

THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND THE CANOE

EPISODE TWO

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1 EXT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DAY

1

A bleak, dank, bitterly cold morning in Seaton Carew, low cloud the colour of dirty school shirts, as we scud over a slow sea, and toward Number 3, The Cliff.

And as we near, a set of curtains open in a top window, to reveal a heavily bearded man's face, staring out at a world that his expression tells us, he believes he has conquered.

ANNE

John !

2 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - BEDROOM - DAY

2

ANNE still in bed, awoken by the light.

ANNE

For heaven's sake, someone will see you.

And now he turns, proudly naked. (Shot from behind?) A hint of contempt in his smile. For her, for the world she inhabits maybe - the land of the living.

JOHN

See who? I'm dead.

He looks at her. Clearly considers jumping back in for a bit of 'nookie'. But then -

JOHN (CONT'D)

Right, come on then, Dobbin, shake a leg, work to do....

(grabbing a dressing gown and walking out)

...we'll start with 'Mutual Assured', I think you'll find they owe me one hundred and thirty six thousand of your earth pounds.

And we track slowly in on her as we hear him clomp downstairs. And the prevailing sense we get of her, is of an utterly exhausted woman. And then she draws back the covers and starts to wearily rise.

3 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN / INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF 3-HALLWAY - DAY

A list (of insurance and pension companies) on the kitchen table.

Pull back to see JOHN is buttoning up his coat, he also wears a woollen hat, glass-less glasses and carries a walking stick. He looks like JOHN DARWIN. But in mediocre disguise.

ANNE pouring boiling water into a mug of instant.

ANNE

And you will go out through Number
Four won't you.

JOHN

(rolls his eyes)
Obviously.
(nods at the list)
And don't let them give you any
nonsense, they owe us, fair and
square.

He then walks out into the hall and to the ground floor connecting door, poking his head through to check no tenants are around to see him.

And seeing the coast is indeed clear, he scuttles along the front hallway to the door, and then gingerly opens the front door.

4 EXT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - FRONT DOOR - DAY 4

JOHN looking out, surveying the road outside, a few cars driving past, but no-one else. And so he exits, shutting the door behind him.

And so yes, here is JOHN DARWIN, a man who 'drowned' only a few weeks ago, now limping down the road, wearing a bad disguise, toward a bus stop about fifty yards away.

5 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 5

ANNE finishing washing the breakfast dishes, all put away, nothing further to distract, and then she turns, with the heaviest of hearts, to the list.

And she knows she can't put it off any longer, and so finally sits down, pulls a corded landline phone towards her, and dials the first number.

After a few rings it answers.

ANNE

Oh hello, could you tell me who I
need to speak to about making a
life insurance claim please?

6 EXT. SUNDERLAND TOWN HALL - DAY 6

And here is JOHN, limping along the High Street, and then turning into a red brick Victorian building, above the entrance of which is the legend, '**Sunderland Town Hall**'.

7 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 7

Close on two empty mugs and a half-eaten sandwich.

And then track on to the typed list, and of the six companies she was due to ring, there are notes now by five of them, all detailing versions of -

'will call back after checked with manager on procedure',

'missing person process'

'no body claims unusual'

Pull back to reveal a weary looking ANNE on the phone.

ANNE

...sadly no, they've not found his
body yet I'm afraid....yes I'll
hold....

Out on her, head in hands. Desolate.

8 INT. SUNDERLAND TOWN HALL - DAY 8

JOHN at a desk, in a quiet corner of the records office, as he scrolls through microfiche records.

And then he stops scrolling. Looks closer.

On the reverse we will see a copy of a death certificate on the screen, which reads

'John Jones, born 27th March 1950, Died 30th April 1950.

Note to design and everyone, the family of John Jones have asked us not to linger on the parents' details on the certificate.

Out on JOHN, the light in his eyes telling us he has found what he needs, and he starts to scribble down notes from the screen, even as we hear -

JOHN (O.S.)

What d'you mean 'they need to
discuss it'?

9 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DUSK

9

ANNE and JOHN in the kitchen. JOHN is not happy.

ANNE

Just that. 'No body' claims have their own rules apparently. It's all quite complicated, so they need to discuss it.

He looks at her, so disappointed.

JOHN

I knew this would happen. You let them bully you, Anne.

ANNE

(tensing)

This was nothing to do with being bullied, these are simply their rules and...

JOHN

(stopping her)

...you just can't be trusted.

(walking out)

I should have done it myself.

ANNE

My God I wish you *had* bloody drowned.

And he stops, turns, appalled.

JOHN

I beg your pardon?

ANNE

You are *so* selfish.

JOHN

Me selfish?

ANNE

You literally *never* think about what this is like for me do you. What it's like to be terrified of every single knock on the door. Wondering if it's the bailiffs again, or another well wisher wanting to give me a hug I don't deserve. Or the police saying we know what you did. All you ever say is 'the worst is over, love'.

(MORE)

ANNE (CONT'D)

Well it might be for you, but let me tell you it is most certainly not for *me*. On an *hourly* basis, John, on an *hourly* basis I am still having to lie to my parents, to strangers and to our sons. So for *me*, every day is still utterly, utterly, *awful!*

Wow. He has never seen her like this. He is making quick calculations.

JOHN

Well I'm sorry I'm not *actually* dead, Anne. I'm sure you'd have *loved* to have had all the insurance money to yourself.

On her despair, he once again has entirely missed the point. He nods down at the list.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Ring Mutual Assured again. Tell them you want a proper meeting, face to face...
(heading out)
...and don't take no for an answer.

On her, as she sags, and then -

ANNE

(calling after him)
And remember the boys are coming tonight. So pick up your dirty washing please. And put the toilet seat down.

But he is already clomping up the stairs and does not reply.

And we stay on her. A sense she really hates him right now.

10 SCENE OMITTED 10

11 SCENE OMITTED 11

12 EXT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT 12

ANTHONY and MARK pulling up in their car. ANNE waiting at the sitting room window, and waving. *

13 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - NIGHT

13

ANNE and the boys putting bread and soup on the table.

ANTHONY

...all I'm saying is, you read about people don't you, in the papers. People who've had a stroke or ...banged their head or something, and got amnesia, and they end up...I dunno, living on the streets or...in some hostel or wherever, and then they just suddenly turn up, however many months later, not knowing what the hell happened.

And MARK nods. Does not want to trash his brother's hope. But.

MARK

They found his canoe though Ant, all smashed up.

ANTHONY

Well exactly, that's what I'm saying, what if it was smashed up because it got hit by a bigger boat and Dad had a head injury, but managed....to swim to shore?

