

Steven Moffat



Shooting Script: 11.1.91

PRESS GANG Series 3

Episode Two

written by

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"KILLER ON THE LINE"

Suggested cuts

5/2/91

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"PRESS GANG" Series 3

Episode Two

"KILLER ON THE LINE"

CHARACTER LIST

LYNDA DAY.....JULIA SAWALHA  
SPIKE THOMSON.....DEXTER FLETCHER  
KENNY PHILLIPS.....LEE ROSS  
SARAH JACKSON.....KELDA HOLMES  
COLIN MATHEWS.....PAUL REYNOLDS  
FRAZZ DAVIES.....MMOLOKI CHRYSTIE  
JACK  
DAVID BANKS  
CONSTABLE  
Loranzo

We fade in on a Close Shot of the front page of a Junior Gazette. It is plainly rumpled and lying on the floor. It is illumined in a square of light thrown by a street-lamp through a window.

We slowly pan along encountering more similarly illumined newspapers - not all Junior Gazettes - scattered over the floor until we come to a foot and a length of leg lying prone across them.

We pan along the semi-conscious form of a middle-aged MAN sprawled on the floor. He is drawing his breath in great shudders and bleeding from a cut in his forehead. He does not look the kind of man who would normally be in a fight but obviously he has just been.

He is clutching something in one of his hands. As he finally lapses into unconsciousness his hand flops to the floor and sets a small aerosol rolling across it.

We pan with the aerosol until it rolls against another pair of feet, these encased in trainers. We pan on up to see JACK - a boy of seventeen or eighteen - sitting crouched against the counter where he has evidently fallen. He is clutching at his eyes and rocking and sobbing in pain.

As we watch he gingerly takes his hands from his eyes - they are puffy and bloodshot - and tries to look around him. It is evident he can hardly see anything and his hands flinch in pain, back to his eyes.

He starts to clamber shakily to his feet. With his hands stretched out feeling in front of him he tries to make his sightless way across the room. Almost immediately his feet twist on a display stand knocked over in the preceding struggle and he goes crashing headlong. As he goes down he flails with his hands, catching the telephone on the counter so that as he hits the floor the receiver is hanging next to him.

From outside we suddenly hear the sound of a police siren. He tenses, listens.

Slowly he relaxes as the siren fades off into the night. It is replaced by another sound - the dialling tone purring from the hanging receiver.

JACK registers this. A thought occurs to him. He gropes around vaguely for the phone.

202 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

202

Close Shot of the Junior Gazette phone. Beyond it we can see that the news-room is deserted.

The phone starts to ring. We start to pan in a circle round the phone, keeping it in the foreground as it continues to ring, revealing that the surrounding news-room is totally empty - until we come almost full circle to a figure slumped back in the chair by the phone behind a magazine.

After a moment FRAZZ looks over the magazine wearily at the phone. He puts out a hand to lift the receiver but it proves just out of his reach. Oh well, he's done his best. He disappears back behind his magazine.

We hear the doors being battered open.

SPIKE is coming through them. He is dressed exactly as he was at the end of the previous episode - in fact, only a few hours have passed - but he is now carrying a suitcase and a flight bag. As he slams these down on to the floor he is plainly in a furious temper.

FRAZZ looks at him with a curiosity so mild it is barely perceptible.

SPIKE

Don't ask!

FRAZZ doesn't. As he goes back to his magazine SPIKE starts storming over to Lynda's desk. Something catches his eye on the way, bringing him to a halt. He stares.

From under Sarah's desk are protruding SARAH'S feet. She is plainly sitting on the floor beneath it for reasons that are rather less obvious.

FRAZZ

(Without looking up  
from his magazine)

Don't ask.

SPIKE has one last bewildered look at SARAH then turns to Lynda's desk, yanks the top drawer fully out of it and empties the contents all over the desktop. We pull away from him as he starts searching through it all and gradually bring the still-ringing phone large into the foreground.

203 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

203

JACK sits huddled on the floor, the phone at his ear. Faintly we hear it ringing out.

203 CONTINUED

203

JACK  
 (Almost in tears)  
 Please... Please!

We slowly crane up from him until we are looking directly down at the hunched figure.

DISSOLVE TO:

204 INT. NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

204

An almost identical shot looking directly down at SARAH under her desk - that is a shot of the desktop and Sarah's legs protruding from beneath. We crane down and in to a close shot of Sarah's face. There are dried tears and she is staring grimly.

FADE UP EPISODE TITLE:

"KILLER ON THE LINE"

A Close shot of the phone as it abruptly stops ringing.

SPIKE now yanks out the second drawer and empties it over the desk - then with a sudden spasm of rage and frustration he hurls the drawer across the news-room. It clatters against one of the shelf units.

SPIKE  
 Where's Lynda?

FRAZZ glances mildly over at the enraged SPIKE glowering from behind Lynda's desk which has been half taken apart in his search.

FRAZZ  
 You haven't tried the filing cabinet.

SPIKE  
 Know what that woman's done to me??

FRAZZ  
 Dated you, dumped you, broken your heart, driven you back to America, and given you a serious hang-up about all other women because you know you're basically still crazy about her and always will be.

SPIKE looks at him sourly for a moment.

SPIKE

Lucky guess.

He starts heading over to Sarah's desk.

FRAZZ

Did I miss anything?

SPIKE

She stole my damn passport.

He ducks under Sarah's desk to talk to her.

SPIKE

Some guy you're nuts about stood  
you up, right?

SARAH

How did you know?

SPIKE

Well it's Saturday. Come on.

He takes her arm and starts to heave her out from under  
the desk. From his matter of fact demeanour this is  
obviously a familiar scenario to him.

SPIKE

(To Frazz)

Know what I did?

FRAZZ

Tried to chat up a stewardess to  
let you on the plane.

SPIKE is taken aback - that's exactly what he did.

FRAZZ

(Shrugs)

Lucky guess.

SPIKE has led a reluctant but unresisting SARAH to a  
chair and sat her in it.

SPIKE

I just tried to point out it's a  
ten hour flight and the seats  
recline. There's no persuading  
some people.

