON: Were you serious about this prison idea?

WARREN: Well we're driving there aren't we?

GORDON: It's just...fucking hell.

WARREN: It's only an idea. I was trying to think of practical uses for this kind of technology if it were to be real. I just don't believe a bunch of old rich people, no matter how much money they have, are enough to justify all this. No one's going to go to all this abject horror and mess, frankly, on the whim of some old bastard, or young bastard, who can change his mind, have second thoughts, die earlier than planned. There are too many variables. There has to be some larger function, something more permanent, some institutional application. Overhead make millions in private prisons. Being able to store prisoners, rather than actively detaining them. All you need is a warehouse, a storage unit, a...

GORDON: A vault.

WARREN: Yeah.

GORDON: So who are we talking to?

WARREN: Like I said, he's just a rep. He might not know anything, I thought what's the harm. We're only dropping in.

GORDON: What time?

WARREN: Oh there isn't a time, I'm just going to catch him at his office. Didn't want him to be able to say no.

GORDON: Sure. Let's just make it up as we go.

SILENCE.

WARREN: So what else did Clive Schill say about me?

GORDON: We don't have to talk about that.

WARREN: It's fine, really. I'd rather know.

GORDON: He said...he said he wasn't supposed to be telling me this, that it was confidential HR stuff, but you had had, uh...some difficulties with your mental health. Before joining the company. That you might be impressionable, or prone to paranoia or manic behaviour. And that I wasn't being a positive influence on you. With all my...interests.

WARREN: Well I don't know where he got that idea. I'm only thacking it up the M1 with a raging hangover, after drunkenly yelling at my boss that I'm off to search for a mythical research facility where maniacs are freezing people's bodies until they shatter like china plates or are liquified into toxic sludge. Without telling my wife.

GORDON: You didn't tell your wife?

WARREN: She...wouldn't take it very well.

GORDON: I expect you may have to tell her at some point.
Like...probably today...

WARREN: That's a distinct possibility. Have you got any sweets?

CUT.

SCENE 4

ON THE ROAD.

WARREN: So I think you've heard way too much about me
Gordon. Tell me about you.

GORDON: There's really not much to tell.

SILENCE.

WARREN: Oh you're serious, you're not going to tell me anything.

GORDON: I...

WARREN: Don't worry about it. I'm sorry to ask.

SILENCE.

WARREN: Can we have the radio on?

GORDON: Someone snapped the aerial off. I replaced it, then
went through the car wash a day later, which snapped
it off again, and now I just think I'm not supposed to
have an aerial.

WARREN: Okay. Got any tapes?

GORDON: Oh yeah! Glove box.

WARREN OPENS THE GLOVE BOX. A PILE
OF CASSETTES SPILLS ON TO THE FLOOR.

WARREN: Jeez Louise.

GORDON: Sorry, there's quite a few. Take your pick, they're all good.

WARREN: 'Neurovitrification and the Simian Brain.'

GORDON: If you can tolerate the horrendous animal cruelty that's a fascinating lecture.

WARREN: 'The Sky's the Hayflick Limit.'

GORDON: The Hayflick Limit is the amount of times the cells in your body divide. Big part of the quest for biological immortality. Simon Callow reads the audiobook.

WARREN: This one's got Aubrey Wood on it crossed out.

GORDON: Oh, that was just a copy I taped over. Think it had some early psych evaluations, boring stuff.

WARREN: I thought you gave me everything.

GORDON: I did. Everything from the base. This was just background fluff, where did she go to school, does she play well with others, etc etc.

WARREN: And you copied over it with... 'Aloha Eternity'?

GORDON: Yeah, a guy proposed a cryonic cruise ship. You live out the end of your days on a luxury cruise liner going round the world, Hawaii, the Caribbean, wherever, always moving, avoiding all kinds of international euthanasia and funeral law then when you're ready, you down your last Dignitas marguerita and the bar staff immediately jump in and freeze your brains before you slip off your bar stool. Its not the worst idea in the world.

WARREN: 'You Can't Freeze a Soul - My Journey Into the Cryonic Void.'

GORDON: That's, uh. That's a memoir. A draft. Of a memoir.

