



MIDNIGHT BLOOM

DIRECTOR'S TREATMENT

A short film written by JAKE WILLIAMS directed by ADAM FERGLER



LOGLINE

Two young, working-class fathers – whose friendship is now a powerful, fragile romance – take refuge in an empty car park night after night, but once their secret is out, how do they put their lives back together... together?



PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

MIDNIGHT BLOOM

AARON

OUR PROTAGONIST

Aaron became a father to Ellie at a tender age. Now 21, he still lacks life experience, but dotes on his daughter, despite their slightly awkward relationship. Together they share a flat with Maddy, Aaron's girlfriend and Ellie's mother.

When Aaron reveals his and Jamie's secret love, Maddy leaves. He fears her return will mean Ellie being taken away. He's tortured by guilt and the constant threat of heartbreak.

Aaron is more sensitive than Jamie, yet also more level headed. His confession puts everything at risk, but there's no other way. He can't cope and he needs everyone to understand.

“ I love Mam. I love you.
And... and I love him too. ”



Winterton Moon

FACTFILE

AARON

Personality

Gentle soul but not a complete pushover. Inclined to put others before himself.

Has a natural intelligence that's not been well fostered. Nevertheless, he tends to make foolish mistakes (like becoming a dad at 16).

Occupation

Patchy shift work in retail/hospitality, plus odd jobs for acquaintances.

Parents

Born in the early 80s (in their late teens/early 20s when they had Aaron). Still together and live close by.

Mum works in similar job to Aaron. She's been there for ages and not moved on. Dad is a labourer, but not consistently, and sometimes on the dole. He's also a small-time and rather crappy dealer of sorts.

Interests

Tries to make up for his poor schooling so he can support Ellie's education. They often visit the local library together.

Likes technical things. Spends hours cycling and fixing his bike.

Media Consumption

Listens to the radio a lot, but rarely anything specialist. Heart plays at work and when Maddy selects the station at home. He chooses Radio 1 and Radio 1Xtra when he has the option. Listens to other music online, usually stuff recommended by friends. Has no real loyalty to particular artists or even really genres.

Tends to collapse in front of the TV rather than actively watching it, often with kids' programmes playing for Ellie. He likes Rick and Morty. He also likes nature shows, but he never admits that to anyone.

Plays mobile games more than console games, especially mindless, repetitive things (Candy Crush, etc).

Midnight Bloom

JAMIE

OUR ANTAGONIST

Jamie and Aaron's love is fraternal at heart. At 22, Jamie plays the role of wiser big brother. He's less outwardly emotional, but deeply invested in their romance.

Zoe, his daughter, is barely a toddler. Jamie was older and more secure than Aaron when fatherhood came, so the pressures are less pronounced. But he's torn. He wants stability for his family and craves more from his secret love.

His balancing act is difficult and frustrating. He keeps control until Aaron's confession shakes the house of cards, leaving him feeling directionless, threatened, even betrayed. His calm demeanour suddenly vanishes.

“It was fine, we were happy.
Now you've gone and messed it up.”

FACTFILE

JAMIE

Personality

Likes to be the 'big guy', overstating his maturity. Prefers things to be predictable, only liking changes he instigated. Deals with pressure on his own terms, but becomes volatile when things go awry.

Out of the two boys, Jamie sources drugs when they need them.

Occupation

Part time delivery driver. Also takes some shifts in one of the local pubs, but not one that his closest friends and family visit.

Parents

Born in the mid 70s (in their late early-mid 20s when they had Jamie). Separated. Jamie hardly sees his mum and resents his dad.

Mum is in a grey, secretarial position in an obscure division of the local council. Dad is a mechanic with an attitude problem. They both live relatively close by, but much further away than Aaron's parents.

Interests

Sporty, with a keen interest in boxing. Occasionally plays unstructured games of football with friends. He likes nice trainers and chains, but can't afford anything good or genuine.

Big interest in cars via his dad and the entertainment he consumes.

Media Consumption

Listens to Radio 1Xtra, Kiss or Capital Xtra while driving at work. Local bands perform at the pub he works in. He listens to a fair amount of grime online and picks up musical tastes from TV, films and games.

Watches illegally acquired sports channels. He likes true crime shows and edgy dramas (Luther, Top Boy). Angsty shows with 80s sheen (Euphoria, Stranger Things) resonate with him.