(To Sarah)

Who was it?

SARAH

David Banks.

*leaf*

SPIKE  
 David Banks?? Sarah, I taught  
 that kid everything he knows  
 about women. You've got to stay  
 away from guys like that.

FRAZZ  
 So you came back from the  
 airport looking for Lynda...

SPIKE  
 I went straight out to her  
 house...

SARAH  
 David Banks is a friend of  
 yours??

SPIKE  
 Sure. We've got four of the  
 same ex's.

She slaps him hard across the face, and strides away from  
 him. SPIKE barely reacts, just strokes his cheek  
 meditatively.

SPIKE  
 I just realised! Sarah and  
 Lynda are both left-handed!

FRAZZ is looking at SPIKE curiously.

FRAZZ  
 So what did you do at Lynda's?

SPIKE  
 This you're going to love. I'm  
 raging, right? Zoe's thrown a  
 fit and is off back to the  
 States without me.

(Realises)

Hey, you know she's left-handed  
 too - and so I throw a fit of my  
 own and I'm hammering on Lynda's  
 door yelling "Open up so I can  
 kill you!"

FRAZZ  
 But she doesn't listen to  
 reason.

*keep it*  
~~*use*~~

*John IV*  
~~*Sarah*~~  
*Lynda*  
*John*

*John*

SPIKE

So I get madder and empty a couple of garbage cans over the front lawn.

FRAZZ

And even that didn't work?

SPIKE

So I stick a couple of choice items through her letter-box just to make the point!

FRAZZ

It's just so hard to get some people to invite you in, isn't it?

SPIKE

I hear her disappearing up the stairs so I'm up the drainpipe, knocking on her bedroom window and yelling some more. Won't even show her face. I got that girl scared, Frazz.

FRAZZ

You're some piece of work, Thomson.

SPIKE

(Laughs)

I'm an animal!

FRAZZ

(Congratulatory hand on Spike's shoulder)

Want to know something, animal?

SPIKE

Sure, what?

FRAZZ

How about Lynda's new address?

Close shot of SPIKE as he slowly digests this information and its awful implications.

Close shot of the SHOPKEEPER as he lies still. The blood is flowing from his forehead and his breathing now seems shallow.



CF

JACK is kneeling by him. Blindly he finds the man's chest with one hand, checks its rise and fall, then moves up to the face, finds the stickiness of the blood on the forehead. He recoils from it in fright. His face is wild with panic.

Outside there are suddenly footsteps, voices talking and laughing.

Instinctively JACK freezes.

The voices fade.

Uncontrollably JACK starts to sob in fear and helplessness.

Slowly he starts to make his way back across to the telephone which is now sitting on the floor at the counter.

SPIKE has SARAH sat down in a chair and is sitting in a chair opposite trying to teach her some of the basic lessons of life and love. We get the impression this isn't the first time.

~~SPIKE  
 So! Do you still wait in all night if some guy's said he'll phone you?  
 SARAH  
 Once I popped out to get some milk.  
 SPIKE  
 I'm proud of you, Sarah.  
 SARAH  
 But I left the phone on the window sill with the ringer turned up.  
 SPIKE  
 Well it's a start.  
 SARAH  
 And when I got back there was a queue of my neighbours using it.  
 SPIKE  
 (Despair)  
 Sarah...!~~

*with Sarah*

*Yes*

SARAH

Oh they were very apologetic.  
But it took ages to get to the  
front.

SPIKE looks at her for a moment.

SPIKE

Does the expression "doormat"  
ever flit briefly across your  
mind?

SARAH

That's what my little cousin  
calls me.

SPIKE slightly double-takes on this.

SARAH

She's only two, of course. She  
thinks it's my name.

(Miserably)

You know, getting called  
"doormat" from a pushchair can  
hurt!

SPIKE stares at her in mounting disbelief.

SARAH

The story of my life.

Abruptly the Junior Gazette phone starts ringing again.  
SPIKE glances round as FRAZZ makes no move to answer it.

SPIKE

Back on phones. You never wait  
in all night for a call - cos  
guys can hear that in your voice  
- and you never, never answer on  
the first ring.

SARAH

But I can't help it, I'm all  
tensed up and waiting - I just  
sort of pounce. I answer the  
phone if the door knocks.

*The phone rings. Sarah makes a lunge for it. Spike stops her.*  
SPIKE looks round at FRAZZ still steadfastly ignoring the  
phone. *ignores*

SPIKE

Frazz is the same - it's just  
that his reaction time is around  
a month.

*(LOOKING  
OVER AT  
FRAZZ)*

SPIKE (CONT.)  
(To Frazz)

You ever going to answer that thing?

FRAZZ  
It might not be for me.

SPIKE  
How will you know if you don't answer.

FRAZZ  
Difficult, isn't it? I just give up the moment it rings.

SPIKE  
(Irritably heading to phone)  
You guys are on late duty - it could be a story.

FRAZZ  
That'd be convenient. They don't usually phone in.

SPIKE just glances at him sourly and reaches for the phone. He freezes.

SPIKE  
What am I doing?? Why should I care??

SPIKE turns on his heels and goes. We hold on the phone, closing in on it as it continues to ring disregarded.

As it fills the screen SPIKE'S hand drops unexpectedly back on to the receiver.

A wider shot shows FRAZZ looking ironically at SPIKE as he hesitates at the phone.

SPIKE  
(Shrugs)  
Old habits.

~~Spike~~ He lifts the receiver.

SPIKE  
Hello, Spike Thomson's advice line for the lovelorn.

207 INT. KENNY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

207

Intercut with Scene 206 as required.

KENNY is sitting on his bed, phone at his ear.

KENNY

I've just met someone I really like. Is it too soon to steal their passport?

SPIKE

(Taken aback)

You knew about that??

KENNY

(By way of an answer)

Spike, it's Kenny.

SPIKE

Right. I guess you're looking for the bitch-editor from hell, yeah?

KENNY

Don't ever call her that, Spike. She likes it.

SPIKE

If she shows I'll bring her over. In suitcases.

