

Dead on Time

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROOFTOP, OFFICE BLOCK, LONDON - NIGHT

A moderately sized, multi-story office building in the heart of the city's financial district.

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT (47), taut, attractive, sophisticated stands teetering on the edge of the roof. He's agitated, breathing heavily, on the verge of tears.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

A month ago I had everything. A high-flying career as a barrister, more money than I knew what to do with, the respect of my colleagues and a comfortable early retirement in the offing.

He looks down at the street below, studies the flow of rush hour traffic he's about to disrupt.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

What then, you may ask, could possibly have changed in my life in the course of just four weeks to bring me to this point in life, to the brink of suicide.

He makes up his mind. Starts to psyche himself up to take the plunge. Wills himself to find the resolve:

CHRISTOPHER

(whispering to himself)

Come on, Christopher, you can do it. You can do it.

He closes his eyes. Straightens his body.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

What change of circumstance could be so dramatic, so powerful, that it would compel me to choose death over life.

Chris stands still, perched precariously, trying with all his willpower to override the survival mechanism in his mind that is stopping him from jumping.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

The answer is simple.

He stiffens. Slowly, hesitantly he lifts up one foot and stretches it out into the void. Keeps it there.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

A month ago, I was visited by an angel.

INT. FIVE STAR HOTEL ROOM, LONDON - DAY

A plush, contemporary affair dominated by a king size bed.

The sheets are ruffled and the detritus of a night of hedonism litters the suite: cigarette butts, champagne bottles, miniatures, joints, remnants of cocaine.

Chris is with REBECCA WARD, a beautiful, slender and refined thirty year old. She's wearing provocative underwear. They are both getting dressed.

REBECCA

We need to cool things off for a little while. Philip's getting suspicious.

CHRISTOPHER

Has he said something, confronted you?

REBECCA

No, but he's started asking a lot of questions lately. I know he knows.

CHRISTOPHER

Fine. If that's what you want.

REBECCA

Is that it?

CHRISTOPHER

Well, what do you want me to say?

REBECCA

That you'll miss me. That you're upset.

CHRISTOPHER

It's just a bit of fun. Always has been.

REBECCA

So that's all I am to you, 'a bit of fun'?

CHRISTOPHER

I thought we both agreed at the outset that we weren't going to get serious or tangled up emotionally.

REBECCA

I'm not. It's just that after nine months I thought our trysts might involve at least a smidgen of genuine emotion.

She looks at Chris searchingly, hoping he'll validate her remark. He doesn't.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Honestly, Chris, you can be a really selfish bastard sometimes!

Chris smarts from her rebuke, but doesn't try to defend himself.

INT. CHAMBER, CROWN COURT, LONDON - DAY

A packed courtroom that is suitably imposing.

Chris is delivering his closing statement to the JURY as barrister for the defence. He's suave, articulate, convincing.

CHRISTOPHER

Members of the jury, you've heard a great deal of testimony over the last few days, and had to absorb significant amounts of information. Yet, it's very easy in a case like this to be seduced into setting the evidence to one side and focusing solely on the human aspects of it. And I can fully understand that temptation. After all, Mr Falconer has been confined to a wheelchair and may never walk again because of the events that took place on that fateful day in March of last year.

The plaintiff, JOHN FALCONER, a working class man in his forties sits in a wheelchair next to his BARRISTER. He listens to Chris glumly.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

What happened to him is utterly tragic and regrettable. There is not a single person in this room who does not sympathise with his condition, myself included. But we cannot allow that sympathy to override the facts. It is critical that the verdict you deliver today is based solely on the evidence you have been presented in court and not on emotion, or gut instinct, or some misplaced sense of altruism. So, let us briefly go over the most salient points one more time.

John glances over to his wife, TRUDI, a portly, bespectacled woman of a similar age who is sitting in the gallery. She returns her husband's skeptical look.

It is clear that the Falconers' belief that justice always prevails is hanging by a thread right now. But they are still hoping against hope, despite what their gut is telling them.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Was there a personality clash between Mr Falconer and my client, Mr White? Most certainly. Mr White has never denied that there has been tension between them for some years now. Did Mr White drive his team on the production line too hard? Perhaps. Did his management style leave much to be desired. Absolutely. The senior management at RM Foods admitted as much and made sure he was assigned to to a back office role after the accident took place. Did Mr White have a verbal altercation with Mr Falconer on the factory floor on the night of the eleventh of March last year, about the speed at which Mr Falconer's was working? Given the number of witnesses to the exchange that night, yes, there is no denying that.

The defendant, GARY WHITE, a vicious-looking man in his fifties who could easily pass for a thug if it wasn't for his sharp suit, sits at an adjacent table. He appears relaxed, confident even.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Did the argument continue between the two men in the stairwell? According to the testimony of at least two witnesses who happened to pass by, yes, it did. But - and this is the crucial question - did Mr White push Mr Falconer in the heat of the argument, causing him to fall down the stairs and injure his spine? The answer to that is: most definitely not. The fact is that Mr Falconer simply lost his footing at the top of the stairs while arguing with Mr White and fell backwards. What happened was an accident, pure and simple, not deliberate, or malicious, or a crime. And had the CCTV in the stairwell been working at the time, that is exactly what the footage would have proved.

EXT. ELSWICK ESTATE, NEWCASTLE - DAY

A run-down parade of shops on a rough council estate dominated by tower blocks. Feral youths and tattooed men with pitbulls hang around outside aimlessly.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE, ELSWICK ESTATE, NEWCASTLE - DAY

KIMBERLEY JOHNSON (46), a striking woman whose beauty has been diminished somewhat by age and poverty, wanders the narrow aisles pretending to innocently peruse the shelves. Just another customer minding her own business.

The Asian SHOPKEEPER knows otherwise and watches her every move warily from the till. He's used to this game of cat and mouse.

A cheerful PENSIONER approaches the Shopkeeper with some groceries and strikes up a conversation with him. The Shopkeeper has no choice but to engage with her. He struggles to keep an eye on Kim as he serves.

Spying an opportunity, Kim pockets a can of baked beans, and beats a retreat out of the shop as hastily and discretely as she can.

INT. CHAMBER, CROWN COURT, LONDON - DAY

The COURT CLERK is addressing the FOREMAN of the jury. Both men stand during the exchange.

COURT CLERK

Have you reached a verdict upon which you have all agreed?

FOREMAN

No, we have a majority.

COURT CLERK

What is your verdict?

FOREMAN

Not guilty.

John can't believe it. He buries his head in his hands.

LATER. Chris exchanges smiles and handshakes with Gary and others in his camp as they all wrap up.

John and Trudi stand at the other end of the court looking utterly devastated.

Chris locks eyes with John momentarily, then quickly looks away, slightly embarrassed.

EXT. CAR PARK, CROWN COURT, LONDON - DAY

Chris sees John and Trudi Falconer standing by his car. He braces himself for a confrontation.

The couple are outwardly restrained and dignified in manner, but their anger, anxiety and disappointment are palpable.

CHRISTOPHER
Mr and Mrs Falconer.

JOHN
What kind of a man are you?

CHRISTOPHER
I'm sorry?

JOHN
You know as well as I do Gary White is guilty.

CHRISTOPHER
My job is to defend my clients, not to sit in judgement on them.

Trudi can't contain her emotions and starts to cry.

TRUDI
This is going to bankrupt us. We're surviving on disability benefit, we're six months in arrears on our mortgage and in danger of losing our home, and now we've been slammed with thousands in legal fees because we lost this case.

John pats Trudi's hand to comfort her. She dabs her tears with a tissue.

JOHN
It's alright, love. It's alright.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm very sorry for your predicament, but it was you who brought the case to court. You chose to do that.

JOHN
That man lost his temper and shoved me. He pushed me down the stairs. The video footage would have proved it except the company decided to cover up for him just to protect its own reputation.

CHRISTOPHER
There was no cover up, no conspiracy of any kind, Mr Falconer. The CCTV camera in the stairwell was simply broken.

JOHN

Believe what you want. I know how
RM Foods work.

TRUDI

How can you sleep at night knowing
that your ruining innocent people's
lives?

CHRISTOPHER

I defend people; it's my job.

TRUDI

Have you no conscience, no
scruples? You'll have to pay for
what your doing one day, you know?

CHRISTOPHER

I really don't think there's any
more to be said. Now, if you'll
excuse me.

Chris moves to enter his car. The Falconers step aside.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

A luxurious Georgian townhouse in a swanky part of the city.

INT. LIVING ROOM, CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris enters the living room, exhausted after a long day at
work.

He stops dead in his tracks.

Sitting patiently before him in the armchair is a handsome
man in his fifties, dressed in timeless black clothes. He is
calm, confident and strangely charismatic. He is DARIUS,
Chris' guardian angel.

Darius is not the winged variety that we normally think of
when we hear the world angel, but an altogether human
looking one. He's as solid and as real as you or me.

Chris is startled by his presence and struggles to make
sense of the intrusion.

CHRISTOPHER

Who are you? How did you get in
here?

DARIUS

I'm Darius, your Watcher?

CHRISTOPHER

Watcher?

DARIUS

Well, that's what I prefer to be called. That or instructor, though we've been given many different labels through the ages: messenger, protector, light being, spirit guide, guardian angel.

Chris thinks he's dealing with some kind of well-heeled lunatic. He responds in a measured tone.

CHRISTOPHER

An angel. Of course. I think you better leave before I call the police.

DARIUS

Christopher Michael Knight; born on the 17 May 1970 to James and Mary Knight; both parents died in a car crash when you were aged four; your grandmother, Iris, who looked after you after the crash, died a year later, at which point you were taken into care and sent to Northwick Park Children's home; graduated with a law degree from Newcastle University in 1991...Would you like me to go on?

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know what your game is, but you need to leave.

DARIUS

Michael Grenfell asked me to tell you he's profoundly sorry for abusing you.

Chris reacts like he's been hit by a thunderbolt. He sits down. How could Darius possibly know that?

CHRISTOPHER

He's been dead for twenty years.

DARIUS

I know.

CHRISTOPHER

Are you a relative of his, tracking down all his victims? Is that what this is about?

DARIUS

No. I told you, I'm your watcher, I can talk to anyone in your life, past or present, dead or alive.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you want from me?

DARIUS

The Guardians have asked me to give you a message: you have ninety days left to live. Here...

Darius picks up a tablet from the coffee table in front of him and hands it to Chris.

Chris looks at the screen in disbelief. It's a close-up photo of him dead. The time stamp in the corner reads 19/12/17.

CHRISTOPHER

Is this some kind of sick joke?

DARIUS

This is no joke, Christopher, believe me. You depart on the nineteenth of December.

CHRISTOPHER

How? How do I die?

DARIUS

I can't tell you that, I afraid. It's against the rules.

CHRISTOPHER

Surely, I have a right to know?

DARIUS

Even if I could tell you, there is nothing you or I can do to change the date.

CHRISTOPHER

Then why tell me at all?

DARIUS

Because the Guardians have singled you out for intervention.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you mean 'intervention'?

DARIUS

Before every soul incarnates it agrees a learning plan with its Watcher. When it returns, the Guardians audit the soul and award it credits. If it performs poorly, then it has to keep reincarnating. That's all normal practice. However, if a soul is deemed to have deviated too far or too often

(MORE)

DARIUS (cont'd)
from its learning plan, then the
Guardians can order an intervention
to force it back on track, even
when it's on Earth.

CHRISTOPHER
What kind of a learning plan?

DARIUS
That varies from soul to soul. But
all souls incarnate to progress
spiritually, to find enlightenment,
so they can perfect themselves and
ultimately merge with The Source.

CHRISTOPHER
If by 'Source' you mean God, then
you're wasting your time, because I
don't have a single religious bone
in my body.

DARIUS
God is a human invention, as is
religion. The Source, on the other
hand, is very real.

CHRISTOPHER
So, tell me, what precious lesson
have I failed to learn in life?

DARIUS
That actions have consequences.

CHRISTOPHER
That's it?!

DARIUS
That's it.

CHRISTOPHER
You're going to kill me for that?!

DARIUS
Nobody is killing you. That day was
always meant to be your departure
date, no matter what.

CHRISTOPHER
What if this intervention of yours
fails?

DARIUS
It won't. But you need to move
quickly. You have very limited time
left on Earth. Make the most of it.

CHRISTOPHER
How?

DARIUS

Just follow your instincts.

CHRISTOPHER

This is madness. How do I know that this isn't just some elaborate hoax?

DARIUS

You want proof. I understand. You're only human, after all.

Darius produces a folded slip of paper from his pocket. Hands it to Chris.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Make sure you're there by three pm tomorrow.

CHRISTOPHER

(reading the slip)

Anne Evans, Alexandra Ward, St Thomas' Hospital.

Chris looks up, slightly confused. The armchair is empty. Darius has simply vanished into thin air.

Chris is dumbfounded. His eyes dart around the room looking for an explanation, but there is none. Darius has pulled off the impossible!

Chris opens the door and rushes into the hallway. It's empty.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Darius rushes out of his house and scans the street urgently. No sign of Darius in any direction.