And his voice catches, because perhaps even he knows this is pretty far-fetched. That he is clutching at straws.

And MARK puts a hand out to squeeze his arm.

MARK

Well it's certainly possible. And we should never give up hope, should we, Mam?

And she can barely look at them. And then hard cut to -

14 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - VACANT GROUND FLOOR BEDSIT - NIGHT

- one of the empty bedsits on the ground floor of Number 4, where JOHN stands in the dark, ear pressed to a wall that adjoins the kitchen of number 3, listening to a muffled version of the above conversation.

And in the end, even he can't quite bear hearing his sons' grief.

And so now he turns away and walks up a flight of stairs to his tiny cell-like room.

15 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - JOHN'S BEDSIT (ROOM 8)- NIGHT 15

JOHN walking in, a low light on a bedside table, dimly illuminating the peeling walls.

And on a desk, a computer. He sits at the desk and sees a message blinking in the corner of the screen, which seems to cheer him.

The blinking message reads 'New message from Kelly'. He quickly clicks on it and reads 'Howdee, pardner, you wanna play?'

And he smiles, and sits and quickly starts to type a reply '**Lol - you're darn tootin'!**'

Even as he then pulls on a headset.

16 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - STAIRWAY - NIGHT 16

From the stairs of the floor above, we see ANNE kissing her boys good night on the landing, as they head to their bedrooms, and then she is walking up to her bedroom.

17 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - ANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 17

And she walks in, turns immediately to the interconnecting door to her right, and with only a tiny moment's hesitation, she then walks over to it, and locks it.

The key in the door, then the bolt across it.

18 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - JOHN'S BEDSIT (ROOM 8) - NIGHT 18

Close on JOHN, one ear of his headset on, mid way through a game of '**WizardQuest**' (a fantasy Dungeons and Dragons type game) as he hears Anne's bolt being shut.

And his jaw tightens, this irritates the fuck out of him and distracts him, even as we then hear (through the headset) -

KELLY (O.S.)
Your move, John boy.

And now he buttons down his irritation at his wife, slips the other headset ear piece back on.

JOHN
(quietly into his headset)
Someone has been a very naughty
lady dragon and is going to be
punished with a smack-bottom.

And he starts playing again even as we hear.

DOLDING (O.S.)
And on behalf of everyone at Mutual
Assured...

New day

19 EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE CLIFF - SEATON CAREW - DAY 19

A man (LES DOLDING, 59) walking along the sea front towards
the Cliff as we hear -

DOLDING (V.O.)
...may I take this opportunity to
offer you and your family our most
sincere condolences.

20 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DINING ROOM - DAY 20

ANNE sitting with DOLDING, a claims adjuster, in the dining
room, looking out to sea.

ANNE
Thank you.

DOLDING
Our hearts go out to you and your
sons at what must be a dreadful
time.

ANNE
You have no idea.

And he lets the moment rest. And then looks down at his
notes.

DOLDING
So thank you for your *many* calls
over the last few days, and for
your patience, but a 'no body
death', as I think I said to you,
on the phone, is a rather unique
situation.

ANNE

Yes.

DOLDING

I also needed to check with the Coroner that I had the most up to date information on the situation.

And she tightens. A sense this might be heading in an odd direction.

ANNE

Right.

21 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - GROUND FLOOR INTERCONNECTING DOOR~~2~~1
/INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DINING ROOM / HALLWAY - DAY

And here is a frowning JOHN. His ear pressed hard to the interconnecting door. (We now cut between the two locations)

DOLDING

And so what I am here to tell you today, Mrs Darwin, is that unfortunately Mutual Assured are *not* currently in a position to be able to pay out on your husband's policy.

On her very muted shock - 'they know'.

On JOHN's very un-muted (but silent) shock.

ANNE

Oh. Right.

DOLDING

Sorry if that comes as a bit of a shock.

ANNE

It does a bit, yes. Can I ask why?

DOLDING

Of course. The problem is that you have no death certificate.

ANNE

(a beat, relief, then)
But the police found his smashed up canoe, they've closed the case, as far as *they're* concerned, he is definitely dead.

DOLDING

I don't doubt that. But as far as the *coroner* is concerned he can't be *declared* dead until the requisite period of time has passed.

ANNE

Oh.

DOLDING

When that period *has* passed and he is then able to hold an inquest and thus *issue* a certificate, we will of course be delighted to honour the claim.

ANNE

Right. And how long might that be then, that requisite period, in a no body case, how long would normally that be? Roughly.

And now DOLDING flicks a look at his watch, time to be going, he has another meeting. He starts to put his paperwork away into his briefcase.

DOLDING

Well the *standard* time, in a case like this, Mrs Darwin, the usual period...

Close on ANNE. On JOHN. On DOLDING as he stands.

DOLDING (CONT'D)

...is seven years.

On her shock.

ANNE

I'm sorry?

On JOHN's face.

DOLDING

Give or take.

ANNE

Right. We had no idea. I mean my boys and I. We had absolutely no...seven? Oh Lord.

DOLDING

I'm so sorry but I have another meeting.

ANNE

Oh. Yes. Of course - I'll see you out.

And she walks him to the front door, opens it, and he steps out, and then turns.

DOLDING

One last thing I should add. If you do let the premiums lapse during those seven years, the policy would become *void* I'm afraid, with no payment being due at all. Death certificate or no.

And he raises his hat in an old fashioned gesture of courtesy.

DOLDING (CONT'D)

Good day to you Mrs Darwin, and once again, my sincere condolences on your loss.

And he walks away, and she shuts the door.

And then behind her, we hear the beginning of a muffled scream from behind a wall.

22 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - HALLWAY - DAY 22

Out on JOHN and his red faced cry of impotent rage.

JOHN

Fuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuck!!!!!!

End of part one.

Part two

23 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 23

JOHN sitting at the kitchen table.

ANNE sitting at the kitchen table.

She goes to speak, he lifts a 'no' finger. He is 'thinking'.

Close on him. The great mind at work. And then finally he looks up.

JOHN

You know what? It's actually very simple. What we need to do. Or what *you* need to do.

ANNE

Me?

JOHN

You need to utilise the sympathy factor.

ANNE

The what?

JOHN

People feel sorry for you, you said it last week, people are always coming up to you and...hugging you and stuff, offering you their condolences - they think it's *awful* what you've been through.

ANNE

It *is* awful.

JOHN

And so we *exploit* that. We use your pain and misery, the boys' grief, to get what we need...

