

MECHANIMALS
"SNAKE OIL"

Draft 4

Written by

Ciaran Murtagh and Andrew Barnett Jones

c/o Valerie Hoskins Associates
20 Charlotte Street
London W1T 2NA

+44 (0)20 7637 4490

1 EXT. THE ZO - MORNING 1

The sun rises over The Zo, the MechAnimals HQ located in an abandoned zoo outside The City.

1 AL (O.S.) 1
 Seriously Ramsey! Hurry it up in there, we got a code 9 emergency...

2 INT. THE ZO. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 2

AL the hamster is hammering on the door, COCO the kakapo in a bathrobe next to him.

2 COCO 2
 (heroic sacrifice)
 It's okay Al, my birdbath can wait.

AL gives COCO a <SNIFF> and wrinkles his nose.

3 AL 3
 Trust me Coco, it cannot.
 (back to hammering)
 Code 9 Ramsey! Code 9!

3 INT. THE ZO. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 3

RAMSEY the python luxuriating in a steaming bubble bath - human sized bath so it's like a swimming pool to him.

4 RAMSEY 4
 Imagine me with shoulders, Al - now imagine me shrugging them. Not my prob--
 (drifts underwater)
 <blupluplupluplup!>

4 INT. THE ZO. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 4

As AL starts to pound the bathroom door again, MARTHA the coelacanth stomps past in her pressurized suit, down the corridor to the kitchen.

5 MARTHA 5
 Ramsey hogging the tub again?
 (sigh) Guess I'm going old school.

MARTHA pulls a hose from the washing machine and plugs it into her suit. <WHOOSH!> Her window is obscured by pink bubbles, then <WHIRR!> her eyes spin round and round as her suit does a 'spin cycle'.

Over at the table, GEOFF-JEFF the giraffe is trying to open a packet of cereal, with hooves.

MARTHA's cycle finishes. With a <SPLURGE>, soap bubbles spray out, leaving her water clean and clear. G-J jumps a mile, bursting the cereal box, scattering oaty clumps everywhere.

6 GEOFF-JEFF 6
 Waah! Oh no! Sorry!

The oaty clumps fly towards AL and land in his fur.

7 AL 7
 Hey! What's the big i-

But his protesting is short lived as COCO starts to peck the oaty clumps off his fur.

8 COCO 8
 Never fear, Al, I'll rescue you! I
 love Oaty Clumps! Yummy!

9 AL 9
 (waving her away)
 Oi! Coco! Get off me!

An alert <SIREN> goes off, screens drop from the ceiling with warning graphics on them. Everyone is suddenly alert, AL looks up.

10 AL (CONT'D) 10
 Breakfast is cancelled, folks,
 that's a code 2.
 (everyone looks blank)
 Code 2 - action stations. Does
 anyone actually read my memos?
 Someone needs help!

11 GEOFF-JEFF 11
 And what they've got - is us!

TRANSITION TO:

5 POWER UP SEQUENCE 5

Stylised suiting-up sequence, with episodic variations.
<INTENSE> underscore.

COCO flings her wings out and her suit flies at her in two halves, clanging together, then she fires her 'sonic boom' and soars into the air.

12 HEROIC VOICE (V.O.) 12
CAPTAIN BOOM! *

13 COCO 13
Boom boom baby!

Bits of metal fly at GEOFF-JEFF from all directions, he <WHIMPERS> as they thump onto him. Beat, then his neck elongates with a <RATCHETTING> sound, carrying his alarmed face up a foot with a <YELP>.

14 HEROIC VOICE 14
LOOKOUT!

MARTHA - already in her suit - punches her fists together.

15 HEROIC VOICE (CONT'D) 15
TANK!

She goes rolling down a marble-run like chute and clunks into place into 'The Cage', their equally OTT customized vehicle. LOOKOUT's neck sticks out of a hole in the top.

Behind, AL clammers into his hamster ball and <POW!> it's fired up like a rocket.

16 HEROIC VOICE (CONT'D) 16
GLOBE-AL!

Hero shot of the Cage rumbling out, the ball soaring above.

