

THE SHEDDING

Written by

Paul Doherty

A Newcastle Film Club film

Title card, Arial Standard Bold white font on a black screen:

OVER 13,687,500KG OF CAT FUR IS SHED EVERY YEAR. WHAT FOLLOWS IS THE TRUE HORROR OF THAT STATISTIC.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The screen is filled with black. The camera TILTS up from the blackness of the back of a television set revealing two people sitting on either end of a sofa, illuminated by the flickering of the tv screen. MIKE, a man in his mid-30s sits on the left. He is bearded and unkempt, dressed in a scruffy white-t-shirt and jeans, his t-shirt getting increasingly more dirty as he wipes his greasy pizza-stained hands on it. MANDY sits on the right. She is attractive in a way that suggests they were once in the same league but Mike has gotten complacent and has stopped making an effort.

The camera continues to TILT UPWARDS from behind the tv, slowly revealing Mike's cat, COLIN, sitting in between them. The unintentional antagonist of the situation.

Mandy looks down at her black top which is covered in cat fur. She reaches for a lint roller nearby and pulls off a used strip, which reveals itself to be the last one.

MANDY

Mike, do you have any more of these?

MIKE

No, sorry I need to order some more.

MANDY

I just can't sit like this, absolutely covered in this stuff. I don't get why we can't hang out at mine? Or even better, actually go out somewhere instead of just sitting in your flat every so-called "date night"

MIKE

You know money's tight for me right now.

MANDY

And why is that?  
(beat)

Mike looks sheepish. Almost embarrassed.

MANDY (CONT'D)

I could have gone out with Lucy and Tom from work tonight. But I didn't. I chose to spend time with you

MIKE

Oh yeah, Tom. Good ol' Tom.

MANDY

(slightly annoyed)  
Oh stop it.

MIKE

Tom with his movie star looks.

MANDY

This has nothing to do with Tom. Or your insecurities.

Mike opens his mouth, about to say something, but thinks better of it.

MANDY (CONT'D)

I'm bored Mike. Bored of the same routine. Sitting here in this flat. Covered in cat hair.

Mandy stands up. She gestures at the messy room around her. Fur flies from her hands and arms.

MANDY (CONT'D)

This needs to change. I just can't anymore.

MIKE

I'll still meet you for lunch tomorrow before your train?

Mandy sighs.

MANDY

No, probably best you don't. I'll see you when I'm back in two weeks but if you haven't sorted stuff out by then it's over. It's just not going anywhere. Get a job. Clean this flat. Please. You have 14 days to fix this.

Mandy leaves. Mike sits in stunned silence, as if this was a surprise to him. He looks at Colin.

MIKE

Just me and you now for the foreseeable then furball.

COLIN

Meow!

Mike gets up to go to the kitchen to get another drink.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Mike opens the fridge and takes out a beer. He looks at the floor and sees 4 sizeable clumps of ginger cat fur on the floor. He bends over and picks them up, holding them in the palm of his hand A FAINT OMINOUS MUSIC STING plays, at odds with the shot.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Onscreen caption: DAY 1.

Mike calls Mandy. The phone is answered then hung up. He texts her. She replies "until you get your shit together please leave me alone". Mike slumps in front of the tv, depressed. We TIMELAPSE over a couple of days of Mike just sitting there, watching tv, falling asleep on the sofa etc

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Onscreen caption: DAY 4

Mike, still on the sofa, awakens. He checks his phone. A text message from Mandy reads "Hey, hope you're getting stuff sorted. Still don't feel like talking but hope you can get this all done"

Mike sits up, called to action.

MIKE

Okay. You can do this.

Mike sees a clump of cat fur on the floor. It is about the size of a fist. He looks perplexed. He looks at Colin, fast asleep.

He picks up a broom and sweeps the fur away. Some more fur catches his eye in the corner which he also sweeps. He bundles all the fur together and holds it out in front of him. It is the size of a football. He deposits it into the bin.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Onscreen caption: Day 7

A montage of Mike cleaning up his flat. Piling empty pizza boxes, beer bottles, cans etc into big black bags. He surveys his work and smiles.