He stands. In the zone now. Pacing as he talks. On her as he does. Her astonishment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

...so you go to them, the police, and you tell them how completely impossible it is for you to move on, to get 'closure', because you will never ever truly accept I am dead, until you have a death certificate in your hand...

ANNE

John...

JOHN

...and then you plead with them, you *beg* them, Anne, you sob and cry and *beg* them, to persuade the coroner to hold an inquest.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

And *not* in seven years, not in five, four, three, two, one, but *now*. *Right* now. In fact you insist, because it is your *right*.

And he looks up at her, eyes glistening with wonder at his own genius. On her. What fresh hell is this?

ANNE

You want me to exploit people's genuine sympathy, for your benefit.

JOHN

('nicely put', nods)

I mean obviously don't put it like *that*, but yes. And it's actually for *our* benefit. Nit picking I know but still.

A beat as she digests.

ANNE

Every time I think you can't sink any lower, you surprise me. No, John, I will not do it, I will *not*.

JOHN

Anne...

ANNE

You're not going to persuade me this time. No. I won't. Just 'no'.

On him, tightening, darkening.

JOHN

So you expect me to just sit in that stinking room for the next seven years do you?

On her. She is clearly scared right now. But she does not back down.

ANNE

I don't expect anything of you, John. Nothing.

And he nods. Relations really turning sour now.

JOHN

Well maybe I *will* turn myself in then.

And she looks up. *What?*

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Maybe I'll turn myself in, and tell
 them everything.

On ANNE.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 I wonder how long we'd get? White
 collar crime but still - a few
 years I'd imagine.

A beat. Lets that sit. We see her terror. And then a thought
 from him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 You'd probably miss Anthony's
 wedding.

And he exits. And her head falls. And we know, once again, he
 has snagged her.

Montage

23A EXT. SUNDERLAND TOWN HALL - DAY 23A

Establisher of Sunderland Town Hall.

24 INT. SUNDERLAND TOWN HALL - DAY 24

And now here is JOHN, back in Sunderland town hall, walking
 down a long municipal corridor, at the end of which is a sign
 which says ' birth, death and marriage certification'.

And at the end of the corridor he turns left to see a
 reception area facing him, which he walks up to.

JOHN
 (charming)
 Good afternoon, I'm here to collect
 a duplicate birth certificate in
 the name of 'John Jones', please.

25 INT. HARTLEPOOL POLICE STATION - OFFICE - DAY 25

ANNE making her plea to JUNE AYOADE.

JUNE

...the problem is, the only person
who can permit him to expedite an
inquest, is the Home Secretary.

*

ANNE

(surprised)
The Home Secretary?

JUNE

Mr Donnelly would actually have to
write to him, and ask for his
permission.

And now ANNE, as requested, lays it on thick. Thicker even,
than we might suppose she needs to.

*

ANNE

(tears coming)
The thing is, June, I just don't
know how we can move on, my boys
and I, without a body, or a
certificate, with nothing to hold
on to, I just don't know how we can
ever truly.....move on.

And we must ask if she crying with shame, or cynically to
order. Either way, all JUNE sees is a broken woman. And it's
heartbreaking.

JUNE

Let me speak to him again. Tell him
what you've just told me,
because...
(it's awful)
....I'll call him again.

26

INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - NIGHT

26

A triumphal JOHN leaning back in his chair, punching the air.

JOHN

Yes!

ANNE at the sink, peeling potatoes.

ANNE

She *just* said she'd call him again.

JOHN

But I feel it, Anne, I do, in my bones, that we'll get there. And now we have this...

(the duplicate birth certificate on the kitchen table)

...that means I can get a new passport, and then we're flying, love, literally, we're flying off to live somewhere ...warm and beautiful, away from this endless bloody cold and rain and...people wanting to stop you making something of yourself...

Close on him, the years of failure and thwarted dreams writ large on his face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

...and we can start again, just the two of us. Go back to how it used to be....when we used to laugh and....had hopes. And were happy. No?

And we are on her. And is there something here speaking to her?

JOHN (CONT'D)

And I *am* sorry, love, that it's taken so much longer than we thought. And I do appreciate everything you've done.

And now he stands and walks over and puts his arms around her, from behind. And we are on her, as he hugs her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But I do also genuinely think that things will start to get easier now. I really do.

And there is a strong sense that she is so needy of human contact, that just for now, she puts aside her anger, and just savours this moment of warmth and affection.

Which is when he starts to kiss her neck.

27 EXT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - HALLWAY - NIGHT 27

At which point, we retreat respectfully down the hall, as we start to hear cries of pleasure.

ANNE (V.O.)
Except it *wasn't* nearly over.

28 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY 28

Watching ANNE through the dining room window crossing frame and walking into the house, head down against the bitter North Sea wind.

ANNE (V.O.)
The days of waiting turned to weeks, which turned to months, which turned to bleak mid winter.

29 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - HALLWAY - DAY 29

ANNE shuts the door behind her, a bulwark against the horrific world out there.

ANNE (V.O.)
And when I wasn't terrified of being found out by the insurance companies...

And as she starts to head toward the kitchen, **bang bang bang!**
And she swivels to see a shape at the door.

ANNE
..I was still having to deal with the bailiffs.

BAILIFF
We know you're in there, Mrs Darwin, open the door please.

Bang bang bang!!

ANNE (V.O.)

Who were not interested in the fact
that the only income I now had was
from working at the surgery

BAILIFF

OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR!!!

And she now scurries down the hall away from them.

ANNE

So whilst we waited for an answer
from the coroner...

30 SCENE OMITTED 30

31 INT. PHOTO BOOTH - DAY 31

Close on JOHN in a passport photo booth. Flash. Flash. Flash.
Flash.

ANNE (V.O.)

...I spent my days trying to fend
off the banks, even as John applied
for a new passport with his fake
identity...

32 SCENE OMITTED 32

33 EXT. THE CLIFF - SEATON CAREW - DAY 33

Snow falling on meagre decorations outside Number 3.

ANNE (V.O.)

...and started searching the world
for somewhere *warm* we could live.
And then it was Christmas again.

And here are the boys pulling up in a car outside, and
getting out with piles of presents in their hands, as if to
make up for the loss.

And she walks out to hug her greetings.

34 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 34

Everyone trying a little too hard to be merry. So it's ANNE, MARK, ANTHONY, RONNIE and her mum and dad HENRY and CATHERINE. And as ANNE and CATHERINE start to put all the food on the table, ANTHONY reads a joke from her cracker.

ANTHONY

What d'you give a dog for Christmas?

