Full-Cast Drama duet & multi-cast scripts

30 practice scripts from VO Journey Academy. Free to record, free to use in your reel. Download the PDF to mark up in the booth, or print it straight from here.

Pass the Gravy

Family drama, dinner · Any · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: ELSIE MARK JO TYLER

A dining room in suburban Ohio, Sunday dinner. ELSIE, 78, sits at the head of the table. Her son MARK, 50, her daughter JO, 46, and her grandson TYLER, 19, are halfway through the roast

SFX: cutlery, a clock ticking

ELSIE Mark, pass the gravy. And I'm getting married.

MARK Here you... What?

ELSIE The gravy, dear. It's by your elbow.

JO Mom. Did you just say married?

ELSIE I did. In May. You'll all get a card.

TYLER Oh, this is the best Sunday ever.

MARK Married to whom?

ELSIE His name is Leonard.

MARK Who is Leonard?

ELSIE Leonard from water aerobics. Tall. Good teeth. Mostly his own.

JO Water aerobics Leonard? With the hat?

ELSIE He has several hats. Pass the gravy, Mark.

MARK You've known him for how long?

ELSIE Eight months.

MARK Eight months! Mom, you're seventy-eight.

ELSIE Which is exactly why I'm not waiting for a year's engagement. Do the math, sweetheart.

TYLER Grandma, is he on social media? I need to see him.

ELSIE He's on the internet, if that's what you mean. He sells birdhouses.

JO Mom, I think it's wonderful. I think it's actually wonderful.

TYLER Found him. Leonard's Lovely Birdhouses. Five stars. He's wearing a hat in every photo.

MARK You would think it's wonderful. You thought the timeshare was wonderful.

JO This isn't a timeshare, Mark. It's Mom.

MARK I'm just saying we don't know him.

ELSIE You didn't know your father either, when I married him. Neither did I. It worked out for forty-one years. Now, Leonard's coming for dessert.

MARK Tonight?

ELSIE He's in the car. He's been in the car since the soup. Tyler, go and let him in.

JO Since the soup? Mom, it's forty degrees out there!

ELSIE He's got a blanket. He's very resourceful.

TYLER With pleasure.

MARK The gravy, Mom.

ELSIE Oh, now you want the gravy.

Page One, 10:52

Newsroom drama, deadline · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: RUTH DANNY GLORIA

A regional newspaper newsroom, 10:52 p.m. RUTH, 52, the night editor, stands over DANNY, 26, a reporter. GLORIA, 64, the copy chief, types at the next desk without looking up

SFX: keyboards, a police scanner murmuring, a phone ringing unanswered

RUTH Eight minutes, Danny. Where's my second source?

DANNY I've got him. I've got him, basically.

RUTH Basically is not a source.

DANNY He said "no comment," but the way he said it...

GLORIA Oh, here we go.

DANNY It was a very guilty "no comment."

RUTH I can't print tone of voice.

DANNY Ruth, the councilman took the money. Everybody knows he took the money.

RUTH Then somebody will say so. On the record.

GLORIA Six minutes.

DANNY The Courier has it too. If we don't run it tonight, they run it first.

RUTH Then they run it first.

DANNY Are you serious?

RUTH If we're wrong, he sues, we fold, and forty people lose their jobs. Including Gloria.

GLORIA I'd like to retire on my own terms, thank you.

DANNY What about the bank records?

RUTH What bank records?

DANNY The ones in my bag. The ones I didn't think were enough on their own.

RUTH Danny.

DANNY I didn't know if they counted.

RUTH Give them to me. Gloria, hold page one.

GLORIA Holding. Four minutes.

RUTH This is a transfer. His name. The contractor's name. The date.

DANNY So we run it?

RUTH We run what the paper shows. Not what the "no comment" sounded like. Rewrite the top. Three paragraphs. Go.

DANNY Going.

GLORIA And spell "councilman" right this time.

DANNY That was once, Gloria!

GLORIA Once is a correction, sweetheart. Three minutes.

Morning Briefing

Police procedural, briefing · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Cast: MARSH PRICE COLE PRIYA

A CID office in Bristol, 7:30 a.m. DI HELEN MARSH, 48, leads a briefing. DS OWEN PRICE, 40, takes notes. PC JAMIE COLE, 24, is on his first week in plain clothes. PRIYA SHAH, 33, a civilian analyst, sits at the back with a laptop

SFX: a projector fan, a mug being put down

MARSH Right. Mrs. Deacon. Seventy-one. Found at the bottom of her stairs on Saturday. Owen.

PRICE Neighbour found her at nine a.m. Front door locked. Back door locked. No sign of forced entry. Pathologist says a fall.

MARSH So why are we here, Jamie?

COLE Ma'am?

MARSH If it's a fall, why am I doing a briefing on a Monday?

COLE Because... the son?

MARSH What about the son?

COLE He inherits. He was in debt.

PRICE Half the sons in Bristol are in debt. He was in Cardiff all weekend. Cash machine, camera, pub. Solid.

MARSH Priya. You've been itching since I walked in.

PRIYA The kettle.

MARSH Go on.

PRIYA The scene photos. The kettle's full. Two cups out on the side. Two teabags. One is used.

PRICE So she made tea.

PRIYA For two. And never poured the second one. And the milk's on the counter, not in the fridge.

MARSH Meaning?

PRIYA Meaning somebody knocked, she let them in, she put the kettle on. Then something happened before the kettle boiled.

COLE And they locked the door on the way out.

PRIYA With her key. Which is missing. It's not on the hook. It's not in her bag. I checked the inventory twice.

MARSH Owen?

PRICE Nobody logged a missing key.

MARSH Nobody looked for one. Jamie, you're with Priya. Every door on that street. I want the name of whoever had a cup of tea with Mrs. Deacon.

COLE Yes, ma'am.

MARSH And Priya. Next time, don't wait for me to ask.

The Best Man Has Notes

Comedy drama, wedding toast · Adult (25-40) · Scottish · 90 seconds

Cast: CRAIG ALI FIONA MORAG

A wedding reception in a hotel outside Glasgow. CRAIG, 32, the best man, stands with a stack of cue cards. The groom, ALI, 33, the bride, FIONA, 31, and her mother, MORAG, 60, are at the top table

SFX: a spoon tapping a glass, the room going quiet

CRAIG Ladies and gentlemen. For those who don't know me, I'm Craig. I've known Ali since primary three.

ALI Keep it short, Craig.

CRAIG I've been told to keep it short. So I've cut it down to forty-one cards.

FIONA He's joking.

MORAG He is not joking. I can see the cards.

CRAIG Ali and I have been through a lot. Scouts. University. The camping holiday in Oban that we've both agreed never happened.

ALI Next card.

CRAIG And then, three years ago, he met Fiona. And I said to him, Ali, she is way out of your league.

FIONA Aw.

CRAIG And he said, I know. Then he said... Hang on. This isn't the right card.

MORAG What's on the card, Craig?

CRAIG It's my notes. From the stag do. It says, "Do NOT mention Heather."

FIONA Who's Heather?

ALI Nobody.

MORAG Who is Heather, Alistair?

ALI Heather is a boat.

FIONA A boat?

CRAIG It's a boat. He bought a boat. A wee sailing boat. Called Heather. Instead of a car. He was going to tell you after the honeymoon.

FIONA You bought a boat?

ALI She's very small. She's mostly a hobby.

MORAG He's named a boat after another woman.

ALI She came with the name, Morag!

CRAIG Anyway. Next card. Cards are gone. Right. Fiona. He talks about you like you're weather. Like you're the whole sky. That's all I've got. To the bride and groom.

MORAG ...To the bride and groom.

FIONA And to Heather, apparently.

Any Other Business

Community drama, village meeting · Any · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Cast: MARGARET GEOFF LUCY KEN ANNIE

A village hall in Yorkshire, 9:40 p.m. MARGARET, 70, chairs the parish council meeting. GEOFF, 66, a retired farmer, sits with his arms folded. LUCY, 34, is new to the village. KEN, 55, runs the pub. ANNIE, 80, knits in the front row

SFX: a gavel, the creak of stacking chairs

MARGARET Item fourteen. Any other business.

GEOFF About time.

MARGARET Geoff, you've been here since seven. You could have raised it under item three.

GEOFF Item three was potholes. This isn't potholes.

MARGARET Go on, then.

GEOFF The goat.

LUCY Oh, for heaven's sake.

GEOFF That goat has been in my cabbages four times since Easter.

LUCY His name is Brian, and he doesn't go in your cabbages. He goes near your cabbages.

GEOFF He was wearing a cabbage, Lucy.

KEN He came in the pub on Thursday. Ate a beer mat. Very polite about it. Better behaved than Geoff, to be honest.

MARGARET Ken, is this helping?

KEN I'm just saying he's no trouble in the pub.