Chris stands in the middle of the road holding the slip of paper, utterly bewildered and more than a little rattled.

INT. ALEXANDRA WARD, ST THOMAS' HOSPITAL, LONDON - DAY

One of the hospital's geriatric care wards that is, in essence, a glorified dying room for the elderly. Staff flit about ministering relief and comfort to the patients.

Chris stops a NURSE who is on her way out just as he enters.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm looking Ann Evans.

The Nurse points to a bed in the far corner.

NURSE

Over there, bed number three.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you.

He stops at the foot of the bed. ANN EVANS, a kindly nonagenarian, lies in a state of semi-conscious delirium and confusion. She's hooked up to a heart rate monitor.

Chris observes her for a long beat. She suddenly becomes aware of his presence and addresses him:

ANN

Have you come to take me?

CHRISTOPHER

No.

ANN

I'm ready...I can see the light...It's so beautiful.

Chris throws a concerned glance at the wall clock. It's mere seconds away from striking three o'clock. A feeling of dread suddenly clouds his face.

ANN (CONT'D)

I can see my George waiting.

With that, Ann gently closes her eyes and expires. The rhythmic signal of the heart monitor suddenly turns into a shrill and continuous bleep as the old lady flatlines.

Chris looks on helplessly, horrified and panicked.

The Nurse arrives and hits the alarm above the bed to call for backup, then starts to massage Anne's heart.

NURSE

(to Chris)

Wait outside please!

Chris does as he's told and beats a hasty retreat.

INT. CORRIDOR, ST THOMAS' HOSPITAL, LONDON - DAY

Chris walks down the corridor apace, keen to get out of the hospital. He looks confused and distressed, as if haunted by what he's just witnessed.

He sees Darius approaching and stops dead in his tracks.

DARIUS

Well?

Chris splays his hands in mock horror.

CHRISTOPHER

Shock, horror! Poorly old woman in hospital dies suddenly.

DARIUS

I get it: you want more proof.

CHRISTOPHER

You bet I do.

Chris gestures to the ward behind him with his thumb.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

And your going to have to do a darn site better than that lame coincidence, if you want me on board.

DARIUS

Thirteen lives over two thousand years and yet you're still stuck at level one. You're lack of progress is starting to reflect badly on me.

CHRISTOPHER

(sarcastically)

Well, I'm sorry to let you down.

DARIUS

It's not me you're letting down. This isn't about me, it's about you. You still have time to change, Christopher, to make amends.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sorry, but I'm not persuaded that any of this is for real.

DARIUS

Very well. Be at the junction of Berry Road and Sanford Road in NW1 between three and four tomorrow afternoon.

CHRISTOPHER

Why?

DARIUS

Just be there. You'll see.

EXT. BERRY RD/SANFORD ROAD, LONDON - DAY

A quiet suburban road. Chris stands near the mini roundabout that intersects the two roads. Chris waits expectantly, observing every little movement in the vicinity. He's on the lookout for something, but he's not sure what exactly.

A small car pulls up. ARTHUR FRANKS, sixty, looks older, his face ruddied by years of over drinking, gets out and crosses the road to the post box opposite. He pops a letter in it.

As he walks back to his car, he spots Chris watching him. He gives Chris a curious look momentarily, but then carries on.

Arthur jumps back in his vehicle, then drives off. Chris watches him go.

The car enters the mini roundabout. At that very instant, a large white van rockets into the car from the right, t-boning it comprehensively. A terrible SCREECH is followed by the sound of METAL CRUNCHING and GLASS SHATTERING.

A horrified Chris stands motionless for a second, his mind struggling to grasp what's just happened. He suddenly unfreezes and starts to race towards the vehicles.

Chris opens the passenger door and checks on Arthur. He's a broken, bloody mess - barely alive. He senses Chris' presence and starts to mumble something.

CHRISTOPHER

Don't move. Stay still. I'm going to call an ambulance.

A breathless Chris fishes his phone out of his pocket. He tries to remain calm, in control, but can't stop trembling.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

You're going to be alright.

Chris quickly glances up at the van from where he is. The thickset DRIVER seems to have fared better - he's stirring.

The old man continues to mumble weakly, as if trying desperately to convey a message to Chris.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

What? What is it?

Chris leans in closer to the old man, to hear him better.

ARTHUR

(with great difficulty)
Files...the files...

Baffled, Chris urgently scans the car to see what the old man is referring to. His eyes quickly alight on a pile of paper files strewn across the back seat of the car.

CHRISTOPHER

The files are fine. We need to get you to hospital.

But the old man isn't finished yet. He's in agony, he's slipping away fast - and he knows it - but he uses the last vestige of his strength to get through to Chris.

ARTHUR

Rescue...files...

Chris looks at him, utterly confused and unable to comprehend why the safety of the files of such importance to the old man at a time like this.

CHRISTOPHER

OK, I will. But first, I have to call an ambulance.

Arthur continues to mumble, but he's barely audible or coherent now.

Chris dials the emergency services, then waits impatiently to be connected.

Arthur stills, his body relaxes and he breathes his last.

Chris realises it's too late to do anything for him now.

EXT. POLICE STATION, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris walks out of the building looking anxious and drained.

INT. STUDY, CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Late night. Chris works by lamplight at his desk.

He thumbs through the files, scanning the information, absorbing, trying to make sense. Each file relates to an individual.

Collectively, the files contain an assortment of notes, both handwritten and typed; photos of people of various ages, some dead some alive; press cuttings; obituaries; autopsy diagrams; letters; forms...

LATER. Chris on his computer. He views a Facebook page entitled 'Dead on Time' and the sub-heading 'For Those With Prior Knowledge Of Their Death'. The old man features in the profile picture.

Chris scrolls through the page. It's filled with entries and pictures from people all over the world, and of all ages, who have either been subjected to an intervention or know someone who has.

It dawns on him that this phenomenon is real. Very real indeed.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE FRANKS' FLAT, LONDON - DAY

A simple but well kept council flat.

SHIRLEY FRANKS (61), plain, quiet, sincere and possessed of a real inner strength resulting from a lifetime of hardship, sits in an armchair, smoking. Chris sits opposite her.

SHIRLEY

My husband had a difficult life. Things seemed to get better when our daughter, Leanne, was born. But she died of Leukaemia aged just two.

She gestures to a picture of a beautiful toddler that sits on the lamp table next to her.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sorry.

Shirley nods gently in acknowledgement.

SHIRLEY

Long time ago now. Arthur couldn't cope with it, though. It destroyed him: he became depressed; hit the bottle. The booze didn't help him none, of course. The more he drank, the angrier he became. And then he'd take it out on me, lashing out...

CHRISTOPHER

You didn't leave him?

SHIRLEY

It's hard when you love someone. And he was always so sorry for what he'd done afterwards, when he'd sobered up.

CHRISTOPHER

When did he find out he was going to die?

SHIRLEY

Four months ago. His Watcher told him. A woman called Tulum. It changed him completely.

CHRISTOPHER

In what way?

SHIRLEY

He stopped drinking, for a start.

CHRISTOPHER

Just like that?

SHIRLEY

Just like that.

Shirley smiles wistfully to herself.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

It was like being married to a new man. Those last few months almost made up for all the black eyes and put downs I suffered over the years. He started telling me he loved me all the time. He never used to do that.

CHRISTOPHER

Could there have been some other explanation for the change in his behaviour?

SHIRLEY

Nah, no way. It was too sudden. It was like she put some kind of a spell on him.

CHRISTOPHER

Did you ever see this Tulum yourself, have any contact with her?

SHIRLEY

No. Those Watchers are too clever by half, they make sure there are never any other witnesses around, only the chosen ever see them. I'd like to thank her, though, if I ever bump into her.

CHRISTOPHER

Wasn't Arthur afraid of dying?

Shirley shakes her head to say 'no'.

SHIRLEY

He was almost looking forward to it. Said he'd finally get to see Leanne again.

CHRISTOPHER

So you're convinced this phenomenon is for real.

SHIRLEY

Oh, it's for real, alright. Come with me.

Shirley gets out of her chair and leads the way.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM, THE FRANKS' FLAT - DAY

Shirley opens the door to the small room. Chris steps inside.

The place is like an incident room dedicated to the phenomenon. Piles of files clutter the floor; various books on angels, death, reincarnation and so on are stacked up on the desk; photos and clippings cover the walls.

Chris takes it all in.

CHRISTOPHER

Good God!

SHIRLEY

Like you, he wanted to find out if this intervention business was for real. He set up his Facebook page within a couple of days of finding out his end date.

CHRISTOPHER

And this was the response.

SHIRLEY

That's right. Within days, he started getting messages from people who were in the same boat, or from their relatives. I'm mean from all over: America, Australia, India, Brazil, everywhere.

CHRISTOPHER

How many cases?

SHIRLEY

Over six hundred at the last count. I think he only managed to sort through about half of them.

CHRISTOPHER

Has anybody ever survived after being told?

SHIRLEY

Not as far as I know.

CHRISTOPHER

Not one person?

SHIRLEY

No survivor ever got in touch with Arthur, not as far as I know. I think that's why he didn't even bother to put up a fight on the last day. He just accepted it. Made his peace.

CHRISTOPHER

Didn't he try to alert anyone, get help?

SHIRLEY

What are you going to say? Who's going to believe you?

Chris realises she's right.

CHRISTOPHER

Then what can you do?

SHIRLEY

Change your life. Make a
difference. That's why you were
chosen.

INT. HALLWAY/BEDROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

A burly DEBT COLLECTOR bends down and shouts through the letterbox on the front door to Kim's council flat.

DEBT COLLECTOR

I know you're in there Kim! It's no
use hiding! You need to pay up!

Kim stands behind the open door of her bedroom cowering. She's anxious, and wills the Debt Collector to give up and go away.

DEBT COLLECTOR (CONT'D)

Your five weeks behind on your
payments!

He tries to peer through the letterbox, strains to see if he can spot Kim inside. He doesn't see any sign of her presence, but he's certain she's there.

He shouts through the letterbox again.

DEBT COLLECTOR

You're only putting off the
inevitable! I'll just come back
another day, and you'll owe even
more!

Kim shuts her eyes tight, as if doing so will make the nightmare go away.

INT. CHURCH, LONDON - DAY

A large metropolitan church with an impressive yet serene interior.

It's a weekday, so very quiet. There's just a smattering of parishioners scattered about the place.

Chris sits alone in one of the pews ruminating, chewing on his anger, silently cursing his fate.

He gazes up at the statue of Christ on the cross above the altar for a long beat. Something inside him suddenly snaps. It's as if he has tried to make some sort of last ditch attempt to connect with some higher power and failed. Instead, he fulminates, whispering venomously:

CHRISTOPHER

Fuck you!

He gets up and storms out of the church. He's made up his mind: if he's really fated to die in a matter weeks, then

he's going to live his last few days on his terms, not the Almighty's.

INT. CHAMBERS, GRAYS INN, LONDON - DAY

Chris is making his way out of the office carrying a box full of personal possessions from his workplace. He walks briskly.

His PARTNER hustles behind him plaintively.

PARTNER

Look, Chris, can't we at least talk about this?!

Chris halts abruptly and turns to address the Partner.

CHRISTOPHER

What is there to talk about? I quit.

Chris walks out, leaving the Partner standing speechless.

INT. OFFICE, BANK, LONDON - DAY

Chris is sitting in a manager's office, patiently waiting for someone to appear.

The BANK MANAGER waltzes in and takes his seat. He's all smiles and goodwill.

BANK MANAGER

Mr Knight, always a pleasure to see you. How can I help you today?

CHRISTOPHER

I'd like to withdraw my money.

BANK MANAGER

Certainly. Exactly how much did you have in mind?

CHRISTOPHER

All of it.

The Bank Manager's smile vanishes instantaneously.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) We are outside an Aston Martin showroom looking in. Chris is inside, being shown around one of the cars by a SALESMAN.

Chris drives out of the showroom in his shiny new car.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

Though I realised my fate had been sealed, I still couldn't accept it. Nor could I bring myself to reflect
(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.) (cont'd)
 on my life honestly, as Darius
 wanted me to. Introspection was
 never one of my strongpoints.

B) Chris and the CROWD gathered around him watch with bated
 breath as the ball spins around the roulette wheel.

The ball slows, then clatters to a stop. It's a win for
 Chris. He pumps his fists in jubilation. The crowd erupts in
 celebration. Everyone loves a winner.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 Instead, I started living a cliché,
 convincing myself that I was making
 the most of the time I had left;
 telling myself that I was living
 life to the full.

C) Chris jumps out of a plane in a tandem skydive. He looks
 utterly exhilarated.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 Every day became became an
 opportunity to experience a new
 adventure, to tick another item off
 my bucket list.

D) Chris in the cockpit of a fighter jet, while the pilot
 performs heart-stopping, gravity-defying manoeuvres in the
 sky.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 And every new thrill became an
 opportunity to stick two fingers up
 at my destiny. I was going to do
 things my way and on my terms.