MARK

I don't know, what do you give a dog for Christmas?

ANTHONY

A mobile bone.
(off the groans)
You want a top up grandad?
(pouring a beer into
Ronnie's glass, as)

MARK

Okay, why did the pony have to gargle?

35 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - VACANT GROUND FLOOR BEDSIT - DAY 35

JOHN, in the empty bedsit abutting the kitchen to Number 3. He wears a hat from a cracker on his head, his ear pressed to the wall.

JOHN

(to himself)
'Because it was a little horse',
come on, we had that one last year.

ANTHONY (O.S.)

To Dad.

36 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 36

And we cut back next door as they all are raising a glass to the man who is just on the other side of the wall.

RONNIE

To my boy.

Tears in all of their eyes, their first Christmas without him. And then MARK is carving as CATHERINE starts to serve up potatoes and veg and chipolatas etc.

ANTHONY

...I drove past Butler's Hill on the way up, and the snow was starting to fall, and it reminded me of that sledge we built with Dad.

MARK

(grins)
Oh my God - 'Snow Rider'.

ANTHONY

How long did we spend making that?

MARK

All year? And it lasted one go.

ANTHONY

(starting to laugh)
Less! It actually started to break up half way down.

MARK

(also laughing)
Was Dad on the bottom?

ANTHONY

Dad was on the bottom, then you, then me, and bits kept flying off with every bump...

MARK

...and we were going faster and faster...

ANTHONY

...so by the time we got to the bottom we were basically just sledging on Dad.

MARK

Oh my God, and we all lay there, in the snow, just wetting ourselves, for so long...

And we fade down on their laughter, everyone around the table seduced by it too, as platefuls of food are handed out.

37 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - VACANT GROUND FLOOR BEDSIT - DAY 7

And this fond, loving, beautiful memory is being listened to by...

...oh. No-one. The bedsit is empty - JOHN obviously got bored and left.

38 INT. NUMBER 4 THE CLIFF - JOHN'S BEDSIT (ROOM 8) - NIGHT 38

And here he is (it's dark now) back in his own bedsit, eating a shop bought turkey sandwich, and finding his Christmas cheer in the company of KELLY, who he is talking to, in a pause in the WizardQuest game.

JOHN

(quietly in to headset)

...no I never had children, not really my thing. And since the cancer took Anne, well, I guess I've been looking for the next big adventure. Professional and personal.

KELLY (O.S.)

Right. Sure. I mean...

(a beat)

...you ever thought of investing out here?

JOHN

(he smiles, a beat)

How funny. Because I think I told you about my affinity with horses, didn't I? Almost a spiritual thing really and I was thinking the other day, after you told me about your ranch....

ANNE (O.S.)

...mince pie?

And he swings round and presses exit at exactly the same time. A practised fraud.

JOHN

Oh, thanks, love, yes please.

And ANNE walks in and sets a cup of tea and a mince pie down on his desk, next to the computer, with its screen now set to a screen saver. And his beady eyes do not leave her as he tries to intuit out what she heard.

JOHN (CONT'D)

How is everyone?

ANNE

All gone now, the boys had to visit
Lou and Flick's families.

JOHN

Right.

A beat. She is just standing there. Did he get away with it?
Then -

ANNE

You could go too John.

JOHN

I'm sorry?

ANNE

You could go. Live the life you
seem to *really* want.

Fuck. She heard.

JOHN

This is the life I really want,
love. With *you*.

ANNE

Is it?

JOHN

Yes. Of course.

Does she believe him? A sense she really *wants* to.

ANNE

(walking out)
Merry Christmas.

JOHN

(after her)
It's just a bit of fun, love, a
game, it doesn't mean anything...
(footsteps down the hall)
...it's just a *game*.

But then he hears the sound of the lock turning. And we sense
he *knows* he's an idiot.

*

39 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - BEDROOM - NIGHT 39

ANNE in her bedroom, bolting the door. Stares at the lock.

Outside the snow falls and the distant sound of '**Tis The Season**', wafts up from the street far below.

ANNE (V.O.)

And then finally, in February, John got the news he'd been waiting for.

40 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 40

ANNE on the phone, JOHN just off.

ANNE

Thank you so much, June, and can you pass on my thanks to Mr Donnelly too and...and we'll see you on the 10th.

And she puts the phone down, and turns to a smiling triumphant, JOHN. And we track slowly in on him as we hear -

ANNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...I feel very much in limbo.

*

41 INT. CORONER'S COURT - DAY 41

A tearful ANNE in the witness stand. ANTHONY and MARK seated in the court. D.C. JUNE AYOADE there too. (Fade down *italicised*).

ANNE

People die, have a funeral, they have a headstone, there's something to mark the fact they existed on this earth, but without a body I don't know how we can mark John's life, *it's the same for the boys, they need help to move on and....*

*

Cross fade to -

JUNE

...there was *no* indication, from
our extensive investigation, that
Mr Darwin could have staged his
disappearance in any way.

*

*

And JUNE flicks a look at ANNE, as if to say 'it's going to be okay'.

JUNE (CONT'D)

What we *do* know, however, is that
the canoe was barely watertight,
let alone seaworthy, and so we
believe that the most likely
scenario is the vessel sank, and Mr
Darwin was carried into the
shipping lanes by the treacherous
currents off North Gare beach,
where we believe he very sadly
drowned, *with his body almost
certainly then being swept out to
sea....*

Cross fade to -

DONNELLY

...and I want to thank the police
for their unstinting investigation.
Sadly, we will probably never know
for *sure* what happened that day,
which will not be of any comfort to
the family, but *is* why I am now
going to record an open verdict...

*

ANNE, holding both of the boys' hands on either side. All three very emotional.

42

EXT. PIER - SEATON CAREW - DAY

42

Three wreaths tumbling slowly through the air.

DONNELLY (O.S.)

...and declare John Ronald
Darwin...

Pull back to reveal, ANNE, MARK and ANTHONY, watching the roiling waters below accept their tributes to the father and husband.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)
....missing, presumed dead. I very much hope you will now have an opportunity to move on with your lives.

And as their heads bow, we drone fast back up to the promenade.

Where JOHN watches his own memorial service from an attic window.

End of part two

Part three

Montage

43 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 43

JOHN hungrily ripping open an envelope, and pulling out a cheque for 90K.

ANNE (V.O.)
Over the next few months, we received cheques for nearly a quarter of a million pounds...

44 SCENE OMITTED. 44

45 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DINING ROOM - DAY 45

ANNE delivering tea, biscuits and more cheques, half a dozen of them, to JOHN, at the desk with all the property files, penning letters to estate agents.

