Thriller duet & multi-cast scripts

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The Second Cup

Interrogation · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Cast: RUIZ OWEN

An interview room, late evening — Detective Ruiz, forties, sets two coffees down; Owen, twenties, a witness who says he saw nothing

RUIZ Milk, two sugars.

OWEN How did you know?

RUIZ Lucky guess. You told the officer you were at the laundromat on Fifth until ten.

OWEN Yeah. Doing laundry. That's what it's for.

RUIZ And you didn't see anyone go into the pharmacy across the street.

OWEN I was watching my clothes go round. It's hypnotic.

RUIZ Sure. What was in the load?

OWEN What?

RUIZ Your laundry. What did you wash?

OWEN Shirts. Socks. I don't know. Normal stuff.

RUIZ The laundromat on Fifth has been closed since June, Owen. Burst pipe. There's a sign on the door the size of a mattress.

OWEN ...Then I was somewhere else.

RUIZ You were somewhere you could see the pharmacy door. Which means you saw who went in.

OWEN If I tell you, he'll know it was me.

RUIZ He already knows you were there. That's why you're drinking my coffee instead of going home.

OWEN ...He had a key. He didn't break in. He had a key.

Knock Twice

Domestic suspense · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Cast: DANA MAN

A front door with the chain on, dusk — Dana, thirties, home alone with her daughter asleep upstairs; a man in his forties outside says he's from the water board

SFX: two knocks

DANA Who is it?

MAN Evening, ma'am. Water board. We've had reports of a pressure drop on your street.

DANA Nobody told me.

MAN That's why I'm knocking. Won't take five minutes. Your meter's in the kitchen.

DANA My meter's outside. By the hedge.

MAN In older houses, sure. Yours was moved in the renovation.

DANA What renovation?

MAN Two years back. New kitchen, new pipes. Nice job. Blue tiles.

DANA ...How do you know my tiles are blue?

MAN I'm just reading the work order, ma'am.

DANA Then read me the name on it.

MAN It's a bit dark out here.

DANA I'll turn on the porch light.

MAN No need. It says Harper. Dana Harper. And there's a note about the little one. Lily, is it? Asleep upstairs?

DANA I'm calling someone.

MAN Course you are. Only your phone's been dead all afternoon, hasn't it? Funny thing, a pressure drop. Everything goes a bit quiet.

DANA Get away from my door.

MAN I'll be by the hedge. Checking the meter.

Dead Drop

Spy · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Cast: TOMAS COLE

A park bench in winter — Cole, sixties, a handler, feeds pigeons; Tomas, twenties, his asset, sits at the far end with a folded newspaper

TOMAS You're feeding them bread. You're not supposed to feed them bread.

COLE Nobody's arrested me yet. Did you bring it?

TOMAS It's in the newspaper.

COLE Leave it on the bench when you go.

TOMAS I didn't open it.

COLE I didn't ask you to.

TOMAS I didn't open it, and I didn't take it to the embassy, and I didn't photograph it. I took it home and put it under my bed and I looked at it for three nights.

COLE That's the job, Tomas. Carrying things you don't look at.

TOMAS My father carried things for you.

COLE Your father was very good at it.

TOMAS He's dead.

COLE I know. I was at the funeral. Back row.

TOMAS I saw you. I thought you'd come to say sorry.

COLE I came to see who else turned up. That's also the job.

TOMAS ...Then I'm keeping the newspaper.

COLE Tomas.

TOMAS Tell whoever wants it they can come and ask my mother for it. Enjoy your pigeons.

Ninety Seconds

Kidnapping · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Cast: CLAIRE CALLER

A kitchen at 3 a.m. — Claire, forties, answers a call from the person holding her son; the caller, any age, is flat and calm

SFX: phone rings once

CLAIRE Hello? Hello, is he there?

CALLER He's here. He's fine. He's eating crisps. You have ninety seconds.

CLAIRE Put him on. Please.

CALLER Did you call the police, Claire?

CLAIRE No.

CALLER There's a car at the end of your road. Silver. Engine off. Two men not talking to each other.

CLAIRE That's the neighbours'.

CALLER Your neighbours have a red van.

CLAIRE ...What do you want me to say?

CALLER I want you to stop lying. Every lie costs ten seconds. You're down to sixty.

CLAIRE Yes. I called them. I was frightened. I'm his mother, what did you expect?

CALLER Exactly that. Thank you. Now we can talk. Tell the men in the silver car to go home. Tomorrow you bring your husband's laptop to the station café at noon.

CLAIRE Mark's laptop? This is about Mark?

CALLER It was always about Mark. Thirty seconds.

CLAIRE Let me hear my son.

CALLER He's asleep. You'll hear him at noon. Don't be late, Claire.

Stakeout, Hour Nine

Detective · Adult (40-55) · Australian · 1 minute

Cast: JO KERRY

A parked car at night, hour nine of a stakeout — Detectives Kerry Walsh, fifties, and Jo Tran, thirties, watch a lit window across the road

JO He's pacing again.

KERRY He's been pacing since seven. Guilty men pace.

JO So do men waiting for a pizza.

KERRY You want to call it?

JO I want a toilet. I want to feel my legs.

KERRY Twenty more minutes.

JO You said that at midnight. Kerry, why are we really out here? Sarge pulled the surveillance on Monday.

KERRY Did he.

JO You know he did. This isn't on the books.

KERRY No.

JO So why bring me?

KERRY You're good, and you don't ask questions.

JO I'm asking one now.

KERRY ...The man in that window drove the car that hit my brother. Eleven years ago. Walked on a technicality.

JO And you want what? To watch him pace?

KERRY I want to see him make one mistake while someone honest is sitting next to me.

JO ...Light's gone off.

KERRY Front door's opening.

JO Then start the engine. Quietly.