WARREN: Your memoir?

GORDON: It's a work in progress.

WARREN: I thought there wasn't much to say about you. You've recorded a memoir! You've filled a whole tape.

GORDON: Well not the whole tape.

WARREN: It says Part 5 on it!

GORDON: It's not ready for public consumption.

WARREN: Gordon I'm going to believe you. You know, I don't think I can listen to anyone talking about brains or monkeys or margueritas of any kind. Do you have any music? Anything at all?

GORDON: Oh yeah. That green one.

WARREN: What is it?

GORDON: That's my old band.

WARREN: Hmm.

GORDON: It's good! I like to keep it around, it reminds me of a simpler time. Put it on, it'll be fun.

WARREN: Sure.

WARREN PUTS IN THE TAPE.
IMMEDIATELY AN EAR-BLEEDING METAL
TRACK PLAYS.

WARREN: Fuck me!

GORDON: Still sounds great!

AFTER A FEW MORE SECONDS WARREN
TURNS IT OFF.

WARREN: Jesus.

GORDON: That track was called Morior Invictus. It's about galloping towards a victorious death.

WARREN: Of course it was.

GORDON: We were called Pus Crank.

WARREN BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER, AND
GORDON JOINS IN.

CUT.

SCENE 5

**WARREN AND GORDON ARE EATING FAST
FOOD AT A BUSTLING SERVICE STATION.**

GORDON: She sells out every belief that she has. Remember that scientist guy she's in love with the whole time?

WARREN: David. He went to Minsk.

GORDON: She's in love with him for like 10 years and then blows him off for a pretty boy -

WARREN: That was Paul Rudd. I'd choose Paul Rudd.

GORDON: They make fun of the engagement ring David buys for her. She's an animal rights activist who then wants to wear a real fur coat, she hates corporations but then fills her house with Pottery Barn furniture and goes to work for the big corporate massage company in secret. Phoebe is a fraud.

WARREN: Rachel turns up at Monica's house in the first episode having left a guy at the altar right. Monica is her best friend from school. She wasn't even invited to the wedding. Not even as an evening guest. She gets off with Ross the night Monica and Chandler get engaged because God forbid an event happens that isn't about her, on Monica's wedding day it's all about Rachel getting pregnant, when she has the baby she steals Monica's treasured baby name. And then Monica ends up not being able to have kids.

GORDON: That's not Rachel's fault.

WARREN: Everyone says that.

CUT.

SCENE 6

**PETROL STATION. GORDON IS
REFUELLING THE CAR. WARREN IS SAT
QUIETLY WHEN HIS PHONE RINGS.**

WARREN: Hello? Oh, Craig. Hi. I'm good, yeah. What can I do for you? Well, yeah, actually I'm on my way through this afternoon and I was wondering...Oh right. Oh Okay. What if we got there sooner? Yeah, I'm with a colleague. Just a friend from Archives. Ah I see. Well another time then. I'll send you an email if thats alright? Okay mate. Good to speak to you anyway. Okay bye.

GORDON IS BACK IN THE CAR.

GORDON: That doesn't sound good.

WARREN: That was my friend, the rep. He cancelled on me.

GORDON: I thought he didn't know you were coming.

WARREN: He didn't.

GORDON: Did Doug Holder tell him?

WARREN: Didn't tell him either. Well I don't think I did.

GORDON: You sure?

WARREN: Well yeah, I was trying to be stealthy.

GORDON: What do you want to do?

WARREN: Sod it. Let's plough on. It's saved some time at least, we can get something to eat somewhere if you like.

CUT.

SCENE 7

PUS CRANK IS BLASTING FULL VOLUME.

GORDON (LOUD): You see the thing is, the music, despite the technical complexity and outwardly aggressive tone is, as I'm sure you can tell, incredibly melodic and uplifting, sentimental in many ways.

WARREN (LOUD): It's very sweet.

GORDON (LOUD): Thank you. So you need a suitable power metal name. I wanted to call us blahblahblah. But Geoffrey and Simon, who were the guitarists, and brothers as well, they were obsessed with names like, uh, Bile Piston, Poxhammer. Which are all clearly crust names -

WARREN (LOUD): What?