He watches car-themed YouTube videos. The games he plays involve cars or skilled combat (consoles and games from dodgy sources).

Wimborne

ELLIE

AARON'S DAUGHTER

Ellie adores Aaron. Their relationship might look stilted to adults, but to her it's normal. At five years old, she has an inquisitive mind and senses something's been upsetting her dad lately. For the first time in her life, she worries it's something to do with her, but all she knows how to do is try and keep him close.

We see Ellie in important scenes, but she never speaks. In the short span of the story, she acts as a barometer for the audience, indicating Aaron's emotional development. For Aaron himself, she's a confidant and a guardian angel.



Winona Rydell



THEMES

MIDNIGHT BLOOM

EMOTIONAL THEMES

Love. Truth. Trust. Hope.

At the centre of the plot is a forbidden romance. But we don't see Aaron and Jamie fall in love. The conclusion isn't a guarantee of life lived happily ever after. Instead we focus on personal truth, on trying to maintain different personas with different people, selective honesty and wilful ignorance.

Aaron and Jamie trust each other as only lovers can, and they trust their nightly getaways provide secrecy and sanctuary. Ellie's interactions with Aaron paint a stark picture of our two leads' responsibilities as fathers. They struggle with faithfulness across the many threads in their complex lives. Deception lurks, constantly threatening to undermine every relationship. Betrayal is impossible to avoid.

There's a profound, shared sense of hope in Aaron and Jamie. Hope for a flourishing romance, of course, but it's also hope for understanding, resolution, and family. Our central theme is searching for the strength to sustain that hopefulness, without which everything is lost.



Midnight Bloom

Midnight Bloom



SOCIAL THEMES

The two lead characters in *Midnight Bloom* are gay lovers. LGBTQ+ themes are important context, but they're not a central tenet. Likewise, the socioeconomic and cultural climate is an important aspect of the characters' lives, but the film is not about social disadvantage per se.

We know Aaron and Jamie are worried what people will think if the truth about their romance is known, but that worry is enough in itself. We don't explore whether the community is oppressively homophobic and we certainly don't assume it is.

We know Aaron and Jamie have fewer opportunities than other people in society, but we don't assume they live in destitution. Hard choices and potential sacrifices are not portrayed as socially forced inevitabilities. This is a film about real people in real circumstances dealing with a human struggle that transcends gender, sexuality, social class, age, etc. The facts of the character's lives mean they have few easy escape routes, elevating our drama, but they're still fundamentally normal people.



SETTING & STYLE

MIDNIGHT BLOOM

AN IMPORTANT NOTE

Midnight Bloom has been developed with a small team who have focused on characters and a setting that aligns with their own experiences.

However, there's nothing inherent in the substance of the story that anchors it to a particular location or time frame. Nor does the ethnic or cultural heritage of the characters play a significant part in the script. These are all important considerations when fleshing out the world of the story and the people within it. As such, they have a big impact on casting, production design and so on.

The following slides demonstrate what our approach would be if we run with the assumptions already made.

We're very open to adapting our production to suit a different setting or cast, achieving the right level of sensitivity and realism through research and consultation.

Jamie & Aaron are assumed to be from the dominant culture found in the majority of northern English council estates: White British and working class. The wider community is expected to be multicultural with some middle class people dotted around.

At the time of the 2011 census, 86% of English and Welsh households identified as white. Social housing figures from 2018 tell us that 3.2 million white households used social housing, out of 20.4 million in total (16%).

People of other ethnic backgrounds are much more likely to use social housing, but the overall non-white population is smaller in absolute terms. There were 683,000 non-white households in social housing, out of a possible 2.7 million (25%).

These are national averages; the demographics and rates of social housing uptake vary between regions.

LOCATIONS

Our story takes place in a city in northern England. The central characters, who come from a working-class background, live in a council estate built decades ago.

The city itself is relatively diverse. It supports multi-generational families, many of them having settled for jobs in long-gone industries, others having arrived in waves of migration. A more recent student population provides some cosmopolitan variety, but the city retains its own unique charm, sense of identity and pride.

Aaron and Jamie's neighbourhood is characterised by tower blocks and parades of shops long past their prime. It contains some very tight-knit communities. People who grew up and went to school together still know each other. The widow on the fourth floor, who bought her flat in the Right to Buy boom of the 80s, is still known by everyone and very little about her life has changed. Everyone remembers when the chippy caught fire and treats it like a major world event.