The Streetlight

Legal, cross-examination · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Cast: BROOKS PRUITT

A courtroom, mid-afternoon — defence attorney Maya Brooks, forties, cross-examines Mr Pruitt, sixties, the prosecution's eyewitness

BROOKS Mr Pruitt, you told the jury you saw my client's face clearly.

PRUITT I did.

BROOKS From your porch. Across the street. At eleven at night.

PRUITT There's a streetlight right there. Lights up the whole corner.

BROOKS You're sure it was on.

PRUITT It's always on. Thirty years I've lived on that street.

BROOKS Do you recall calling the city on the fourth of March?

PRUITT I call the city a lot. Somebody has to.

BROOKS This call was about the streetlight. Your words, from the city's log: "It's been out a week and nobody cares."

PRUITT That was... that was March.

BROOKS And the night you saw my client?

PRUITT ...March.

BROOKS The eighth. Four days after your call. Had they fixed it, Mr Pruitt?

PRUITT I don't know.

BROOKS You don't know.

PRUITT I know what I saw.

BROOKS I believe you believe that. And I'm sorry. Nothing further, Your Honor.

PRUITT I saw him. I saw somebody. I'm sure I saw somebody.

The Back Door

Domestic suspense · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Cast: GREG TESS

A restaurant hallway and a family living room, 9 p.m. — Greg, forties, calls home from a dinner; Tess, eighteen, is babysitting his kids

GREG Hey, Tess. Just checking in. Everyone asleep?

TESS Out like lights. Maddie made me read the dragon book three times.

GREG That's the price of admission. We'll be back around eleven.

TESS Oh. I thought you were back already.

GREG Why would you think that?

TESS I heard the back door, like ten minutes ago. And someone in the kitchen. I figured you'd forgotten something.

GREG Tess, we're across town.

TESS ...Okay. It's probably the wind. That door sticks.

GREG It doesn't stick. I fixed it Sunday. Where are you right now?

TESS On the couch.

GREG Is the kitchen light on?

TESS It wasn't. It's on now.

GREG Listen to me. Don't hang up. Walk upstairs, normal speed. Go into Maddie's room and lock the door.

TESS Greg, I can hear the fridge.

GREG I know. Keep walking. Talk to me about the dragon book.

TESS The dragon... he's scared of the dark, and the girl gives him a lamp.

GREG Good. Keep going. I'm already in the car.

Room Service

Spy · Adult (30-45) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Cast: IMOGEN BRANDT

A hotel corridor in Vienna, midnight — Imogen, thirties, in a waiter's jacket with a trolley; Brandt, forties, speaks through a closed door

SFX: a knock

IMOGEN Room service.

BRANDT I didn't order anything.

IMOGEN Compliments of the management. Soup of the day.

BRANDT What's the soup?

IMOGEN Leek and potato.

BRANDT It's Thursday. Thursday's soup is tomato.

IMOGEN Chef ran out of tomatoes.

BRANDT Chef never runs out of tomatoes. Who sent you?

IMOGEN The same man who sent you. He says the phrase changed at noon.

BRANDT Nobody told me.

IMOGEN That's rather the point. He isn't telling anyone anything anymore. There's a new passport under the bread roll, and about eight minutes before the men in the lobby finish their coffee.

BRANDT How do I know you're not one of them?

IMOGEN If I were one of them, I wouldn't have knocked.

SFX: the chain slides off

BRANDT ...Leek and potato.

IMOGEN It's actually quite good. Eat it in the car.

BRANDT Whose car?

IMOGEN Mine. Take the service lift. And don't bring the tie. It's far too memorable.

The Examiner

Interrogation · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Cast: HALE DEV

A polygraph room — Hale, fifties, a veteran examiner; Dev Shah, thirties, a bookkeeper who is far too calm

HALE Yes or no answers only. Is your name Devan Shah?

DEV Yes.

HALE Are we in Columbus, Ohio?

DEV Yes.

HALE Did you take money from the Garrison account?

DEV No.

HALE Have you ever lied to someone who trusted you?

DEV Yes. Have you?

HALE I ask the questions, Mr Shah.

DEV Of course. Only you've been tapping the desk since I sat down. Your needle just moved. Not mine. Yours.

HALE The machine is on you.

DEV The Garrison account had two signatures on every transfer. Mine, and the auditor who signed off the books last March. Do you remember March, Mr Hale?

HALE Stop.

DEV You audited Garrison before you took this job. Your initials are on page nine. I kept a copy. Several, actually.

HALE ...This session is over.

DEV Is that a yes or a no?

HALE Turn off the tape.

DEV There isn't a tape. There's a camera. It's been on the whole time. You set it up yourself.

Platform Six

Spy · Any · Neutral British · 1 minute

Cast: STRANGER COURIER

A railway platform, the last train, fog — two strangers, any age, stand a careful distance apart

STRANGER Is this the train to Carlisle?

COURIER Change at Preston.

STRANGER I was told there was no change.

COURIER There's always a change. You're late.

STRANGER The taxi took the long way. I think on purpose.

COURIER Then someone paid him. Did you see who?

STRANGER Grey coat. He got in the car behind.

COURIER He's on the footbridge now. Don't look.

STRANGER I wasn't going to.

COURIER Everyone says that, and everyone looks. Here's your ticket. Seat forty-one. Don't sleep.

STRANGER What's in Carlisle?

COURIER Nothing. That's why you're going.

STRANGER And you?

COURIER I'm waiting for the next one. It goes the other way.

STRANGER With him watching?

COURIER He'll follow whoever looks more frightened. So I'll try to look very frightened.

STRANGER Thank you.

COURIER Don't thank me. Get on the train.

SFX: doors hiss open

STRANGER Will I see you again?

COURIER I hope not. That's the nicest thing anyone in this job can say.

Terms

Hostage negotiation · Adult (40-55) · Southern US · 90 seconds

Cast: RUTH WADE

A command van outside a small-town bank, afternoon — negotiator Ruth Calder, fifties, on the phone to Wade, thirties, who is inside with four hostages

RUTH Wade, it's Ruth again. You hung up on me.