LUCY I've mended the fence twice. He jumps it. He's a very athletic goat.

GEOFF Then get a less athletic goat.

ANNIE I had a goat in 1962.

MARGARET Yes, Annie?

ANNIE Nancy. Terrible goat. Ate my wedding veil. Best thing that ever happened. It was a horrible veil. His mother's.

GEOFF Annie, that's not the point.

ANNIE Everything's the point at my age, Geoff.

LUCY See? This village has a history of goats.

GEOFF It has a history of cabbages, as well.

MARGARET Right. I propose Lucy pays Geoff for the cabbages, Geoff helps Lucy raise the fence, and Ken stops giving Brian beer mats.

KEN He likes the cardboard ones.

MARGARET All in favour.

ANNIE Aye. For Nancy.

MARGARET Carried. Meeting closed. Somebody fetch Brian, he's eating the minutes.

Juror Nine

Courtroom drama, jury room · Any · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: FOREPERSON JUROR NINE JUROR FOUR JUROR TWO

A jury room in a county courthouse, late afternoon. The FOREPERSON, a man in his 50s, stands by a whiteboard. JUROR FOUR, a man in his 30s, checks his watch. JUROR TWO, a woman in her 60s, eats crackers. JUROR NINE, a woman in her 40s, has not spoken all day

FOREPERSON That's eleven guilty. And one not guilty. Juror Nine, is that still you?

JUROR NINE It's still me.

JUROR FOUR Come on. We've been here since nine.

FOREPERSON Let her talk. Go ahead.

JUROR NINE The receipt.

JUROR TWO What receipt?

JUROR NINE Exhibit eleven. The gas station receipt. The prosecution said it put him near the store at 8:40.

JUROR FOUR It did. It's got the time on it.

JUROR NINE It's got 8:40 on it. And a pump number. Pump six.

FOREPERSON So?

JUROR NINE The station manager testified on day two. He said pump six has been broken since June. Out of order. Bag over the handle.

JUROR TWO ...He did say that. I remember, because he made a joke about the bag.

JUROR FOUR So the time's wrong. Doesn't mean he didn't do it.

JUROR NINE No. But it means that receipt isn't his. Somebody paid at a pump that doesn't work. Or the receipt was printed later. Either way, it's the only thing that puts him there.

FOREPERSON Does anybody have the manager's testimony?

JUROR TWO I wrote it down. I write everything down. Here. "Pump six, broken since June."

JUROR FOUR Why didn't the defense say that?

JUROR NINE I don't know. Maybe they missed it. That's not a reason for us to.

FOREPERSON ...Okay. Let's ask for the transcript.

JUROR FOUR That's another day.

JUROR TWO Then it's another day, honey. Have a cracker.

The Birthday Cake

Family drama, dinner · Adult (40-55) · Southern US · 90 seconds

Cast: LYNN RAY CASEY

A kitchen in Georgia. It is CASEY's twentieth birthday. Mom, LYNN, 48, is lighting candles on a cake. Dad, RAY, 52, is finishing his iced tea. CASEY, 20, is home from college for the weekend

LYNN Okay, lights off. Ray, lights.

RAY I'm going.

SFX: a light switch

LYNN Happy birthday to you...

CASEY Mom, wait. Before the song. I want to say something.

LYNN Before the song? The candles are going, honey.

CASEY It won't take long. I'm leaving school.

RAY You're what?

CASEY I'm leaving State. After this semester.

LYNN Oh. Oh, sweetie. Is it the roommate? Because we can call about the roommate.

CASEY It's not the roommate.

RAY Casey, you are two years from a degree.

CASEY I'm two years from a degree I don't want. I've been offered an apprenticeship. Electrical. With Hank Dupree's company.

RAY Hank Dupree? You want to be an electrician?

CASEY I want to be good at something. I'm good at it. Hank says I'm the best first-year he's seen.

LYNN Well, that's... That's a real trade, Ray.

RAY I know it's a real trade, Lynn. I did it for thirty years. I put you through college so you wouldn't have to.

CASEY I know. I know that, Dad. And I'm grateful. I've already done it. I signed on Tuesday.

LYNN Tuesday?

CASEY I wanted to tell you in person.

RAY ...The candles are dripping.

LYNN Ray.

RAY Hank Dupree's got no sense of humor. You'll have to work twice as hard.

CASEY I know.

RAY And you'll wire your mother's porch light. It's been flickering since Easter.

CASEY Deal.

LYNN Can I sing now?

RAY Sing, Lynn. Before we burn the house down.

Between Floors

Contemporary drama, strangers · Any · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: GAVIN NADIA MR. PELL KEISHA

An office elevator in Chicago, stuck between the ninth and tenth floors. GAVIN, 35, in a suit, jabs at the buttons. NADIA, 45, on her phone. MR. PELL, 80, a retired accountant, leans on his cane. KEISHA, 22, an intern, holds a tray of coffees

SFX: a thud, the hum of the elevator cutting out

GAVIN No, no, no. Come on.

NADIA Pressing it harder won't help.

GAVIN I have a pitch at ten.

NADIA I have a flight at twelve. Nobody cares.

MR. PELL Isn't this exciting.

GAVIN Exciting?

MR. PELL I've been in this building forty years. Never once got stuck. I'd started to take it personally.

NADIA There's no signal.

GAVIN What do you mean, no signal? It's the twenty-first century.

NADIA It's a metal box, hanging on a rope, in the twenty-first century.

NADIA Tell it that.

GAVIN Is it getting hot? It's getting hot. It's getting really hot.

MR. PELL It's the coffee, dear. She's got six coffees.

KEISHA Everybody sit down.

GAVIN Sorry?

KEISHA Sit down. On the floor. Uses less air and it's cooler down there. Sir, there's an emergency phone behind that panel. Can you open it?

MR. PELL With pleasure.

NADIA How do you know that?

KEISHA My mom's an elevator inspector. I grew up hearing about this. Fifteen minutes, usually. Twenty if it's Friday.

GAVIN It's Friday.

KEISHA Then twenty. Here. Have a coffee. It's oat milk. It was for my boss.

GAVIN I can't take your boss's coffee.

NADIA I can. Pass me one. Is there a vanilla?

KEISHA Second from the left.

KEISHA My boss can take the stairs.

MR. PELL Hello? Yes. Elevator three. We're all fine. A young lady is in charge. Twenty minutes? Lovely. No rush.

Open House

Family drama, sale · Any · Australian · 90 seconds

Cast: BREE SOPHIE LIAM DEAN

A weatherboard house in Adelaide, Saturday morning. BREE, 38, a real-estate agent, shows a young couple, SOPHIE, 29, and LIAM, 30, through the back door. The owner's son, DEAN, 45, sits alone on the verandah

BREE And through here, the famous back verandah. North-facing. Perfect for a Sunday.

SOPHIE Oh, it's gorgeous.

LIAM Is that a lemon tree?

BREE Original lemon tree. Fruits all year. And this is... Oh. Hello.

DEAN G'day.

BREE Sorry, the house is meant to be empty during inspections.

DEAN I'm the empty bit. Don't mind me.

SOPHIE Do you live here?

DEAN Used to. Grew up here. Mum's in a home now. We're selling for the fees.

LIAM Oh. Sorry, mate.

BREE Dean, maybe you could wait out the front?

DEAN I'll be quiet. You carry on.

BREE Right. The verandah was renovated in, um...

DEAN 1987.

BREE 1987. Thank you.

SOPHIE It's beautiful work. Is that jarrah?

DEAN Recycled jarrah. From a woolshed out near Burra. Dad hauled it back on a trailer. Took him four trips.

LIAM He built it?

DEAN He built it. Every board. I held the torch. That's my initials, there, in the corner. Burnt in with a magnifying glass. I was nine.

SOPHIE D.W.

DEAN Dean Walsh.

BREE The Walshes have been a very loved family in this house.

DEAN You don't have to do the voice, Bree. It's all right.

BREE ...Sorry.

LIAM Would you mind if we kept them? The initials. If we bought it.

DEAN You'd keep them?

SOPHIE We wouldn't touch that board.

DEAN ...Then you should put an offer in. Before the bloke with the spreadsheet does.

The Reading

Family drama, will · Any · Irish · 90 seconds

Cast: BYRNE UNA FERGAL NUALA

A solicitor's office in Limerick. MR. BYRNE, 60, reads the will of Delia Keane to her three children: UNA, 55, FERGAL, 50, and NUALA, 44

SFX: paper rustling, a clock

BYRNE "To my eldest daughter Una, I leave the house on Cratloe Road, and my mother's rings."

UNA Well. That's only right.

FERGAL The house. Grand. Of course. Una gets the house.

UNA I did live with her for nine years, Fergal.

FERGAL In the house. Rent free.

BYRNE If I may continue. "To my son Fergal, I leave my savings, less funeral costs, and the car."