GORDON (LOUD): Crust. Like anarchy-punk shit. All guttural screaming and dirty bass. It's an entirely different sound. So no wonder we never got anywhere with a name like Pus Crank!

WARRENS PHONE STARTS RINGING.

WARREN: Ah shit.

GORDON (LOUD): What?

HE TURNS THE MUSIC OFF. THE PHONE
CONTINUES TO RING.

GORDON: Just tear the plaster off.

WARREN: Yeah thanks.

ANSWERS.

WARREN: Hi.

KAREN: Hi. I didn't expect you to pick up.

WARREN: I'm sorry.

KAREN: I don't even know what you're apologising for.

WARREN: Thank you.

KAREN: No, I mean which part. Is it the running away and not telling me where you're going, is it going AWOL at your job which we need to pay for the house we live in, or is it the way you spoke to Doug, your boss, my friend, to whom you owe your whole career?

WARREN: I know. You're right.

KAREN: I'm right. Of course I'm right! You told him to suck your dick!

GORDON: What!

WARREN: Whoa whoa, I never said that.

KAREN: Really?

WARREN: I would never say that.

KAREN: So what did you say?

GORDON PUFFS OUT HIS CHEEKS.

KAREN: Warren?

WARREN: I said he could suck a dick.

KAREN: I'm sorry?

WARREN: I said he could go suck a dick.

KAREN: Oh, much better. I wonder how he got those two confused.

GORDON: Yeah that's totally different.

KAREN: Who's that?

WARREN (CLOSE): Shh.

KAREN: That's Gary Hemlock or whoever is it?

GORDON: Gordon Porlock.

KAREN: And I suppose he's taping all of this on his little dictaphone is he?

WARREN (CLOSE): Sorry man. She's my wife.

GORDON: I'm an archivist Mrs Godby. It's just a habit.

WARREN (CLOSE): Stop talking. Karen, I know, I'm having some trouble, I should never have spoken to Doug that way, I don't want to lose my job -

KAREN: Then why did you tell him he could stick it up his shitpipe?

GORDON CAN'T HELP BURSTING INTO
LAUGHTER.

WARREN & KAREN: Shut up, Gordon!

WARREN: Karen, I will be home in the next day or two -

KAREN: Oh will you?

WARREN: - and I'll explain everything.

KAREN: I'll just make you up a dinner shall I? Keep it warm for you, when you deign to come home?

WARREN: Look let's talk later, please.

KAREN: Hmph.

AN AWKWARD SILENCE.

GORDON: Who's the worst Friend, Mrs Godby?

WARREN (CLOSE): Gordon, be quiet!

KAREN: What?

GORDON: The worst friend from Friends. I think it's Phoebe, Warren thinks it's Rachel.

KAREN: Two white guys taping themselves arguing about TV shows. Just what the world needs more of.

WARREN: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

KAREN: Enjoy your little pop culture happy hour, my love.

WARREN: Bye. Love you.

ANOTHER SILENCE.

KAREN: Ross is obviously the worst Friend.

KAREN HANGS UP.

CUT.

SCENE 8

**WARREN AND GORDON ARE IN A
ROADSIDE CAFE.**

GORDON: How's the hangover?

WARREN: I feel like I'm having a really long stroke.

GORDON: But you've done all the things. You had muffins. You found those furry paracetamol in the cup holder. You had Burger King.

WARREN: I listened to 75 minutes of power metal.

GORDON: Which you were into by side B. And you said you were only pretending to be napping so I'd stop talking about my pitch for a live action adaptation of The Silmarillion but I saw a fly land on your face and you didn't move so I know you got some sleep.

WARREN: I don't know who I think I am carrying on like this. I have no idea what I'm doing.

GORDON: You've just got the dreads. Existential crises are an essential part of the recovery experience.

PAUSE.

WARREN: You remember when you were at school, and you would get bullied -

GORDON: What makes you think I was bullied?

WARREN: Who did you say you wanted to play Eru the Supreme Being in The Silmarillion?

GORDON: Danny DeVito.

WARREN: So when you were bullied. You would always do everything you could to avoid being hit, right.