WADE You were talking about pizza. I don't want pizza.

RUTH Okay. What do you want?

WADE I told the last guy. A car, and nobody following.

RUTH The last guy isn't here anymore. I am. And I don't think you want a car.

WADE You don't know what I want.

RUTH You've had three hours to walk out the back door. It's been open the whole time. You know it has.

WADE ...Maybe I like it in here.

RUTH Maybe. How are the folks with you?

WADE They're fine. Mrs Ostrander's got her sugar thing. I gave her the mints off the manager's desk.

RUTH That was kind.

WADE Don't do that. Don't handle me.

RUTH Fair. Then straight. Why this bank?

WADE They took my granddaddy's farm. Signed it away in that office right there, the one with the fish tank.

RUTH When?

WADE Nineteen years ago. I was twelve. I held his hand while he signed.

RUTH And today?

WADE Today I came to take back the paper. It's in a file. They keep everything.

RUTH Wade, if I get you that file, will you let Mrs Ostrander walk out first?

WADE You can't get it.

RUTH I'm looking at the manager right now. He's very eager to help me.

WADE ...Her first. Then we'll talk about the others.

RUTH Her first. I'm writing that down, Wade. Your terms.

The Confession

Interrogation · Mature (55+) · Irish · 90 seconds

Cast: NIAMH BRIDGET

A Garda station interview room, morning — Detective Sergeant Niamh Kearney, forties, faces Bridget Doyle, seventies, who walked in at dawn to confess

NIAMH Mrs Doyle, you've said you killed Martin Cleary.

BRIDGET I have, and I did, and I'd like to be home by teatime if it's all the same to you.

NIAMH It doesn't usually work like that.

BRIDGET Well, I've never done it before. You'll have to tell me the rules.

NIAMH How did you kill him?

BRIDGET With the poker. From the fireplace.

NIAMH Which hand?

BRIDGET The right.

NIAMH You've a splint on your right wrist, Mrs Doyle.

BRIDGET I did it before the splint.

NIAMH The splint's from April. Martin died Saturday.

BRIDGET Then I used the left. I'm very determined when I'm cross.

NIAMH Where's your grandson this morning?

BRIDGET ...Kieran's at work.

NIAMH He's not. His boss rang looking for him. Twice.

BRIDGET Kieran's a good boy.

NIAMH I believe you.

BRIDGET Martin Cleary was not a good man. Ask anyone on the road.

NIAMH I have. And every one of them said Kieran was the only one who ever stood up to him.

BRIDGET He's twenty-two. He has his whole life.

NIAMH And you think yours is used up.

BRIDGET Mine's had a good run, love.

NIAMH It's not a swap, Bridget. You'd go in, and he'd still have done it, and he'd have to live knowing his gran took the weight.

BRIDGET ...He'd never forgive me.

NIAMH No. So tell me where he is. Before someone less patient finds him first.

Ten-Twenty-Two

Detective · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: BEN LISA

A precinct break room after midnight — Detectives Ben Okafor, forties, and Lisa Marsh, thirties, rebuild a victim's last evening on a whiteboard

BEN Victim leaves the bar at ten-fifteen. The camera on Delancey catches him at ten-twenty.

LISA Then nothing until the river.

BEN Then nothing. Pass me the marker.

LISA You look tired.

BEN I've looked tired since 2009. Tuesday, ten-twenty to eleven. Where does a man go for forty minutes?

LISA A friend's. A second bar.

BEN Where were you Tuesday?

LISA ...What?

BEN Just making conversation.

LISA I was home. Laundry and bad television.

BEN You told me that was Wednesday.

LISA Tuesday, Wednesday. They're all the same.

BEN Your car's in the Delancey footage, Lisa. Ten-twenty-two. I watched it four times hoping I was wrong.

LISA Ben.

BEN I haven't logged it. It's on a drive in my pocket.

LISA He was my informant. Two years. He called me that night. Said he'd been made. He was scared.

BEN And you met him.

LISA I gave him cash for a bus ticket and I drove away. He was alive. I swear to you he was alive.

BEN Why didn't you say?

LISA Because an informant I never registered turned up in a river. Think how that reads.

BEN It reads bad. It reads worse tomorrow.

LISA Are you going to log it?

BEN I'm going to put the kettle on. And you're going to tell me every word he said to you, before either of us decides anything.

The Timeline

Legal, cross-examination · Adult (30-45) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Cast: VANE HANNAH

Crown Court, day four — prosecuting barrister Edward Vane, fifties, cross-examines the defendant, Hannah Price, thirties, an accountant

VANE Ms Price, you left the office at five past six.

HANNAH Yes.

VANE And arrived home at twenty to eight.

HANNAH About then.

VANE It's a twenty-minute drive.

HANNAH On a good day.

VANE Was it a good day?

HANNAH It was a Friday in December, in the rain.

VANE Traffic. Of course. And yet in that hour and a half, the company accounts were accessed from a laptop registered to you.

HANNAH My laptop was on my desk. I didn't take it home.

VANE Convenient.

HANNAH Company policy. We're not allowed to. It's in the staff handbook, page twelve.

VANE So someone else used your laptop.

HANNAH Someone used my login. That's not the same thing.

VANE Who else knew your password, Ms Price?

HANNAH IT. And my line manager, because he asked for it in November, to cover my holiday.

VANE Your line manager being Mr Gould.

HANNAH Yes.

VANE Who is a witness for the Crown.

HANNAH I'd noticed that.

VANE Ms Price, you are asking this jury to believe that a senior partner—

HANNAH I'm not asking them anything. You asked me who knew my password. I answered.

VANE ...Did you raise this with the police?

HANNAH Twice. It's in my first statement. Paragraph four. I'd assumed you'd read it.

VANE No further questions, my lord.

Lisbon

Spy · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Cast: PAVEL MARGARET

A steamy launderette in east London — Margaret, fifties, a handler, folds towels; Pavel, thirties, her asset at a foreign embassy, sits on a dryer

PAVEL I want to stop.