KENNY

(Lying back on bed,  
closing eyes)

Well leave them at the door, I'm in serious need of sleep. Look, between the witty barbs and the furniture hurling could you tell Lynda we've got distribution problems all over the south side. And tell her Loranzo's been trying to phone her all evening but no one's been answering at the news-room.

SPIKE

Loranzo??

KENNY

Just a plain ordinary guy I wouldn't mind seeing dead. Got to go, Spike.

He puts the phone down.

208 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

208

SPIKE is putting down the phone.

SPIKE  
So who's Loranzo?

FRAZZ  
Long story. Mostly dull.

The phone starts ringing again. SPIKE looks at it irritably.

SPIKE  
Enough already!

He goes, leaving us with a shot of the phone ringing and beyond it SARAH sitting sulking in a chair. After a moment a thought occurs to her and she looks around at the phone. She checks her watch.

209 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

209

Close shot of JACK on the phone.

JACK  
(Despairing)  
Come on!... Come on!!

We slowly crane up from him till we are looking directly down at the tableau below - JACK huddled at the counter, the SHOPKEEPER prone on the floor, the scatter of newspapers everywhere.

And we see something else clearly for the first time. The street-lamp throws the lettering on the window in sharp relief over the floor by the shopkeeper's body. "LORANZO'S".

210 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT.

210

Same shot of SARAH over ringing phone.

She hesitates, starts towards it.

A shot of SPIKE back searching Lynda's desk. He is watching SARAH.

SPIKE  
You expecting a call?

SARAH  
(Apologetic)  
When David cancelled he said he might phone about eleven.

210 CONTINUED

210

SPIKE  
It's five to ten.

SARAH  
Well, elevenish.

211 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

211

Shot of JACK waiting on the phone.

212 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

212

SPIKE stands with SARAH at the phone urgently imparting last minute advice.

SPIKE  
You tell him it like it is. Get that sucker sweating guilt.

SARAH  
(Bracing herself)  
Right, I will.

SPIKE  
Straight for the throat, no mercy! Go for it, killer!

She determinedly lift the phone.

SARAH  
(Instinctively; before she can stop herself)  
Hello, I'm fine.

She claps her hand to her mouth. SPIKE groans and heads off, leaving her to it.

213 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

213

Intercut with Scene 212 as required.

JACK is bewildered at this response.

JACK  
What?

SARAH frowns.

SARAH  
David?

JACK  
Who is this?

SARAH

Who's this?

Impulsively JACK slams the phone down.

SARAH looks puzzled at the phone.

JACK sits in the dark, baffled. Who was that?

Hesitantly he lifts the receiver again.

SPIKE looks up from his renewed search of Lynda's desk.

SPIKE

Not David?

SARAH

(Still staring troubled  
at the phone)

Wrong number. I think...

The phone rings again. SARAH answers it.

SARAH

Hello?

Shot of JACK frowning baffled at hearing the same  
voice again.

SARAH is perturbed at the silence.

SARAH

Hello?

JACK

Where's Rod. I need to speak to  
Rod.

SARAH

Rod?

JACK

Look, I know he's there, okay!  
Just get him!

From the note of panic in his voice SARAH now knows  
there is something badly wrong here. A look of  
suspicion comes over her face.

SARAH

There's no Rod here, I'm sorry.  
What number were you dialling?

JACK  
Is this part of it? Look if this is part of  
it, stuff it, okay?

SARAH  
Part of what?

JACK  
I don't know what number, I just  
know Rod's there. So get him!!

SARAH  
How can you not know...

JACK  
(Real desperation)  
Look, I'm stuck here, I could be  
found any minute!

This really registers in SARAH. Something is definitely  
amiss here. She thinks rapidly. She must keep him on  
the phone, keep him talking.

SARAH  
(Cautious, not sure this is  
the right thing to say)  
Why are you stuck?

JACK frowns. He has detected the false note in Sarah's  
voice. He has his first suspicions.

JACK  
Who is this? Who am I talking  
to? Kathy?

SARAH  
Why are you stuck?

She is met with silence. JACK is worried now. SARAH  
chances her arm.

SARAH  
Look, what do I tell Rod? Why  
are you stuck, he'll want to  
know.

Still silence.

SARAH  
I mean, you know Rod.

JACK considers.



213 CONTINUED

213

JACK

I can't see.

SARAH

What?

JACK

He sprayed my eyes, he had some kind of spray stuff. I can't see. And if I'm caught here...

He breaks off again.

Outside he can hear voices again. Two men have stopped by the window and are talking. JACK shrinks into himself.

JACK

(Whispered)

I'll phone back.

He hangs up.

214 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

214

SARAH is left deeply troubled. She thinks a moment, reaches behind her, takes her notebook off her desk. She flips it open to the first fresh page. She poises her pen over it, frowning in thought.

FRAZZ and SPIKE have stopped what they're doing - which in Frazz's case is not a lot - and are watching her.

SPIKE

Problem, Sarah?

SARAH

(Without looking up)

If that phone rings again let me answer it.

FRAZZ and SPIKE exchange a glance. They shrug and get back to what they're doing.

We cut quickly to a shot of the news-room through the glass of one of the doors just as it is swung open and out of our view - plainly the POV of someone who has just entered.

Closer shot of SPIKE searching through the desk.

LYNDA

Dear Diary...

214 CONTINUED

214

SPIKE'S head snaps up. LYNDA is standing in the doorway, COLIN beside her. She is watching SPIKE with an amused twinkle which is a very difficult trick and should only be attempted by a trained actress.

LYNDA

It's that cute American again!  
And he's searching my desk.  
Does this mean he fancies me?

SPIKE has straightened up. He looks murderously at her. But LYNDA just carries on taking the piss and loving every moment of it. We track with her as she makes her way towards him.

LYNDA

It's so difficult to know what to say in these situations. One wants to be firm with him but just a little seductive. Find out what the hell he's doing - but maybe encourage him a little. I need style, authority and sex appeal.

She is now standing facing him. She glances briefly at the ransacked desk, back at SPIKE.

LYNDA

Something of interest in my drawers?

SPIKE stares at her coldly.