Our characters are known in the community. And, for better or worse, they have an extensive network of peers.

Winnipeg Boom

LOCATIONS

The entire film takes place in two locations: the top floor of an empty multi-storey car park, always seen at night, and Aaron's flat, always seen during the day.

Both locations show their age. Aaron's flat in particular is dusty and feels tired, all available money and effort having gone on Ellie. We see one interior space: Ellie's room, the window of which is promptly blacked out.

The film is faithful to its rough-and-ready setting. Locations are represented as they are. No fancier, no more 'gritty'. The audience's focus should be on the human drama.

We share Aaron and Jamie's view of the world. What's normal for them is normal for us. What's special to them is special to us. A tatty vehicle in an empty car park, shrouded in the inky darkness of night, is the safest, most intimate space they have, and they enjoy it. Likewise, a bedroom adorned with cardboard fished from the bin becomes an almost religious confessional space for Aaron and Ellie.





Mindnight Bloom

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Midnight Bloom

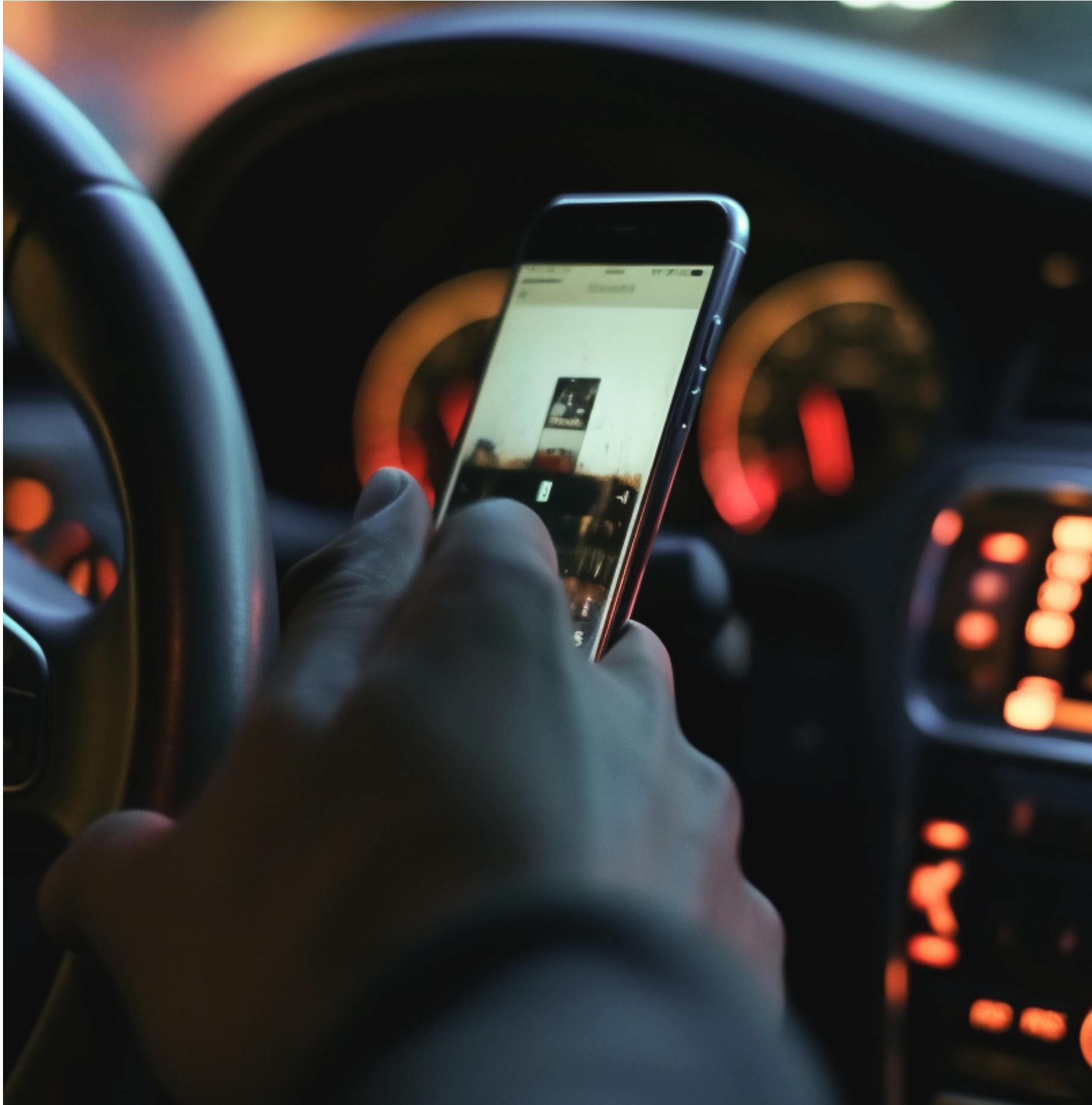
Production design is intentionally rooted in what's available to the main characters. We don't see parts of the world beyond their reach – literally or aspirationally. Everything will be shot on location.