MARGARET Pass me that pillowcase.

PAVEL Did you hear me?

MARGARET I heard you. Everyone wants to stop around year three. It's like a marriage.

PAVEL My wife is pregnant.

MARGARET Congratulations. Genuinely.

PAVEL I can't do both. I can't sit at embassy dinners smiling at men I'm selling, then go home and paint a nursery.

MARGARET People do.

PAVEL Do you?

MARGARET I haven't got a nursery. I've got a cat who tolerates me.

PAVEL Margaret. Please.

MARGARET If you stop, they'll wonder why. The man who's been so helpful, suddenly not helpful. They'll look at you harder.

PAVEL Then help me make it look natural.

MARGARET ...There's a posting in Lisbon. Commercial attaché. Very boring. Nobody interesting goes to Lisbon.

PAVEL You could get me that?

MARGARET I could suggest it to someone who could suggest it. It would take a year.

PAVEL And in that year?

MARGARET In that year you give me the dinners. Then you go and paint your nursery in Lisbon, and I never ring you again.

PAVEL You promise?

MARGARET I don't promise. I'm telling you what's likely. That's the most honest thing anyone in this job will ever give you.

PAVEL ...Yellow. We're painting it yellow.

MARGARET Good choice. Fold that for me.

Proof of Life

Kidnapping · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: RICHARD WOMAN

A home office at 2 a.m. — Richard Amsel, fifties, takes a call from a woman who says she is holding his daughter, Emma

RICHARD I want to speak to Emma.

WOMAN You get a question. Ask something only she would know.

RICHARD What was the name of the horse she had when she was ten?

WOMAN Hold on.

SFX: muffled voices, a door

WOMAN Biscuit.

RICHARD ...Yes. That's right. Is she hurt?

WOMAN She's cold and she's angry. Same as usual, from what I hear.

RICHARD What do you want?

WOMAN Four hundred thousand. From the offshore account. The one your accountant doesn't know about.

RICHARD How do you know about that?

WOMAN Ask a better question.

RICHARD Fine. Ask her what she called me the last time she was home.

WOMAN Hold on.

SFX: the door again

WOMAN She says, "You know exactly what I called you."

RICHARD ...She told you about the account.

WOMAN Mr Amsel—

RICHARD Nobody knows about that account except my daughter. She found the statements at Christmas. We had words.

WOMAN Your daughter is being held against her will.

RICHARD My daughter is standing next to you. Put her on.

WOMAN That isn't how this works.

RICHARD Emma, I know you can hear me. You want me to pay for what I did? That's a real conversation, and I'll have it. Come home and have it with me. Not like this.

SFX: a long silence

WOMAN ...She says she'll think about it.

RICHARD Tell her I'll leave the porch light on. And tell her Biscuit was my idea.

Sugar

Domestic suspense · Adult (40-55) · Irish · 90 seconds

Cast: AOIFE SIOBHAN

A landing between two flats, late evening — Aoife, twenties, knocks on her neighbour's door with an empty cup; Siobhan, forties, answers

AOIFE Sorry. I know it's late. Would you have a bit of sugar?

SIOBHAN Sugar.

AOIFE For tea. I've only just moved in. I've nothing in the press.

SIOBHAN I know. I heard the van.

AOIFE The walls are desperate, aren't they?

SIOBHAN They are.

AOIFE So you'd hear... everything.

SIOBHAN Come in off the landing.

AOIFE I'm grand here.

SIOBHAN Come in, love. He's gone out. I heard the door go at ten.

AOIFE ...I don't want sugar.

SIOBHAN I know you don't.

AOIFE You heard last night.

SIOBHAN I heard last night. And Tuesday. And I heard the girl who lived there before you, for two years.

AOIFE What happened to her?

SIOBHAN She knocked on my door one night with an empty cup. Same as you.

AOIFE And?

SIOBHAN And I gave her sugar and I shut the door, because I was afraid of him. I've been sorry every day since.

AOIFE Where is she now?

SIOBHAN I don't know. That's the part I'm sorry about.

AOIFE He'll be back soon.

SIOBHAN Then we've twenty minutes. My sister's in Galway, she's a spare room, and I've a car.

AOIFE I can't just go.

SIOBHAN You can. Get your coat and whatever fits in one bag. I'll get the keys.

AOIFE Why are you doing this?

SIOBHAN Because I've had two years of practice at the wrong answer. Go on. Quick now.

The Night Porter

Stranger danger · Young adult (18-25) · Scottish · 90 seconds

Cast: LAUREN ANGUS

A small hotel lobby in Edinburgh, 1 a.m. — Lauren, twenties, travelling alone; Angus, sixties, the night porter

LAUREN Excuse me. The man in room twelve. Has he checked out?

ANGUS I couldn't say, miss.

LAUREN Couldn't or won't?

ANGUS Bit of both. It's policy.

LAUREN He followed me from the station. He was at the café. He was at the bookshop. Now he's across the hall.

ANGUS Plenty of folk like books.

LAUREN He wasn't reading. He was reading me.

ANGUS ...Sit down a moment. Tea?

LAUREN I don't want tea. I want to know his name.

ANGUS I can't give you his name. What I can tell you is he paid cash, he gave an address in Leith that doesn't exist, and he asked me which room the young lady with the green case was in.

LAUREN What did you tell him?

ANGUS Room four.

LAUREN I'm in room nine.

ANGUS Aye. You are. Room four's the linen cupboard.

LAUREN ...You lied for me.

ANGUS I've been doing nights forty years. You get a feel for who's asking and why.

LAUREN What do I do?

ANGUS You sit in that chair where I can see you, and I ring my nephew. He's a police constable. Lazy lad, but big.

LAUREN And the man?

ANGUS If he tries the linen cupboard, he'll get a shelf of towels on his head. I stacked them myself.