SPIKE

Let's get one thing clear. I know you stole my passport. And I am going to get seriously - and I mean dangerously - angry if you ever consider, for one moment, denying it!!

LYNDA

(Promptly)

Fair enough, I stole your passport.

SPIKE is momentarily silenced by this reply. He's all geared up to deal with her denials, not this bare-faced admission of guilt. He rallies as best he can.

SPIKE

Well give it back to me!

LYNDA

No.

She smiles at him brightly.

LYNDA

Well thank goodness that's settled!

She pulls a folder from her desk clearly marked "RAINY DAY" file.

LYNDA

Have a look through the "Rainy Day" file. Kerr pulled the Coles and Folkestone story, legal stuff apparently, so we need a new lead. See what you can find in there.

She heads over to the filing cabinet, starts foraging through it. SPIKE, file in hand, stares at her in disbelief.

COLIN

(Appearing beside him)

Spike babe, didn't know you were back! How was Birmingham?

SPIKE

America, Colin. I was back home in America!

COLIN

No kidding?? I thought you came from Birmingham!

SPIKE

(Going to Lynda)

Lynda, you better listen to me....!

LYNDA

Any point, Spike? You don't appear to be much interested in telling me the truth these days!

SPIKE stares at her.

SPIKE

What?

LYNDA is already heading over to SARAH.

LYNDA

Sarah, we're changing the lead,  
any ideas?

SARAH is still pondering over her notebook which she has now made a few notes in. She has barely registered Lynda's arrival or her confrontation with Spike.

She now looks up from her notebook. The troubled look has not left her face.

SARAH

You know that spray stuff - like you use if you're being attacked or something, a little aerosol. Blinds people for a bit.

LYNDA

(Frowns, puzzled)

Sure, why?

FRAZZ

(Worried look at Sarah)

Sarah, I don't think you're supposed to use it if you've just been stood up.

SPIKE

(Coming over)

Lynda, I'm going to tell you exactly once - you give me that damn passport.

LYNDA looks at him icily. This is more than just their usual fight, there is something else going on.

LYNDA

I don't recall at any point in our relationship just doing what you told me, Spike.

SPIKE

Good point. I see you never did lose any weight off your ass.

LYNDA

Well I never had much confidence in your aim.

SARAH

(Breaking in over this)

Look the point is the spray is defensive, right? It's used by someone who is being attacked.

Already gone.

cut

LYNDA  
(Puzzled)

What?

SARAH  
So someone who's had it used on  
them, they're likely to be the  
attacker, yeah?

LYNDA  
I suppose.

SARAH stares abstractly into space.

SARAH  
The big question is; why's he  
phoning here?

LYNDA  
Sarah? What's wrong?

SARAH  
(Going back to her notebook)  
I'm just thinking.

FRAZZ  
Yeh, I had that once.

LYNDA  
Don't exaggerate.

yes

SARAH is oblivious to all this, deep in thought.

SPIKE - enraged at being ignored - throws the "Rainy Day"  
file to the floor.

SPIKE  
Lynda, will you damn well listen  
to me!

LYNDA looks at him. She bends, picks up the file, tosses  
it on his old desk.

LYNDA  
(Calmly; as if nothing  
has happened)  
Just have a look. See what you can find.

Quick shot of SARAH - still deep in thought but the fog  
is clearing.

Back to SPIKE and LYNDA...

SPIKE

I saved your butt a couple of hours ago. I don't deserve this.

She looks at him defiantly.

LYNDA

You'd better know. I've worked out the real reason you're back in England.

They stare at one another. The tense silence is broken by SARAH.

She has reached a conclusion - and the impact of the thought brings her to her feet.

SARAH

Everyone!

They all turn.

SARAH

(Pulling the phone closer)  
We're about to get a call. If I'm right it'll be from someone who's in the process of committing an assault and possibly a burglary. And for some reason he had our phone number.

There is a somewhat startled silence.

SARAH

(Looking round them wryly)  
I thought that might be news to you.

Shot of the shadows of the two men thrown by the street-lamp through the window across the scattered newspapers on the floor.

We can't hear what they are saying but they are evidently laughing and joking. The shadows fall right across JACK sitting huddled on the floor, blindly unaware of this. He waits, shaking and afraid.

CF

215 CONTINUED

215

After a moment the shadows shake hands one of them starts heading off down the street, the other crosses the road away from the shop, causing his shadow to sink down out of sight.

As we hear the footsteps recede, JACK starts groping his way over to the phone.

216 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT

216

Close shot of the Junior Gazette phone. There is a sucker microphone stuck to the side of the mouthpiece. A pen is being tapped impatiently on the receiver. As we pull out we see that it is SARAH. We also see that the microphone is attached to a cassette recorder and that the phone is also attached to a speaker unit.

As we pull further out we see SPIKE in the background methodically searching a filing cabinet by dumping everything on the floor.

In the foreground COLIN is pacing up and down excitedly.

COLIN

This is good, this is great! A crime in progress phones us! I mean, are we a newspaper or what??

SARAH

It's nothing yet, Colin, just a guess.

COLIN

Well if it turns out different you can always make it up that way. Hell, you're a journalist.

SARAH

I don't make things up, Colin. I write news.

COLIN

Hey, kid, babe, lovey! I'm right behind you on news. People are always going to need entertainment, right?

SARAH gives up on him. COLIN continues to enthuse.

ms

COLIN

I can just feel the sales figures when this one hits. And I know you're going to write a real seller this time, kid.

SARAH

(Ironically)

Really?

COLIN

I got faith in you.  
(Tapping himself on chest)  
Your number one fan over here, babe. Trust you till the day you die!

SARAH

Well thank you, Colin.

COLIN

(Claps a comradely hand on her shoulder)  
Put in lots of adjectives. I love those.

He goes. SARAH shoots a withering look at his back. Suddenly the phone rings.

A wider shot as everyone reacts. LYNDA stands, COLIN whirls dramatically, even SPIKE turns from his ransacking of the filing cabinet.

SARAH

This could be it, Frazz?

FRAZZ starts the tape.

SARAH

(Answering phone)

Hello?