FERGAL The car? The little blue one?

NUALA It's a good car.

FERGAL It's got a hundred and ninety thousand on the clock and a goat's worth of dog hair in the back.

BYRNE "To my youngest, Nuala, I leave my books, my good china, and Bartholomew."

NUALA I'm sorry. Bartholomew?

BYRNE The dog, I'm led to believe.

NUALA I live in a one-bedroom flat in Dublin!

UNA She always said you needed company.

NUALA She always said I needed a husband. This is the dog version.

FERGAL That dog is fourteen and bites the post.

BYRNE There is a further paragraph. "To whichever of my children takes Bartholomew, the sum of twenty thousand euro for his care and for theirs."

FERGAL Twenty thousand?

UNA For the dog?

NUALA For whoever takes the dog.

FERGAL I'll take him. I've a garden.

NUALA You've a patio.

FERGAL It's a big patio.

BYRNE I should say the will specifies the dog must be willing.

UNA Mammy.

NUALA She's done this on purpose.

BYRNE I'd imagine so, Miss Keane. He's in reception. Shall I bring him in?

Table Twelve

Workplace drama, restaurant kitchen · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: VASQUEZ TONI JUNE SAM

A busy restaurant kitchen, 8:45 p.m. on a Saturday. CHEF VASQUEZ, 42, runs the pass. TONI, 35, the sous chef, works the grill. SAM, 20, is a commis cook on his second week. JUNE, 28, a server, bursts through the swing door

SFX: pans, extractor fans, a ticket printer chattering

VASQUEZ Two duck, one bass, one risotto, table six. Walking in.

TONI Heard.

JUNE Chef. Table twelve.

VASQUEZ What about twelve?

JUNE It's her. The critic. Glasses, grey coat, ordered the tasting menu and asked what the fish was yesterday.

VASQUEZ You're sure?

JUNE She's writing in a little notebook under the table.

TONI Oh, good. Great. Love that.

VASQUEZ Nobody panics. Toni, where's my bass?

TONI Two minutes. Chef, we're out of the fennel.

VASQUEZ We're out of fennel?

TONI Delivery was short. I told you at four.

VASQUEZ You told me at four we were short. You didn't say out.

JUNE She's on course two. You've got ten minutes before the bass.

VASQUEZ What else goes with the bass? Think.

SAM Chef.

VASQUEZ Not now, Sam.

SAM Chef, the celery root. From staff meal. I roasted it with the orange peel, the way my grandma does it. There's a tray in the walk-in.

VASQUEZ ...Bring it.

TONI Chef, we can't give a critic the staff meal.

VASQUEZ Taste it.

TONI ...Okay. Okay, that's actually very good.

VASQUEZ June, the bass comes with roasted celery root and orange. It's always come with that. It's our signature.

JUNE Since when?

VASQUEZ Since about forty seconds ago. Go.

JUNE Going.

VASQUEZ Sam.

SAM Yes, Chef?

VASQUEZ Plate it. Your hands. My pass. If she likes it, it's yours on the menu Tuesday.

SAM Yes, Chef!

TONI Heard.

Last Orders at the Lamb

Contemporary drama, pub · Mature (55+) · Welsh · 90 seconds

Cast: GLENYS NIA DAI EMRYS

A village pub in North Wales, 10:55 p.m. GLENYS, 68, the landlady, wipes down the bar. Two regulars, EMRYS, 74, and DAI, 58, finish their pints. The door opens: NIA, 30, a stranger, comes in out of the rain

SFX: rain, a door, a bell over it

GLENYS We're just closing, love.

NIA I'm sorry. I won't stay. I'm looking for someone. Or I was.

DAI You'll want the post office for that. Shuts at five.

EMRYS And it's got nothing in it anyway.

NIA It's an old photo. It was taken outside here. See the sign?

GLENYS Let's see.

NIA It's my grandmother. Before she went to Liverpool. She never talked about Wales. Not once. She died in March.

EMRYS Oh, now. That's the old sign. Before the gale took it. Sixty-something.

DAI Look at the car. That's Tomos Parry's old van.

EMRYS It is. Look at the state of the bumper.

NIA Do any of you know her? Her name was Eira. Eira Hughes.

DAI Hughes. There's a lot of Hugheses.

EMRYS Half the valley's Hughes.

GLENYS ...I knew her.

NIA You did?

GLENYS She was my best friend. Until she was sixteen. Then one Sunday she wasn't in chapel, and nobody would say why.

EMRYS Glenys.

GLENYS It's all right, Emrys. It's sixty years. Sit down, love. Dai, put the kettle on.

DAI It's closing time. And you've never once in your life said "put the kettle on" after ten.

GLENYS It's my pub, Dai. I'll say when it's closing time.

NIA What happened to her?

GLENYS I'll tell you what I know. Then you tell me what you know. Between us, we might have the whole of her.

Christmas at the Lake House

Family drama, dinner · Any · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: CAROL WALT GREG BETH SAM

A lake house in Michigan, Christmas night. CAROL, 60, the host, raises a glass. Her husband GREG, 62, carves. Their daughter BETH, 34, sits with her partner, SAM, 35. Carol's father, WALT, 88, is on his third eggnog

SFX: a fire crackling, glasses clinking

CAROL Before we eat. I just want to say how wonderful it is to have everybody here. All together. No drama this year.

WALT Give it an hour.

CAROL Dad.

GREG Who wants white meat?

BETH Actually, Mom, Sam and I have something to say.

CAROL Oh! Oh my goodness. Are you...?

BETH No. Not that. Sit down, Mom.

SAM We're moving.

CAROL Moving where?

SAM Lisbon. In March. I got a transfer.

CAROL Lisbon. Portugal Lisbon?

WALT Is there another one?

GREG That's... That's exciting, kids.

CAROL Greg, you're not surprised.

GREG I'm very surprised. Look at my face.

CAROL That is your "I knew" face. You had it when the dog died.

BETH Dad knew. I told him in October.

CAROL October?

SAM And Grandpa knew.

WALT I've known since Labor Day. I helped with the paperwork.

CAROL Everybody knew?

BETH Everybody but you, Mom.

CAROL Why? Why would you tell everybody but me?

BETH Because you'd do this. Right now. Exactly this. You'd make it about the distance.

CAROL It is about the distance! It's four thousand miles!

BETH It's a seven-hour flight. You fly to Arizona for golf.

GREG She's got you there, Carol.

CAROL Don't you dare, Gregory.

WALT When your mother and I moved to Detroit, her mother didn't speak to us for a year.

CAROL Dad, that's not helping.

WALT I'm not trying to help. I'm telling you how it ends. She came round. Brought a ham. Cried in our kitchen. Said she'd wasted a whole year being right.

CAROL ...

SAM I'm sorry, Carol. That was my idea, not telling you. Not Beth's. Blame me. Carol, there's a guest room. It's got a balcony. We measured it for you.

CAROL You measured it?

BETH Twice. It faces the river.

CAROL ...I'd need a good suitcase.

GREG I know a man.

CAROL White meat, Greg. Just carve.

The Holdout

Courtroom drama, jury room · Any · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: DOLORES ED MARCUS CARMEN OWEN

A jury room, day three of deliberations. DOLORES, 60, the foreperson. ED, 55, a contractor, stands by the window. MARCUS, 30, a teacher. CARMEN, 42, a nurse. OWEN, 70, retired, reads the evidence folder for the fourth time

DOLORES We're six and six. Again. Does anyone want to change their vote before I tell the judge we're stuck?

ED I'm not changing. The kid did it.

MARCUS You keep saying "the kid." He's twenty-two.

ED He's a kid. I've got socks older than him.

CARMEN Ed, we're not voting on your socks.

OWEN The witness put him at the bus stop at eleven. The camera puts him at the bus stop at eleven. The robbery was at eleven-oh-five, a mile away.

ED So he ran.

MARCUS A mile in five minutes? In those shoes?

ED He's twenty-two!

CARMEN So now he's not a kid?

DOLORES All right. Let's hear it, Ed. Not "the kid did it." Tell me why you're sure.

ED Because they're always sure. The ones who do it. He sat there all week looking at the floor, like he was sorry. Guilty people look sorry.

OWEN So do scared people.

ED What would you know about it?

OWEN I was a public defender for thirty-four years. I've seen a lot of floors looked at.

ED ...

DOLORES Ed?

ED I had a brother. Kenny. He got picked up for something when I was nineteen. Looked at the floor all through the trial, just like this one. Everybody said he was guilty.

CARMEN Was he?

ED I don't know. He did six years. He came out and he never looked anybody in the eye again. Not even me. He died when he was forty.

MARCUS I'm sorry.

ED And I thought, if they'd just been sure. Either way. If somebody had been sure.

DOLORES It was your brother you were voting on.

ED ...Maybe.

OWEN Being sure isn't the same as being right, Ed. That's the whole job in here.