GORDON: Yeah.

WARREN: Of course you did. Me too. And when I would tell my mum or a teacher or whoever they would always commend me for not trying to hit them back, for not getting in a fight.

GORDON: Okay.

WARREN: And that idea was meant to get reinforced in your mind, that you were the better person for not being violent, for not rising to it.

GORDON: Well yeah. That's true.

WARREN: I never felt that. Not once. I didn't back down from a bully at school or walk away from an idiot in a pub because I thought it made me the better man, I did it because I was scared, because I was always smaller than they were, because I had no idea how to hit someone. If I'd been built like The Rock I wouldn't have backed down, I would've broken their faces. I wasn't better, I was weaker.

GORDON: There's no shame in not wanting to get yourself hurt. Especially if you've done nothing to earn it.

WARREN: I'm sorry. I'm getting all intense aren't I.

GORDON: Yeah, enough of this self-pitying beta male shit please.

GORDON GETS A WAITRESS' ATTENTION.

GORDON: Hi. Could we get the bill please?

WAITRESS: Sure.

GORDON: Thanks. Sorry, can I ask you, who's your least favourite Friend? From the TV show?

WAITRESS: Least favourite Friend? Tribbiani. Guy's a walking STD.

GORDON: Back to the real issues of the day Warren. Whoa, that might be the first time I've seen you smile. Like ever.

CUT.

SCENE 9

WARREN AND GORDON DRIVE IN SILENCE,
A TAPE PLAYING. THE VOICE IS SLOW AND
ENTIRELY MONOTONOUS.

MR ALOHA ETERNITY: There's no denying the allure of the cruise lifestyle. I myself have taken 16 cruises with my wife and family over the years. I've been to the Mediterranean, seen the Northern Lights, Budapest, the Caribbean, Thailand. I believe there is a great opportunity here to celebrate the spirit of adventure at that time of life when it might seem most far away. To not know where in the world you might pass on but to be secure in the knowledge that when you do highly skilled cryonic technicians will be on hand to vitrify your corporeal form -

THE TAPE CUTS AND ANOTHER VOICE IS
HEARD.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think your mother's death, and the manner of her death, impacts on the work you do? Do you believe it has an impact on your current position, and how do you think it could affect your day to day responsibilities?

AUBREY WOOD: I think It would be naive to think it hasn't played a part in my choices, in my career and my personal life. And that it wouldn't inform decisions I go on to make. It's one of the reasons I got into the field, but its not an obstacle.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had counselling or therapy of any kind in regards to this or / any other life event or trauma?

WARREN: / What's this?

GORDON: Oh there's still some Aubrey left over. You want to turn it off?

WARREN: Nah.

AUBREY WOOD: I expressed a desire to talk to someone following my mother's passing. / My father wasn't keen as he was worried it would somehow damage my future if I had a 'mental issue on your record', as he put it, but I insisted I speak to someone shortly after her death.

INTERVIEWER: A professional?

AUBREY WOOD: Yes, my school counsellor and then a private practitioner later. I've had therapy at various times in my life, I think it's very healthy.

INTERVIEWER: / I agree entirely. We've made great efforts to offer committed mental health services across the board at Overhead, it's hugely important that the staff feel they are able to come to us, for any reason.

AUBREY WOOD: Yes, I've seen the posters. It's a very good thing.

GORDON: / Her mum died when she was little I think. They're just trying to work out if she's in all this for the right reasons.

WARREN: Whatever that is.

GORDON: Uh-hmm.

INTERVIEWER: / You're aware of the full nature of your duties once you're embedded at the facility.

AUBREY WOOD: Yes. Fully.

INTERVIEWER: The risk of loss of life during the process is...

AUBREY WOOD: I'm under no illusion. There will be loss of life. As with every stage of the project so far.

INTERVIEWER: How does that sit with you, Aubrey?

AUBREY WOOD: The process by which we select our cohorts is exhaustive and I've played a direct role in meeting, vetting and selecting our candidates. I believe in informed consent. I believe everyone that sets foot in our facility knows the risks.