217 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

217

Intercut with Scene 216 as required.

JACK

Where's Rod?

SARAH

You missed him.

JACK

What?



SARAH

You missed him, he went out again.

JACK

What do you mean, out?

The others have gathered around SARAH, hearing Jack's voice through the speaker - except SPIKE who ostentatiously ignores all this and continues his search.

SARAH

He, ah... wants to know where you are.

JACK

Where I am?

SARAH

Yeh.

JACK

Look, he knows where I am, he brought me here.

SARAH exchanges a look of surprise with LYNDA.

JACK

Did you tell him I'm in trouble, did you tell him about my eyes?

SARAH

Look, ah... there wasn't really time. Listen, we're kind of foggy on what's really happened over there.

JACK

I told you, it went wrong, he got me with the spray.

SARAH

And you still can't see.

JACK

(Looking blearily at his hands)  
Not well enough. And I've got to be sure no one sees me coming out of here, I really cracked that old guy on the head.

Again looks are exchanged round the table. Even SPIKE has stopped searching the filing cabinet and is listening.

SARAH

How is he? The old guy, what state's he in?

JACK

I don't know - breathing. But he could get worse so I've got to get out of here!

Everyone round the table looks on with a new urgency. The stakes are getting higher.

SARAH

Tell us where you are, we'll come and get you.

JACK hesitates.

JACK

Rod knows where I am.

SARAH

Rod isn't here.

JACK doesn't reply. He is thinking hard.

SARAH

So tell us where you are.

LYNDA signals to SARAH, indicating she is pushing too hard. SARAH shrugs back at her.

After a long moment...

JACK

Who's us?

SARAH frowns.

JACK

Who are you? Who am I talking to?

SARAH doesn't know how to reply. She looks for inspiration round the others.

JACK

Tell me something. Tell me Rod's second name.

SARAH is stymied. LYNDA is scribbling something on a slip of paper. She slides it across to SARAH.

It reads "OWN UP".

217 CONTINUES

217

SARAH looks in surprise at LYNDA. LYNDA shrugs - what harm can it do now?

SARAH

Look, I'm going to tell you the truth, okay? Are you listening?

JACK is silent.

SARAH

Are you listening?

JACK

I'm listening.

SARAH

Okay, just don't hang up. I don't know where you are so I can't be any danger, right?

JACK frowns in puzzlement at this preamble.

SARAH

-You still there?

JACK

Shoot.

SARAH

The truth is, you got a wrong number. I don't know any Rod, there's never been any Rod here. But don't hang up. You're in trouble, maybe we can help.

There is a long silence.

JACK considers.

The news-team sit tensely round the table.

JACK

You think I'm some kind of idiot?

SARAH

What?

Cut

JACK  
 I know for a fact I've got the right number, okay? A fact. An hour ago Rod phoned this number and said he'd be over in ten minutes, I was there!

SARAH looks round the others in some bewilderment.

SARAH  
 I'm sorry, but you did get it wrong.

JACK  
 You don't understand - no way, not possible. I know this is the right number!

SARAH  
 Look, it can't...

yes

JACK  
 Is this part of the test?

SARAH  
 What?

JACK  
 I'm in real trouble here, okay? Stuff the test, just get me out!

SARAH  
 But I don't...

yes

JACK  
 Look, I know this is the right number! You understand me? I know!

He slams the phone down.

As the dialling tone purrs from the speaker the news-team look at one another in bewildered silence.

JACK sits in the shadows, panicked, breathing hard.

DISSOLVE TO:

In the background we can see LYNDA talking on her phone. In the foreground SARAH is waiting by her phone while COLIN berates her.

CF

COLIN  
I can't believe you blew it like that. I just feel so let down at a deeply personal level.

*show*

SARAH  
He'll phone back.

COLIN  
You any idea how many copies we could've sold with a story like this? Don't you care about news??

*exchange*

SARAH  
Shut up, Colin.

COLIN  
I trusted you like family, you know, I've always looked up to you like one of my own mothers!

LYNDA  
(Joining them)  
Shut up.

COLIN  
Yeh, just shut up, Sarah!!

LYNDA  
Colin, go away.

COLIN  
(Controls himself)  
You're right. I'm hurt and vulnerable, I guess I need to be alone. Thanks, Lynda.

He goes.

SARAH  
What did the police say?

LYNDA  
Imagine how I sounded. Hello, we're a newspaper, someone just called us up about a burglary and assault they're in the middle of doing. Could be anywhere in Britain but we've narrowed it down - they've got a phone.

*yes*

Ex

28  
218

And? SARAH

LYNDA  
I got a patronising lecture  
about hoax calls to newspapers.

SARAH  
That was it?? Lynda, there's a  
guy in there who's injured -  
dying for all we know!

LYNDA  
~~I did my best, Sarah!~~ They  
might send somebody by later.  
But don't hold your breath.

She looks at the phone and the speaker unit.

LYNDA  
We just have to hope he phones  
back.

SARAH  
I suppose he's bound to!

LYNDA starts to ~~get up~~ go.

SARAH  
Lynda...

LYNDA turns.

SARAH  
Why's he phoning us?

LYNDA  
(Shrugs)  
Wrong number.

SARAH  
He seems very sure.

LYNDA  
He's wrong.

SARAH  
I've got a feeling there's more  
to it than that.

LYNDA  
(Frowns at this)  
How? What connection could  
there be between us and him?

SARAH

218

cut

218 CONTINUED

SARAH  
Kind of the question of the  
moment, isn't it?

~~LYNDA and SARAH look at one another, troubled.~~ There is  
a crash from off screen. They look round.

SPIKE, amid the chaos his search has already created, has  
swept clean another shelf on one of the shelf units.

LYNDA starts to head over to him.

LYNDA  
We still need a story, Spike.  
Found anything in the "Rainy  
Day" file?

SPIKE  
(Searching through  
the stuff)  
I don't work here any more.  
Remember?

LYNDA  
I'm thinking of the future.

SPIKE  
I'm not coming back, Lynda.

LYNDA  
You're not exactly leaving  
either, are you?