17 HEROIC VOICE (CONT'D) 17
MECHANIMALS ASSEMBLE!!!

INSERT: The Cage <SCREECHES> to a halt.

18 MARTHA 18
Waaaaait, wait! Where's that lazy son-of-a-snake?!

CUT TO:

6 INT. THE ZO. BATHROOM - THAT MOMENT 6

RAMSEY is floating, tail in mouth, like a moment in a Busby Berkeley aquatic dance routine. The mood is shattered as the door flies across the room, having been punched by MARTHA, RAMSEY <MOANS>...

7 POWER UP SEQUENCE 7

The missing section of the power-up sequence: RAMSEY shoots back and forth across the frame picking up an extra coloured tube on each pass, until he's got the whole rainbow.

19 HEROIC VOICE (V.O.) 19
ROLLERSNAKE!

20 RAMSEY 20
(half hearted)
Woo(!)

8 E/I. THE WHEEL - DAY 8
AL's ball zooms upwards.

21 AL 21
Okay crew, patching the details through, go out there and make me proud, I'll be keeping an eye on you from up here. Waaay up here.

His ball passes through the atmosphere into space.

9 EXT. THE CITY. TOWN SQUARE - DAY 9
The Cage parked, COCO, RAMSEY, GEOFF-JEFF and MARTHA strike a 'heroes assemble' type pose, COCO hovering impressively.

22 COCO 22
Have no fear, citizens, we're here to clean up this town!

The HUMANS go about their business oblivious, one looks up from a mobile phone and then goes back to it, dropping an empty soft drinks can ('Snake Oil') on the floor.

23 MARTHA 23
Litter patrol. Seriously. Does this really need a team of superheroes?

GEOFF-JEFF <EXTENDS> his neck - and <GULPS>.

24 GEOFF-JEFF 24
Um... maybe?!

REVEAL ridiculously huge mounds of Snake Oil cans littering every corner of the street. Another is tossed and bounces off GEOFF-JEFF's armoured head.

25 RAMSEY 25
You got me out of my tub for this
Al? Al?!

CUTAWAY to the ball. Bits of cereal float off his fur. AL shrugs and he grabs a couple and <CHOMPS> them down.

26 AL 26
Can't talk right now!
(chomps the clump)
Asteroid field...!

BACK to COCO, she taps at her helmet as AL's voice comes through. It sounds like he's breaking up, actually he's just <LOUDLY CHOMPING CEREAL>.

27 COCO 27
Al? He's breaking up... We'll have
to work out where these cans are
coming from ourselves. But how?

A huge promotional stand for 'Snake Oil' is directly behind her. A giant can on the top revolves and plays a jingle, as brand-wearing PROMO STAFF hand out cans to passing humans.

28 PROMO STAFF 28
Snake Oil! / Drink yourself smart!
/ Free samples!

GEOFF-JEFF taps her on the shoulder and points her in the direction of the stand. Meanwhile MARTHA heads over and is offered a can.

29 PROMO GUY 29
Try new Snake Oil, the soft drink
that makes you smarter!

Quick shots of HUMANS guzzling down the drink - getting a quick burst of smarts - then tossing the can away recklessly.

30 FIRST CUSTOMER (FEMALE) 30
(gasp!) I've been wasting my life
in a dead end job because my lack
of a strong father-figure left me
continually seeking approval from
authority! And this stuff's minty!

31 SECOND CUSTOMER (MALE) 31
(belches each one)
"E!" "equals!" "M!" "C!" "Squared!"

The PROMO GUY has put a can on the counter for MARTHA. MARTHA's pounded it flat with one fist, a huge <FIZZ> of soda spurts out - powerful stuff!