E) Chris having sex with two stunning escorts. He's not
 really in the moment, though.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 I thought I was translating my
 anger into defiance. But all I was
 really doing was disguising my fear
 of dying.

F) Chris in a night club: partying hard; flirting; treating
 everyone to rounds. He's the main attraction, Mr Popular.

Chris having vigorous sex with a young woman in one of the
 club's toilet cubicles. It's mindless, casual physical
 relief.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 It didn't work. I could never block
 out the thought of my impending
 doom. It tormented me day and
 (MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.) (cont'd)
night, eating away at me from
within, like a cancer.

G) Chris drinks alone at a bar. He looks haunted and upset,
and begins to cry.

He nearly gets into a drunken fight with some late night
REVELLERS.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
As the days wore on, the thrill
seeking turned into something much
darker. I'd hit the self-destruct
button without even knowing it, and
there was no going back.

H) Chris alone at home. He looks a mess, mentally and
physically. He snorts a line of cocaine, then sits back.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
I started to spin out of control.
And the more I fought it, the more
I was sucked in. Until, eventually,
the only way out was this...

EXT. ROOFTOP, OFFICE BLOCK, LONDON - NIGHT

We are back at the beginning, with Chris teetering on the
rooftop, about to jump.

Chris stands there, one foot stretched out into the void
before him, balancing precariously.

He opens his eyes, looks down. The drop is sheer and
vertiginous. He brings his foot back from the brink. He's
annoyed with himself for his lack of courage.

A stands there a beat, breathing heavily, trying to calm
himself.

He looks down at the street below again. He never thought
suicide would be this hard, given his circumstances.

Chris tries again. Psyches himself up. Clenches his fists in
determination. Takes deep breaths. Readies himself.

He lifts one foot up off the ledge slightly.

But then he hesitates again!

He seems caught in a thought. He stands frozen like that for
a long beat, pondering.

Then his demeanour changes. He brings his foot back onto the
ledge. His body relaxes, his breathing slows. He takes in
his surroundings. It's as if he's realised that he doesn't
really want to jump, and that what he's doing is madness.

Chris steps down from the ledge, then seems to make decision, a resolute one, one that makes utter sense, one that he should have made much earlier.

He hurries away from the rooftop.

We start to focus on a large multi-story office building opposite, all lit up, one of many in this teeming part of the city.

As we get closer to it, we realise there is man standing in one of the windows looking in our direction. It's Darius.

He's concentrating intensely, the palm of his hand outstretched in front of him, as if he's radiating some invisible beam of energy from it. Satisfied he's stopped Chris from jumping, Darius lowers his hand and finally relaxes.

INT. ATTIC, CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

A room used purely for storage. It's full of storage boxes, old furniture and unused items.

Chris rifles several of the boxes desperately. He's clearly searching for something.

He finds it: an old flip photo album.

He flips through the pages looking for one photo in particular. All the shots in the album are of him and Kim in various situations, either alone or together. They both look to be in their late teens or early twenties. They were clearly an item.

Chris finds the picture he's been looking for. It's close-up of him and Kim beaming together, young, happy, in love.

He takes it out of the album and studies it, memories bubbling up.

INT. STUDY, CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris works with a sense of urgency, a man on a mission, a man making up for lost time.

He types in the term 'people search' in a search engine, then clicks on the first result.

The page opens to a specialized people finder website. Chris types in 'kimberley johnson' in the search box.

A pregnant pause, then he hits the enter key momentarily.

INT. HALLWAY, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

The doorbell rings. Kim opens the door cautiously. It's Chris. He's not sure what kind of reception he's going to get. Plays it cautious.

Kim freezes, her expression one of shock, confusion and anger.

CHRISTOPHER

Hello, Kim.

KIM

What do you want?

CHRISTOPHER

I've come to apologise.

KIM

Well, I don't want to hear it.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not leaving until you've heard what I've got to say.

KIM

Do what you want.

Kim starts to close the door. Chris pushes it back, to stop her.

CHRISTOPHER

It'll only take two minutes. I'll never bother you again afterwards. I promise.

Kim relents, lets him in.

INT. LIVING ROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Chris follows Kim into the room. She stands a good distance away from him, but facing him, her arms folded, her demeanour icy and defensive. She's certainly not going to make it easy for him.

KIM

Say what you have to say, then go.

CHRISTOPHER

I, erm...

Chris struggles to find the words. This is harder than he thought it was going to be. He takes a deep breath. Starts over.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

You were the love of my life and what we had together was something incredibly special. I realise that now and that what I did to you was truly unforgivable. Believe me when I say this, but there hasn't been a day that's gone by since you broke up with me that I haven't thought

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D) (cont'd)
about you; not a day that I haven't
regretted what I did. So, er...I've
come here today simply to apologise
to you. I'm sorry, Kim. Really and
truly sorry. And I hope that you
can find it in your heart to
forgive me.

He stands there a beat, waiting for a reaction from Kim.

KIM
Is that it?

CHRISTOPHER
That's it.

KIM
The love of your life, eh? Is that
why you cheated on me?

CHRISTOPHER
No.

KIM
Then why? Why did you do it?

CHRISTOPHER
Because I was young, and stupid and
selfish.

KIM
That's not an answer. What, was I
just your bit of working class
rough, is that it?

CHRISTOPHER
No. It was never like that.

KIM
The needy girl from the wrong side
of town who you could bide your
time with at Uni, until a proper
bit of posh totty came along.

CHRISTOPHER
Your background had nothing to do
with it.

KIM
Good enough to pull pints for all
you university students, but not
good enough to be one of you.

CHRISTOPHER
It wasn't like that.

KIM

Then how was it? Tell me. Did you love her?

CHRISTOPHER

No.

KIM

Did she love you?

CHRISTOPHER

No. I couldn't handle how much in love with you I was and it scared the hell out of me. I just panicked. It was an act of subconscious sabotage, nothing more.

KIM

Oh, it was much worse than that. What you did destroyed me.

CHRISTOPHER

It destroyed me too.

She points to his Rolex.

KIM

You could have fooled me. You don't exactly look like a man who's had to endure many hardships in life.

CHRISTOPHER

I've paid a price all these years too, Kim.

KIM

Is that why it's taken you nearly thirty years to show your face around here again?

CHRISTOPHER

There have been some changes in my life recently.

Kim's mask slips for a second and she shows genuine concern.

KIM

What sort of changes? Are you ill or something?

CHRISTOPHER

No, no, nothing like that. It's just that there have been some events in my life lately that have forced me to take stock, to review my life and the mistakes I've made.

KIM

Perhaps your conscience has finally woken up.

CHRISTOPHER

I think it has. (beat) I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

Tears start to roll down Kim's face.

KIM

I can't. I can't.

CHRISTOPHER

I know how much I hurt you.

KIM

You have no idea how much you hurt me.

CHRISTOPHER

If there was a way to turn the clock back and put things right, I would.

KIM

I gave you my heart and you tore it right out of me.

CHRISTOPHER

I know.

KIM

I thought we were planning a life together, yet all the while...

Kim starts to sob.

Chris moves to comfort her, but Kim backs away sharply.

KIM

Go! Please just go!

CHRISTOPHER

Kim...

KIM

Just GO! I never want to see you again.

Chris is about to well up too, but manages to keep his tears in check. Her agony is killing him.

CHRISTOPHER

I love you. I always will. Goodbye.

Chris turns and leaves in a quiet, dignified manner.

EXT. LONGSANDS BEACH, TYNE AND WEAR - DAY

A cold blustery day with dark, low hanging clouds. The beach is almost deserted.

Chris stands looking out to sea. He seems glum, ruminative, ponderous, like a man who tried his best but failed. A man defeated.

INT. CHRIS' ROOM, HILTON HOTEL, NEWCASTLE - DAY

The best room in the house.

Chris is busy packing his suitcase. He's almost done.

There's a knock at the door. He stops what he's doing and goes to answer it.

He opens the door. It's Kim. She looks calm, composed.

Chris is almost too shocked for words. He stands there, frozen in disbelief.

KIM

Can I come in?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, of course. How did you find me?

Chris let's Kim in. She's not used to such plush surroundings and it makes her feel slightly awkward.

KIM

The taxi driver you used is a friend of mine. He lives on the estate. He told me he dropped you off here.

CHRISTOPHER

You're lucky you caught me, I was about to check out; my flight's in a couple of hours.

Kim turns and faces Chris. It's clear there's something on her mind.

KIM

Did you mean what you said, that you're truly sorry.

CHRISTOPHER

More than you could ever imagine.

Kim digests this for a beat.

KIM

I always used to wonder what I'd say or do if I ever met you again. When it finally happened yesterday, it was nothing like how I imagined.

CHRISTOPHER

I know. I felt the same.

KIM

I've been doing a lot of thinking since yesterday.

Chris is not sure where this is going, but he's cautiously hoping this is what he thinks it is, a reconciliation.

CHRISTOPHER

OK.

KIM

After I broke up with you, I was so angry it was beyond words. I soldiered on thinking I would get over it eventually, but I never did. Instead, my anger just kept growing, eating me up inside.

CHRISTOPHER

That's my fault, not yours.

KIM

Yes, but I'm the one who paid the price for it. I'm the one the anger destroyed, not you.

Chris nods in comprehension.

KIM (CONT'D)

I realised last night that the only way I'm going to break free is by letting go of the anger, stop it controlling me. It sounds so simple doesn't it, but it's taken me all these years to realise that.

CHRISTOPHER

And that's why you're here?

KIM

Yes, to let go. To get my life back.

A beat, as Kim finds the courage to say the words.

KIM (CONT'D)

I forgive you.

A surge of emotion gets the better of her and Kim suddenly moves forward and hugs Chris.

KIM (CONT'D)

I forgive you everything.

Kim steps back and wipes a tear. Tries to reign in her feelings.

Chris is reeling. His hopes have been realised.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you...thank you.

KIM

We need to talk.

CHRISTOPHER

I'll cancel my flight.

INT. SIX RESTAURANT, GATESHEAD - NIGHT

A swanky eatery. The views of the city are spectacular.

The WAITER finishes removing the dishes of the main course.

Chris is relaxed. Kim much less so, and not just because she feels out of place in the upmarket surroundings. Something else is playing on her mind.

KIM

(slightly nervously)

There's something I need to tell you.

CHRISTOPHER

Go ahead.

She fishes a photo out of her handbag, places it face down in front of her.

A beat, as Kim plucks up the courage for the big reveal.

KIM

You have a son.

Chris looks like he's had the air sucked right out of him.

CHRISTOPHER

What?!

KIM

You have a son aged twenty six. His name is Sean.

CHRISTOPHER

You mean you were pregnant when you broke up with me?

Kim nods yes.

KIM

I found out a couple of weeks after.

CHRISTOPHER

And you chose not to tell me?!

KIM

It was over between us: What was the point?!

They both realise they've attracted the attention of some of the other diners. Self-conscious, they both pipe down.

Chris points to the photo on the table with his chin.

CHRISTOPHER

Is that picture of him?

Kim nods yes. Slides the picture over to him.

Chris studies the photo. It's an unsmiling school portrait of the teenage Sean, his eyes brimming with unfathomable sadness. Loss. Betrayal.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Do you have a more recent shot of him?

KIM

That's the most recent one I have.

CHRISTOPHER

Where is he? Can I meet him?

KIM

No. He went into care. I lost touch with him years ago.

CHRISTOPHER

How?

KIM

The short version of the story? He went into care.

CHRISTOPHER

And the long version?

KIM

A couple of months after I found out I was pregnant, I went back home to my Dad...

CHRISTOPHER

But he abused you. That's why you left him in the first place.

KIM

...I know, but I had nowhere else to go. You can only sleep on friends' sofas for so long.

Chris makes an expression as if to say "fair enough".

KIM (CONT'D)

Anyway, he kicked us out when Sean was four months old. Said he couldn't afford to feed another mouth.

CHRISTOPHER

Where did you go?

KIM

The council. I was put in temporary accommodation first, but eventually got given the flat I'm in now.

CHRISTOPHER

So, how did Sean end up in care?

KIM

Things were really hard. Sean wasn't an easy baby to look after. He cried a lot. I struggled with him on my own. No money. No support. Totally isolated. I couldn't cope and sank into depression. I started to drink. A little, at first, but then more and more.

CHRISTOPHER

Is that why Sean was put into a childrens' home?

Kim shakes her head ruefully.

KIM

No. If it had just been alcohol, I might have coped. When Sean was two, I met a man called Jason. I didn't know it when I met him, but he was a drug dealer. Heroin. Of course, the inevitable happened.

Chris sighs with sadness, realising the direction her story is taking.

KIM (CONT'D)

He encouraged me to try it, and when I did, I became hooked on it pretty quickly. And then he left; found someone else. That's when things really started going

(MORE)

KIM (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 downhill. I had social services on my back all the time about Sean, warning me, trying to help me, but all I cared about was my next hit. Nothing else mattered, not even Sean. They took him away when he was five. Said I was an unfit mother, which I was.

CHRISTOPHER
 Did you ever get him back?