ED Read me the camera time again.

OWEN 11:02. Bus stop. Hood down. Facing the camera.

ED Facing the camera.

CARMEN Not looking at the floor.

ED ...Put me down as undecided. For now. And somebody get me the map.

MARCUS Put me down undecided too. I was guilty because I was tired.

DOLORES Seven undecided. Carmen?

CARMEN I'll order the sandwiches.

The Correction

Newsroom drama, ethics · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Cast: FRANCES TOM RAJ NADINE

A national newspaper office in London, 6:15 a.m. FRANCES, 54, the editor, stands with the morning edition. TOM, 31, the reporter, has just arrived. NADINE, 45, the paper's lawyer, is on speakerphone, then in person. RAJ, 38, the photo editor, is already there

SFX: a door, the building's air conditioning, a phone on speaker

FRANCES Sit down, Tom.

TOM I got your message. Is it the council story?

FRANCES It's the council story.

RAJ The photo. Page one. The man in the photo isn't Graham Pike.

TOM It is. It's from his firm's website.

RAJ It's from his firm's website. It's his cousin. Martin Pike. Same firm, same name, same haircut. Martin Pike is a primary school governor in Swindon who has never met a councillor in his life.

TOM Oh, no.

FRANCES He rang at five. His daughter saw it on the school gates. Somebody had stuck it up with the word "crook" in red pen.

TOM I'm sorry. I checked. I thought I checked.

NADINE Frances, I'm here. I've read it. Legally, we're in a bad place, but not a catastrophic one, if we move now.

FRANCES How now is now?

NADINE Online correction in the next ten minutes. Apology on page two tomorrow. Call Mr. Pike personally. Don't let Tom call him.

TOM I'd like to call him.

NADINE I'd like a pony. Don't call him.

RAJ Page two won't cut it. That photo was the whole front page. Everybody saw the front.

FRANCES Raj is right.

NADINE Frances, a front-page correction is an admission.

FRANCES It is an admission. We did it. On the front. So we fix it on the front.

NADINE The board won't like it.

FRANCES The board didn't put a school governor's face under the word "corruption." We did. Tom, write it. Two paragraphs. No excuses, no "regrettably." Say what we got wrong and who we hurt.

TOM Yes.

FRANCES And then you and I are going to Swindon.

TOM Both of us?

FRANCES I'm the editor. It's my front page. Raj, pull a picture of the right Pike and check it three times.

RAJ Four.

NADINE I'll draft the letter. For the record, this is a terrible legal strategy.

FRANCES Noted, Nadine. It's a good newspaper one.

Missing Since Tuesday

Police procedural, briefing · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: REYES HALE KIM BENNY

A police department briefing room in Oregon, 8 a.m. LIEUTENANT REYES, 50, at the front. DETECTIVE HALE, 45, leans on a desk. OFFICER GRACE KIM, 32, the family liaison. TECH ANALYST BENNY OKAFOR, 27, at a laptop

SFX: a coffee machine gurgling, a whiteboard marker squeaking

REYES Danielle Price. Thirty-eight. Missing since Tuesday. Hale.

HALE Car's gone, bank card used at a gas station in Redding Tuesday night. Husband says they argued Monday. Looks like she left.

REYES Grace?

KIM She didn't leave.

HALE Grace, with respect, you've been at the house two days. You're on their side.

KIM I'm on the side of what's in the house, Detective. Her insulin's in the fridge. All of it. She's type one. She wouldn't go a day without it.

HALE People forget things when they're upset.

KIM Not that. Not for three days.

REYES Benny, the card.

BENNY Card was used at 9:14 p.m. Tuesday at a gas station off the interstate. Pump and in-store. Forty dollars of gas, a sandwich and dog food.

REYES Dog food?

BENNY Large bag. Chicken and rice.

KIM They don't have a dog.

HALE Maybe she's getting one. New life.

KIM Her husband's brother has a dog. A big one. He lives outside Redding.

REYES ...Did anybody interview the brother?

HALE He wasn't on the list. Husband didn't mention him.

KIM I asked the daughter. She's nine. She said Uncle Rob was at the house on Monday. She said he and Mom were shouting in the garage.

HALE Why didn't the husband tell us that?

KIM That's a very good question.

REYES Benny, the gas station has cameras?

BENNY Three. I've requested them. Twenty minutes. And, Lieutenant, the card was used by a man. The clerk remembers. Big guy, ball cap, paid for the dog food separately.

REYES Make it ten. Hale, get Redding police to do a welfare check on the brother's address. Quietly. Don't spook him.

HALE Yes, Lieutenant.

REYES Grace.

KIM Lieutenant?

REYES Go back to the house. Stay with the kid. And if the husband wants to talk, let him talk.

KIM And if he doesn't?

REYES Then that's something too.

The Maid of Honour Speaks

Comedy drama, wedding toast · Adult (25-40) · Australian · 2 minutes

Cast: JESS KATE BARRY LORRAINE NICK

A wedding reception at a vineyard in the Barossa. JESS, 30, the maid of honour, stands at the microphone. The bride, KATE, 31, the groom, NICK, 33, Kate's dad, BARRY, 64, and Nick's mum, LORRAINE, 60, are at the top table

SFX: a microphone thump, laughter settling

JESS Hi, everyone. I'm Jess. Kate and I met in year seven when she punched a boy for stealing my lunch.

KATE He deserved it.

JESS He did. He's here, actually. Hi, Tim.

BARRY Good on you, Tim. Brave man.

JESS When Kate met Nick, I was suspicious. He was too nice. He brought soup when she had the flu. Nobody brings soup.

LORRAINE I taught him that.

JESS Thank you, Lorraine. And I thought, there's got to be a catch. And there was. Because three weeks ago, Nick asked me to help him plan the surprise.

NICK Jess. Jess, not that bit.

JESS What? It's lovely. Nick has bought a house.

KATE What?

JESS In Tasmania. With a view of the water.

KATE Tasmania?

NICK I was going to tell you on the plane.

KATE On the plane to Bali?

NICK On the plane home from Bali. Honeymoon glow. You'd have been relaxed.

LORRAINE He gets this from his father. His father bought a caravan once without asking. We lived in it for a year.

KATE Did you like it?

LORRAINE I loved it, darling. That's not the point.

KATE We live in Adelaide, Nick. My whole family's in Adelaide.

NICK I know. I know. But you said, the night we met, you said you'd always wanted to live somewhere with a sea you could hear from bed. And I found one.

KATE ...I said that?

NICK You said it about four times. You'd had a few.

JESS I'm so sorry. I thought she knew. I thought it was a "we" surprise.

BARRY Can I say something?

KATE Dad, this isn't really...

BARRY Your mother and I moved to Adelaide from Broken Hill with one suitcase. Her mum said we were mad. Best thing we ever did. You don't hold on to a place, love. You hold on to him.

KATE ...Does it have a spare room?

NICK Two.

KATE Then Dad gets one. And Jess gets the other one, because she's never telling a secret again in her life.

JESS That's fair. That's completely fair. To Kate and Nick. And to Tasmania.

The Allotment Vote

Community drama, village meeting · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Cast: BRENDA COLIN DEREK SANDRA IVY

A church hall in a Midlands village, 7 p.m. BRENDA, 62, chairs the allotment committee. COLIN, 50, from the district council, presents a plan. DEREK, 70, grows prize onions. SANDRA, 45, runs the nursery school. IVY, 88, sits by the radiator

SFX: rain on high windows, the hum of an old heater

BRENDA Right. Item one, and the only item. Colin, you have the floor.

COLIN Thank you, Brenda. As you know, the high street needs parking. The allotments are the only flat land in the village. The council proposes forty spaces, landscaping and a new bench.

DEREK A bench.

COLIN A very good bench.

DEREK I've had plot nine for thirty-one years, Colin. You can't grow onions on a bench.

SANDRA The nursery takes the children there every Thursday. They plant beans. They've never seen a bean before they come.

COLIN I understand. And there'll be planters. In the car park.

SANDRA Planters.

COLIN Large planters.

DEREK My onions weigh more than your planters.

SANDRA And where do the children go on a wet Thursday? The car park?

BRENDA Derek, please.

COLIN The shops are closing. The bakery closed in May. People can't park, so they drive to town. This is how you save a high street.

BRENDA He does have a point, Derek.

DEREK I know he's got a point. I don't like his point.

IVY May I?

BRENDA Ivy? Of course.

IVY I'll stand, if you don't mind. I've been sitting since 1990.

COLIN Please, there's no need.

IVY There's every need. Young man, do you know who owns that land?

COLIN The parish, I believe.

IVY You believe wrong. My father gave the use of it to the village in 1946. For growing food. For as long as someone grows food there. I have the letter. I have the deeds. They're in my handbag. They've been in my handbag since 1990, in case somebody like you turned up.