SPIKE  
I'll find it.

LYNDA  
And what makes you so sure it's  
in the news-room?

SPIKE  
You must've gone straight from  
here to a meeting with Kerr  
about Coles and Folkestone.  
Knowing him you haven't time to  
go home.

She shrugs, conceding the point.

LYNDA  
~~Spike...~~ I really did miss you,  
you know.

yes

SPIKE

~~Oh, yeah, right.~~ What you missed, Lynda was a good reporter. You missed what I can do, what I know. Face it! You only want me for my mind!

LYNDA suppresses a smile at this.

SPIKE

You are just so shallow, Lynda!

He goes back to his search.

LYNDA

We're shallow people, Spike. Success of our relationship - we never had anything to talk about.

He ignores this, heads through the debris to the other shelf unit.

LYNDA

(Following him)

Know what the give-away was?

SPIKE

(Mystified)

What?

LYNDA

Bringing Zoe to England. You wouldn't take your girlfriend to the corner shop in case you fancied someone on the till. But here you are shelling out for a plane ticket.

SPIKE has stopped searching. Slowly he has turned to look at LYNDA. His face is unreadable.

LYNDA

And introducing her to your relatives! Why didn't I spot this sooner?

SPIKE remains impassive.

LYNDA

For that matter, why didn't you just tell me?

Again SPIKE is silent.



LYNDA  
Does this mean I'm not on the  
guest list for the engagement  
party?

SPIKE  
(Looks at her for a moment)  
That's what you think, is it?

LYNDA  
I'm right, aren't I?

SPIKE  
Which is usually what you think.

LYNDA  
Well?

SPIKE  
So what's the plan? You keep me  
around here till I fall back in  
love with you?

LYNDA  
You're not going to find that  
passport, you know.

SPIKE  
(Stares resentfully at her)  
In the end I'll make you give it  
to me.

LYNDA looks at him for a moment.

LYNDA  
Ditto.

They stare at one another.

Abruptly the phone rings.

Everyone - bar SPIKE - is hurrying to Sarah's desk.

COLIN  
It's him, it's got to be.  
Sarah, you're so great!

SARAH  
Shut up, Colin!

COLIN  
Me and Sarah are always kidding  
around like this, aren't we  
Sarah?

218 CONTINUED

218

FRAZZ  
 (Starting Tape)  
 Shut up, Colin.

COLIN  
 Hey, get this crazy news-room  
 banter, huh?  
 (Arms round Frazz and Sarah)  
 Are we the guys or what?

LYNDA  
 (To Sarah)  
 Well?

SARAH  
 Here goes.

She answers.

SARAH  
 Hello?

219 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

219

Intercut with Scene 218 as required.

JACK  
 I don't want to speak to you. I  
 want Rod.

SARAH  
 I keep telling you...

JACK  
 (Edge of hysteria  
 in the voice)  
 No more of that stuff, okay? No  
 more of the wrong number stuff.  
 I know, all right?

SARAH  
 Look, you have to believe me...

JACK  
 I said enough of that!! Just  
 get me the hell out of here!

SARAH  
 But we don't know where...

JACK  
Rod knows! And he's there, I  
 know he is! So no more rubbish,  
 all right??

219 CONTINUED

219

For a moment SARAH is floundering under the savagery of his attack - then her face sets.

SARAH  
(Firmly)

No, not all right. As a matter  
of fact, not all right at all.

JACK is taken aback at this.

JACK

What?

SARAH

It strikes me I'm your lifeline.  
You're stuck there and you need  
me, right? So let's do it my  
way, shall we?

JACK is silent and aghast. Round the table the news-  
team are similarly astonished at this new assertive  
SARAH. From the shelf units SPIKE is watching with  
interest.

SARAH

First of all I want to know  
about the man you attacked. How  
is he, still okay?

JACK

What does it matter about him?  
Who cares about him? I've got  
to get out of here!

SARAH

Fine! Phone back when you're  
ready to talk.

And she promptly hangs up on him.

JACK is astonished.

220 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

220

Round the table the reaction is much the same.

COLIN  
(Outraged)

I can't believe you did that!  
You better understand this  
throws serious doubts on your  
future as head of Features.  
Let's all have a meeting about  
Sarah.

FRAZZ

I think you played it right.

LYNDA

Absolutely. Good tactics.

COLIN

(Hurriedly)

Well of course that's how I feel too basically.(Playful punch on  
the shoulder)I'm just hurt you didn't talk it  
over with me first. Hell,  
Sarah, we're like brothers!

The phone rings. SARAH answers.

SARAH

Hello?

JACK

(Appeasing) -

Look, what does it matter about  
the old guy?

SARAH hangs up on him.

SPIKE

(From over by  
the shelf units)

That's telling him, killer.

SARAH grins back at him.

She looks back at the phone. It doesn't ring. This gets  
to COLIN.

COLIN

So why isn't he phoning back?

(Looks angrily at Sarah)

Hey, maybe I was right ~~the first~~ *about Sarah the first*  
time!

(Considers)

Or was it the second?

SARAH

He's having a look at the man he  
attacked.JACK is kneeling over the prone SHOPKEEPER. He checks  
his breathing with a hand on his chest, feels for the cut

221 CONTINUED

221

on the forehead where the blood has now dried. He turns, starts groping back towards the phone.

222 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

222

SARAH sits watching the phone.

LYNDA leans back restlessly in her chair. She glances over to where SPIKE is leaving an ever worsening tract of devastation in the wake of his search. By now almost half the news-room has a distinctly ransacked look. LYNDA smiles sardonically to herself.

The phone rings. SARAH answers.

SARAH

How is he?

223 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

223

Intercut with Scene 220 as required.

JACK

Okay, far as I can tell. His breathing's normal, he's just out. Now are you going to help me?

SARAH

Okay. Tell me where you are?

JACK hesitates again.

SARAH

Well?

JACK

Rod knows.

SARAH  
(Warning)

Look, next time I hang up I don't answer the phone again.

JACK is silent.

SARAH

I mean it.

JACK

Who are you? Look, I don't know what I'm getting into here, I mean if you're not... Who are you?