- 32 MARTHA 32
Where's this junk coming from?
- COCO rockets in and <PULSES> her out of the way.
- 33 COCO 33
And can it really make me smart? I
should try this, guys, I'm...
- 34 RAMSEY 34
Thick as a concrete milkshake?
- COCO cracks a can and guzzles it.
- 35 COCO 35
Oh! Wow! This is awesome! Ha!
'Thick as a concrete milkshake' - I
get it now, both concrete and
milkshakes are famously thick!
- She slams the can flat against her head, then throws it in
the gutter. GEOFF-JEFF is concerned.
- 36 GEOFF-JEFF 36
Um, should we maybe...
- RAMSEY flips his way onto the counter like a reverse Slinky.
- 37 RAMSEY 37
Try it out! Good call!
- He cracks a can open with an 'opener' attachment and guzzles
a can, smacking his lips like a wine connoisseur.
- 38 RAMSEY (CONT'D) 38
Aw, now this is very familiar. I'm
getting floral topnotes and a
subtle undertone...
- In CUTAWAY we see AL munching on cereal as he monitors his
crew down below.
- 39 AL 39
Hey, less shirking and more
working! You're there to pick up
trash, not pick up snacks!
- COCO interrupts, cracking a can and handing it to him.
Behind them MARTHA drinks too. GEOFF-JEFF absent-mindedly
drinks it as she holds forth.

40 COCO 40
 Or even better. We could track down
 the source of this astonishingly
 alchemical concoction, analyse it,
 find out what's making humans toss
 their cans away, and...

She lets out a <BURP> that takes her enhanced intelligence
 with it - but an unusual lack of responsibility remains.

41 COCO (CONT'D) 41
 And is it me or does that seem way
 too much like hard work?

She throws her second can into the gutter. GEOFF-JEFF wavers.

42 GEOFF-JEFF 42
 But, right here, right now, there's
 a whole loada trash... <BURP> but
 if humans wanna trash the place,
 let 'em! Dominant species, yeah?

<LAZY AGREEMENT WALLAH> from the others. They head away,
 GEOFF-JEFF throws his empty can over his shoulder and it
 <CLANGS> onto the pile like a coffin-lid falling...

43 RAMSEY 43
 An emergency like this calls for...

CUT TO:

10 INT. THE ZO. BATHROOM - DAY 10
 RAMSEY's out of his suit, and in the bath, he relaxes into it
 with a plume of bubbles.

44 RAMSEY 44
 Ahhhhh-<BLUBLUBLUBLUB>!

11 INT. THE ZO. OPERATIONS ROOM - THAT MOMENT 11
 COCO has a crate of cans of Snake Oil that she's mainlining,
 empty cans litter the floor. She pours some into a technical
 gizmo. GEOFF-JEFF is lying on his back, legs in the air.

45 COCO 45
 What, I'm supposed to press the
 buttons myself? Squawk that! Al!
 You do the hard work for once!

She <CRACKS> another, holds a can out to MARTHA who waves it away. The water in her tank is still bubbly. She <BURPS> - a bubble bursts in the water, she 'breathes' it back in.

46 AL (VIA SCREEN) 46
I am - for once! I've been
analysing this 'Snake Oil' stuff...

CUTAWAY TO WHEEL: AL examines a 3D hologram of floating atoms. One of them is actually an oaty clump..

47 AL (CONT'D) 47
And the active ingredient is toxic!
Your stomachs will implode in
searing agony in three, two...

CUTAWAY TO ZO: Total disinterest from all of them.

BACK TO WHEEL:

48 AL (CONT'D) 48
... no, wait, that's an oaty clump.
(eats it, mouth full)
Sorry, false alarm!

BACK TO ZO:

49 MARTHA 49
Nyah. Load'a flapdoodle.

50 AL (ON SCREEN) 50
Clearly that drink is eroding your
sense of urgency...

They stare at the screen waiting for him to continue.

51 AL (CONT'D) 51
So you should find out what's in
it.
(still no reaction)
Okay, let me put it this way.

He hits a button, the sirens start blaring again. The OTHERS protest half heartedly.

52 AL (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D) 52
I'll turn it off when you get back
out there and do your job. It's
getting serious!

He hits a button, the screen flashes up an image of The City, cans now literally pouring out of the sides of it.