KIM
 No. The last time I saw him was when he was fourteen. He was living in a children's home by then; no foster family would have him. He was wild, angry. Blamed me for ruining his life. Said he didn't want to see me ever again. By the time I cleaned up my act he'd left the home.

CHRISTOPHER
 Have you tried searching for him since?

KIM
 I have. But I have very limited means, so never got very far with it.

Chris sits there a moment, thinking, trying to digest it all.

CHRISTOPHER
 If you don't mind, I'd like to help you find him. I want to meet my son.

KIM
 There's nothing I'd like more.

CHRISTOPHER
 I absolutely have to be back in London for the nineteenth of December, but I'm free until then. I think we should devote all our energy to tracing him. Work together.

Kim nods in agreement. She's almost overwhelmed with emotion. Her revelation has gone down better than she could have ever hoped.

Chris reaches out and takes Kim's hands into his. A moment of unspoken reconnection between them.

CHRISTOPHER

We're going to find him. I promise.

INT. HALLWAY, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

The front door opens. Kim enters. Chris follows her in.

They stare at each other for a beat. There's a deep longing for each other in their eyes. Neither of them wants the night to end. Their hearts are pumping.

Chris breaks the spell first:

CHRISTOPHER

I'll be back first thing in the morning. We can talk more then.

KIM

Stay. I'd like you to stay.

Chris can't believe what she's just said, while Kim can't believe she just said it. No matter, the fuse has been lit.

The atmosphere suddenly changes. It becomes electric, febrile. They can't hold back any longer. Their passions ignite.

Chris grabs Kim's face with both hands and kisses her with intensity. Pins her against the wall with his body.

He breaks off suddenly to check her reaction. They stare at each other for a beat, lustful, breathless.

Kim dives back in again. Kisses him hard. They claw at each others bodies, consumed by ardor.

Kim begins to manoeuvre them both towards the living room, their lips still locked together.

INT. LIVING ROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A love they thought had been lost forever has suddenly been rediscovered. There is no stopping them now.

They cross the living room, removing each others clothes and devouring each other as they go.

INT. BEDROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The door to the room crashes open and, semi-clothed, Chris and Kim collapse onto the bed together, still entwined in a passionate embrace.

Chris starts to make love to her.

INT. BEDROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

The morning after. Kim is asleep alone in the bed, face down.

She stirs. Smiles a little smile to herself. Purrs contentedly. With her eyes still shut, she stretches her arm out on the bed and searches blindly for Chris.

He's not there.

Kim opens her eyes scans the room, certain he can't be far. No sign of him. The whole apartment is eerily quiet. Just like it normally is when she's on her own.

KIM

Chris?

No reply.

She gets out of bed and throws on a gown, all the while trying not to let her imagination gallop ahead, trying not to jump to conclusions. She pads out of the room in search.

INT. BATHROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Kim pops her head in. It's empty.

Her spirits sag further.

INT. LIVING ROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Kim enters. Surely he must be in here.

But there's nobody.

She stands alone in the middle of the room, looking slightly lost, taking in the emptiness and silence around her.

She's no longer thinking the worst, she's concluded the worst: Chris has left her; disappeared, scared off by her revelation.

Her lip begins quiver, her emotions really starting to get the better of her now. She can't believe the brief interlude of happiness in her life has ended so abruptly, after just one passionate night.

Just then, the front door opens. Chris walks in, a carrier bags full of groceries in each hand. Beaming.

CHRISTOPHER

I hope you don't mind, but you didn't have much in the fridge. I took your keys, so I could let myself in.

Kim tries to recover her composure quickly, but Chris senses there's something wrong - and he knows it's nothing to do with him borrowing her keys.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

What? What's the matter?

KIM

Nothing. I'm just being silly. I thought that...

CHRISTOPHER

You thought what? That I'd left you again?

Kim nods, shamefaced, embarrassed. How could she think so unkindly of him!

He puts the bags down and walks over to her. Clasps her arms gently. Looks her in the eye.

CHRISTOPHER

Listen to me. I'm not going anywhere. Do you understand?

Kim nods in agreement.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I promised you that I was going to stay here for the next two months and help you look for Sean - for our son - and that's exactly what I'm going to do.

KIM

OK.

CHRISTOPHER

Look, I know that I've caused you a lot of hurt in the past, but we have to put that behind us and move on, if we're to make this work.

KIM

You're right. I'm sorry. I just panicked and thought the worst.

Chris brushes back her hair and kisses her tenderly on her forehead. It's not just a gesture of amity, but symbolic of their rapidly reviving romance too.

EXT. ASCOT LODGE CHILDREN'S HOME, NEWCASTLE - DAY

An anonymous institutional building set in large grounds.

Chris and Kim walk up the path to the entrance.

CHRISTOPHER

How long was Sean here for?

KIM

He spent his last two years in care here.

INT. OFFICE, ASCOT LODGE CHILDREN'S HOME, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Chris and Kim are talking to DEREK CARSON (39), one of the staff at the home. He's casual and relaxed, but also comes across as forthright and honest.

He makes tea while they talk.

DEREK

I'm afraid I'm the last of the staff from that era still working here. There's a high level of turnover in this profession, a lot of burnout.

CHRISTOPHER

I can imagine.

DEREK

I remember Sean well. He was a bright lad. Sadly, by the time he arrived here, he was too badly damaged by the system for us to make a real difference in the short time we had him.

KIM

How do you mean?

DEREK

He'd been through ten different foster families by the time he was fourteen. That's kind of instability is bound to take its toll.

CHRISTOPHER

Ten. Is that typical?

DEREK

Well, it's not untypical.

Derek gives Chris and Kim their drinks, then sits down with his. The couple thank him.

KIM

Why so many?

DEREK

He had a lot of personal issues, which meant he was angry and violent a lot of the time. Most of the foster families he was placed with just couldn't cope with him.

KIM

So they just pushed him from pillar to post?

DEREK

That's the system, I'm afraid, Miss Johnson.

KIM

Did any one try to reach out to him while he was here?

DEREK

All the staff tried. But as I said, by the time he arrived here the damage had been done. Any help we offered was just sticking plaster.

CHRISTOPHER

Did he make any progress at all?

DEREK

Very little.

Kim's heart sinks. She really doesn't want to hear this.

DEREK (CONT'D)

He'd runaway from here regularly. And he was in constant trouble with the police: vandalism, theft, arson, assault. I'm pretty sure he was dabbling with drugs back then too. I really hope he's put all of that behind him now.

CHRISTOPHER

We are desperate to find him. Do you have any idea where he might be now?

DEREK

I'm sorry, I don't. I lost touch with him after he went into transition.

KIM

Transition?

DEREK

When a child in care turns sixteen they're assigned a personal adviser who helps them transition into life in the outside world. They help them find housing, plan their education, look for work, apply for benefits, that sort of thing.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you know who Sean was assigned to?

DEREK

Yes, a social worker called Camilla Ward. These are her contact details.

Derek hands Chris a slip of paper with a an email address and telephone number written on it.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Give her a call. She may be able to help you more than I can.

INT. KITCHEN, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - NIGHT

Chris and Kim together, all loved up. Chris is busy cutting veg. He's cooking up a special meal for Kim as a treat.

Kim stands adjacent, drink in hand, watching him dreamily.

She's blissful, utterly bewitched by the sheer domestic mundanity of the scene. It's so comforting, so normal. She never dreamed she'd enjoy intimacy like this ever again in her life. The good old days are back.

Chris looks over, catches her studying him.

CHRISTOPHER

Are you OK?

KIM

(nods)

Mmm. I was just thinking...

CHRISTOPHER

What?

KIM

I was just marvelling at how domesticated you've become. You never used to be like that.

CHRISTOPHER

(mock indignation)

I used to cook for us when we were together!

KIM

(chuckling)

I don't think reheating two day old pizza counts.

CHRISTOPHER

Probably not.

His eyes meet hers. A beat. The frivolity in the atmosphere suddenly evaporates and Chris' expression becomes more earnest.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I've changed.

He means it.

KIM

I know.

She does too.

KIM (CONT'D)

Just think, this could have been us
all along, if we hadn't messed up.

CHRISTOPHER

You mean if I hadn't messed up?

KIM

I made my fair share of mistakes
too.

Chris reaches out and gently strokes her face with one hand.

CHRISTOPHER

I guess we both had lessons to
learn.

KIM

What a way to learn, eh?

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah.

He leans in, kisses her tenderly on the lips.

KIM

Still, we survived, and we're
together now. I'm not letting you
go this time, no matter what.

Chris gives her a rueful, guilty smile. He so desperately
wants to come clean to her. Knows he must. But How? And
when?

EXT. CAR PARK, SOCIAL SERVICES, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Chris and Kim approach a dreadlocked Caribbean woman in her
late thirties as she locks her car. She is Sean's old social
worker, CAMILLA WARD. Direct, dedicated and seemingly with
the weight of the world on her shoulders.

KIM

Excuse me, are you Camilla Ward?

CAMILLA

Yes.

KIM

My name is Kim Johnson and this is Chris Knight. We're the parents of Sean Johnson. I believe you were his social worker.

Camilla racks her brains trying to remember who the couple are talking about. She quickly realises who they mean.

CAMILLA

Yes, that's right, I was.

KIM

We're desperately trying to find him and we were wondering if you could spare us a few moments.

Camilla is in a rush. She glances at her watch impatiently. Sighs.

CAMILLA

I have an important meeting in half an hour; it'll have to be brief.

INT. CAMILLA'S OFFICE, SOCIAL SERVICES, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Camilla sits behind her desk facing the couple.

CAMILLA

Sean was assigned to me on his sixteenth birthday. The first thing we did was hold a series of meeting with him, in order to draw up a Pathway Plan?

KIM

A Pathway Plan? What's one of those?

CAMILLA

It's basically a map of where a child wants go and what they want to do once they leave care.

KIM

I see. And what did Sean decide?

CAMILLA

Well, he was adamant that he didn't want to go down the academic route. He was perfectly capable, but I think he'd had enough of authority by that stage.

CHRISTOPHER

So, what did he do instead?

CAMILLA

I found him work. Fixed him up with a job at a warehouse in Gateshead. Arranged accommodation in a little bedsit nearby for him. Basically set him up for life on the outside.

KIM

Do you remember the name of the company?

CAMILLA

Logistika, with a 'K'. You won't find him there now, though.

KIM

Oh?

CAMILLA

He was fired from there after just a few months. He was caught stealing.

Kim sags with disappointment. This tale seems to be taking a familiar downward trajectory.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)

Without a regular income, he started to fall behind on his rent, got evicted, started couch surfing. We see it happen a lot. They struggle when they're in care, but struggle even more when they're left alone to cope on their own.

KIM

Did you try to find him other work?

CAMILLA (CONT'D)

I did. But he wasn't interested. He fell in with the wrong crowd and just started to drift. Failed to turn up to job interviews. Missed our meetings. Stopped cooperating.

CHRISTOPHER

When did you last have contact with him?

CAMILLA

Well, we're usually assigned to each child until they reach eighteen, but he stopped engaging with me properly after about a year.

KIM

Do you have any idea what happened to him after that? Any idea at all?

CAMILLA
Not officially, but the last I
heard was that he was in prison.

CHRISTOPHER
Prison?

CAMILLA
I'm afraid so.

KIM
When was that?

CAMILLA
Oh, a good six or seven years ago
now.

CHRISTOPHER
Do you happen to know which one?

CAMILLA
Birmingham, I think, but please
don't quote me on that.

INT. CORRIDOR, SOCIAL SERVICES, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Kim stands crying, dabbing her eyes with a hanky, while
Chris tries his best to soothe her.

KIM
Look at the life he had because of
me. I let him down.

CHRISTOPHER
No. I let you both down. We're
going to find him and we're going
to put things right, I promise.

INT. LIVING ROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Kim is busy searching on the Web while Chris speaks to
someone on the phone.

CHRISTOPHER
(into phone)
That's fantastic...Thank you for
your help...I look forward to our
meeting. Goodbye.

He hangs up, pleased.

KIM
Well?

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Bingo! He confirmed what the
Prisoner Location Service told us:
Sean served two years at Winson
(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 Green for burglary. And, what's
 more, he's willing to meet us
 tomorrow.

KIM
 Birmingham tomorrow then.

A rush of positivity surges through them. Hope is etched on their faces. They are another step closer to tracking down their son.

EXT. ADRIAN VAUGHAN'S HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Chris and Kim stand at the front door of a well maintained but anonymous semi in a quiet suburb.

Chris rings the door bell.

He looks over at Kim, sees that she's slightly edgy. He takes her hand in his and squeezes it gently. Gives her an encouraging smile.

A bear of a man, over six feet tall and in his mid-fifties, answers the door. He's ADRIAN VAUGHAN, former prison officer, devoted family man.

CHRISTOPHER
 Adrian Vaughan?

ADRIAN
 I am. You must be Chris. Pleasure
 to meet you.

They shake hands.

ADRIAN
 (shaking Kim's hand)
 And you must be Kim. Come in.