ANNE (V.O.)
...which meant we could pay off the global mortgage and finally start selling the rental houses.

(MORE)

ANNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All twelve of them. Two months after the inquest, his new passport arrived - it was all going to his plan...

46 SCENE OMITTED 46

47 EXT. STREET - SEATON CAREW - DAY 47

Bearded JOHN walking down a street, a bag of shopping in hand, with just his bobble hat on now (having eschewed the glasses).

ANNE (V.O.)

...what could *possibly* go wrong?

48 INT. CAR - STREET - SEATON CAREW - DAY 48

And now we are with the P.O.V of a driver (ALAN) in a car, driving towards JOHN, who is waiting to cross a road in Seaton at a zebra crossing.

And ALAN frowns as he slows, and then stops, and stares intently at him, and then -

ALAN

What the *fuck*?

And he is about to open the door and get out, when a car hooting him behind means he has to drive on. But he cannot take his eyes off JOHN in the rear view.

But ALAN knows what he just saw.

49 SCENE OMITTED 49

50 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DINING ROOM - DAY 50

ANNE sitting with JUNE AYOADE.

ANNE

No.

JUNE

Swore blind. Worked with him at Holme House prison he said - Alan Hudson?

ANNE

(nods)

I remember Alan.

JUNE

Just walking along the promenade he said. Then just crossed in front of him at the Zebra.

ANNE shaking her head. Shaking it a long time. Then -

ANNE

I mean no-one would like him to be alive more than me, June.

JUNE

Well of course.

ANNE

But he isn't. He's dead.

A beat as they both contemplate this tragic truth. And then -

JUNE

And you've not seen anyone who you thought *looked* like him?

ANNE

But with a beard.

JUNE

But with a beard.

And she thinks. Thinks hard. Then -

ANNE

I'm really sorry, no. I mean if I did, did you want me to call you?

JUNE

If you wouldn't mind, at least so's we could eliminate them.

ANNE

Of course, happy to do that.

JUNE

Thanks, Anne.

ANNE

(standing)

I'll see you out.

51 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - SITTING ROOM - DAY 51

JUNE walking away across the road, watched by ANNE, and, perhaps surprisingly given the circumstances, by JOHN. And his beard.

JOHN

I think it might be sensible for me to go away for a bit.

She turns. And he cannot quite look her in the eye when he says.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I've been researching some business opportunities for us in America. And now I have my new passport, I thought I might head there for a week or so. Kill two birds with one stone. As it were.

She says nothing.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Could you get me some cash out? Please.

52 EXT. STREET - SEATON CAREW - DAY 52

ANNE walking to work, watching a plane rising up into the sky.

ANNE (V.O.)

A part of me was almost relieved when he left.

53 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN / HALLWAY - NIGHT 53

ANNE sitting down with a meal for one down at the kitchen table and pouring a glass of wine from a mini 'one glass' bottle.

ANNE (V.O.)

Almost.

Because she's also so lonely. She takes a small sip of wine.

ANNE (V.O.)

And then just two weeks later.

And then the sound of a gentle knocking.

She frowns.

There it is again. She looks up. A 'Knock knock knock' coming from the connecting door outside the kitchen door.

And of course she 'knows'. A beat. And then she stands, walks out into the hallway, unbolts the bolt, turns the key and opens the door to reveal a ramshackle, sodden JOHN.

JOHN

She told me it was a watertight investment, stupid tart. *

ANNE almost un-surprisable now.

ANNE

How much ?

A beat. Then, eyes down -

JOHN

Fifty.

ANNE

(stunned)

Fifty thousand pounds?

JOHN

Dollars. I'm not *that* daft.

And she looks at him with almost *pity* now.

ANNE

And what else didn't she give you?

JOHN

It was never like that. She said she had a ranch we could invest in. It was just business.

And does she believe him? Maybe, maybe not, but it's still like a dagger to her heart. And now she turns and walks back into the kitchen.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Can I come through?

ANNE

Do what you like, you will anyway.

And with his tail very much between his legs, he follows.

ANNE (V.O.)

And so that was that, and now we
settled back into a dull routine.

Over the following speech, he will drink her wine, and sit
down and eat her meal as she gets another mini bottle for
herself.

ANNE (V.O.)

With the next two years passing in
the opposite of a blur. John kept
searching for his dream, I kept
working and saw no-one other than
family.

ANNE walking out of the kitchen...

54 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

54

...and in to the dining room and walking to the window and
staring out at the black.

ANNE (V.O.)

Very occasionally, we'd fly to a
country to see if we could live
there, John would lose some more
money, and then we'd fly home, to
drink wine on our own, waiting for
something to change.

And she drinks deeply from her glass. She looks desperate.

ANNE (V.O.)

And then finally, one day, against
all the odds, it did.

New day

55 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY

55

ANNE turning the pages of a glossy brochure on Panama on the
kitchen table.

Pull back to see JOHN talking excitedly at her.

JOHN

...it has anonymous bank accounts,
it's not obsessed with law and
order, meaning you can actually get
stuff done, it's Catholic - one for
you there - and last but not least,
it's just beautiful.

And she is indeed looking at pictures of a stunning tropical paradise. The rain on the roof. Again.

ANNE

So what first attracted you to the low tax, high corruption country of Panama, John Darwin?

He smiles. She is joking, good.

ANNE (CONT'D)

It looks very lovely but it's ten thousand miles away.

JOHN

Five.

ANNE

It's another world.

JOHN

And like I said before, I think that's exactly what we *need*, a fresh start, a brave new world.

A beat. A long beat. He is watching her carefully. And then -

ANNE

So what would our life be there?

She (and maybe he) cannot quite believe she is engaging.

JOHN

Well, whatever we wanted it to be. But I've been looking into eco-tourism....

And he slides over some other brochures.

JOHN (CONT'D)

...so we buy a plot of land, in a scenic spot somewhere, near a lake or a river, or hiking trails. And then we build some cabins, one for us, and then others to rent, to tourists, and then we start advertising it. Riding, swimming, rafting, trekking, I mean just...what a life that would be, Anne.

And he watches her nervously, and she is not dismissing it outright.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And I know in the past I've sometimes bitten off more than I could chew, but I really think this one is doable, I genuinely do.

A beat.

ANNE

How would the boys visit?

JOHN

I don't know, but they visit here okay don't they.

ANNE

Except we'd be living as man and wife there.

(looks up)

I presume?

JOHN

Of course we would. And as for the boys, okay, so this time I'm not going to pretend to have all the answers yet, but we'd work something out, haven't we always?