COLIN ...Could I see those?

IVY You may. Carefully. They're older than you.

DEREK Ivy, you never said.

IVY Nobody asked. Now. The bakery. Sandra, you need a hall for the nursery on wet days. Derek, you've got more onions than sense. Colin, there's a yard behind the old bakery that would take twenty cars. That's your car park. Brenda, write that down.

BRENDA Writing it down.

COLIN That's... actually not a bad plan.

IVY I'm eighty-eight. I've had a long time to think about it.

Death at the Summer Fete, Part One

Mystery, radio-play whodunnit · Any · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Cast: NARRATOR DUNN HATTIE PAMELA RUPERT

A village summer fete in the 1950s, a radio-play in the classic style. NARRATOR, any age. INSPECTOR DUNN, 50s, male. PAMELA ASHWORTH, 40s, the vicar's wife. RUPERT GALE, 30s, a charming visitor. HATTIE BELL, 20s, runs the cake stall

SFX: a brass band in the distance, birdsong, a tent flap in the breeze

NARRATOR The summer fete at Little Hensley had never had a murder. It had had a runaway donkey, a scandal over a marrow, and one very serious wasp. But never a murder. Until four o'clock on the third of August, when Colonel Fitch was found face down in the Victoria sponge.

DUNN Nobody touch the cake.

HATTIE It's my cake! It won second prize!

DUNN It's evidence now, miss. Who found him?

PAMELA I did, Inspector. I came in to count the raffle money. And there he was.

DUNN You seem very calm, Mrs. Ashworth.

PAMELA I'm a vicar's wife. I've been to a great many funerals. One learns to keep a steady hand.

NARRATOR Her hand was steady. But the inspector noticed that her gloves, white cotton, spotless, were on inside out.

DUNN And you, sir? You're not from the village.

RUPERT Rupert Gale. On holiday. I heard the scream and dashed in to help. Anything I can do, Inspector. Anything at all.

PAMELA He's a very kind young man, Inspector. He held my handbag.

DUNN Did he, now. Did you know the Colonel, Mr. Gale?

RUPERT Never met the man. Seemed a decent sort. From a distance.

HATTIE That's not true! I saw you arguing with him! By the coconut shy!

RUPERT A misunderstanding. About... coconuts.

DUNN Coconuts.

RUPERT He thought they were rigged. Which, frankly, they are.

NARRATOR Hattie Bell was crying now. Real tears. But she was crying, the inspector noted, a little too loudly. As though she wanted the whole tent to hear.

DUNN Miss Bell. Did the Colonel have any enemies?

HATTIE Everybody! He was horrible! He said my sponge was dry!

DUNN Was it?

HATTIE ...It was a bit dry.

PAMELA It was very dry, dear. I did say.

DUNN Then he died a critic. Nobody leaves this tent. Mrs. Ashworth, your gloves, please. Mr. Gale, the coconuts. And Miss Bell, I'll need the name of whoever took first prize.

NARRATOR And from outside the tent, very faintly, came the sound of a brass band playing, quite cheerfully, as if nothing at all had happened. To be continued.

Parents' Evening

Family drama, school meeting · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: OBI ANNA DAVID

An elementary school classroom in Minnesota, 6 p.m. MS. OBI, 38, a fourth-grade teacher, sits on a tiny chair. Across from her, on equally tiny chairs, are DAVID, 45, and ANNA, 43, who divorced last year. They arrived separately

OBI Thank you both for coming. I know schedules are difficult.

ANNA Some schedules are more difficult than others.

DAVID I was eight minutes late, Anna. There was a crash on the bypass.

ANNA There's always a crash on the bypass.

OBI So. Leo. He's a lovely boy. He's bright. He's kind to the younger kids at recess.

DAVID That's great.

OBI But he's stopped handing in homework.

ANNA That's David's week. Homework's always missing on David's week.

DAVID I do homework with him every night!

ANNA You do the homework for him every night.

DAVID That's not fair.

OBI Actually, it's not about which week. It's both weeks.

ANNA Both?

OBI Since October. And he's been asking to stay in at recess. He says he's tired.

DAVID He's not sleeping well at mine. The new place is by the train.

ANNA He doesn't sleep well at mine either. He comes into my room.

DAVID He does?

ANNA Every night, since you left.

DAVID You never told me that.

ANNA You never asked.

OBI May I show you something? We did a project on homes last week. The children drew their house.

DAVID Okay.

OBI This is Leo's.

ANNA ...That's both houses.

DAVID With a road between them.

OBI And there's a little boy standing in the middle of the road. With two backpacks.

ANNA Oh, Leo.

DAVID ...Okay.

OBI I'm not a counselor, and I'm not taking sides. But I think he needs to see you two in the same room. Not fighting. Just in the same room.

DAVID Like this?

OBI Like this. On tiny chairs. It's very hard to fight on a tiny chair. I've seen people try.

ANNA ...Leo's got a recital on the fourteenth. He's the tree.

DAVID I know. He told me. He's very proud of being the tree.

ANNA We could sit together.

DAVID We could. I'll get there early. Avoid the bypass.

OBI And I'll save you two tiny chairs.

The Search

Community drama, search party · Any · Scottish · 2 minutes

Cast: ROSS MORVEN KIRSTY ANGUS

A hillside above a Highland village, 9 p.m. in December. SERGEANT ROSS, 45, leads the search. MORVEN, 36, the missing boy's mother, carries a torch. ANGUS, 81, a retired shepherd, walks with a crook. KIRSTY, 19, a volunteer, carries the radio

SFX: wind, boots on frozen heather, a crackling police radio

ROSS Keep in a line. Ten yards apart. Call his name every thirty seconds, then listen.

MORVEN Callum! Callum!

KIRSTY Sergeant, the radio says the mountain rescue team's forty minutes out.

ROSS Forty minutes. Right. Tell them we're on the east side of the burn.

MORVEN He's eight. He's in his school shoes. He went out after the dog.

ROSS We know, Morven. Keep calling.

ANGUS The dog.

ROSS Sorry, Angus?

ANGUS What kind of dog?

MORVEN A collie. Bess. She's only a year old.

ANGUS A young collie on this hill, in this wind, she'll go for the sheep. The sheep go to the old fank when the weather turns.

KIRSTY What's a fank?

ANGUS A pen. Stone walls. My father built it. It's up by the ruined bothy. Nobody uses it now. The sheep still remember.

ROSS That's off our search area.

ANGUS Then your search area's wrong, son.

MORVEN How far?

ANGUS Half a mile. Straight up. I'd not do it in the dark, at my age.

ROSS Kirsty, radio the team. Tell them the fank above the bothy.

KIRSTY They're asking for grid reference.

ANGUS Tell them to follow the burn to the waterfall and turn left at the big rock. That's the grid reference.

KIRSTY ...I'll tell them that.

MORVEN I'm going up.

ROSS Morven, wait for the team.

MORVEN I've waited three hours. Angus, which way?

ANGUS Follow the wall. Keep your hand on it. It'll take you all the way.

SFX: a long, thin whistle in the distance

KIRSTY What was that?

ANGUS Shh. Listen.

SFX: the whistle again, then a dog barking faintly

MORVEN That's his whistle. That's the whistle for Bess. He's calling her!

ANGUS He's calling her because he's safe enough to think of her. That's a clever boy.

ROSS Everybody, towards the sound. Slowly. Kirsty, tell rescue we've got a location.

KIRSTY What do I say?

ANGUS Tell them the fank. And tell them he's got a good dog.

Anniversary

Family drama, dinner · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: MIKE LAURA PHIL JOAN

A restaurant in Boston. JOAN, 66, and PHIL, 68, celebrate their fortieth anniversary with their adult children: LAURA, 38, and MIKE, 35

SFX: restaurant murmur, a waiter's footsteps

MIKE To forty years. Mom, Dad, you're the reason I believe in marriage.

LAURA Hear, hear.

PHIL Thank you, son. That's lovely.

JOAN Very lovely. Phil, do you want to tell them?

PHIL You tell them.

JOAN We said you'd tell them.

PHIL I said I'd tell them if it was raining. It isn't raining.

LAURA Tell us what?

JOAN We're separating.

MIKE ...What?

JOAN Not divorcing. Separating. Your father's moving to the cabin in Maine. I'm keeping the house.

LAURA You're joking. It's your anniversary.

PHIL That's why we picked tonight. Everybody's here.

MIKE You just toasted forty years!

PHIL It was a very good forty years. That's why we're stopping now. While we're ahead.

LAURA Are you seeing somebody?

JOAN Oh, for heaven's sake, Laura.

PHIL I'm seeing a lake. And a boat I'm going to fix. And about four thousand books I haven't read because your mother likes the TV on.

JOAN And I'm seeing my own closet. For the first time since 1985.

MIKE This is insane. Is this a midlife crisis?