INT. CONSERVATORY, ADRIAN VAUGHAN'S HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Addressing his grandchildren, who are playing noisily in the adjoining room, as he slides shut the patio door separating the two areas.

ADRIAN
 No disturbing Grandad you little
 terrors, you hear?

He slumps back in his chair. Chris and Kim sip tea, amused.

ADRIAN (CON'TD)
 I'm sorry about that. Sometimes it
 feels like I never retired. The
 prisoners were a lot less work,
 mind. Now, where were we?

CHRISTOPHER

You were talking about Sean's behaviour.

ADRIAN

Ah, that's right. Well, he was no trouble, really. I mean, don't get me wrong, you could tell he was a very angry individual, someone capable of real violence, especially if you rubbed him up the wrong way. But, thankfully, he kept it in check while he was inside. I think he was determined to get out as quick as possible, so kept his head down.

CHRISTOPHER

He had a pretty traumatic childhood, so understandably he carried a lot of rage.

ADRIAN

Yeah, I know all about that. To tell you the truth, though, I think the heroin played a pretty big part in it too.

KIM

Heroin?

ADRIAN

That's right. That's why he was inside; he was breaking into houses to feed his habit.

CHRISTOPHER

Was he offered any kind of treatment for his addiction while he was locked up?

ADRIAN

Not enough places. Anyway, I think attending rehab was one of the conditions of his parole.

KIM

Did he talk much about his background with you?

ADRIAN

Sometimes. When he was in the mood. I was one of the few wardens he opened up to. It was pretty bleak from what he told me.

KIM

(tentative, probing)

Did he ever say anything about me?

Adrian feels put on the spot. He struggles to find the right words.

ADRIAN

I think it's fair to see say that he was pretty conflicted about his feelings towards you.

Kim nods her head, understanding. It's a stab in the heart for her, but she's grateful, nonetheless, for the tactful and diplomatic way in which he framed his reply.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you have any idea of what happened to him after he left prison, or know anybody who might?

ADRIAN

I know that he was released on parole, but what happened to him after that I really don't know. Your best bet is to speak to his parole officer. If you give me a minute, I'll go and dig up his details for you.

Adrian gets up to go find the information.

INT. LOUNGE, SUITE, HYATT REGENCY, BIRMINGHAM - NIGHT

A luxurious room with a view.

Kim is at the desk, on a laptop, cycling through a series of images of young men on a national missing persons website. They all approximate to Sean's current age and appearance.

Chris sits in a chair nearby reading a book on tracing missing persons.

Kim reaches the last image in the series. She throws her hands up in frustration.

KIM

Aaarrggh! Nothing. This is so bloody frustrating!

Chris puts his book down and goes over to her. He stands behind her and starts to massage her neck, in an attempt to soothe her.

CHRISTOPHER

I know. I know. But we're making good progress. Every day we're a step nearer to tracking him down. Obsessing about him isn't going to help.

KIM

I can't help it. I'm desperate to find him. I want to tell him how sorry I am for what happened and how much I love him. I want us to be a family again. To be normal.

Chris spins her chair around, so Kim's facing him, then leans over her.

CHRISTOPHER

And we will. It's only a matter of time now, I can feel it.

Kim sighs. She starts to rub his chest affectionately with her palms.

KIM

You're right. I just find it hard to switch off, that's all. He's always on my mind. Always has been.

CHRISTOPHER

I understand. But how about we try switching off, just for one night. A bit of down time.

He closes the lid on the laptop as he says this.

Kim smiles lewdly at him, arching her eyebrows suggestively.

KIM

What do you suggest?

CHRISTOPHER

(amused)

I was thinking more along the lines of exploring the delights of Birmingham.

KIM

(deflating)

I'm not really in the mood to go out.

CHRISTOPHER

Come on! Let's have some fun together for a change. Just you and me - for one night.

KIM

I don't know.

Chris looks her dead in the eyes, serious, sincere.

CHRISTOPHER

Look, now that you're in my life again, I don't want to waste a

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (cont'd)
 single minute of the time we have
 left together. Please, let's make
 the most of it.

Kim is genuinely touched. She gulps back her emotions.

KIM
 OK.

CHRISTOPHER
 Great! I'd like to treat you - if
 you don't mind.

KIM
 To what?

CHRISTOPHER
 You'll find out.

He offers her his hand. Pulls her out of the chair.

EXT. BULLRING, BIRMINGHAM - NIGHT

The landmark retail mecca all lit up. Late-night shoppers everywhere. The place is still buzzing with the hum of activity.

A cab pulls up outside. Kim and Chris jump out. Kim takes in the complex.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) Kim emerges from a changing room wearing a frumpy, budget dress. She shows Chris, who's seated in the waiting area. He shakes his head no.

B) A different shop. Same scenario. This time Kim is wearing a rather loud number. Chris answers with a frown.

C) Kim materializes before Chris in yet another number. It's too tight. She's unsure about it. She pulls a disappointed face, shakes her head, then returns to the changing room.

D) Kim comes out of the changing room in a sleek dress. It's perfect. Chris gives it the thumbs up. Kim beams.

E) The couple zipping in and out of various women's retailers. Accumulating shopping bags, building a new wardrobe for her.

E) Kim sitting at a department store make-up counter while a young ASSISTANT gives her a makeover.

E) The loved-up pair ride up an escalator holding hands. They are both carrying shopping bags, and Kim's wearing the dress she tried last.

We see Darius standing on a top floor balcony, observing them from above. He smiles, satisfied at the progress Chris is making at rehabilitating himself.

F) Kim in a hairdresser's chair discussing options with a STYLIST, while Chris waits patiently.

G) Kim enjoying a manicure. She's loving all this pampering. She smiles at Chris. He smiles back. He loves spoiling her.

I) Chris and Kim in a cinema, watching a movie, big tubs of popcorn in hand. It's a chick-flick; Kim is engrossed. Chris gazes at her discretely, full of love and wonder.

EXT. CITY CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM - NIGHT

Later.

It's late and the city is starting to wind down noticeably. Just a few die-hard revellers about now.

Chris and Kim emerge from a swanky restaurant. She's carrying a small bouquet of roses.

They walk along the street together.

Kim's Pygmalion-like transformation is complete. She looks a million dollars: sleek, sophisticated, beautiful. She loves it. It's a real boost to her confidence and it shows.

KIM

Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER

For what?

KIM

For a wonderful evening. For this...

She gestures to indicate that she means her makeover.

KIM (CONT'D)

...For everything.

Chris stops and kisses her tenderly.

CHRISTOPHER

You deserve it.

He means it.

INT. BEDROOM, SUITE, HYATT REGENCY, BIRMINGHAM - NIGHT

Later still. The bedside clock shows it is 3:10am.

Kim and Chris in bed together. She is sound asleep. He sits beside her, glum, mobile phone in hand. The glow from the screen illuminates him in a ghostly light.

We see that he's consulting the countdown timer on his mobile. It shows he has just 30 days left.

Chris stares at the screen despondently for a long beat, as if hypnotized by it.

Then he turns his attention to Kim. He gazes at her sorrowfully, desperate to tell her the truth, but unable to find the courage.

INT. LOUNGE, SUITE, HYATT REGENCY, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Days later.

Chris is at the desk with his laptop, reading his emails.

Kim enters from the bedroom. She's fresh out of the shower, so has a towel wrapped around her and is drying her hair.

KIM

Anything.

CHRISTOPHER

More progress. Sean's old probation officer replied to say that he's willing to meet us on Monday, at three.

KIM

That's great news.

Chris swivels around in his chair, to face Kim.

CHRISTOPHER

It is.

Chris holds out his hand. Kim places her hand in his. He pulls her closer and seats her on his lap.

He gazes at her while stroking her face lovingly. A shared moment. But it's clear something is playing on his mind. His demeanour shifts subtly.

CHRISTOPHER

Can I ask you something?

KIM

You can ask me anything.

CHRISTOPHER

Did you leave my name off the birth certificate just to spite me or because you genuinely wanted to forget about me?

A guilty beat. An awkward moment of silence as she gauges how best to answer. Honesty and candor win out.

KIM

Both.

Chris nods slowly in acknowledgement as he takes this in, accepts it.

CHRISTOPHER

I realise I let you both down - badly. But I'm still his father. He's as much my creation as he is yours.

KIM

I know.

CHRISTOPHER

I'd like that fact to be acknowledged - officially. To be recorded. Do you think there's any way you could bring yourself to add my name to his birth certificate?

KIM

I think that's a brilliant idea.

She kisses him.

INT. OFFICE, PROBATION SERVICE, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

A busy, open plan office.

MARK STANFORD, a forthright man in his thirties, sits talking to Chris and Kim.

A COLLEAGUE of Mark's sits at a nearby desk, within earshot, sorting case files.

MARK

I'm not sure how much help I can be. I mean, it's been a few years since I dealt with Sean.

KIM

I lost touch with my son a decade ago, when he left the children's home, so I have very little to go on. Any information you have - anything at all - would be helpful.

MARK

It's all pretty bog standard, really. He was released from prison after serving half his sentence, which is normally what happens if you're on a fixed term sentence, and he was obliged to report in to me on a regular basis. His parole conditions also stipulated that he

(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)
had to attend a drug treatment programme and actively look for work.

KIM
And did he?

MARK
He did. However, I think it's fair to say that he struggled to make much progress on either front.

CHRISTOPHER
Did he complete his probation without being taken back into prison?

MARK
Yes, his probation ended in July of 2012. We've not had any dealings with him since then, although he has shown up on the police's radar since then for shoplifting and anti-social behaviour, among other things.

CHRISTOPHER
What about a last known address? Do you have a record of where he was staying while he was on parole?

MARK
I do, but it was in temporary accommodation, so I doubt the information will be of much use to you now. I'm sorry, I know this isn't much help.

The Colleague gets out of his chair and comes over.

COLLEAGUE
Excuse me, Mark. I'm sorry to butt in, but I couldn't help overhearing. Are you guys talking about Sean Johnson?

MARK
We are.

COLLEAGUE
I remember seeing him begging for change near New Street railway station ages ago. He looked like he was sleeping rough at the time.

CHRISTOPHER
Can you remember how long ago, exactly?

COLLEAGUE

Oh, I'm talking a couple of years back now. It might still be worth your while asking around some of the homeless shelters in the city, mind, just to check if he's still around. You never know.

Kim's looks at Chris, her hope of finding Sean suddenly rekindled.

INT. BEDROOM, SUITE, HYATT REGENCY, BIRMINGHAM - NIGHT

Chris and Kim in bed together in a post-coital embrace, chatting.

KIM

We're devoting all this time and effort to tracking him down, but what if he doesn't want to see us when we find him?

CHRISTOPHER

He will. Why wouldn't he?

KIM

He could barely bring himself to even look at me the last time we met.

CHRISTOPHER

That was a lifetime ago. Circumstances change, people change with them.

KIM

What if we don't like what he's become?

CHRISTOPHER

He's still our son - a part of us. Nothing can change that.

Kim feels reassured by Chris' confidence, his committedness. She kisses him, thankful.

INT. OFFICE, HOMELESS SHELTER, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Close on date-stamped CCTV footage taken in the shelter's refectory. We see Sean arguing with another homeless man, pushing and shoving him. The altercation escalates and Sean picks up a chair and starts beating the man with it. The other VAGRANTS and STAFF watch horrified. SECURITY GUARDS rush in and overpower Sean.

The clip freeze frames on a close-up of a seething Sean being restrained.

We pull back to see Chris and Kim's shocked reaction to the video. They are sitting with DOMINIC HANSON, the manager of the shelter. He's in his late twenties and slightly bohemian.

CHRISTOPHER

What triggered the outburst?

DOMINIC

Sean accused the other man of stealing his belongings from his locker overnight.

KIM

Did he?

DOMINIC

No, it was just Sean's being paranoid and letting his temper get the better of him.

CHRISTOPHER

Has he been back here since?

DOMINIC

No, he hasn't. We had to ban him after that incident.

Kim can't hide her disappointment.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

(off her reaction)

I'm sorry, but we simply can't allow that kind of disruption and violence here. It's not a decision we take lightly, I assure you.

Kim looks back at Sean's frozen image on the computer screen, studies it as if trying to make sense of him.

KIM

Are there other shelters in the city he can use?

DOMINIC

There are, along with hostels, and soup kitchens and charities that offer all kinds of help and advice to the city's homeless. I strongly recommend you contact each and every one of them. If your son's still homeless here, the chances are he's made use of their services at some point.

KIM

We intend to.

CHRISTOPHER

What about favoured haunts? Are there any areas of Birmingham that the homeless like to congregate in particularly?

DOMINIC

You'll find the majority of them in the city centre. That's where they make the most money begging. I'd focus your search there to start with.

CHRISTOPHER

Makes sense.

DOMINIC

How long have you been searching for him exactly?

CHRISTOPHER

A little over a month.

DOMINIC

Have you checked to see if he's claiming any benefits? You know, housing, unemployment, disability, that kind of thing. That would definitely give you clues as to his whereabouts.