53 MARTHA 53
Fine.
(megaphone emerges)
RAMSEY?! WE'RE LEAVING!!

They all head for the door.

CUTAWAY TO BATHROOM:

New Age <WHALE SONG> blares out, competing with the sirens.
RAMSEY is oblivious to the sirens.

12 EXT. SNAKE OIL FACTORY - DAY 12

Suits on, COCO, GEOFF-JEFF and MARTHA have parked the Cage outside the City. They're looking at a large factory with a rotating 'Snake Oil' can on the top, and a huge video-wall running an aspirational advert for Snake Oil. A half-buried pipeline snakes out of the city into the factory.

54 COCO 54
(drinking Snake Oil)
Nice work, Al, did you triangulate
the chemical signature of <BURP>...
something or other?

55 AL (VIA COMMS) 55
Nope. There's a mailing address on
the side of the can.

MARTHA turns a can - oh yeah. GEOFF-JEFF elongates to his full height, making him dizzy.

56 GEOFF-JEFF 56
That pipeline looks... Waah!

He topples over and lands with his head next to a hatch in pipeline.

57 GEOFF-JEFF (CONT'D) 57
Hey, I found a way to move without
any effort! Over here!

He digs his chin into the ground and retracts his neck, pulling his body across to him.

58 COCO 58
I calculate a 99.7% chance this is
where the secret ingredient is
piped into the factory. <BURP!>

MARTHA strains to turn the wheel on the hatch. They peer in.
The narrow pipeline is bone dry.

59 MARTHA 59
Empty. Waste of effort!

60 COCO 60
But, someone could squeeze down
that pipe and into the factory.

61 GEOFF-JEFF 61
And when you say someone...

CUT TO:

13 INT. THE ZO. BATHROOM DOOR - DAY 13

RAMSEY floating perfectly still on the top of the bath. <NEW AGE WHALE SONG> plays, candles light the room. <BLART!> A mirror turns into a video screen, split four ways so COCO, GEOFF-JEFF, MARTHA and AL are all looking in at him.

62 AL (ON SCREEN) 62
Ramsey! Suit up! We need
RollerSnake!

63 RAMSEY 63
Hey! I was just cresting maximum
bliss here and... wait, there's a
video screen in the bathroom?!

64 AL 64
This whole place is wired up,
buddy, and I got the buttons!

65 RAMSEY 65
Well I'm not leaving and you can't-
waaagh!

Suddenly the water in the bath swirls downwards... taking a stubborn RAMSEY with it down the plug hole.

66 AL (ON SCREEN) 66
Like I say, I got the buttons.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. SNAKE OIL FACTORY - THAT MOMENT 14

A rush of distant underground water. GEOFF-JEFF bends his neck like a crazy straw to look down the pipe.

67 GEOFF-JEFF 67
Something's coming...

68 COCO 68
(drinking Snake Oil, smug)
A 100% chance this is where the
secret ingredient is piped in...

A sluice of soapy water rushes past, carrying RAMSEY with it, he manages to stick his head out of the hatch. MARTHA grabs him round the neck and whips him out of the pipe.

69 RAMSEY 69
Not cool, guys, very not cool.
(at their faces)
What?

70 GEOFF-JEFF 70
Wait, hang on, does this mean, the
secret ingredient in Snake Oil - is
Ramsey's bathwater?

COCO, can to mouth, lets out a ridiculously long spit take.

The video wall on the factory flickers and PAN appears, flanked by PENGUIN henchbirds. He claps sarcastically.

71 PAN (ON SCREEN) 71
Finally! Even with nineteen cans of
intelligence enhancing elixir
inside you, that was painful!

72 RAMSEY 72
Snake Oil is my... wow, I feel
simultaneously clean AND dirty.

73 PAN 73
After I realised your scales would
excrete oil containing traces of
the Mechanimal intelligence
enhancement process, I mastered the
art of Grand Theft Aqua...