LAUREN Why would you do all that for a stranger?

ANGUS Because my granddaughter travels on her own too. Sit. I'll put the kettle on anyway.

Route Nine Pharmacy

Hostage negotiation · Adult (40-55) · Southern US · 90 seconds

Cast: LUIS DANNY

A small-town pharmacy at night, half the lights off — negotiator Luis Ortega, forties, walks in with a paper bag; Danny, twenties, stands behind the counter with a pistol; the pharmacist is tied to a chair in the back

LUIS I'm coming in slow. Hands up. I've got a bag.

DANNY Stop there. What's in the bag?

LUIS Two burgers, fries and a strawberry shake. They told me you hadn't eaten.

DANNY They told you wrong. I ate.

LUIS What'd you eat?

DANNY ...Cough drops.

LUIS Well, this beats cough drops. I'm putting it on the floor. I'm Luis, by the way.

DANNY I know who you are. You're the talker.

LUIS That's what they call me. I'd rather be the listener, but it doesn't sound as good on a jacket.

DANNY I'm not coming out.

LUIS I didn't ask you to. How's Mr Pike doing back there?

DANNY He's fine. He's mad. He keeps saying I'm ruining his inventory.

LUIS That sounds like him. Sold my mama her pills for twelve years and never smiled once.

DANNY He smiled at me. Before.

LUIS Before what?

DANNY Before the insurance said no. My sister's insulin. Three hundred forty dollars. I had eighty.

LUIS So you came for insulin.

DANNY And he said he couldn't, and I don't know. I had my daddy's gun in the truck. I don't even know why.

LUIS How much insulin did you take?

DANNY None. It's still on the counter. I can't even do this right.

LUIS Danny. Nobody's hurt. That matters more than you know right now. Put the gun on the floor by the burgers, and I'll carry that insulin to your sister myself.

DANNY They'll arrest me.

LUIS They will. And she'll have her medicine tonight. Both of those things.

DANNY ...Do I get the shake?

LUIS You get the shake.

Anything to Declare

Interrogation, customs · Any · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Cast: OFFICER TRAVELLER

An airport customs hall, 6 a.m. — an officer, any age, has pulled aside a traveller, any age, with one battered suitcase

OFFICER Anything to declare?

TRAVELLER No.

OFFICER You've been in Tangier for two days.

TRAVELLER It was a short holiday.

OFFICER Nobody goes to Tangier for two days on holiday.

TRAVELLER I'm very efficient.

OFFICER Open the case, please.

TRAVELLER It's just clothes.

OFFICER Then it'll be quick. Three shirts. Toothbrush. A book. Where are the other clothes?

TRAVELLER What other clothes?

OFFICER You flew out with a larger case. Twenty-three kilos. You're flying back with nine.

TRAVELLER I gave some things away.

OFFICER Fourteen kilos of things.

TRAVELLER I'm very generous.

OFFICER You're very efficient, you're very generous. What else are you?

TRAVELLER Tired. I'm very tired.

OFFICER Who did you give them to?

TRAVELLER My brother. He's been there a year. He had nothing. I took him clothes, and a winter coat, and his daughter's drawings, and I left the big case because he needed a case.

OFFICER Why didn't you just say so?

TRAVELLER Because he's not supposed to be there. And the last officer who asked me about my brother kept me for nine hours.

OFFICER I'm not the last officer.

TRAVELLER You all say that.

OFFICER ...What's the book?

TRAVELLER His. He asked me to bring it home. He said he'd be back to finish it.

OFFICER Close the case. Go on through.

TRAVELLER That's it?

OFFICER I haven't seen anything to declare. I hope he finishes it.

The Margin Note

Spy, recruitment · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Cast: ELEANOR PRIYA

A café in Brussels, rain on the window — Eleanor, sixties, a handler, meets Priya, twenties, a translator at a trade ministry, for "coffee about a job"

ELEANOR You're punctual. That's rarer than you'd think.

PRIYA Your email said you were from a recruitment firm.

ELEANOR It did say that.

PRIYA You're not from a recruitment firm.

ELEANOR No. Have the almond croissant. They're very good here.

PRIYA I'd like to know who I'm talking to.

ELEANOR Someone who's read your work. Your translation of the Kovač memo last spring. You caught something nobody else did. A verb tense.

PRIYA How have you read that? It was classified.

ELEANOR So I'm told.

PRIYA I should leave.

ELEANOR You probably should. But you're still sitting down.

PRIYA ...What do you want?

ELEANOR Nothing you'd have to steal. Just what you notice. The verbs. The hesitations. Who doesn't meet whose eye at lunch.

PRIYA That's spying.

ELEANOR That's listening. You already do it. I'm only asking you to tell someone afterwards.

PRIYA And if I say no?

ELEANOR Then you've had a croissant and a strange afternoon, and I never contact you again.

PRIYA Just like that.

ELEANOR Just like that. Forcing people doesn't work. They make bad listeners.

PRIYA Why me?

ELEANOR Because on that memo you wrote a note in the margin. "He's frightened of someone." You were right. Nobody else saw it.

PRIYA ...Who was he frightened of?

ELEANOR Ah. Now that's a question for the second coffee.

The Loading Dock

Detective, action · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Cast: NINA SAM

A dark warehouse, whispered — Officers Nina Reyes, twenties, and Sam Whitlock, forties, crouch behind crates; Sam has been shot in the leg

NINA Sam. Sam, look at me.

SAM I'm looking. You've got a smudge on your nose.

NINA You're bleeding a lot.

SAM It's a leg. I've got another one.

NINA Backup's four minutes out.

SAM Then we sit here four minutes. Nice and quiet.

NINA He's still in here. By the loading dock.

SAM I know. I can hear him breathing. He's scared too.

NINA I'm not scared.

SAM Good. Lie to him like that, not to me.

NINA ...I'm scared.

SAM There she is. Belt.

NINA What?

SAM Take your belt off. Round my thigh, above the hole. Tight as you can.