CHRISTOPHER

That was one of the first things we did. And he's not. In fact, he hasn't claimed anything from any government agency for the last two years, as far as we can tell. But there's no indication that he's working either. We're not sure what he's doing.

DOMINIC

He may have found work.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, if he has, then it must be paying cash in hand, because he's not using his national insurance number or paying any tax. The truth is, we don't have a clue about what he's up to.

DOMINIC

I see. Then I'm afraid your going to have to do a lot of legwork. I'd start by talking to as many homeless in the city as you can. It's a pretty small community.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (cont'd)
 Somebody is bound to know
 something.

CHRISTOPHER
 We're planning exactly that. We
 intend to hand out flyers too.

DOMINIC
 Good idea. Oh, and don't forget to
 check the rehab centres too.

KIM
 (referring to the video
 clip)
 Is there any chance you could print
 off that image for us? We don't
 have any recent pictures of him.

DOMINIC
 I can do better than that. We have
 a registration photo of him on our
 system somewhere. Bear with me a
 moment.

He taps away on his computer briefly.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
 Here we go?

Dominic turns the screen around again, to reveal a clear and recent passport-style photo of Sean. He has long hair, tattoos and a heavy stubble, but it is unmistakably him.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

[Note: these scenes take place over a number of days.]

A) Chris and Kim in a print shop: the ASSISTANT presents them with a box. They open it to reveal a stack of missing posters featuring the passport photo image of Sean.

B) As Chris and Kim walk out of a newsagents, we see the OWNER putting up one of the posters in his shop window.

C) Chris and Kim work individually, quizzing various HOMELESS PEOPLE about Sean, showing them his photo. Nobody seems to know where he is.

D) Chris and Kim hand out flyers to PEDESTRIANS. It's a thankless task, with many simply shaking their heads in refusal and walking on by.

E) Chris showing Sean's photo to two POLICE OFFICERS. They haven't seen him either.

F) Kim waiting outside a medical walk-in centre. Chris comes out and shakes his head no. They both look demoralized.

G) The couple quiz STREET PEOPLE at a soup kitchen. More negative responses.

EXT. PARK, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Chris and Kim sit on a park bench together. A welcome break in yet another long day of searching.

Kim looks particularly dejected.

KIM

This is hopeless, Chris.

Chris puts his arm around her, pulls her close, tries to pep her up.

CHRISTOPHER

Don't give up hope. He's out there somewhere.

INT. UPMARKET RESTAURANT, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

A contemporary, serene and exclusive eatery.

Chris and Kim sit at one of the tables, waiting.

In breezes PAUL WINCOTT, a forty-something lawyer. He's portly, ruddy-cheeked, gregarious and larger than life.

PAUL

(shakes hands with Chris)
Christopher, you look well.

CHRISTOPHER

You too. Kim, this is Paul Wincott, the old friend I told you about. We completed pupillage together.

PAUL

(shakes hands with Kim)
Charmed.

KIM

Nice to meet you.

They all sit.

CHRISTOPHER

So, how's life at the Home Office?

PAUL

Oh, you know me, busy greasing the wheels of government with my legal genius. How's life in independent practice?

CHRISTOPHER

I quit.

Paul is caught off guard, genuinely surprised, not sure if Chris is joking.

PAUL

Why?

CHRISTOPHER

Let's just say that I wanted to get out of the rat race for a while and focus on more important matters.

Christopher takes Kim's hand in his devotedly.

The penny drops with Paul.

PAUL

Ah. Good for you. I wish I could quit, but I've still got maintenance payments and a second mortgage to worry about.

CHRISTOPHER

Shall we order?

PAUL

How about we get business out of the way first?

CHRISTOPHER

Good idea.

PAUL

Sorry it took so long, but my contact at the Passport Office took some persuading.

CHRISTOPHER

And?

PAUL

No passport has ever been issued to a Sean Johnson matching the details you provided me.

KIM

No match with the photo either?

PAUL

None at all. So, unless he's slipped out on someone else's passport or swum across the Channel, he's still somewhere in this fair isle of ours.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) The Salvation Army are offering hot drinks to the homeless from a van. Chris and Kim talk to one of the WORKERS.

B) Chris and Kim alone in their hotel's sauna, relaxing together at the end of a long hard day. She gives him a tender look. They kiss.

C) Chris and Kim with a DOCTOR in A&E. They show him Sean's photo. He doesn't remember seeing him.

D) Chris and Kim walk along a canal path together hand in hand, chatting, enjoying each other's company.

E) The couple hand out flyers to the public. A PENSIONER takes one out of curiosity, then quickly hands it back, uninterested, much to Kim's annoyance.

F) Chris and Kim in a pub, watching a live band play. Chris snaps a selfie of them together, happy and smiling.

INT. LOUNGE, SUITE, HYATT REGENCY, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Close on Chris' face on his laptop screen. It is slightly out of frame. He adjusts the screen, then hits the record button before sitting down square in front of the computer.

He is alone in the hotel room.

He shuffles nervously in his chair for a moment, slightly self-conscious. Then he, clears his throat, takes a deep breath and begins.

CHRISTOPHER

OK, erm...Kim, and hopefully Sean too, if you're watching this video, then it means that I'm already dead and that you are viewing it posthumously, which is exactly how I wanted you both to view it. I decided to record this message today because I know that my death is imminent. In fact, I know the exact date I'm going to die: December 19th, 2017. How is that possible? Well, it's not because I'm planning to kill myself on that date, or because I'm dying from some terminal illness, or even because I've had some kind of strange premonition. No, the truth is actually much more bizarre than that...erm...

Chris laughs nervously at the sheer absurdity of what he's about to reveal, but his mirth is bittersweet. He composes himself and carries on.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

...You see, I know my death date because an angel told me. I know it sounds crazy, but I met a real life
(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 angel. Not one with wings, and a
 halo, or a golden glow, but a being
 from another dimension - the real
 deal...

EXT. SIDE STREET, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Another day, another round of searching. Kim finishes talking to a homeless man and rejoins Chris, who is waiting for her nearby.

KIM
 He says he remembers him, but
 hasn't seen him around for months.

At that moment, GEOFF WALTON (25), a sorry-looking street-dweller, approaches the pair.

GEOFF
 Excuse me, are you two looking for
 Sean?

KIM
 That's right.

GEOFF
 I think I might be able to help
 you.

INT. CAFE, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

A typical greasy spoon affair.

Chris and Kim sit across the table from Geoff, watching him wolf down an English Breakfast with ravenous delight.

Chris, impatient, decides to cut to the chase.

CHRISTOPHER
 You were going to tell us where
 Sean is.

Geoff talks between mouthfuls throughout.

GEOFF
 Oh, yeah, that's right. Well,
 basically, you're wasting your time
 looking for him here.

CHRISTOPHER
 Really? Why is that?

GEOFF
 Because he's not in Brum any more.
 He left.

Chris and Kim exchange a brief look, alarmed. Have their efforts really been in vain all this time?

CHRISTOPHER

Where did he go?

GEOFF

The big smoke. London. He had it in his head that there was more money to be made begging down there.

CHRISTOPHER

And he told you this himself?

GEOFF

Yeah. We was mates. We used to hang out together all the time when he was here. It's tough being on the streets on your own, you know. You need someone to mind your back. And that's what we did for each other.

CHRISTOPHER

How long ago did he leave?

GEOFF

I'd say it's been over a year now.

KIM

You didn't go with him?

GEOFF

Nah, not my scene. I used to have to go there as part of my job years ago, when I had a job, that is. I couldn't stand the place. Too big. Too much of everything. Give me Brum any day of the week.

KIM

How did he make his way down there, do you know?

Geoff makes a hitchhiking gesture.

GEOFF

Thumbed a lift. Like I said, you're wasting your time up here. London's where you should be looking.

EXT. PARK, BIRMINGHAM - DAY

Chris and Kim sit on a bench together. A group of children play in the activity playground nearby. Most of them are the same age as Sean was when he was taken away. The couple watch them.

Kim looks distraught, totally floored by the news of Sean's whereabouts. Chris disguises his pain with a mask of grim determination.

KIM
We've lost him.

CHRISTOPHER
That's not true.

KIM
I may never have been to London,
but I know how big it is. How many
people are we talking, five
million, ten million?

CHRISTOPHER
About ten million.

KIM
We have no hope of finding him down
there.

CHRISTOPHER
We are not giving up. I want to see
my son.

KIM
So do I. I'm just trying to face
the facts, that's all. There must
be thousands of rough sleepers in
London. We had a hard enough time
searching for him up here, and
Birmingham's a fraction the size.
He'll be a needle in a haystack in
London.

CHRISTOPHER
We are going to find him, no matter
what. Even if it takes years, even if
something happens to me, I want you
to carry on.

A brief moment of levity as Kim picks up on Chris' oblique
reference to his mortality.

KIM
You're not going anywhere. I'm not
letting you slip through my fingers
a second time, Christopher Knight,
so you can forget about that.

Chris doesn't share the moment, remains solemn.

CHRISTOPHER
We'll carry on looking for him
ourselves down there. And we'll
hire a private detective too, if we
have to. Whatever it takes.

KIM
I'm just trying to be realistic.

CHRISTOPHER

So am I. We still have every chance
of finding him.

INT. BEDROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Kim finishes folding the last of Chris' clothes. She's sorted them all out neatly on the bed. She decides to be proactive and pack for him too.

She takes down Chris' holdall from the top of the wardrobe and puts it on the bed. She unzips a side pocket and proceeds to pack some clothing in the compartment.

As she does so, she realises there is something in there already. She takes it out. It's a CD in a case. Written on the disc is the wording 'Message for Kim + Sean'.

Kim looks at it, uncomprehending, a little confused. A beat, as she thinks, trying to make sense of it, trying to place it. It's no use. But her curiosity gets the better of her; the temptation is too great. She decides to check it out.

INT. LIVING ROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Kim pops the disc in the rickety DVD player. Waits for the content to load.

The moment it starts to play, we realise that it is the video Chris recorded back at the hotel in Birmingham.

CHRISTOPHER

(in the video)

OK, erm...Kim, and hopefully Sean too, if you're watching this video, then it means that I'm already dead and that you are viewing it posthumously, which is exactly how I wanted you both to view it...

Kim stands dumbfounded, arms crossed, mouth agape, listening intently. She struggles to make sense of what she's hearing. Is this some kind of a joke? Is Chris really saying the words she's hearing coming out of his mouth? She's shocked.

LATER.

A tearful Kim is sitting watching Chris' video message. She dabs her eyes, blows her nose. It's been traumatic viewing.

CHRISTOPHER

(in the video)

As I said, Kim, I desperately wanted to tell you the truth. Believe me I did. But when I walked back into your life that day, I fell instantly in love with you all over again, and every day

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (cont'd)
 thereafter just made that love grow
 stronger, and that meant that every
 day it became harder and harder to
 confide in you.

In the background, the front door clicks open and Chris enters. The video continues to play.

Kim realises he's back, but continues deliberately to focus on the video.

Chris takes slow, conscious steps into the room, a horrified expression on his face. He's been busted and he knows it.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
 (in the video)
 I never meant to hurt you or
 mislead you, I swear. I was just
 trying to protect you. I hope you
 understand and that your able to
 find it in your heart to forgive me
 one more time. I love you. I love
 you both. Until we meet again.

The video ends. Kim switches the TV off with the remote.

Chris is standing next to her, hardly daring to breath.

Kim addresses him without looking at him, staring ahead. Her anger bubbling like a cauldron.

KIM
 (controlled)
 What is the meaning of this?

INT. LIVING ROOM, KIM'S FLAT, NEWCASTLE - DAY

Chris finishes showing Kim, Arthur's Facebook page.

She's struggling to get her head around the revelation. It's like trying to piece together a jigsaw that makes no sense even when it is complete.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
 These are just the ones who
 contacted Arthur direct about their
 intervention. There thousands,
 possibly hundreds of thousands,
 more like them out there.

KIM
 So, this Darius, he just appeared
 out of nowhere?

CHRISTOPHER
 Exactly. I walked in that day and
 he was just sitting there, waiting
 for me.

KIM

And then he just disappeared?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, vanished into thin air. Until I saw him at the hospital, that is.

KIM

Did he look real? I mean, was he solid, or did he look like a ghost or a hologram or something?

CHRISTOPHER

He looked completely human. As real as you are to me now.

KIM

I...I can't take this in. It doesn't make any sense. I mean, I always believed there was something out there, some higher power, but this is mad. Picking on people and telling them when their actually going to kick the bucket...

She shakes her head with incredulity.

KIM (CONT'D)

What if those people you saw die were just a fluke? You said yourself the old woman was on her last legs.

CHRISTOPHER

No, it would be too much of a coincidence, especially the car crash. How could anyone know that a freak accident was going to take place in a specific spot at a particular time. It's impossible.

She knows he's right, but she can't stop herself clutching at straws. Anything but accepting this is all true.

KIM

Has anybody ever dodged the bullet, do you know? Survived I mean?

CHRISTOPHER

Nobody has ever come forward.