One small clump of cat fur lies on the floor.

MIKE  
(to himself)  
Oh! Nearly missed you!

He picks it up and pops it in the bin bag, smiling.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

Mike outside putting the bin bags in his bin, with a spring in his step.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Onscreen caption: Day 10

Montage: Mike sits at his laptop sending an email applying for a job, disposing of more cat fur, receiving an email confirming the job interview then disposing of more cat fur which is now covering most of the floor of his flat.

He texts Mandy to tell her about the job and vacuums more cat fur. The vacuum cleaner, overloaded by the sheer volume of fur, overloads and explodes, setting off a cloud of dust and fur into the room. Mike sits down on the sofa

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Onscreen caption: Day 13

Mike sits down in a chair across from MR JONES, who is interviewing him. Mr Jones appears as the height of well-dressed, everything perfectly in order, neat and tidy. Mike, now clean-shaven, is wearing a suit and while doesn't compare to Mr Jones it is clear he has finally made an effort.

Mike spots a small clump of cat fur on his sleeve. He brushes it off. He looks at Mr Jones to see if he noticed and smiles when he realises he hadn't.

MR. JONES  
Well, Mr Thomas I can see that...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

The end of the interview.

MR. JONES  
...so we do still have one more candidate to interview but between you and me they don't have the experience that you do for this role. I can safely say that you should be hearing from us with a positive outcome by the end of the week.

They both stand up and shake hands.

MIKE  
Thank you.

Mike turns to walk out of the door, revealing the back of his suit to be completely covered in cat hair, like he's wearing a fur rug on his back . Mr Jones turns his face up in disgust, scrunches up Mike's CV and drops it in the bin.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike, still in his shirt and tie, drops a lump of cat fur into his bin. He looks at Colin on the sofa.

MIKE  
This is getting ridiculous.

Mike sits down and Facetimes Mandy.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Hey, how's it going?

MANDY  
You'll have to do more than a shave and a shirt and tie to convince me you've changed Mike.

MIKE

This is from a job interview I had today. The guy all but said I got the job.

MANDY

What job?

MIKE

Just data entry/office admin. But it's a start. And I've cleaned the flat up.

Mike switches the camera on his phone and pans around the room.

MIKE (CONT'D)

See?

MIKE (CONT'D)

So what are you doing tomorrow when you get back?

MANDY

No plans.

MIKE

Wanna hang out? Anywhere you want?

MANDY

Can you promise things are going to be different?

MIKE

I can. I know this is my last chance.

MANDY

How about that cute little brunch place I told you about? It's right next to the station. I get in at 11.

MIKE

Sure, I'll see you then.

MANDY

Don't be late.

MIKE

I told you, I'm a new man ok?

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Onscreen caption: Day 14

Ginger fluff fills the screen. We see this from Mike's POV as his hands reach out to pull away the fluff. We see him navigate through the mass of fluff which fills the screen. He gets to the window. We see from outside that fluff is stuffed up against the window and is even spilling out of the sides.

Mike pulls away at the fluff to walk to the bedroom door, in absolutely shock and horror at what he is seeing. It's like swimming through a never-ending sea of candy floss. He tries to open the door but it is jammed, fluff pulling through the sides keeping it wedged shut.

MIKE

Oh come on!

Mike picks up his phone. It is covered in ginger cat fluff. He swipes on the screen but the fluff won't come off, rendering it unusable. Around the fluff we can make out the time is 11:25am. We can see 3 missed calls from Mandy and text messages which cannot be opened because of the fluff.

Mike's phone goes off. He frantically tries to swipe it open but cannot because of the fluff. He can just make out a message that says "Just forget it...". He starts banging on the door.

MIKE (CONT'D)

HELP! HELP!

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Colin sits on the sofa, fast asleep, purring contentedly. The camera cranes out of the window into the:

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A MAN walks down the street wearing a black sweater. He stops, observing a clump of white fur on his arm. He brushes it off, clearly not for the first time...nor the last...

FADE TO BLACK.