FLASHBACK: A near-identical bathtub in the Zo bathroom, a welding torch rapidly comes up through the floor in a circle and the bath disappears down, several PENGUINS push up the new one that we've seen Ramsey in, spot weld it into place, look around in dismay at realising they're trapped, and dive down the toilet. All this in about five seconds.

74 PAN (CONT'D) 74
I had intended to use it to enhance
my own superlative intellect, but
my tests revealed a side effect:
enhanced apathy.

75 GEOFF-JEFF 75
Apathy? Where did that come from?

76 RAMSEY 76
Wake me if we get to a part where
it's my problem.

77 MARTHA 77
 (realising)
Uh-huh.

PAN's image is replaced by footage of humans doing ridiculous acts of littering and destruction, playing under his speech:

1) Two NEIGHBOURS on either side of a garden fence punting a bag of trash between them like a disgusting game of volleyball. Cans of Snake Oil litter their yards.

2) A car chugs to a stop - out of gas. The OWNER taps the fuel gauge, sighs, gets out - and pushes it off a cliff. As it explodes she cracks open a can of Snake Oil.

3) A PENSIONER on a bench takes one bite of a footlong sandwich, then has a swig of Snake Oil. He looks at the sandwich, looks at the empty bin - then sets fire to the bench.

78 PAN (V.O.) 78
Snake Oil makes humans fleetingly
smart - and then saps their sense
of civic servitude. Free samples
are just the start - now to flood
the world with sweetened snake
sweat and watch humanity shrug its
way to annihilation!

79 COCO 79
 (flies up, heroic pose)
This is awful!
 (lands, apathetic)
Someone else should really do
something about it!

PAN <CACKLES>, the video screen rises up to reveal open factory gates. A fleet of tankers with the *Snake Oil* logo on the side drive out, driven by PENGUINS.

80 AL (VIA COMMS) 80
They're headed for docks, airports,
transport links - ya gotta stop
them before this thing goes global!

81 RAMSEY 81
 Well I'd love to, but I came out
 without my suit so...

COCO is guzzling another can of Snake Oil, genius strikes!

82 COCO 82
 So, you're the perfect girth to
 slither down this pipe and gain
 access to the factory. (beat) What?

83 GEOFF-JEFF 83
 You're still drinking that stuff?

84 COCO 84
 I like being smart! I'm full of
 great ideas for what other people
 should be doing. Martha: sluice
 him!

MARTHA shrugs, picked RAMSEY up and bundles him into the pipe
 - then flips open a nozzle and <SLUICES> water sending him
 <YELPING> up the pipe. She nods in satisfaction - then
 starts pouring more Snake Oil in to fill up again.

85 GEOFF-JEFF 85
 Y'know, those tankers are nearly
 out of sight and mind...

COCO swigs another can and has another bright idea.

86 COCO 86
 Stick your neck out and fall over -
 you said it wasn't any effort!

GEOFF-JEFF cranks his neck after the closest tanker - still
 ridiculously far - and hooks onto the bumper with his chin.
 He is momentarily dragged behind the truck like a rubbish
 water skier.

87 GEOFF-JEFF (JUDDERING BUT DEADPAN) 87
 I can't even be bothered to let go.

The bumper comes away and GEOFF-JEFF face plants the road.
 The tanker careers off road and topples over, a huge <FIZZ>
 of bubbles emerge as the knock causes a pressure surge.

88 COCO 88
 Whoah! That stuff's fizzy! I could
 boom 'em... if I could be bothered
 to fly...

MARTHA reaches out, lifts COCO on top of the crate of Snake Oil, and <SLAMS> her hands together to smash the cans, causing a huge frothy rocket effect sending COCO flying.

89 MARTHA 89
Don't say I never do anything for
ya.

90 COCO 90
Ahhhhh.... BOOM!

COCO lets out a sonic <BOOM> above the fleet, and the reverberations knock the tankers onto their sides, they <FROTH> up and come to a halt. PENGUINS slither from the frothy wreckage - look at it and shrug, all apathetic!

GEOFF-JEFF meanwhile has the bumper stuck in his bottom lip stretching it absurdly. He blunders back into shot.