KIM

(a rush of optimism)
So it IS possible then?

CHRISTOPHER

Possible, but unlikely. Anyway, I need to proceed on the basis that
(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (cont'd)
 it is really going to happen. If I
 do survive by some miracle, well,
 then that's just an incredible
 bonus.

Kim sags. She becomes pensive as she sits and chews over something in her mind.

KIM
 Tell me the truth, if you hadn't
 been put under this 'intervention'
 or whatever you call it -

CHRISTOPHER
 That's right, intervention.

KIM
 - Right, well, would you have
 bothered to contact me?

Chris is caught off guard by the question. He considers.

CHRISTOPHER
 The truth is, I don't know. Deep
 down I always wanted to. But I'm
 not sure I would have had the
 courage to if this hadn't happened
 to me.

Kim appreciates his honesty. A beat, before her frustration and sense of injustice gets the better of her again.

KIM
 Why this?! Why now?! It's like some
 kind of sick game designed to tear
 us apart!

He takes her face in his hands, talks to her with real feeling and sentiment.

CHRISTOPHER
 Even if I'd only reached you on my
 last day, I'd still be grateful.
 Because every second of every day
 we've spent together has made up
 for all the years we spent apart.
 Do you hear me? I love you. I love
 you Kimberley Johnson. I always
 have and I always will. Not even
 death can change that fact.

Kim can't help but be affected by his declaration. She grabs him and kisses him ardently.

KIM
 You're not running away from me.
 I'm going to be at your side until
 (MORE)

KIM (cont'd)
 you've take your last breath -
 whether that's on the 19th or when
 you reach a hundred.

INT. CHRIS' CAR - DAY

The car is bombing along the motorway.

The couple sit in silence, under a pall. Chris concentrates on the road, Kim just watches the scenery fly by. She seems gloomy and distant.

Kim comes back to the present. She turns and gazes at Chris. She reaches out and rubs his arm affectionately, gives him an encouraging smile, as much to lift her own spirits as his.

Through the windscreen, we see a sign flash by that indicates London is just 60 miles away.

INT. SOLICITORS OFFICE, LONDON - DAY

An imposing office catering to an exclusive clientèle, not your usual high street practice.

Present are Chris, his SOLICITOR, two WITNESSES and Kim. They sit around a conference table, waiting patiently, while Chris reads through his revised will.

Chris finishes reading the document, puts it down.

SOLICITOR
 All in order?

CHRISTOPHER
 Yes.

SOLICITOR
 Any other questions?

CHRISTOPHER
 Nothing more.

SOLICITOR
 Good. Then all that remains is for
 you and the witnesses to sign the
 will, and it will be validated.

The Solicitor leans forward and indicates the sections Chris needs to sign.

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)
 You need to sign here and here.

Chris pulls out his pen, prepares to sign. Just as he's about to put pen to paper, Kim gently rests her hand on his, to interrupt him.

KIM

Chris, are you sure this is really
what you want to do?

Chris looks at her, sees the doubt and honest concern
written on her face. He's genuinely touched. Puts his free
hand on top of hers.

CHRISTOPHER

I've never been so sure of anything
in my life.

KIM

It's just that it's such a big
step...

She hesitates, struggles to say what she means, fearful of
offending Chris, or appearing ungrateful.

KIM (CONT'D)

I know this is really obvious,
but...well, it's your money, your
property, not anything I've
contributed to. I don't feel I
deserve it.

CHRISTOPHER

If you don't deserve it, then I
don't know who does? I want you to
have it. I want to look after you
and Sean when I'm gone. You're the
only family I have. The only family
I've ever really had. Please...let
me do this. It's what I want.

Kim understands. She pulls back, frees her hand.

Chris signs the document, finishing with a flourish.

CHRISTOPHER

There, done.

He locks eyes with Kim. They look at each other, subdued,
serious. Both know that time is running out for him.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris and Kim are lying in bed together just gazing at each
other, enjoying each other's company. Chris is in a wistful
mood.

CHRISTOPHER

You know something, the moments of
my life I've spent with you have
been the happiest of my life.
They're the only ones that have
ever really mattered.

KIM
I feel the same.

CHRISTOPHER
I so wish I could turn the clock
back and do things differently.

KIM
Like what?

CHRISTOPHER
Our relationship - obviously.
Mistakes that I made. Things that I
did. People I hurt...

KIM
I'm sure they've forgiven you by
now.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm not sure they all have.

KIM
You said yourself that cheating on
me was probably the worst thing
you've done in your life. And I've
forgiven you, so why wouldn't they.

CHRISTOPHER
Because sometimes what you do
leaves scars.

KIM
Well, if you feel that strongly
about it, why don't you do
something to fix it. It's never too
late to do the right thing.

Kim's last comment strikes a real chord with Christopher. He dwells on it.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME, LONDON - DAY

Chris and Kim approach the front door, arm in arm.

Chris hesitates for a second and exchanges a look with Kim before girding himself and entering the premises.

INT. CHRIS' CAR - DAY

Chris sits, waiting. He's parked up in a non-descript car park somewhere. A perfect spot for a clandestine meeting.

He looks at his watch and frowns, then goes back to waiting.

A sudden, SHARP RAP ON THE PASSENGER WINDOW. Chris reacts.

At the window, and dressed every bit like the off-duty security guard he is, is GAVIN SEARLE. He's in his early

twenties, pimply and well-meaning, but slightly dense and socially awkward.

The door opens and Gavin jumps in briskly.

GAVIN

Sorry I'm late. Missed my first train. Nightmare.

CHRISTOPHER

That's OK.

Chris feels the leather on the seats, admires the interior.

GAVIN

Fuck'n 'ell, this is what you call a car. Sweet. It's a Vanquish, yeah?

CHRISTOPHER

That's right.

Chris, getting down to business.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Did you manage to get it?

GAVIN

Yeah, course. You got the money?

Chris pulls out a bulging envelope from his inside coat pocket. He holds it out to Chris, as if offering it.

Just as Gavin is about to take it, Chris pulls back the envelope in a power play.

CHRISTOPHER

I need to see the goods.

GAVIN

Sure.

Gavin pulls out a USB memory stick and hands it to Chris.

Chris turns and grabs his laptop from the back seat. He plugs in the USB and clicks on the single data file showing on it.

A video clip starts to play.

It's CCTV footage of the altercation between John Falconer and Gary White on a staircase, at their workplace.

Chris sits and watches, enthralled. Gavin continues to wax lyrical about the car.

GAVIN

What's the top speed on this, Mr K?

Chris replies absently, without looking up from the screen:

CHRISTOPHER

201.

GAVIN

Oh, man! You know what? I'm gonna get me one of these when I win the lottery, I swear.

Chris remains absorbed in his viewing.

As the clip plays, we see the argument between the two men becoming more and more heated, more animated. Then, as clear as day, we see Gary shove John down the stairs in a fit of rage. It's all the confirmation Chris needs.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Good enough for you?

CHRISTOPHER

You bet.

He hands Gavin the envelope, then offers him his hand. The two men shake.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Thank you - from me, and from Mr and Mrs Falconer.

GAVIN

No worries, man. Listen, do me a favour, make sure nobody can ever trace it back to me. Yeah? I can't afford to lose my job.

CHRISTOPHER

I've never met you in my life.

Gavin hesitates a split second while he processes what Chris means, then he smiles, comprehending.

GAVIN.

Nice one, bud.

He exits the car as quickly as he entered.

EXT. THE FALCONERS' HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

A well-kept but modest semi in an anonymous suburb.

(MOS) We see Chris talking to John and Trudi Falconer on their doorstep. They look less than pleased to see him.

As Chris continues to talk, their expression starts to change from one of hostility to one of interest and receptivity. They are clearly being won round by him.

Then Chris hands John the USB stick. The couple react with genuine shock and delight. In one fell swoop, Chris has transformed their legal fortunes.

Chris bids them farewell and walks away feeling gratified.

INT. STUDY, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

Kim sits at the desk viewing the photo of Chris' corpse that Darius originally revealed.

She stares at it gloomily. Her mind is lost in thought: surely there must be some way Chris can escape death!

INT. SURGERY, HARLEY STREET, LONDON - DAY

The DOCTOR, a bespectacled man in his fifties skims through a report.

DOCTOR

All I can say is that if all my patients were as healthy as you, I'd go out of business very quickly.

CHRISTOPHER

You found nothing?

DOCTOR

Apart from a slight vitamin D deficiency, there's not a thing wrong with you. You're in fine fettle.

INT. LIVING ROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

Kim and Chris are in the middle of a blazing row, one instigated by her. Emphatic, raised voices. Swirling emotions.

KIM

You lock down. You don't go anywhere, you don't do anything, you don't switch anything on, you don't try to cook anything. I take care of you for the whole 24 hours. All you do is just stay in your bedroom. We ride it out.

CHRISTOPHER

It won't work.

KIM

What could possibly happen in your bedroom. Make yourself prisoner in your own home for one day and you massively boost your chances of surviving. Step outside and you

(MORE)

KIM (cont'd)
could be run over before you even
know it.

CHRISTOPHER
It won't work, I'm telling you.
Fate will intervene, somehow.

KIM
That's not true. Stop saying that.

CHRISTOPHER
Your just indulging in wishful
thinking, Kim. Nobody has outwitted
their death day -

KIM
(interrupting)
- That you know of. That you know
of...What's the alternative? Are
you just going to roll over and let
them take you?!

CHRISTOPHER
I don't have a choice.

KIM
You do have a choice: you can
either give in or you can fight.

CHRISTOPHER
Fight what? In a days time you're
still going to be breathing. I'm
not. I'm going to lying on a slab
in a mortuary somewhere. No wonder
you can afford to talk tough.

KIM
(hurt)
That's not fair. That's not fair.
I'm in this with you, I told you
that.

CHRISTOPHER
(scoffs)
Yeah, right.

Chris steps up the anger, fuelled by fear and vulnerability.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
I am shitting bricks, I'm so
scared. You can't imagine how I
feel right now. I've had enough of
this. I need to think. I'm going
out.

He starts to walk away, but Kim tries to stop him, by
grabbing his arm. She knows he's in no fit state of mind to
go out alone.

KIM

Chris, please don't go. Please
don't go. Let's talk about this.

Chris tries to fight free.

CHRISTOPHER

Don't. Don't. I need to be alone.

He yanks his arm free and storms out of the room.

Kim doesn't follow him out. She knows it's no use. She paces the room, distraught, trying to stifle her tears.

A moment later we hear the front door slammed shut hard.

Kim breaks down and starts to sob.

INT. LIVING ROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Later that same day.

Kim is sitting on the sofa, by the lamplight, waiting for Chris to return.

She's been crying on and off all day and looks exhausted.

We hear the front door open and close gently.

Chris stands in the doorway of the living room, still dressed in his coat, looking calm and contrite. He takes in Kim's emotional state, how vulnerable she looks.

CHRISTOPHER

You're right, we'll lock down
tomorrow.

Kim leaps up from the sofa and throws her arms around him, weeping with relief. Chris hugs her tight, in a life affirming manner.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Later that evening.

Kim and Chris are lying in bed together, still fully clothed. Kim is catching some shuteye; Chris is wide awake, looking tormented.

The alarm clock suddenly screams to life.

Kim awakens, switches off the alarm. It reads 11:00pm. She turns to Chris, sees that he's awake, realises that he's not slept a wink.

She touches his face gently, then addresses him in a soothing but sincere voice:

KIM

You're going to get through this day. But you have to believe it to make it happen.

Chris just looks back at her, so wanting to believe her, so wanting to share her confidence, but too spooked to dare even hope.

Kim kisses him.

KIM

You need to get ready. You've only got an hour left.

INT. KITCHEN, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Kim switches on the coffee machine. The realisation that this is potentially Chris' last day, that this is for real, suddenly engulfs her. She starts to panic, hyperventilate, tear up.

INT. EN-SUITE, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris stands before the mirror shaving. He stops. Starts to stare at his reflection. Looking back at him he sees what we see, a haunted, shell of a man. A condemned man living out his last day on death row.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris dresses alone, somberly, as if getting ready for a funeral.

INT. KITCHEN, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Kim splashes water on her face and dabs it dry with a towel. She breathes in hard, trying calm herself, compose herself.

She manages to get it together, to put on a brave face.

She picks up the tray laden with coffee and biscuits that she's prepared and exits the kitchen.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris settles himself in an armchair.

Just then, Kim enters carrying the tray. She tries desperately to appear unfazed and upbeat.

She puts the tray down and offers Chris a cup.

KIM

I've made you some coffee.

Chris declines it, shaking his head.

CHRISTOPHER
I don't think I can stomach it.

KIM
Try. You need to stay alert.

He takes the cup from her, more to please her than anything, then takes a sip.

Kim stands there a beat, feeling awkward, slightly at a loss.

KIM
What do we do now?

CHRISTOPHER
(disarmingly)
We wait.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

Late afternoon on the last day.

Chris is sitting alone. He looks agitated, ruminative, tightly coiled. His eyes keep flicking at the clock.