INTERVIEWER: But given the circumstances you'll face. Isolation, limited rest or relaxation, rationed food, very little company. How do you predict those risks, the apparent certainty of a mortality rate, will affect you? Given your own responsibility in...managing those risks.

AUBREY WOOD: When I was vetting potential candidates I spoke to a man who had seen terrible things, maybe he'd done terrible things. Part of the process is very similar to this conversation, only I'm in your chair and the potential candidate is in mine. I tried to gauge his state of mind considering the exceptional circumstances under which we were meeting. I asked him about the things he had done, the things done to him. He said, 'You should only do what you know you can live with.' It's a far easier thing to say than it is a code to live by, but it's stuck with me since. I know what we're facing. And I'm still here.

THE INTERVIEW ENDS, THE TAPE STATIC
ROLLING ON.

GORDON: What?

WARREN: What?

GORDON: You're looking at my tape deck like it turned into a grapefruit.

WARREN: Nothing.

GORDON: You sure?

WARREN: Yeah.

CUT.

SCENE 10

STILL DRIVING. TIMES HAS PASSED.

GORDON: It's so dark, how are you supposed to see anything...

WARREN IS SILENT.

GORDON: At least its not raining I guess.

SILENCE.

GORDON: I'm sure we're in the middle of some dramatic scenery,
if there was just some moonlight or something.

THEY DRIVE ON A LITTLE LONGER.

GORDON: Wait, was that it?

THE CAR SLOWS.

WARREN: What?

GORDON: Was that a sign?

WARREN: I wasn't looking.

GORDON PUTS THE CAR IN REVERSE.

GORDON: Yeah this is it.

THE CAR TURNS AND SLOWLY TRUNDLES
UP A ROCKY PATH.

WARREN: Surprised they have B&Bs round here.

GORDON: It's not a B&B.

WARREN: You said it was a B&B.

GORDON: I said a bothy.

WARREN: A what?

GORDON: A bothy.

WARREN: What is a bothy?

GORDON: Like a hut for mountaineers. I think farmers used to use them.

WARREN: A hut?

GORDON: Well Airbnb doesn't really go this far up.

THE CAR COMES TO A STOP.

WARREN: Does it have electricity?

GORDON: Yeah, its not a literal hut. Its just a bit bare bones.
Camping stove, sleeping mats, that sort of thing.

WARREN: We've been on the road for 11 hours and there's no
bed?

GORDON: Come on, its all part of the adventure.

GORDON GETS OUT OF THE CAR.

WARREN RELUCTANTLY FOLLOWS.

WARREN: How do we get in?

GORDON: The farmer that has the keys lives just nearby it
said...Oh there, you can see his lights on.

WARREN: Right.

GORDON: Look, you're shattered, just wait in the car and I'll walk
over, it'll only be 10 minutes.

WARREN: Why don't we just drive over, its the middle of the
night.

GORDON: Nah I fancy a quick stroll. The air is amazing here.

WARREN: Okay.

GORDON: You alright?

WARREN: What do you mean?

GORDON: You've been quiet for ages, just wondered if you were alright.

WARREN: I'm fine. Its just late.

GORDON: Yeah. Sit tight, I'll be right back.

GORDON WALKS AWAY. WARREN GETS
BACK IN THE CAR. HE SIGHS AND TURNS
ON THE STEREO, LISTENS TO THE STATIC
OF THE UNTUNABLE RADIO. EVENTUALLY
HE PICKS UP A TAPE, PUTS IT IN THE
DECK. REWINDS IT FOR A FEW SECONDS,
PLAYS.

INTERVIEWER: -iven the circumstances you'll face. Isolation, limited rest or relaxation, rationed fo -

HE WINDS FORWARD A COUPLE OF
SECONDS.

AUBREY WOOD: - candidate in mine. I tried to gauge his state of mind considering the exceptional circumstances under

which we were meeting. I asked him about the things he had done, the things done to him. He said, 'You should only do what you know you can live with.' It's a far easier thing to say than -

WARREN STOPS THE TAPE, AND DOES
NOTHING FOR A MOMENT. THEN HE
SHIFTS FROM HIS SEAT INTO THE
DRIVER'S, STARTS THE CAR, AND PULLS
AWAY QUICKLY.

END.