91 GEOFF-JEFF 91
Help! Help!

92 MARTHA 92
This won't hurt a bit.

We go to an extreme wide shot as GEOFF-JEFF <HOWLS>.

93 MARTHA (CONT'D) 93
It'll hurt a lot.

Atop the factory the spinning can stops, and flips open to reveal PAN sitting inside on a giant throne. His two PENGUIN henchbirds are squished in tight on either side.

94 PAN 94
Stop these tankers and I will only
send more. I've been draining
"Rollersnake"'s bath water for
months.

More tankers come out of the factory.

95 COCO (HEROIC) 95
Come on Ramsey, don't let us down
any more than usual.

15 INT. SNAKE OIL FACTORY - CONTINUOUS 15

A warehouse factory. Crates of Snake Oil stacked around a huge fizzy glass vat - with a rubber duck floating up top. The pipe runs straight into it.

We hear RAMSEY'S echoing <SCREAMS> as he plunges down the pipe and is shot like a cork into the vat. He sticks his head out of the top of the tank, the rubber duck on his head.

96
 RAMSEY
 Quacky, that's where ya got to!
 Missed you ya rubbery goon! 96

RAMSEY coils himself spring like and propels himself (and Quacky) out of the tank. He splats onto the floor and looks up at the tank.

97
 RAMSEY (CONT'D)
 Okay, gotta get rid of this
 stuff... any smart ideas? 97

He squeezes Quacky who <QUACKS>.

98
 RAMSEY (CONT'D)
 Yer a genius, Quacky! Need a smart
 idea? Drink Snake Oil! 98

He spots a spigot-like tap at the base of the vat - puts his mouth over it and using his tail loosens the tap. Dirty fizzy bath water gushes into his mouth and he starts to swell like a balloon.

99
 RAMSEY (WHILE DRINKING) (CONT'D)
 Although, right now this doesn't
 feel so smart... 99

16
EXT. SNAKE OIL FACTORY - CONTINUOUS 16

Outside more tankers roll out of the factory. GEOFF-JEFF swats at them half-heartedly with the bumper. MARTHA stands in front of them, power fists outstretched. The vans just swerve past her. COCO looks on aghast. PAN gloats.

100
 PAN
 I'd say 'give up' but you already
 have! Ha ha ha! 100

101
 COCO
 Al! You got anything buddy? 101

CUTAWAY to AL patting a swollen tummy, wiping away an oaty clump, the last few crumbs floating around him.

102
 AL
 Yup. Oaty-gestion. (BURP!) 102

He mashes some buttons in the soda can and thrusters appear at the bottom. It struggles to take off, the can wobbles.

112 PAN (CONT'D) 112
(to his henchbirds)
It's too heavy. One of you get out.

The PENGUINS stare at each other and shrug. An awkward moment as both PENGUINS go to get out, then they both don't, one gestures after you. A PENGUIN flops out and the soda can takes off, at a wonky angle.

113 PAN (CONT'D) 113
(to himself)
Every time. Every time.
(to the GANG)
You haven't seen the last of--

<SPLOOSH!> One last spurt of Snake Oil is sprayed up by RAMSEY, and the flying can spins off into the distance.

17 EXT. THE CITY - DAY 17

COCO, GEOFF-JEFF and MARTHA all with litter pickers, shovelling empty cans into a bin bag. HUMANS walking past.

114 GEOFF-JEFF 114
The snake oil should have worn off
by now, why is no-one helping?

115 AL (ON COMMS) 115
Because they're humans.

116 COCO 116
(heroic)
But helping humans is what we do.
Because deep down, they deserve--
(a HUMAN drops a can)
SERIOUSLY?!

117 MARTHA 117
Speaking of helping, where's that
wriggler Ramsey? Don't tell me...

WHIP PAN TO THE ZO. CUTAWAY to RAMSEY - still spherical, balanced on top of the tub - he doesn't fit.

118 RAMSEY 118
Nooooooooooooo!

END.

*