Clothes are casual, old and cheap, with some statement items (often knockoffs). Any accessories are simple and inexpensive but showy. Hairstyles are likewise quite basic.

The car the boys use is an older vehicle, tantalisingly close to classic status, but lacking the attention required to elevate it beyond an old banger.

Locations, costumes and props establish the film's colour palettes. Colour work in post will be limited to minor corrections and balances, rather than stylised treatment. Night-time scenes overwhelmingly use blue, black and grey, with tans and oranges used as a contrasting accents.

Scenes around the flat favour a green-brown hue. Here, pink accents remind us of Ellie's importance, but also symbolise hope and vulnerability. In an environment lacking vibrance, pink also suggests separation and isolation.



MUSIC & CULTURE

With such a focused story, limited locations and few scenes, we get to see very little of the social and cultural aspects of Aaron and Jamie's lives. Their clothes and slivers of dialogue give us hints, but the heavy lifting is really done by their enjoyment of music.

In all the scenes where Aaron and Jamie are together, music plays. Neither is an aficionado, but it's clear that music occupies a very important place in their lives.

We've compiled a [playlist](#) of the musical world that surrounds the boys – influences of their parents and peers, and things heard on the radio, on TV and in games as much as music of their own choosing.

In the three car park scenes, music choice is critical in setting three very different tones, while providing that all-important deeper glimpse into Aaron and Jamie as rounded characters.

A more detailed exploration of music, social and cultural influences are provided in the appendix.

Minnicht Bloom





APPROACH TO FILMING

MIDNIGHT BLOOM

CHARACTER CENTRED

The film is specifically built around complex emotional tension rather than elaborate plot structures. We're working with a minimal cast to allow us to develop drama that feels very real, human-scale and relatable, without distraction.

Our actors will have plenty of room to explore and inhabit their characters. Exploration of subtext and nuance will be very important, supported by workshop rehearsal.

When it comes to shooting days I want the cast and crew to feel that we're capturing a performance more than we're choreographing one.

VISUAL APPROACH

Our baseline visual style is built on cleanly composed, unfussy framing. Establishing wides will set an almost theatrical stage, emphasising our performance-focused approach. Balance will be important in these shots. For example, we establish the car park three times and each time the alignment of the car in the parking bay and the angle of the camera relative to the grid of the car park will change to reflect the very distinct mood of the scene.

Our default camera setup is static or, when movement is required, stabilised. We deviate from this in line with Aaron's emotional state: gentle handheld movement during the scenes with Ellie, escalating to dramatic momentum in a more *cinéma vérité* style of shooting during the argument with Jamie.

We'll make heavy use of practical or natural light where possible, any additional lighting being minimal and heavily motivated by the environment.

Wimminight Bloom



APPENDIX

MUSIC, CULTURAL & SOCIAL INFLUENCES

MIDNIGHT BLOOM

FRIENDS & PEERS

Aaron and Jamie were at the same school one year group apart, from which they developed a large, shared friendship group. They know most people their own age on their estate, many of them also being school mates. All have broadly similar stories, music tastes, experiences and hobbies.

Since Ellie was born, Aaron's had less opportunity to make new friends, so he leans on those easy-at-hand quite a bit. He's frequently busy, so knows less about people than he'd like to, resulting in a certain level of detachment, even from people he considers close.

Jamie knows a lot more people, partly through sporting exploits. He knows some dealers through his dad, as well as via friends. He tries to know enough about everyone's lives to suss out a situation fairly quickly. He likes to be in the know.