ANNE

No. And what about my parents, your dad, they're way too old to do a flight like that.

JOHN

Agreed, but you could come back and visit your folks whenever you wanted to, and if you liked the idea, I think they'd support you, I think they'd want you to be happy.

A beat. Some kind of thaw definitely happening here.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But what I suggest, first up, is that we just take a holiday there. I mean we could both do with a break, Anne, a change of scenery, And we have a look at some land and just....we play it by ear, see how it feels.

A beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What do you say?

And as the rain drums down harder, and she looks in a brochure at a picture of someone drinking a Pina Colada on a white beach by azure sea, we can see she is tempted.

Why would she *not* be?

ANNE

I need to speak to the boys.

56

INT. FISH AND CHIP SHOP - DAY

56

ANNE with MARK and ANTHONY, having fish and chips, in an otherwise empty restaurant, on a rainy day. And she has obviously just told them.

MARK

Panama?

ANNE

Yes.

MARK

Like, Central America Panama?

ANNE

Is there another one?

ANTHONY

(kindly)

Did you not consider Alicante, mam,
if you just wanted 'warm'?

A beat, then -

ANNE

I also want a bit of an adventure.

And we are close on her. And there is clearly some truth here.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I've spent the last four years rattling around that great big house on my own. Every day the same, every day looking out to where your father...

And she trails off. Emotional again, for all the usual reasons.

ANNE (CONT'D)

...I just wanted a change, a bit of ...sunshine. I thought you'd be pleased for me.

ANTHONY

And we are, sorry, I think we're a bit surprised that's all.

MARK

But it's a great idea. And you're right, maybe an adventure's exactly what you need right now.

And the atmosphere recovers.

ANTHONY

So what you staying in, a hotel or a flat or....

ANNE

...an apartment, it was cheaper and gave me a bit more flexibility to explore....

And a sense she is already sowing some seeds in their heads.

*

ANNE (CONT'D)

...I don't want to just sit on a beach, I want to see the real country.

She drinks her tea as we hear -

TANNOY (O.S.)

Passengers for flight BA265 to Miami, please make your way to gate 12.

57 INT. NEWCASTLE AIRPORT - DAY 57

JOHN and a fairly terrified ANNE, in Newcastle airport, walking toward security, and she is walking twenty feet behind him (deliberately) except he keeps slowing and turning. Until she snaps -

ANNE

(hissed under her breath)
Will you stop bloody slowing down,
what if I see somebody I know.

JOHN

Love you're being daft...

ANNE

(hissed whisper)
...or I'm not coming!

And she stops in her tracks.

And with a wry smile he heads on, on his own, as she waits, letting other people go past her, until she finally starts to move forward, a good fifty yards behind him now.

58 EXT. PANAMA CITY - DAY 58

Establisher of the extraordinary skyline of Panama City.

59 EXT. TOCUMEN AIRPORT - PANAMA CITY - DAY 59

An American Airlines plane touching down in Panama City.

60 EXT. TOCUMEN AIRPORT - PANAMA CITY - DAY 60

JOHN and ANNE heading towards the taxi rank outside the airport.

61 INT. TAXI - PANAMA CITY - DAY 61

The pair of them in the back, driving through the city.

And we are on ANNE really, watching her absorbing the sights of this incredible, exotic city.

The skyscrapers, the old Spanish town, the beach, the verdant land beyond the city, it really *is* the most extraordinary place.

ANNE

This is more than five thousand miles away.

And he smiles, as intoxicated as she clearly is.

JOHN

Wait till you see some of the land we're visiting. It really is out of this world.

And even as she stares out of the window at the sights, her hand looks for his, and he takes it.

And so now they sit, in the back of the cab, holding hands, for this moment in time at least, happy.

62 INT. ESTATE AGENCY - PANAMA CITY - DAY 62

And here they are, being led into an office by a land estate agent called MARIO. (JOHN and ANNE are now changed into holiday clothes, and JOHN has shaved off his beard)

*
*

MARIO

...and this is my wife, Karina, Karina, this is Anne and John who I told you about.

KARINA

Hello, lovely to meet you, how was your trip?

ANNE

Muy Bueno, gracias.

MARIO

Ah, very good, you are honorary Panamanians already.

JOHN

That's actually all she can say. So what's the plan, Mario?

MARIO

Okay, so we start first thing tomorrow, there are two plots we will see in the morning, one in the afternoon, and then we will do the same each day, so three or four a day, till either I wear you out or you find your dream! Hopefully the latter, sound good?

JOHN

Sounds good.

KARINA

Oh...

*

And they turn to see KARINA has a camera in her hand.

KARINA (CONT'D)

...would you mind, it's just a thing we do with our clients?

And neither have time to say 'no'.

JOHN

Oh. Sure.

And then the three of them (JOHN, ANNE, and MARIO) turn to the camera and smile as she clicks.

And we freeze frame on ANNE and JOHN's smiling faces posed in the now iconic photo. And we track slowly in on the frozen frame, as we hear -

ANNE (V.O.)

Aside from the initial lie, this was easily the most stupid thing we did in those five and a half years.

And then out. *

End of part three.

Part four.

63

EXT. CARIBBEAN SEA - PANAMA - DAY

63

ANNE standing up to her knees (her skirt hitched up) in warm turquoise crystal clear tropical sea, on a deserted white sandy beach.

The image is in deliberate and very stark contrast to the last time we saw her in the sea. Which was in the depths of despair.

JOHN

Annie?

And she turns to see JOHN walking out of the land giving on to the beach. (MARIO stands a little way off on his mobile). *

Behind them, low mountains covered in dense tropical vegetation rise from verdant plains. *

Birds of Paradise fly between the trees, and there are coconuts littering the sand under the trees.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Come on, we'll be late for the next appointment.

ANNE

Can't we just buy *this* one?

JOHN

(grinning)

You said that about the last one. And all *three* yesterday.

And she giggles. Looks younger than we have seen her look in a while.

ANNE

Could we actually do this, John. Do the numbers actually work?

JOHN

I think so. I need more time to go through them all in detail, but my gut tells me yes. And has my gut let us down yet?

And this time she does not answer 'No'.

ANNE (V.O.)

Over the next two weeks, we saw dozens of plots, through several agents, each one more beautiful than the last. And I can't deny, I slightly started to fall in love....

64 EXT. RESTAURANT - PANAMA CITY BEACH - DUSK/NIGHT 64 *

ANNE and JOHN eating alfresco in a beach side restaurant. It is impossibly romantic. *

ANNE

...and we could do painting classes, maybe get in some local artists to teach, and cooking courses, using local produce, I bet we could even grow our own vegetables and...