SARAH

Well you phoned me.

JACK

I phoned Rod. No one knows where I am except Rod. That's how it stays.

SARAH

Well Rod's not even going to know you phoned unless I tell him, right?

JACK

At least you're admitting it's not a wrong number.

SARAH exchanged a glance with LYNDA. They don't know what to make of his insistence that he's got the right number.

SARAH

So tell me what this test was.

JACK

You know about the test. You must.

SARAH

Humour me.

For a moment JACK hesitates.

JACK

Look, I want in, right? With Rod's lot.

SARAH doesn't know what to make of this.

JACK

With the gang. So Rod brought me here and told me I had to do the till - like a test, right? Only the old guy's more trouble than I thought and I'm stuck here.

SARAH

(Covers mouthpiece;  
to others)

Till. He's in a shop.

EA

SARAH (CONT.)  
(To Jack)

And you cracked some guy's head  
just to get into a gang? Pretty  
sad in its way. Pretty sick in  
fact.

JACK  
You think so, huh?

SARAH  
Which shop did you say he took  
you to?

JACK  
I didn't.

A moment's silence.

JACK  
Who are you?

SARAH  
You tell me. You're so sure  
you've got the right number.

yes

As soon as she say this she knows she's overstepped the  
mark.

*for a moment says nothing.*

JACK ~~is thinking hard about this remark.~~ Impulsively he  
bangs the phone down.

224 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

SARAH  
Damn!

FRAZZ  
I don't get it. Why's he so  
sure Rod's here?

SARAH  
~~He may not be any more.~~ I think  
I just over-did it.

LYNDA  
I think you did.

COLIN  
(Outraged on Sarah's behalf)  
Oh, that's right! Everyone  
turns on Sarah now!

yes

224 CONTINUED

224

He reaches over and gives SARAH'S arm a comforting squeeze.

SPIKE

(Calling over)

On the other hand provoking him might work. Get him angry, he might say something.

SARAH

If he phones back at all.

Promptly the phone rings.

COLIN

Never had any doubts, babe!

SARAH lifts the phone.

SARAH

Look what is the point in all this? You're proven you're a big enough creep to be with all the other creeps, fine! I don't know if I want to hear any more from a pointless little worm like you! Okay?

There is a silence. SARAH looks nervously at LYNDIA. Too much?

VOICE FROM SPEAKER

Sarah?

SARAH startles.

SARAH

(Finding her voice)

Who's this?

225 INT. DAVID BANK'S HALLWAY. NIGHT

225

Intercut with Scene 224 as required.

DAVID is on the other end of the line.

DAVID

David. David Banks.

SARAH instantly wilts.

SARAH

David! Oh, I'm sorry, really I am!



225 CONTINUED

225

There is a crash from off-screen. SARAH looks round. SPIKE has dropped some of the clutter he has been searching through and is staring at her in irate disbelief.

SARAH stiffens her resolve.

SARAH

(To David)

Actually I'm not sorry at all. We had a date tonight, you didn't turn up. So you blew it. Tough. I don't think there's anything more to say about that, do you?

DAVID

Hey, Sarah...

226 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

226

SARAH

(Really into her stride)

No second chances, David! Pity really, I quite liked you. We might even have lasted the week.

She puts the phone down with a flourish, and turns triumphantly to SPIKE.

SPIKE

I want you to know, Sarah. I have never been dumped that good!

LYNDA looks at SPIKE, somewhat offended.

SPIKE

Sorry, boss.  
(Squeezes Sarah's shoulder)  
She's a killer on the phone.

He goes back to his search. COLIN is staring slack-jawed at SARAH.

COLIN

Total amazement city! You were dating the guy that broke into the shop??

SARAH

(Looks at him sourly)  
Work it out, Colin!

SARAH (CONT.)

(She looks back at the phone)  
What do you think, Lynda? Is he  
going to phone again?

COLIN

You mean after you dumped him  
like that?

LYNDA

(To Sarah; with a weary  
glance at Colin)  
He doesn't really understand  
anything you can't express as  
money.

COLIN

(Proudly)

Thanks, Lynda.

LYNDA

Yeh, he'll phone back. You know  
something? I think he likes  
talking to you.

She smiles at SARAH and goes, heading over to SPIKE.  
COLIN looks troubled from FRAZZ to SARAH.

COLIN

I'm not really following any of  
this, am I?

FRAZZ

Of course you are. Just a long,  
long way behind.

LYNDA picks her way over the last of the debris to SPIKE.  
She looks around her thoroughly messed up news-room.

LYNDA

Do you a deal, Spike. You find  
the passport, I'll tidy up. You  
don't, you tidy up.

SPIKE

I'll find it, Lynda.

VOICE (OFF)

Excuse me.

They turn to see a Police Constable at the door.

CONSTABLE

Something about a hoax call?

227 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

227

JACK has crawled over to the SHOPKEEPER. The unconscious man's breathing has distinctly changed note. His eyes are now slitted open but seem sightless. JACK feels the rather lesser rise and fall of the man's chest.

JACK

Don't die, okay? Just don't die.

He starts to grope his way back over to the phone. As he reaches it and his hand closes over the key pad a thought strikes him, one that almost makes him gasp.

He freezes, thinking it through, realising the truth of the situation.

And then he starts to laugh - a manic giggle building alarmingly to full blown hysteria.

We crane up as he falls on to his side then on to his back, laughing and laughing, until we are looking directly down at him.

228 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

228

Close shot of cassette recorder as it plays. We pull out to a shot of the CONSTABLE listening with the others. SPIKE is still searching away in the background.

TAPE

(During pull out)

"I told you, it went wrong, he got me with the spray."

"And you still can't see?"

"Not well enough. And I've got to be sure no one sees me coming out of here. I really cracked that old guy on the head."

At this point the phone rings.

SARAH

(Stopping tape)

This could be him! Frazz?

FRAZZ has been connecting up the recorder again.

FRAZZ

Ready.

SARAH lifts the phone.

SARAH

Hello?

228 CONTINUED

228

(Silence)

Hello?