PHIL I'm sixty-eight, Michael. If this is midlife, I'm delighted.

LAURA Are you fighting? Is it something we did?

JOAN Sweetheart, we're not fighting. We haven't fought in years. We just want different weather.

MIKE You don't even like each other anymore?

PHIL No. We still like each other. That's the point. We'd like to keep it that way.

JOAN He's going to call every Sunday. I'm going up in August.

PHIL She's going to tell me the boat's a waste of money.

JOAN It is a waste of money.

LAURA ...You're serious. You're actually happy about this.

JOAN We are, honey. Can you try to be happy for us?

MIKE I need a minute.

PHIL Take a minute. Take the bread. We ordered the good wine.

LAURA So who gets Christmas?

JOAN Oh, we'll all be at the house for Christmas. Your father's not leaving the family. He's just leaving the thermostat.

PHIL Sixty-eight degrees, Joan. Sixty-eight degrees. For forty years.

Beginners, Please

Backstage drama, theatre · Any · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Cast: KWAME PIP CELIA JOSH

A dressing room in a regional theatre, 7:15 p.m. PIP, 40, the stage manager, holds a clipboard. DAME CELIA, 70, the leading lady, sits wrapped in a scarf with no voice. JOSH, 24, her understudy for the evening, emerges from the loo. KWAME, 45, the director, bursts in

SFX: a tannoy crackle: 'Fifteen minutes, please. Fifteen minutes.'

KWAME What's happened? Somebody said "voice." Why is everybody saying "voice"?

PIP Celia's lost hers.

KWAME Lost it where?

CELIA ...Gone.

KWAME Gone? Gone how? Celia, you were doing scales at six.

PIP She was doing scales at six. At six-fifteen she did the high note in act two to show the stage door man. At six-sixteen, gone.

CELIA ...Worth it.

KWAME Right. Right. Understudy.

PIP The understudy for Lady Agatha is Monica. Monica's in Scarborough at her sister's wedding.

KWAME Why is Monica in Scarborough?

PIP Because you signed her leave form, Kwame.

KWAME Then who...

JOSH Me. Um. Hello. Me.

KWAME You're the understudy for the butler.

JOSH And I'm covering the second understudy. For Agatha. It's in my contract. Page four.

KWAME You're a man.

JOSH So was every Agatha until about 1660.

CELIA ...Ha.

PIP Josh, you've been sick twice.

JOSH Three times. The third was very small.

KWAME Do you know it? Do you actually know it?

JOSH I know it. I know every word. I've watched her every night for eight weeks from the wings. I know where she breathes.

CELIA ...Show him.

JOSH What?

CELIA Show him. Act two.

JOSH "Do not speak to me of love, Mr. Crane. I have buried two husbands and a Pekinese, and I will not bury my heart as well."

KWAME ...

PIP Kwame?

KWAME That's... not bad.

CELIA It's good.

JOSH You can talk!

CELIA Only... a little. Don't... tell anyone. Go.

PIP Wardrobe, we need the purple gown in a larger size, and we need it in ten minutes.

KWAME Pip, what do I tell the audience?

PIP Tell them tonight, Lady Agatha has a slightly deeper voice. And a beard, if Josh doesn't shave in the next nine minutes.

JOSH I'm shaving. I'm shaving!

SFX: the tannoy again: 'Beginners, please.'

JOSH That's me.

CELIA Breathe... where I breathe.

JOSH Every time.

The Night Porter's Story

Mystery, radio-play whodunnit · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: NARRATOR MRS. CARLISLE MOSS EDDIE LOTTIE

The Grand Palms Hotel, Miami, 1952. NARRATOR and EDDIE are the same actor: Eddie Doyle, the night porter, now in his 60s, looking back on the night. DETECTIVE MOSS, 40s, female. MRS. CARLISLE, 70s, a wealthy guest. LOTTIE, 19, a chambermaid

SFX: ceiling fans, distant surf, a jazz record through a wall

NARRATOR I worked the night desk at the Grand Palms for twenty-six years. I saw a lot of things. Most of them I forgot on purpose. But I never forgot the night of the Carlisle diamonds.

MRS. CARLISLE They were on the dresser at ten. I remember it precisely. I took them off before my bath.

MOSS And the door was locked?

MRS. CARLISLE Of course it was locked. I'm not a fool, Detective.

MOSS Who has keys to the suite?

EDDIE The desk has a master. The maids have one each. That's all.

NARRATOR I said it plainly. I didn't look at Lottie. I didn't have to. Everybody else did.

LOTTIE I didn't go in! I did the turndown at eight, and that's all. The necklace wasn't even out then.

MOSS How do you know it wasn't out?

LOTTIE Because... because I'd have seen it. I always look. It's so pretty.

MRS. CARLISLE There. She admits it.

MOSS She admits she has eyes, Mrs. Carlisle. Mr. Doyle, where was the master key between ten and midnight?

EDDIE On the hook. Behind the desk. Where it always is.

NARRATOR And that was the truth. Mostly.

MOSS You never left the desk?

EDDIE Once. For a smoke. Five minutes. Maybe six.

MOSS What time?

EDDIE Around eleven.

NARRATOR It was closer to ten-thirty. I don't know why I said eleven. Habit, maybe. Or maybe because I'd seen somebody by the desk when I came back in, and I didn't want to have seen it.

MOSS Did anyone come through the lobby?

EDDIE No, ma'am. Quiet night.

LOTTIE Mr. Doyle. That's not right. Mr. Carlisle came down. I saw him from the stairs. He asked if you were around.

MRS. CARLISLE My husband was asleep.

LOTTIE He was in his dressing gown. He had something in his pocket. It was heavy. It swung.

MOSS Mr. Doyle?

NARRATOR Twenty-six years, and I only told one lie on that desk. And a nineteen-year-old maid undid it in four sentences.

EDDIE ...He tipped me ten dollars, Detective. To not see him.

MOSS Then you'd better start seeing.

The Last Slice

Mystery, radio-play whodunnit · Any · Neutral British · 3 minutes

Cast: NARRATOR CRANE TEDDY MOSS PEARL LADY HARRIET

Fallowmere Hall, a country house in 1934, a radio-play in the classic style. NARRATOR, any voice. INSPECTOR ADA CRANE, 50s. LADY HARRIET VANE, 60s, the hostess. DR. JULIAN MOSS, 40s, the family doctor. PEARL, 20s, the cook. CAPTAIN TEDDY FARR, 30s, the late Sir Roland's nephew

SFX: a fire in a grate, rain against tall windows, a clock

NARRATOR They were gathered in the library at nine, as the inspector had asked. Sir Roland Vane had died at dinner the night before, over the last slice of his own birthday cake.

CRANE Thank you all for coming.

TEDDY We were rather told to come, Inspector.

CRANE So you were, Captain. Let's begin with you. Your uncle changed his will on Tuesday.

TEDDY Did he? News to me.

CRANE He cut you out entirely. Your debts were mentioned. By name.

TEDDY Then I can hardly have killed him for it, can I?

CRANE Unless you're lying. Dr. Moss.

MOSS Inspector.

CRANE You signed the death certificate within the hour. Heart failure.

MOSS He had a weak heart. I'd treated him for eleven years.

CRANE And yet you kept the plate.

MOSS ...I'm a careful man.

CRANE You're a frightened man. You suspected, and said nothing, because his death wiped out the four thousand pounds you owed him.

MOSS That is not a crime.

CRANE No. But it is a reason. Pearl.

PEARL I only made the cake, miss. Lemon and elderflower. Same as every year.

CRANE Who cut it?

PEARL I did. In the kitchen. Seven slices. I brought them up on the silver tray.

CRANE And which slice went to Sir Roland?

PEARL The last one. He always had the last slice. He said it had the most luck in it. The whole house knew.

TEDDY Well, there you are. Anyone could have done it.

CRANE Anyone could have poisoned the last slice. But the tray was in the kitchen from six until seven, and the only people in the kitchen were Pearl and one other.

PEARL Her Ladyship came down. To see the cake.

LADY HARRIET I often go down to the kitchen. It's my house.

CRANE Of course. Lady Harriet, did you touch the cake?

LADY HARRIET I admired it. I did not touch it.

CRANE The laboratory found foxglove on that plate. Digitalis. The very medicine the doctor prescribed for your husband's heart, in a dose that would stop a horse.

MOSS I kept his medicine locked in my bag.

CRANE Where was your bag, Doctor, from six until seven?

MOSS In the hall. Where I always leave it.

NARRATOR For a moment nobody spoke. Then Lady Harriet reached, very calmly, for a cigarette.

LADY HARRIET This is absurd. Anyone could have walked through that hall. Pearl, for instance.

PEARL I never left the kitchen, my lady. Not once.

CRANE Lady Harriet, last night you told the constable your husband complained the icing tasted bitter. But he never said a word. He took one bite and fell.