And she looks up. To see him smiling at her. And she stops, embarrassed.

ANNE (CONT'D)

...what?

JOHN

Nothing. I'd just forgotten how pretty you are when you smile.

ANNE

(embarrassed)

Oh be quiet.

JOHN

It's true.

A beat.

ANNE

Well it's been a long time since I've felt like I *could*. And maybe I'm being stupid, letting myself get carried away with it.

JOHN

You're not being stupid at all.

Which feels like a first. That sort of kindness.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I mean I'm not saying it'd all be easy. We've got 'a lot of baggage' as they say. And I think we have to accept we can't change the past, what we've done.

A beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But I do wonder if here at least we could live alongside it a little more.... *comfortably*? Not pretend it never happened, but just let *other* things be important again as well. Like sun. And smiles. And s...

ANNE

....*shush*.

As she flicks a nervous glance to the table next to them, who, of course, did not hear a word.

And we stay on her, as reality creeps back in.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Which is all very well and good, John, but we *do* still have two sons back home. And my mum and dad. And *your* dad. And every time I kid myself there *could* be a way forward, I always come back to them. What I've done to them all.

JOHN

And I get that.

A beat. Lets that sit. Then -

JOHN (CONT'D)

But my dad's very old, not long for
this world, and no offence but
yours neither probably, sad though
that is...

And he leans in, takes her hand like she took his in the cab.

JOHN (CONT'D)

...which leaves the boys. So here's
the thing, love. I listen to them
when they come up, talking round
the kitchen table with you, I
listen to them, always. And let me
tell you one thing I know for sure.
They, are, happy.

On her. And actually, his words are landing, because they are
probably true.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Never mind what they went through
with me, they're *happy*. They've
both got lovely partners, they've
both got great jobs, they'll be
having their own kids soon, forging
their own paths in life, they're
going to be okay, you've done your
job, they're happy. So don't ever
lose sight of that.

And a waiter arrives with a beautiful plate of seafood.

ANNE

Gracias.

WAITER

De nada.

And as he walks away, JOHN takes the bottle of iced sparkling *
wine from the bucket and pours her a second glass. She takes *
it and he raises his glass to her. The glasses chink.

JOHN

To happiness?

A beat, and then she looks up at him, almost girlish.

ANNE

To happiness.

And they tuck in hungrily to their food.

ANNE (V.O.)
We went back and forth several
times over the next year...

65 SCENE OMITTED 65

66 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - HALLWAY - NIGHT 66

The hallway of the old cold house.

ANNE (V.O.)
...to finally sell the two
remaining houses.

And now the front door opens and ANNE walks in with her bags,
as a taxi pulls away behind her.

Her breath misting in the brutally cold air inside. That
peeling wallpaper. A sense that if she had any doubts, being
back has dispelled them.

Montage

67 INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY 67

ANNE holding on the phone (we can hear holding muzak). On the
kitchen table, we will see a printed out list of to do tasks,
headed '**John's tasks**'. A number of tasks have already been
crossed out (already done) and the first uncrossed
instruction, says 'international transfers, Alliance
National' and has a phone number next to it.

ANNE (V.O.)
And start the process of
transferring our money to various
Panamanian and American banks.

ANNE
Oh hello, I hope you can help
please...
(*'...I want to transfer a
sum of money from my
deposit account in the
UK....'*)

ANNE (V.O.)
And then it was time to tell the
boys.

68 INT. PUB - NIGHT

68

ANNE sits with MARK and ANTHONY in a quiet country pub.

ANNE
Well it might feel like an
impulsive decision to you, but if
I'm honest, I started thinking
about it the first time I went out
there.

Looks between ANTHONY and MARK.

ANTHONY
And starting up your own business,
mam, in a foreign country, you
feel....confident you can do that
do you?

ANNE
Do you not?

ANTHONY
I'm sure you could achieve anything
you set your mind to, it's just...
you're a long way from home if
anything goes wrong.

ANNE
It's a day's travel, Anthony.
(a beat, then)
Look, I know it's a lot to take in
but...
(and she takes their
hands)
...I just can't bear the thought of
giving up already, of throwing in
the towel at the age of fifty four.
(MORE)

ANNE (CONT'D)

I might have another thirty years in me, and I think I have the right to try to be happy again, to try for a new life somewhere. Somewhere away from the past.

Close on her. A sentence which means so much more than her sons could ever even begin to appreciate.

ANNE (CONT'D)

And obviously I'll come back and visit regularly. And when I've settled, you can come out and visit me. But you've got your lives to lead now, and you don't want to be worrying about having to drive all the way up to see me every other weekend...

MARK

...that is never a...

ANNE

...and you haven't ever made it feel like a chore, but I just want you both to be free to start thinking about your own families now. So the houses are going on the market, and as soon as I've found buyers, that'll be it.

A beat.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I need a big change, boys, to be able to move on, I need to be somewhere...I can forget.

And we go out on the boys, both clearly fairly stunned by this turn of events.

ANNE (V.O.)

We managed to sell Number Four in mid 2007....

70

INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - BEDROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

70

ANNE packing into suitcases a load of brand new outfits, sexy, slinky numbers, 'racy' bikinis with price tags still attached, amongst the more sensible tropical stuff. She has clearly been on a serious spending spree.

ANNE (V.O.)

...and then a few months later we also found a buyer for Number Three.

The doorbell sounds, and ANNE walks down the stairs (every room full of packing cases now) and she opens the front door to see MARK and ANTHONY.

MARK

(affectionately)
Not changed your mind then?

ANNE

(kissing him and then his brother)
Sorry, no.

And they are walking in and she shuts the door behind them as they turn back to her.

ANNE (CONT'D)

So it's all in there...
(the dining room)
...take whatever you want, or take nothing if it doesn't feel right, it's entirely up to you. I'll put the kettle on.

And she walks on down the hall, and MARK and ANTHONY walk into the dining room.

71

INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - DINING ROOM - DAY

71

And it's mainly filled with packing boxes, but the dining table remains upright, and on it is a selection of their dad's personal effects.

A watch, some cufflinks, some books, his old wallet, his old passport, his old ration book, some paperbacks etc.

The boys pick them up, smell them, caress them, a shared moment of deeply personal grief.

MARK

Which ones d'you want?

ANTHONY

You choose.

And realising his brother is too selfless to choose something that perhaps he thinks MARK might like, he quickly splits the effects into two equal piles.