Kim enters the room carrying a bowl of soup on a tray.

KIM
I bought you some soup.

She offers him the soup.

CHRISTOPHER
(waving her away)
I don't want anything.

Kim persists.

KIM
You haven't eaten a thing since yesterday. At least try some.

CHRISTOPHER
No.

KIM
Please.

Chris lashes out and send the tray flying.

CHRISTOPHER
I said no!

Kim's taken aback by his vehemence, but maintains her composure.

Chris suddenly crumples, unable to handle the strain of waiting any longer, and starts to cry.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm scared. I'm scared. I don't want to die.

Kim kneels before him and takes him in her arms.

KIM

You're not going anywhere. When that clock strikes midnight, you're still going to be alive and kicking.

CHRISTOPHER

Something is going to happen to me, something bad. I know it. I can feel it.

Kim genuinely can't accept Chris defeatism, even under the current circumstances. She's a fighter, always has been.

KIM

No you can't. I don't care if you saw an angel or not, but nothing bad is going to happen to you today. The doctor gave you the all clear. You're sitting in the safety of your own home - cooped-up in one room, no less. Look around you. What could possibly happen in the next few hours that could kill you?

CHRISTOPHER

What if the doctor missed something?

KIM

He didn't.

She wipes his tears dry, looks him in the eye.

KIM (CONT'D)

Listen to me, you've only another eight hours to go until you find out this whole thing is fake. I'm sorry, but that's just what it is. And when you do, we're going to celebrate, then we're going to bed, and when we wake up tomorrow, we're going to start searching for Sean again, and then we're going to find him, and we're going to be a family again - a happy family. THAT is what is going to happen.

CHRISTOPHER

And what if you're wrong. I don't want to see what's on the other side. I want to be with you and Sean. I want to grow old.

KIM

And you will. I read somewhere once that people who die of a voodoo curse die because they believe it's real, not because the spell actually works. You're doing exactly the same as them now.

CHRISTOPHER

(pained)

I can't handle the waiting. it's torture.

KIM

You know something, I wish I'd bet money on you surviving, because I would have woken up tomorrow a very, very rich woman.

Chris smiles weakly at her.

KIM

(imploring)

I want you to be brave for me. Just for a few more hours. Be strong, for me. Please.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Kim is sitting in an armchair watching Chris, waiting, anticipating.

Chris has fallen asleep on the bed despite himself.

He wakes up and immediately glances at the alarm clock. It shows 11:47pm.

Kim smiles at him.

KIM

Just over ten minutes to go. You've almost made it.

Chris can't quite believe he's still alive. He allows himself a little smile too.

CHRISTOPHER

You're right, almost there.

KIM

Do you want me to get you anything?

CHRISTOPHER

No, I'm fine. Thanks.

EXT. BACK GARDEN, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Two BURGLARS, approach the rear of the house. They are both dressed in dark clothing and balaclavas, and they both have

rucksacks on their backs.

BURGLAR #1
Are you sure about this?

BURGLAR #2
Relax, this house has been empty
for weeks. The lights switch on
automatically for security.

Burglar #1 blacks out the lens of the security camera above
the window with an aerosol can.

He then pulls out a Motorola UHF portable handset from his
rucksack and punches in a frequency code.

BURGLAR #1
We're good, receivers been blinded.

BURGLAR #2
Let's go.

Burglar two produces some heavy-duty pliers from his bag and
proceeds to prise out the lock from the door.

INT. EN-SUITE, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris splashes his face with water.

INT. KITCHEN, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Two beams of torchlight pierce the darkness, as the Burglars
advance through the room. Burglar #1 continues to hold the
UHF portable in his hand, inhibiting the alarm system.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris re-enters from the en-suite, dabbing his face with a
towel.

Kim is watching the clock, willing the time to go quicker.

KIM
(exasperated)
God this wait is agony!

CHRISTOPHER
Tell me about it.

INT. HALLWAY, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

The Burglars quietly make their way through the hallway,
checking all the rooms leading off it are unoccupied.

Burglar #1 picks up on the faint voices upstairs. As he
turns, startled, he accidentally knocks over a vase with his
rucksack.

The VASE CLATTERS LOUDLY as it hits the wooden floor.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris and Kim hear the noise downstairs. They freeze, perturbed.

KIM

What was that?

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know. Stay here. I'll go and check it out.

INT. HALLWAY, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Burglar #2 glares at his partner.

BURGLAR #2

(hissing)

What the fuck?!

BURGLAR #1

(whispering)

I thought I heard someone upstairs!

INT. LANDING, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Christopher comes out of his room and cautiously makes his way to the top of the stairs. He moves stealthily, alert to anything untoward.

Chris reaches the top of the stairs. Looks down. At the foot of the stairs - looking right up at him - are the burglars.

CHRISTOPHER

Shit!

Chris turns and runs back to the bedroom.

The Burglars storm up the stairs after him.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris comes in, locks the door.

KIM

What's going on?

Chris turns and motions her to be quiet. He grabs his mobile phone and hand it to her.

CHRISTOPHER

(whispering urgently)

We've got intruders. Take this and hide in the wardrobe.

The door handle turns, followed by pounding on the door.

BURGLAR #2 (O.S.)

Open the fucking door!

Kim hesitates a second, confused by this sudden turn in events.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Now!

She nods and quickly secretes herself in the wardrobe.

BURGLAR #2 (O.S.)

I'm not going to ask you again.

INT. LANDING, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Burglar #2 pulls out a gun, then gives his partner the signal. Burglar #1 starts to kick the door down.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

The door vibrates with each blow.

Chris dives onto the bed and grabs the landline.

The door frame suddenly splinters and the door flies open.

Burglar #2 rushes over and socks Chris in the mouth, then grabs the phone from him before Chris can place a call.

Burglar #2 stands, pointing his gun at Chris. Both men panting.

BURGLAR #2

(to Chris)

Who else is here?

Burglar #1 checks the en-suite quickly for occupants.

CHRISTOPHER

Nobody. I live alone.

Inside the wardrobe: Kim listens intently, scared for herself and for Chris.

BURGLAR #2

Alone? In a place like this?

Chris nods yes. Burglar #2 signals to his partner to check the wardrobe too.

Chris panics, but manages to disguise his reaction. He keeps one eye on what Burglar #1 is doing.

BURGLAR #2 (CONT'D)

God, talk about greedy!

The wardrobe door flies open suddenly. Kim freezes, caught unawares, not daring to breath.

Burglar #1 conducts a perfunctory check. Closes the door.

Inside the wardrobe: Kim breathes with relief.

BURGLAR #2 (CONT'D)
How many bedrooms?

CHRISTOPHER
Four.

BURGLAR #2
I'm going to ask you one more time:
is there anyone else in the house?

CHRISTOPHER
I told you, there's only me.

BURGLAR #2
(to Burglar #1)
Check the rest of the bedrooms. (to
Chris) You better not be lying.

INT. BEDROOM #2, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Burglar #1 opens the door, sees there's nobody there and retreats.

INT. BEDROOM #3, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Burglar #1 checks the room. Again, no sign of life.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

Chris is in the process of dumping any belongings like his wallet, watch, ring, etc in Burglar #2's rucksack.

Burglar #1 comes in.

BURGLAR #1
All clear.

BURGLAR #2
(to Chris)
Where's the safe?

CHRISTOPHER
I don't have one.

Burglar #2 whips him with his gun. Chris smarts with pain.

BURGLAR #2
Where is it?!

Chris indicates by cocking his chin in the direction of a large painting on the wall.

BURGLAR #2 (CONT'D)
Open it.

CHRISTOPHER
(pointing to his bedside
cabinet)

I need to get the remote for it.

Burglar #2 indicates for him to retrieve it. Chris does so, moving with deliberate caution, then de-activates the safe.

Burglar #1 sets to work immediately, emptying the contents into his bag, while Burglar #2 stands guard over Chris.

Chris glances at the clock: 11:55pm. Just five tantalising minutes to go and he's home and dry!

Burglar #2 sees Chris look at the time, and gives him a curious look.

Chris tries to act normal, calm, but it's all starting to get too much for him - burglary in progress and five minutes until Darius' spell breaks.

Burglar #1 finishes up.

BURGLAR #2
(to Burglar #1)
Go check if there's anything worth
nicking in the other rooms.

Inside the wardrobe: Chris' mobile suddenly chimes to announce the arrival of a new message. Kim stiffens with fear.

The two Burglars hear the chime. They look at each other, then at Chris. He lied!

Burglar #2 moves to go to the wardrobe, pointing his gun.

Chris panics. He has a split second to make a decision: stay his hand and potentially risk Kim's life, or intervene and risk his own?

No choice: he makes a sudden play for the gun by leaping on Burglar #2 and trying to overpower him.

The two men struggle violently, jostling each other for possession of the gun.

Burglar #1 watches, deems it unsafe to enter the fray just yet.

Neither side seems to be winning, as the two men exert themselves with all their might. It's muscle vs muscle. An even match.

BANG!!! The gun goes off!

Inside the wardrobe: Kim gasps with shock. She covers her mouth to stifle her cry.

Both men freeze and look at each other. But Chris' expression seems more fixed, more pained.

Chris staggers back and looks down at his chest, sees a rapidly forming patch of blood on his shirt.

Horrified, he clutches his chest, then collapses to the floor.

BURGLAR #1

Fuck!...Fuck!...What have you done!

Even with his mask on, it is clear that Burglar #2 is catatonic with shock.

BURGLAR #2

(quietly)

I just went off...

Chris lies there gasping, looking up at the two Burglars helplessly, his trousers soiled, his life force rapidly slipping away.

Burglar #2 stands immobile just looking at Chris. Burglar #1 tugs at his partners arm, urging him to jump ship.

BURGLAR #1

C'mon, let's go!

Burglar #2 doesn't move. He's mesmerized by the bleeding, traumatized man lying in front of him.

BURGLAR #1 (CONT'D)

We need to get out of here!

Still Burglar #2 doesn't budge. Instead, he slowly kneels down on the floor beside Chris, as if in contrition.

CHRISTOPHER

(weak whisper)

Help me...Help...me...help...

An agitated Burglar #1 waits impatiently in the doorway.

Burglar #2 removes his balaclava, so he can breath easier. And for the first time we see that he is none other than...

SEAN JOHNSON!

There is a flicker of recognition in Chris' eyes when he's sees Sean's face, but he's ebbing away too fast to react meaningfully.

Sean stares at Chris, fear and regret etched on his young face.

Chris' makes a strange gurgling sound, then his body relaxes visibly and he's gone. Dead.

BURGLAR #1 (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Come on!

Sean suddenly comes to his senses. He gets up, collects his gun and makes for the door.

At the doorway, Sean turns around and takes one last mournful look at Chris' body.

Then the two Burglars leave. We hear their footsteps thundering down the stairs as they retreat.

A long beat.

The door to the wardrobe opens guardedly. Kim peaks out, fearing the worst. She's horrified by the carnage.

Kim scrambles over to Chris, hoping against hope. She checks him for signs of life.

Realising there are none, she gathers up his limp, lifeless body in her arms as best she can, then lets out a hopeless, bloodcurdling scream and begins to cry uncontrollably.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

The house with just the curtained bedroom window illuminated from within. An island of turmoil and anguish in an otherwise quiet street late at night.

We continue to hear Kim's heart-wrenching cries from within the house as we pull back slowly.

INT. VISITS HALL, HM PRISON BELMARSH, LONDON - DAY

It's visiting day. Prisoners' FRIENDS and FAMILY are streaming in and occupying the seats.

Kim is among them, already seated. She is well-turned-out and coiffed, a world away from her recent humble past. She waits expectantly.

The visitors settle down quickly and the PRISONERS, all wearing high-visibility vests, begin to flow into the room.

People exchange hugs, kisses, waves and smiles everywhere you look.

Sean enters the room, spots Kim straight away. They both react with a small smile, pleased to see each other.

Sean makes his way to Kim's table. She gives him a big hug and a kiss, before they both sit down.

KIM

How are you, pet?

SEAN
Surviving.

KIM
Anyone given you trouble lately?

SEAN
Nah, just keep my head down, keep
myself to myself, count the days...

Kim nods, understanding. There's no need for detail.

A beat.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Did you brings the picture?

KIM
I did.

She immediately dips into her pocket and fishes out a print of the selfie Chris took of him and Kim in the pub in Birmingham. She slides it across the table to Sean.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Cheers.

Chris studies the photo quietly for a long moment, as if trying to divine his fathers personality from the still image.

After a long beat, Sean smiles affectionately at the snap.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Tell us more about me Dad. How did
you two meet, for starters?

Kim strokes Sean's hand, regards him fondly, then begins:

KIM
Well, I met your dad when he was at
Newcastle Uni', just after he
started his law degree there. That
was back in...oh...1988. I'd only
just started work as a barmaid in a
local pub that all the students
went to. He came in...

Sean listens intently, soaking up the knowledge.

As Kim continues to speak, we start to pull back until we can no longer hear what she's saying.

FADE OUT

THE END