LADY HARRIET ...He always complained about something.

CRANE He did. But not this time. The only person in this house who knew that icing would taste bitter is the person who put the foxglove in it.

NARRATOR The cigarette never reached her lips.

TEDDY Aunt Harriet?

LADY HARRIET Thirty-one years, Teddy. Thirty-one years of that man having the last slice of everything.

CRANE Constable. Take her ladyship to the car. Gently, please. It's raining.

Verdict

Courtroom drama, jury room · Any · Neutral American · 3 minutes

Cast: FRANK DERRICK JANINE HELEN PETE ROSA

A jury room in a county courthouse, day two, 4 p.m. FRANK, 58, the foreperson, a bus driver. ROSA, 23, a waitress. HELEN, 67, a retired librarian. DERRICK, 40, an accountant. JANINE, 35, a nurse. PETE, 71, a veteran. The vote is being taken by show of hands

SFX: a clock, a radiator, paper cups

FRANK Okay. Final vote. Not guilty, hands up.

DERRICK Here.

JANINE Yep.

HELEN Not guilty.

PETE Not guilty.

FRANK Rosa?

ROSA ...

FRANK Rosa, is that a hand?

ROSA It's half a hand.

DERRICK It's either a hand or it isn't.

ROSA Can I say something first?

FRANK Of course.

ROSA The alibi. He said he was at the Starlight Diner on Fifth from ten until one in the morning. And the waitress backed him up. Carla. Carla said she served him pie.

HELEN That was very convincing testimony.

ROSA I work at the Starlight.

JANINE What?

ROSA Not that night. I work weekends. But I know Carla. And the Starlight closes at midnight on Wednesdays. It's been midnight on Wednesdays since last spring. They cut the hours.

PETE How do you know that?

ROSA Because I asked for the Wednesday late shift. They told me there wasn't one.

DERRICK That's... that's not evidence. That wasn't presented.

JANINE The defense said ten to one. Nobody challenged it.

HELEN The prosecution must have checked.

ROSA Maybe they didn't. Maybe they didn't think anyone would know.

FRANK Why didn't you say so before?

ROSA They asked if I knew the defendant. I don't. They asked if I knew the witnesses. I didn't know Carla's last name. I didn't realise it was her until she walked in. And then I was scared to say anything.

PETE Why?

ROSA Because Carla's got two kids and she's always behind on rent. And I kept thinking, why would she lie? And I think I know why. And I don't want it to be true.

DERRICK We're not allowed to use what we know outside the courtroom. That's the rule. It's the first thing they told us.

HELEN He's right, dear. We decide on the evidence.

JANINE But if the evidence is a lie...

HELEN Then that's for the lawyers.

PETE The lawyers aren't in this room.

DERRICK So what do we do? Guess? We send a man to prison because a waitress thinks a diner closed early?

ROSA I don't want to send anybody to prison. I just can't put my hand up and say I believe something I know isn't true.

FRANK ...

JANINE Frank?

FRANK I drove the number nine bus for thirty years. I know the Starlight. I've seen it dark at midnight. I never thought about it until now.

DERRICK Frank.

FRANK No, Derrick. We don't get to use it. You're right. But we also don't get to pretend we didn't hear it.

HELEN So what are you saying?

FRANK Then we tell the judge. We write a note. We say a juror has information she didn't know was relevant when she was picked. And we let the judge decide what that means.

DERRICK That could be a mistrial. Two weeks of our lives.

PETE I've wasted two weeks on worse.

JANINE I'll sign it.

HELEN ...So will I. Heaven help us.

DERRICK Terrible idea. Fine. Give me the pen.

ROSA I'm sorry.

FRANK Don't be sorry. You're the only one of us who was paying attention.

The Final Edition

Newsroom drama, deadline · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 3 minutes

Cast: DEBBIE HECTOR JAKE MARION LILY

The newsroom of the Harlow Ledger, a small-town weekly in Pennsylvania, 10:20 p.m. on the night of its last issue. MARION, 64, the editor and owner. HECTOR, 78, who has run the press for fifty years. DEBBIE, 50, ad sales and everything else. JAKE, 24, the only reporter. LILY, 19, the summer intern, on her last day

SFX: an old press warming up in the next room, a radio scanner, a cork popping

DEBBIE To the Harlow Ledger. A hundred and twelve years. Every Thursday, rain or shine.

HECTOR Except the flood of '72.

DEBBIE Except the flood of '72.

JAKE What happened in '72?

HECTOR The press was under four feet of water. We printed on a mimeograph in the church basement. Eight hundred copies. My hands were purple for a month.

MARION And we never missed another issue. Until next Thursday.

LILY I'm sorry. I know I've only been here since June. But this is a really sad party.

JAKE She's not wrong. Debbie's been crying into the potato salad since nine.

DEBBIE I have allergies, Jake.

MARION It's a wake, honey. Wakes are sad. Have some cake.

DEBBIE Front page is locked. "Thank You, Harlow." Photo of all of us on the steps. Hector's blinking.

HECTOR I always blink.

JAKE Final press run at eleven?

HECTOR Eleven. Then I turn her off for the last time.

SFX: the scanner crackles: 'Engine four, respond, structure fire, Mill Street, the old Kessler building'

LILY What was that?

JAKE That's a fire. Mill Street.

MARION The Kessler building?

DEBBIE That's the library annex. They moved the town archive in there in March.

MARION ...Everything? The whole archive?

DEBBIE Every Ledger back to 1911. Bound volumes. It's the only full set.

JAKE I'm going.

MARION Take the camera. Lily, go with him.

LILY Me?

MARION You. Notebook. Names, times, who's in charge. Spell everything twice.

LILY Okay. Okay!

MARION Hector, how long can you hold the press?

HECTOR For the last issue? As long as you need, Marion. Till dawn, if you want.

MARION Debbie, I need page one open.

DEBBIE But "Thank You, Harlow"...

MARION Goes to page two. The town will understand. This is what we're for.

SFX: time passes: the scanner, a phone ringing, footsteps running in

JAKE I'm back. Fire's under control. Nobody hurt.

MARION The archive?

JAKE Half of it. The east wing's gone. But Lily...

LILY The fire chief let three volunteers carry out boxes before the roof went. They got 1911 to 1960. I have all their names. I got a quote. And a picture. It's a bit blurry.

DEBBIE Let me see. ...Oh, it's a good picture.

MARION It is a good picture. Jake, four hundred words. Lily, you're sharing the byline.

LILY I have a byline? My mom is going to frame it. She's going to frame it and hang it in the bathroom.

MARION On the last front page of the Harlow Ledger. Don't let it go to your head.

JAKE 1961 onward. That's gone?

HECTOR Not all of it. Not by a long way.

MARION Hector?

HECTOR I kept a copy. Every issue I ever printed. Fifty years. In my garage. My wife said I was a hoarder.

DEBBIE Every issue since 1974?

HECTOR Since 1972. The mimeographs too. Purple.

MARION ...Put that in the story, Jake.

JAKE Already typing.

HECTOR Page one's closed?

MARION Page one's closed.

HECTOR Then let's print her. One last time. Properly.

Thanksgiving, Take Two

Family drama, dinner · Mature (55+) · Southern US · 3 minutes

Cast: DELORES BEN CAROLYN TASHA PEARL

A kitchen in Charleston, South Carolina, Thanksgiving Day. The first holiday for two families since TASHA, 29, married BEN, 30. Tasha's mother, DELORES, 58, is hosting. Ben's mother, CAROLYN, 60, has brought a pie. Tasha's grandmother, PEARL, 86, sits at the kitchen table with iced tea

SFX: an oven door, a smoke alarm beginning to beep

DELORES It's fine. Everything's fine. Ben, honey, get the towel.

BEN Which towel?

DELORES Any towel. Wave it at the alarm.

SFX: the beeping stops

CAROLYN Is that the turkey?

DELORES That's the outside of the turkey.

TASHA Mama, it's black.

DELORES It's blackened. It's a style. They do it in Louisiana.

CAROLYN They do fish in Louisiana, Delores.

DELORES Well, today they do turkey.

PEARL I told you three-twenty-five.

DELORES Mama, I've been making this turkey for thirty years.

PEARL You've been making it at three-twenty-five for thirty years. Today you did four-fifty.

DELORES Because we were running late, because some people were forty minutes late.

CAROLYN There was traffic on the bridge!

BEN Mom, there wasn't traffic. You changed your blouse three times.

CAROLYN Benjamin!

TASHA Okay. Okay. Everybody breathe. We have sides. We have the mac and cheese. We have Carolyn's pie.

CAROLYN It's a pecan pie. My mother's recipe. It's been in the family four generations.

PEARL Mm.

CAROLYN I'm sorry, Miss Pearl?

PEARL I didn't say a word.

CAROLYN You said "mm."