NINA Like this?

SAM Tighter. Ow. Yes. Perfect. You'd make a terrible nurse and a fine cop.

NINA He's moving.

SAM Toward us?

NINA Toward the door.

SAM Let him go.

NINA Sam, he shot you.

SAM And he'll be on the gate camera in thirty seconds. Chase him, and you're a rookie alone in the dark with a man who's already fired once. Stay, and we both go home.

NINA That's not how it works in the movies.

SAM In the movies the old partner dies on page ninety. Stay with me, Reyes. Tell me something boring.

NINA ...My mom wants me to go to law school.

SAM Perfect. Keep going. That's the most boring thing I've heard all year.

Recross

Legal, cross-examination · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: KIMURA HOLLOWAY

A courtroom, afternoon — defence attorney Walt Kimura, fifties, cross-examines Detective Anne Holloway, forties, who found the murder weapon

KIMURA Detective Holloway, how long have you worked homicide?

HOLLOWAY Eleven years.

KIMURA How many searches have you run in that time?

HOLLOWAY Hundreds.

KIMURA And in hundreds of searches, how often have you found the weapon in the first ten minutes?

HOLLOWAY It happens.

KIMURA How often?

HOLLOWAY Not often.

KIMURA In this case you found it in six. In a house of fourteen rooms. Behind a panel in the laundry room ceiling.

HOLLOWAY I'm thorough.

KIMURA You went straight there. Officer Diaz testified that you walked past the kitchen, past the bedrooms, into the laundry room, and asked for a stepladder.

HOLLOWAY I'd seen that kind of hiding place before.

KIMURA Where?

HOLLOWAY Other cases.

KIMURA Name one.

HOLLOWAY I'd need to check my notes.

KIMURA You didn't need notes on the day. Detective, did someone tell you where the gun was?

HOLLOWAY ...We received information.

KIMURA From whom?

HOLLOWAY An anonymous caller.

KIMURA An anonymous caller. Is that call in your report?

HOLLOWAY No.

KIMURA Why not?

HOLLOWAY I was told it would compromise a source.

KIMURA Told by whom?

HOLLOWAY My lieutenant.

KIMURA So a person nobody in this room can name, question or see told you exactly where to look, in a house they had no reason to be inside.

HOLLOWAY I found the gun, Mr Kimura. Ballistics matched. It's the gun.

KIMURA I'm not asking whether it's the gun. I'm asking who put it there. Did you ever ask yourself that, Detective?

HOLLOWAY ...Yes.

KIMURA When?

HOLLOWAY The night I found it. I sat in my car outside that house for an hour.

KIMURA And what did you conclude?

HOLLOWAY That it wasn't my job to wonder.

KIMURA Do you still believe that?

HOLLOWAY No. I believe I should have put the call in my report. I believe I should have asked who made it.

KIMURA Thank you, Detective. I know that wasn't easy. Nothing further.

Line Two

Hostage negotiation · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: JOANNE KATE

A hospital corridor, a phone patched to a locked office — negotiator Kate Mbeki, thirties, talks to Joanne Pratt, fifties, a night nurse who has locked herself in the director's office with the director

JOANNE Is this the negotiator?

KATE It's Kate. I'm the one they sent to talk.

JOANNE You sound young.

KATE I'm thirty-six. Everyone sounds young on these phones.

JOANNE I've been a nurse twenty-nine years. I can hear a lie in a pulse. Don't lie to me, Kate.

KATE Okay.

JOANNE How long before they come through the door?

KATE I'm not going to answer that.

JOANNE That's an answer.

KATE It's the most honest one I've got. How's Dr Fenn?

JOANNE He's sitting on his couch. His expensive couch. He's sweating through a very nice shirt.

KATE Has he got water?

JOANNE He's got water. I'm a nurse. I'm not a monster.

KATE Then tell me what the monster did.

JOANNE ...Four nurses for thirty patients on my ward. I wrote to him. Eleven letters. Eleven. And a man in bed nine died on Thursday because nobody could get to him for forty minutes.

KATE I'm sorry.

JOANNE His name was Harold. He liked crosswords. He was waiting for me to help him with seven down.

KATE What do you want Dr Fenn to do, Joanne?

JOANNE I want him to read the letters. Out loud. On the record.

KATE I can't give you a news crew.

JOANNE I know you can't.

KATE But I've got a recorder. And tonight I'm writing a report that goes to people who don't work for Dr Fenn.

JOANNE You'd put them in?

KATE All eleven. Open the door, and I'll come in myself and take them from your hand.

JOANNE And then they cuff me.

KATE Then they cuff you. I won't pretend they won't.

JOANNE ...Harold's answer was "vigil." Seven down, five letters. I worked it out after.

KATE Tell me that on the way out. I'll write it down too.

JOANNE Come by yourself.

KATE By myself. Open the door, Joanne.

SFX: a lock turns

Fourteen Years

Detective, cold case · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: LEON FRANK

A porch outside a rented house, a week after release — Frank Mercer, sixties, a retired detective; Leon Hardy, forties, who served fourteen years for a killing he didn't commit

LEON You're on my porch.

FRANK I knocked. Nobody answered. I figured I'd wait.

LEON You're good at making people wait.

FRANK I brought beer. Seemed like a thing a person brings.

LEON I don't drink. Haven't in fourteen years. Funny how that works.

FRANK I'll take it home, then.

LEON What do you want, Mercer?

FRANK I read about the appeal. The DNA.

LEON Everybody read about it. They put my picture on TV. Me at twenty-nine. I didn't recognise him.

FRANK I wanted to say it to your face. I was wrong.

LEON Wrong, or was it easy? There's a difference. I had fourteen years to think about the difference.

FRANK ...It was easy. You were there, you had a record, the witness picked you. My captain wanted it closed before the election. I didn't push.

LEON You didn't push.

FRANK I had a feeling. About the witness. She looked at that lineup like she was reading a menu. I had the feeling and I let it go.