MARK

How about I have these for a bit,
and then, every once in a while, if
you want to, we swap.

ANTHONY

Sounds like a plan.

And MARK puts his arm around his little brother's shoulder.

MARK

Still miss him.

ANTHONY

Me too. Miss ringing him to find
how to build something badly. Or
how not to handle a work dispute.

And MARK grins. True enough.

And we stay on the two of them, looking down at his effects,
quietly united in their loss.

72

INT. NUMBER 3 THE CLIFF - KITCHEN - DAY

72

ANNE in the kitchen, getting some lunch ready as MARK and ANTHONY walk in. At one end, the table set. But at the other various sheets of paper, each, the last page of much longer forms.

ANNE

All done?

MARK

All done.

ANNE

Good stuff. So can I just ask each
of you to sign those, please, it's
just some IHT stuff, all very
boring, you don't need to read it.

BOTH

Sure/No problem.

And as they start to sign we track in on ANNE. And under the efficient smile, there is an acre of self loathing.

73

SCENE OMITTED

73

74 INT. NEWCASTLE AIRPORT - NIGHT

74 *

MARK and ANTHONY bidding farewell to their mother at Newcastle airport.

MARK

E-mail us, or call, as soon as you get there.

ANNE

I will.

ANTHONY

And remember, if at any point you think maybe this wasn't such a good idea.....

ANNE

(smiles)

...Anthony...

ANTHONY

...I'm just saying, it's fine to come back home, ay any time...

ANNE

...okay, well 'thank you'.

(and she smiles)

And I love you both, very much.

And one last hug, and then she is walking off.

And we stay on the brothers as she disappears through the security doors. And then without looking at his brother -

MARK

Totally bloody nuts.

And ANTHONY half laughs, and then they both walk away, clearly utterly baffled by their mum's behaviour.

75 EXT. TOCUMEN AIRPORT - PANAMA CITY - DAY 75

A United Airlines plane touching down on the tarmac at the airport.

76 INT. TOCUMEN AIRPORT - PANAMA CITY - DAY 76

ANNE breezily pushing her trolley through the airport, and heading towards the exit and the taxi rank.

*
*

77 EXT. BEACH RESTAURANT - DAY 77 *

ANNE walking in, spotting JOHN, already waiting at 'their' table. *

And he waves, stands as she starts to walk over. And as she does, we should clock that JOHN looks a little tense. That something is wrong. *

ANNE
(hugging him)
Heya love, lovely to see you, how are you? *

JOHN
(hugging her back, but tense as fuck)
I'm good, I'm excellent, how was your flight? *

ANNE
Yeah fine thanks. *

JOHN
Let me get you a drink have a seat. *

ANNE
(sitting)
And how have you been, all on your own, how's everything going? *

JOHN
Good. Yes. Good.
(looking for the waiter a little too hard) *

ANNE
Are you okay? *

JOHN
(looking back)
I'm sorry? *

ANNE
You're being a bit funny. *

JOHN
Am I? No. *

ANNE
Is something wrong? *

JOHN
(really craning round for
a waiter now)
Not at all just trying to find a
waiter.

ANNE
John can you leave that a second.

JOHN
I'll get you a glass of that stuff
you had last time.

ANNE
John, what's the matter?

JOHN
The prosecco wasn't it.

ANNE
John!

And now he stops. Cannot meet her eye. A long beat, then -

JOHN
Okay we might have a little
problem.

Oh fuck. He looks up at her.

ANNE
What sort of a little problem?

JOHN
And this is absolutely not my fault
because they only changed the rules
a few months ago so there was
literally no way I could have known
about it.

ANNE
What sort of a problem?

A beat. And then -

JOHN
To get permanent resident status
here now, you have to have a signed
letter from a police force in your
country of origin attesting to your
good character. Which is obviously
a *bit* tricky, given my character
doesn't actually exist.

ANNE cannot quite believe what she just heard. *

ANNE *

So you're saying...we can't *

actually *live* here? *

JOHN *

Not *literally*, no. *

And her head goes into her hands. *

ANNE *

Oh my God, John. *

JOHN *

I know. *

ANNE *

How could you have missed that? *

JOHN *

There was so much else to deal *

with. *

As a new thought occurs to her. *

ANNE *

And you found this out when? After *

I got on the plane? I mean...when *

did you find this out? *

And he nods. *

JOHN *

Actually a few weeks ago. *

Can she be more stunned? *

ANNE *

And you didn't think to *tell* *

me???!! To maybe stop me shipping *

all our possessions out here? *

JOHN *

Yep, fair play, I could have been a *

bit more reactive there - to be *

honest I've just been so *

preoccupied with the land deal. *

ANNE *

(a tiny beat, then) *

What land deal? *

JOHN

(frowns again, she is
being dim)
The land we saw, love, the land we
agreed to buy.

ANNE

(and *she* frowns now.
Because surely not)
I remember *that* land deal, John, of
course I remember *that* land deal.
But you obviously wouldn't spend
four hundred thousand dollars on
that land deal, if you'd just
learned you couldn't actually live
or work here. Would you. Only a mad
man would do that. Wouldn't they.

And she is looking at him. And he is worryingly silent. And
then finally -

JOHN

It was a bargain.

Stunned. Then her head goes down, and we might here a muted

ANNE

No no no no no no no no no no.

And he nods.

JOHN

You're frustrated, and I get that,
it's obviously disappointing for
both of us. But everything happens
for a reason, Anne, and this has
actually given me room to think.

On her. What fresh hell is coming?

JOHN (CONT'D)

Because in truth, I'm fed up of
skulking in the shadows. I want to
be able to see the boys again, as
their dad, and for us to live
normally, out in the open, as man
and wife. So....
(deep breath, then just
say it)
...I'm going to fly back to the UK,
I'm going to present myself to the
police, and I am going to tell them
...I have had *amnesia*.

On her face. Slack.

*

JOHN (CONT'D)

*

I'm going to say I've had it for
seven years, and that I have
absolutely no idea where I've been,
since a holiday to Norway, in June
2000.

*

*

*

*

*

*

A beat. He smiles.

*

JOHN (CONT'D)

*

And I'm sure there'll be a bit of a
kerfuffle, and the insurance
companies might kick off a bit, but
we can sort all that out. The most
important thing, is that once it's
all died down, we can get back to
some semblance of normality. You,
me, and the boys. Because bottom
line love...

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

And he leans back. The swagger back.

*

JOHN (CONT'D)

*

...I've had enough of being dead.

*

*

Out on her face.

*

77A

SCENE OMITTED

77A

*

End of episode.

*