PEARL "Mm" is not a word, honey. It's an opinion.

DELORES Mama, be nice.

PEARL I am being nice. If I wasn't being nice, I'd tell her about the dressing.

TASHA What about the dressing?

DELORES Nothing about the dressing. Mama.

PEARL I'm eighty-six years old. I'm not taking it to the grave.

BEN Taking what to the grave?

PEARL The famous family dressing. Delores's famous dressing. That everybody at church asks for. Every year.

DELORES Mama, don't you dare.

PEARL It comes in a box. It has always come in a box. I bought it at the grocery store in 1971, and I put it in my good dish and I added celery, and your daddy said it was the best dressing he'd ever had. So I never told him. And then I never told you. And then I told you, Delores, when you got married, and you never told anybody.

TASHA It's from a box?

DELORES It's from a box with celery.

BEN I asked you for that recipe. You said it was a family secret.

DELORES It is a family secret! It's just not a very good one.

CAROLYN ...Oh, thank the Lord.

DELORES What?

CAROLYN The pie. It's a frozen pie. From the store. I put it in my mother's pie dish and crimped the edge with a fork.

TASHA Carolyn!

CAROLYN Four generations of women in my family have bought that pie, Tasha. That's the tradition.

PEARL Mm.

CAROLYN And what does that "mm" mean?

PEARL That means I like you better now.

DELORES So we've got a burnt turkey, a box of dressing and a frozen pie.

BEN And mac and cheese.

TASHA Is the mac and cheese real?

DELORES The mac and cheese is real, baby. I'd never lie about the mac and cheese.

PEARL That's true. She wouldn't.

CAROLYN Well. Let's cut the black off that bird. There's got to be something in the middle.

DELORES You'd help?

CAROLYN I've burnt more turkeys than you've had hot dinners, Delores. Hand me a knife.

TASHA Ben, are you crying?

BEN A little. It's the smoke. It's mostly the smoke.

The Lifeboat Meeting

Community drama, village meeting · Any · Irish · 3 minutes

Cast: NORA KAVANAGH PADDY SINEAD AOIFE

A community hall in a fishing village on the west coast of Ireland, a winter evening. MR. KAVANAGH, 50, from the national sea-rescue service. NORA, 62, chair of the harbour committee. PADDY, 70, a retired fisherman. SINEAD, 40, a publican and lifeboat volunteer. AOIFE, 17, sits at the back with her mother

SFX: wind against windows, a full hall murmuring, then quiet

NORA Mr. Kavanagh, you've heard the room. You might as well give us the rest of it.

KAVANAGH Thank you, Nora. I know this isn't easy. The service has reviewed every station on this coast. This station launched four times last year. The one at Carrowmore launched sixty-one. We have one new boat. It can go to one place.

PADDY And that place isn't here.

KAVANAGH The boat from Carrowmore can reach your harbour in thirty-five minutes.

PADDY Thirty-five minutes. Have you ever been in that water in January, Mr. Kavanagh?

KAVANAGH I have, as it happens.

PADDY For how long?

KAVANAGH Not long.

PADDY Twelve minutes, you get, before your hands stop working. My brother went in off the Hag's Rock in 1979. Our boat was there in eight. He's in the front row. Wave, Michael.

SINEAD Four launches, you say. I crewed on three of them. That's three people alive who might not be. You can't put that on a spreadsheet.

KAVANAGH Sinead, I can, and I have to. That's my job. I'd rather it wasn't.

NORA What would it take to keep it open?

KAVANAGH Honestly? A case the review didn't see. Something the numbers miss.

NORA Is there anyone else who wants to speak? Anyone at all?

SFX: a chair scraping at the back

AOIFE Me. I want to. Sorry.

NORA Aoife. Go on, pet.

AOIFE I'm Aoife Doherty. I don't really do talking in front of people, so, sorry.

KAVANAGH Take your time.

AOIFE Last August, I took my cousin's kayak out past the point. Which I shouldn't have. Everybody knows that. And the wind changed. And I went over. And I couldn't get back in. I tried for ages.

SINEAD I remember.

AOIFE I had a whistle. Which is the only thing I did right. And Mrs. Ryan heard it from her garden and rang it in. And Sinead's boat came. It was eleven minutes. I know because Mrs. Ryan timed it. She's very precise.

PADDY She is.

AOIFE I was so cold I couldn't hold the rope. Sinead had to lift me in. And I remember thinking, eleven minutes is a very long time. And I've been thinking since. Thirty-five minutes.

KAVANAGH ...

AOIFE I wouldn't be here. That's all. That's the thing the numbers miss. It's me. I'm the thing. Sorry. That's it. I'll sit down now.

NORA Don't sit down yet, love. Mr. Kavanagh?

KAVANAGH Was that launch in the report?

SINEAD It was logged as "kayak, recovered, no injury."

KAVANAGH "No injury."

AOIFE I was fine. After.

KAVANAGH Nora, I'll be honest. I can't promise you anything tonight.

NORA We're not asking for tonight.

KAVANAGH But I can ask for the review to be reopened. With response times, not launch numbers. And a statement from everyone this boat has pulled out of the water.

PADDY Michael will give you one. He's been waiting forty-five years to give it.

SINEAD I'll get you twenty names by Friday.

KAVANAGH And Aoife's first.

AOIFE Me? Do I have to talk again?

NORA Just write it down, pet. Exactly like you said it. Leave in all the sorrys.

Operation Kestrel

Police procedural, briefing · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 3 minutes

Cast: ROWE BRADY GRANT HUSSAIN NOLAN

A major crimes office in Manchester, 5 a.m. DCI CATHERINE ROWE, 50, stands at a whiteboard. DS LIAM BRADY, 38, Northern Irish, second in command. DC ZARA HUSSAIN, 29, sharp and ambitious. DC GARY NOLAN, 45, a long-serving detective. PC ELLA GRANT, 26, from the tactical unit

SFX: a strip light buzzing, rain, a kettle clicking off

ROWE Operation Kestrel. We go in at six. Target address is the unit on Canal Street. Liam.

BRADY Two vans, eight officers. Front and back. Tactical on the door, us behind.

ROWE Ella, you're first through.

GRANT Ma'am.

ROWE Gary, you're on the back with me. Zara, you're with Liam at the front.

HUSSAIN Ma'am, can I ask why we've moved it?

ROWE Moved it?

HUSSAIN It was Tuesday. On Friday's briefing, you said Tuesday. At the warehouse on Pollard Road.

ROWE It was. Tuesday was a lie.

NOLAN Sorry, ma'am?

ROWE I told this team, and only this team, that we'd raid Pollard Road on Tuesday. On Sunday night, the Pollard Road warehouse was cleared out. Every box. Somebody told them.

BRADY Catherine, you didn't tell me.

ROWE I didn't tell anyone, Liam. That's rather the point.

GRANT I wasn't in the Friday briefing, ma'am.

ROWE No, Ella. You weren't. That's why you're first through the door this morning.

HUSSAIN So it's one of us four.

ROWE One of you four. Or me. I've considered that. I've ruled myself out.

NOLAN This is a bit much at five in the morning.

ROWE It's a lot much, Gary. Eighteen months of work.

BRADY So why tell us about Canal Street at all? If there's a leak, it'll get out.

ROWE There's no time for it to get out. We leave in twenty minutes. Nobody leaves this room. Phones on the table. Now, please.

SFX: four phones placed on a desk, one after another

HUSSAIN Ma'am, with respect, I've got nothing to hide.

ROWE Good. Then you won't mind. Ella, would you collect those?

GRANT Ma'am.

NOLAN Mine's a work phone. There's nothing on it but rotas.

ROWE Gary, how's your mum?

NOLAN ...Sorry?

ROWE Your mum. The care home in Salford. The one you told me is costing you eleven hundred a month.

NOLAN She's fine. Why?

ROWE Because the fees got paid off. In full. On Monday morning. The home rang to update the next-of-kin details. They rang the office by mistake. They got me.

NOLAN My brother paid it.

ROWE Your brother's in Spain, Gary. And he's been in Spain since 2015. With no job.

BRADY Gary?

NOLAN ...

HUSSAIN Gary, tell her it's not you.

NOLAN It's eleven hundred a month, Zara. On my salary. She doesn't know where she is half the time. But she knows if I'm not there.

GRANT Ma'am?

ROWE Liam, take Gary's warrant card. Zara, you're with me at the back. Ella, you're still first through the door.

BRADY We're still going?

ROWE We're still going. Canal Street is real. Gary didn't know until five minutes ago, and his phone's been on the table for four of them.

NOLAN Catherine. I'm sorry.

ROWE I know you are. I'm sorry about your mum. I'll make sure someone visits her. Vans, everybody. Six o'clock.

Practice with these, record them, post them as demos or reels, use them in auditions. Please do not resell them as scripts. © VO Journey Academy · avosjourney.com