LEON My mother died in year six. They let me go to the funeral in cuffs. I stood at the back with two guards, and everybody I grew up with watching.

FRANK I know.

LEON You don't know. You weren't there.

FRANK I was. Across the road. In my car.

LEON ...Why?

FRANK Penance. Cowardice. I sat there till it was over, drove home, and never told my wife where I'd been.

LEON You want me to forgive you.

FRANK No. That's not mine to want.

LEON Then what?

FRANK The DNA gave them a name. He's in Arizona. The DA's dragging his feet. I've got fourteen years of notes nobody wanted, and a car, and nothing to do on Tuesdays.

LEON You're asking me to go after him with you.

FRANK I'm asking if you'll let me finish the job I should have done.

LEON ...Leave the beer.

FRANK You said you don't drink.

LEON I don't. You look like you need one. Sit down. Slowly. I haven't decided about you yet.

The Guest Room

Domestic suspense · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Cast: TOM RACHEL

A bedroom at midnight — Rachel, forties, sits on the bed holding a passport; her husband Tom, forties, comes in from brushing his teeth

TOM You're still up.

RACHEL I couldn't find the spare blanket. I looked in the guest room closet.

TOM It's in the hall cupboard.

RACHEL It is. I found it after. First I found the shoebox.

TOM What shoebox?

RACHEL The one taped under the top shelf, Tom. With this in it.

TOM ...Where did you get that?

RACHEL I just told you. It's your face. It says Daniel Ward. Born in Ontario.

TOM Rach. Put it down.

RACHEL Who is Daniel Ward?

TOM It's a gag gift. From a work party.

RACHEL It has stamps in it. Lisbon. Istanbul. Last March. You were in Denver last March. You brought me a snow globe from Denver.

TOM I was in Denver.

RACHEL The snow globe says "made in Portugal" on the bottom. I went downstairs and turned it over. Just now.

TOM Keep your voice down. The kids.

RACHEL The kids. Do the kids have other names too? Do I?

TOM Rachel, listen. There are things about my work—

RACHEL You sell insurance software.

TOM There are things about my work I can't tell you. I never lied about who I am. Only where I go.

RACHEL Where you go is who you are.

TOM I come home. Every time. That's the part that's real.

RACHEL Is anyone going to come looking for Daniel Ward?

TOM ...Why would you ask that?

RACHEL Because there's a car outside. It's been there since nine. Engine running. I thought it was the Kellys' son. It isn't.

TOM Turn the lamp off.

RACHEL Tom.

TOM Turn it off. Now. Get the kids' shoes. Don't touch the hall light.

RACHEL You said nobody would ever come.

TOM I never said that. You never asked.

Cold Kitchen

Spy · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Cast: VERA HOLLIS

A derelict farmhouse kitchen at dawn — Hollis, sixties, a handler, finds Vera, forties, his burned agent, at the table with a pistol in front of her

VERA Took you long enough.

HOLLIS The roads are terrible. You picked a very inconvenient farmhouse.

VERA That was the point. Sit where I can see your hands.

HOLLIS May I take my coat off?

VERA No.

HOLLIS Fair. How long have you been here?

VERA Four days. Tinned peaches and the radio telling me I'm dead.

HOLLIS Yes. That was us. Sorry. It seemed tidier.

VERA Tidier for who?

HOLLIS For whom. For everyone. For you, if you'll let it be.

VERA London sent you.

HOLLIS London doesn't know I'm here. London thinks I'm at my sister's in Norfolk.

VERA You don't have a sister.

HOLLIS London doesn't know that either.

VERA Twenty years, Hollis. Twenty years, and someone gave my name away in an afternoon.

HOLLIS I know.

VERA Was it you?

HOLLIS No. If it were me, I'd have sent a younger man, and I wouldn't have told him your coffee order.

VERA ...What's in the bag?

HOLLIS A passport, a ferry ticket, and a flask. Black, no sugar. Still?

VERA Still.

HOLLIS The passport's good for ten days. After that it's a very expensive bookmark.

VERA Who gave me up?

HOLLIS You won't like it.

VERA I haven't liked anything since Tuesday.

HOLLIS Martin.

VERA Martin was at my wedding.

HOLLIS Martin has debts, and a boat he can't afford, and he's been very sad for a long time. Nobody noticed. I noticed. Too late.

VERA What happens to him?

HOLLIS Not your concern anymore. You're dead, remember.

VERA And you? When they find out you came?

HOLLIS I'm sixty-three. They'll give me a small office and a nice pension. Drink your coffee, Vera. The ferry's at nine.

VERA ...Come with me.

HOLLIS I get seasick. Go on. I'll finish the peaches.

The Bell at Wandarra

Kidnapping · Adult (30-45) · Australian · 2 minutes

Cast: JESS MAN

A payphone outside a country petrol station, midnight — Jess, thirties, follows instructions from the man holding her brother Liam; the man, forties, is patient and polite

SFX: the payphone rings

JESS I'm here. I'm at the phone.

MAN Good. You found it. Not many of these left.

JESS Where's Liam?

MAN Safe. Bored. He asked for a phone charger. I said no.

JESS I've got the money. It's in the boot. All of it.

MAN I know. I watched you count it at the bank. Your lips move when you count. Anyone ever tell you that?

JESS What do you want me to do?

MAN Drive north. Forty kilometres. There's a rest stop with a broken picnic table. Leave the bag under it.

JESS And then?

MAN Then you drive home, put the kettle on, and wait. Liam walks through the door by breakfast. Tired, hungry, and very sorry for himself.

JESS How do I know that?

MAN You don't. That's the unpleasant bit.

SFX: in the background of the call, a church bell, three times

JESS ...What was that?

MAN What was what?

JESS The bell.

MAN There's no bell.

JESS Three times. That's St Brigid's at Wandarra. They ring it at midnight for old Mr Coates, because he rang it for fifty years. Everyone round here knows that.