Whenever Aaron and Jamie socialise with others, Jamie's the conversational driving force. Aaron picks up bits and bobs, but doesn't know people well enough to follow all the details.

Both boys have relationships through work. Jamie's provides a wider network. Even so, he associates with a disproportionate number of shady types. Still, it gives the boys access to things they otherwise wouldn't have.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

The community is peppered with notorious people. Mandy from the chippy is somewhat loud mouthed and lascivious. Chester, an older man, is abit of a perv and easily duped. Probably off his head half the time, not to mention in and out of police custody.

A few eccentrics live on the estate, known to almost everyone (perhaps avoided by a few). One thug starts the majority of fights. Everyone's sure he's a more serious criminal than anyone really knows.

Some of the elderly residents are full of stories, often about other members of the community, which actually makes one or two residents nervous of monitoring eyes.

A number of important individuals crop up in Aaron and Jamie's lives. Family friends, distant relatives, neighbours, work supervisors. Mature people with their lives together. People who don't get too involved, but who share advice on anything from how to get by, how to look after kids, or how to wind down, recommending TV shows, books and movies, even though their own tastes are quite different. People who offer guidance so subtle it goes unnoticed.

DRINKING CULTURE

Drinking is likely to be casual but frequent for the most part, with occasional big sessions among friends.

Aaron and Jamie's families drank at home while they were growing up (cheap tinnies, etc). Almost all their groups of friends tend towards drinking at one time or another.

In many settings, drinking overlaps with drug taking.

DRUG CULTURE

The boys share joints together. They also enjoy social events where drugs feature more heavily. The kinds of conversations, music played and places visited vary markedly depending on the group.

Most often it's a bunch of school friends enjoying cheap booze and cheap weed. They also know an older group, with access to more gear. The age gap is awkward and it's financially challenging.

One older friend refuses to believe it's not 1999 any more. Their hedonism looks increasingly delusional. 30-something and clinging to long-faded youth, frequently turning their living room into shit imitation of a late-90s rave. They love hosting parties, sharing whatever they get hold of (usually hard stuff). They rarely ask for money in return. Despite the inherent distance in the relationship, Aaron and Jamie find it oddly comforting and the parties fun. It's always a non-judgemental environment.

AARON & JAMIE'S MUSIC EXPOSURE

The boys' music tastes were forged roughly between 2011 and 2017, which coincides with the grime revival and, later, some grime artists transitioning to a more R&B sound. R&B itself, along with hiphop, becomes more downbeat, while dance music gets bigger and louder in scale during this period.

Aaron and Jamies like slower, more soulful, chilled out music as well as much more noisy, upbeat tracks. Jamie is more likely to listen to 'darker' music, especially guitar-led genres thanks to the influence of his dad.

Jamie's pub work has given him an interest in local bands and, unexpectedly, found this becoming an ongoing conversation between him and Aaron's parents, who have many stories about the rise of northern musicians through the charts in the 90s and 00s.

A range of retro-influenced games and TV shows, with soundtracks to match (for example, *Grand Theft Auto* and *Stranger Things*) will have given the boys a slight taste for 80s and 90s music, supported by hearing similar things in their parents' music collections.

THEIR PARENTS' MUSIC EXPOSURE

Aaron's parents' music taste formed in the mid-late 90s, predating the initial grime explosion. Aaron's taste for grime comes from his friends and Jamie, rather than from family influence. Some late-90s electronica has made its way into Aaron's parents' lives. The growth of trance and house was big and becoming mainstream in the mid 90s. But these aren't hardcore people. They listened to a lot of chart music, especially the explosion of successful guitar bands at the time. Copies of *What's the Story Morning Glory* and *Urban Hymns* are still in the house. An All Saints album has also survived the years, which Aaron always enjoyed.

Jamies parents are older, developing their music taste in the late 80s. That's peak Haçienda era. They almost certainly went to a similar club, if not the Haçienda itself. They have nostalgia for 80s music in general, and certainly have fondness for some recognisable hits, but mum and dad have generally different tastes. Mum enjoyed synth-driven music, while dad liked hard rock and metal. In their 20s, they bonded over the music they enjoyed during their big nights out – late 80s dance tunes associated with the UK's burgeoning drug scene.