229 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

229

Intercut with Scene 228 as required.

JACK is on the phone, grinning oddly.

JACK

Well hello there!

SARAH

Listen. Next time you phone give us a signal first - one double-ring, off, and then phone, okay?

JACK

One double-ring, no problem. Thing is, though, won't be phoning you again! You see, I really think it's time to say goodbye to the Junior Gazette.

They all react to this with astonishment.

JACK

Hello? Still there? Had you going for a bit, didn't I? Bet you had your headlines ready, didn't you? Sorry. No such person as Rod. Sorry, never cracked any old guy on the head. And I'm really sorry about never breaking into any till but you know how it is. Been fun, hasn't it. For me anyway. Still there? Nothing to say? No one on the kiddie paper anything to say?

He starts to laugh.

230 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

230

As the laugh reverberates around the news-room, we pan round the bleak news-team's faces - till we come to the CONSTABLE as he snaps shut his notebook. Suddenly, explosively, SARAH slams down the phone. The silence is deafening. SARAH looks at LYNDIA, then very seriously at the CONSTABLE.

230 CONTINUED

230

SARAH

I'm sorry. But we really did think he was for real.

231 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

231

JACK slowly recovers from his laughter. He puts the phone to one side, holds up his hand in front of him, peers at it. Evidently his sight is starting to return. He looks over to where the still figure of the SHOPKEEPER is lying. He frowns.

DISSOLVE TO:

232 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

232

An hour or so later. We are panning round the devastated news-room - every nook and cranny has been thoroughly searched. We come to SPIKE slumped across his desk, fast asleep. LYNDA stands next to him, her coat on ready to go home. She looks at him, shakes her head, then reaches over and opens the "Rainy Day" file lying untouched next to SPIKE. Inside on top of all the papers, is Spike's passport.

SARAH

(Off)

I suppose he's got nowhere else to sleep.

SARAH is standing bleakly by the door, also with her coat on. Everyone else has gone.

LYNDA

(Looks at her enigmatically)  
You never quite know with Spike.

She starts to head towards the doors.

LYNDA

Come on, Sarah, cheer up. We can't always solve a mystery and catch a bad guy. This is life.

She glances back at SPIKE as she reaches for the light switch.

LYNDA

No guaranteed happy endings.

233 INT. NEWSAGENTS. NIGHT

233

A shot from JACK'S POV of his own hand as he revolves it in front of himself, testing his restored sight. He

233 CONTINUED

233

drops his hand out of frame leaving us with a shot of the door.

He gets shakily to his feet, goes towards it. He listens at the door for a moment - silence. Gently he eases it open. He takes one last look round the shop in which he has spent the last few hours and slips out. We see him pass along the window and then he is gone.

Suddenly, startlingly, the phone rings. We pan down to a shot of it sitting on the floor. It is just one double ring, abruptly cut off. We start to close in on the phone. It starts to ring again, this time continuously. We pan up from the phone to a shot of the door. JACK is back in the doorway.

He stares in disbelief at the phone.

He has recognised the agreed signal but does not remotely understand how he can be hearing it now. He realises this is madness but he has to know. He closes the door softly behind him, crosses the room, lifts the phone silently.

234 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWS-ROOM. NIGHT

234

SARAH is back in the news-room still in her coat. We intercut Scene 233 as required.

SARAH

I was half way home before I worked it out.

JACK'S eyes widen at the sound of her voice.

SARAH

Remember when I asked what number you'd dialled and you said you didn't know. I just thought you were talking nonsense. But you weren't.

JACK says nothing.

SARAH

It goes something like this. Rod takes you to the shop. Before he leaves you there he phones home. And the point is he uses the shop phone - presumably he paid to or something. Later, it's all gone wrong and you've got to talk to Rod. But my guess is you don't even know his number. Then you

SARAH (CONT.)

realise! A lot of phones these days have got "last number redial". Even blind in the dark you can find one button.

Suddenly there is the sound of a siren and a blue light is flashing through the room. JACK stares towards the window in horror. He lets the receiver fall with a clatter, hurries over to the window. Peering out, he can see a police car parked in the street. One POLICEMAN is getting out, talking into his radio. JACK sags. He realises the game is up. He plods wearily back to the phone, lifts it.

SARAH

That you back?

JACK

Turns out I'm not going anywhere.

SARAH

The problem was, between Rod phoning and you, the shopkeeper must've tried to phone us. So the wrong number was in the phone memory. Right?

JACK

(Grimly)

Right.

SARAH glances at SPIKE who is now awake but bleary-eyed next to her. LYNDA is also there.

SARAH

So when I heard a certain Mr. Loranzo had been trying to phone us all evening I put two and two together. You see we know Mr. Loranzo quite well. He owns a chain of newsagents on the south side, gives us a lot of distribution problems. He's got one shop that opens late, the one he runs himself. The one you're in.

JACK looks ruefully towards the window where the blue light is still flashing in.

JACK

Pretty sure of your guess,  
weren't you.

SARAH

Pretty sure.

There is an awkward silence.

SARAH

Time to answer one question?

JACK

No one seems to be in a hurry  
here.

SARAH

How did you know it was us? The  
last time you phoned, I mean.

JACK

I saw him try to make the call,  
I just forgot later. Kept  
muttering away about the damn  
Junior Gazette. I don't think  
he liked your paper much, the  
late Mr. Loranzo.

It is SARAH'S turn to go silent. She pales.

The repressed fright in JACK is slowly becoming evident.  
He is shaking almost tearful. He looks over to where the  
SHOPKEEPER now lies absolutely still.

JACK

I didn't mean to kill him.  
Really, I didn't. You've got to  
believe that. Do you?

SARAH sits silent for a moment. Then, in a very small  
voice...

SARAH

Yes.

JACK looks up. He can hear footsteps approaching the  
door. He closes his eyes in despair.

JACK

What's your name?

SARAH

Sarah.



..JACK .

Jack.

He puts down the phone.

We hold on JACK as we hear the door open. A torch beam flashes right into JACK'S face. He winces.

ON THIS WE FREEZE FRAME.

END CREDITS.