MAN You're tired. You're confused. You've been driving all night, and people hear all sorts of things at midnight.

JESS I grew up two streets from that bell. You're not forty k north. You're in town. You want me on the highway so I'm not in town.

MAN Drive north, Jess. I won't say it again.

JESS Liam used to hide in that bell tower when he was little. When Dad was drinking. Is that where he is? Is he in the tower?

MAN Stop talking.

JESS Liam! If you can hear this, it's the bell! I know where you are!

MAN You've made a mistake.

JESS No. I think you have. You picked a town with a bell.

SFX: the receiver slams, a car door, an engine

The Long Interview

Interrogation · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 3 minutes

Cast: VOSS AARON

Interview room B, hour three — Detective Carla Voss, fifties, patient; Aaron Pell, thirties, whose wife Megan has been missing for six days

VOSS You want another water?

AARON I want to go home. I've been here three hours. I've told you everything.

VOSS You've told me a lot. Let's go through Friday one more time.

AARON Friday. Fine. I got home at six. Megan wasn't there. Her car was there. Her phone was on the counter.

VOSS And her purse?

AARON Gone. Purse gone, phone there. Which is insane, because she never goes anywhere without that phone.

VOSS Never?

AARON Never. She sleeps with it. She takes it in the shower.

VOSS Why do you think that is?

AARON I don't know. She likes her phone. Everyone likes their phone.

VOSS Does it have a passcode?

AARON ...Yeah.

VOSS Do you know it?

AARON Of course I know it. We're married. We don't have secrets.

VOSS So you've looked at it. Since Friday.

AARON To see who she'd called. Obviously. I'm trying to find my wife.

VOSS And who had she called?

AARON Nobody. That's the thing. She'd deleted everything. Calls, messages. The whole week, gone.

VOSS That must have upset you.

AARON It scared me, Detective. Why would she delete everything?

VOSS What do you think?

AARON That somebody made her. Somebody was threatening her.

VOSS Someone she was afraid of.

AARON Yes.

VOSS Someone who checked her phone.

AARON ...I don't like where this is going.

VOSS Where do you think it's going, Aaron?

AARON You think I did something to her. That's why I'm in here and not out there looking. You've got nothing. You don't have a body.

VOSS You're right. We don't have a body.

AARON So I can go.

VOSS We don't have a body because Megan is alive.

AARON ...What?

VOSS She's alive. She's safe. She walked into a shelter forty miles from here on Friday afternoon, with her purse and no phone, because she knew you tracked it.

AARON Where is she?

VOSS That was fast.

AARON What?

VOSS Six days. You've been on the news, crying. You organised a search of the reservoir. I tell you your wife is alive, and the first thing out of your mouth isn't "thank God." It's "where is she."

AARON Anyone would ask that.

VOSS Anyone would ask it second.

AARON I want to see her.

VOSS She doesn't want to see you. She gave us a statement. Eleven pages. Photographs. Dates. She's very organised, your wife. She had to be.

AARON She's lying. She does this. She's unstable, she—

VOSS She said you'd say that. Page three.

AARON I want a lawyer.

VOSS That's the first smart thing you've said all afternoon. I'll get you a phone. You know how phones work, Aaron. You know them very well.

AARON You can't keep me here.

VOSS I can for now. The photographs were enough for the judge. Sit down. I'll get you that water.

Safe House

Witness protection · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 3 minutes

Cast: KAYLA EVAN

A rented cabin, witness protection, the third night — Kayla, twenties, a witness in a fraud trial; Deputy Marshal Evan Rourke, forties, her protection detail

KAYLA You don't sleep either.

EVAN Part of the job. Someone has to watch the door.

KAYLA There are two other marshals outside.

EVAN Someone has to watch them watching the door. Tea?

KAYLA You make terrible tea.

EVAN I make consistent tea. That's different.

KAYLA Can I ask you something?

EVAN You can ask.

KAYLA How did they find the last place?

EVAN We don't know yet. We're looking into it.

KAYLA The motel. Room fourteen. Nobody knew the room number but you, me and your boss.

EVAN And the desk clerk.

KAYLA The desk clerk thought I was your niece. You told him that.

EVAN Kayla, you've been through a lot. It's normal to feel—

KAYLA Don't tell me what's normal. I testified against men who move money for people who kill people. Nothing's normal.

EVAN Fair.

KAYLA When that car pulled into the motel lot, you were already standing. Before the headlights. You were already at the window.

EVAN I heard the engine.

KAYLA I didn't.

EVAN I've got better ears. Twenty years of practice.

KAYLA And tonight you sent the other two to check the road. Both of them. You've never done that.

EVAN There was a report of a vehicle.

KAYLA From who?

EVAN From dispatch.

KAYLA I've been sitting next to the radio all night. It hasn't made a sound.

EVAN ...Sit down, Kayla.

KAYLA I'm fine standing.

EVAN Please. Sit down. You're making this harder.

KAYLA Making what harder?

EVAN I have a daughter. She's nineteen. She's at college in Ohio. Three weeks ago a man sent me a photograph of her walking to class. From behind. That's all it was. A photograph from behind.

KAYLA So you gave them me.

EVAN I gave them a room number. I told myself the others would stop it. They nearly did.

KAYLA And tonight?

EVAN Tonight I sent the others to the road because I couldn't do it with them watching. And now I've told you, and I can't do it at all. I sat here an hour with the tea going cold, and I can't.

KAYLA Then what happens now?

EVAN Now you take my keys. The truck's round the back. There's a number in the glove box. A woman in the Denver field office who's honest and hates me. Call her from the road.

KAYLA And your daughter?

EVAN I called her an hour ago. She's with campus police. She's furious. She thinks I'm being paranoid.

KAYLA And you?

EVAN I'll wait here with the lights on and the door unlocked. Someone should answer it when they come. Go, Kayla.

KAYLA ...Your tea really is terrible.

EVAN Consistent. Go.

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