Shallow Grave

By

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INT. DAY

A blurred image forms on a white screen. A horizontal strip of face, eyes motionless and unblinking.

    DAVID
    (voice-over) Take trust, for instance, or friendship: these are the important things in life, the things that matter, that help you on your way. If you can’t trust your friends, well, what then?

EXT. DAWN

A series of fast-cut static scenes of empty streets.

    DAVID
    (voice-over) This could have been any city: they’re all the same.

A rapid, swerving track along deserted streets and down narrow lanes and passageways. Accompanied by soundtrack and credits. The track ends outside a solid, fashionable Edinburgh tenement.

INT. STAIRWELL. DAY

At the door of a flat on the third floor of the tenement. The door is dark, heavy wood and on it is a plastic card embossed with the names of three tenants. They are Alex Law, David Stevens, and Juliet Miller. A man climbs the stairs and reaches the door. He is Cameron Clarke, thin and in his late twenties with a blue anorak and lank, greasy hair. He is carrying an awkwardly bulky plastic bag. Cameron gives the doorbell an ineffectual ring and then stands back, shifting nervously from foot to foot until the door is answered.

    CAMERON
    Hello, I’ve come about the room.

Cameron enters and the door closes.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

David, Alex, and Juliet sit in a line on the sofa directly opposite Cameron, who shifts uneasily in his armchair. Alex checks some items on a clipboard before speaking.
ALEX
What’s his name?

DAVID
I don’t know -- Campbell or something?

JULIET
Cameron.

ALEX
Cameron?

JULIET
Yes.

ALEX
(to Juliet) Really?

CAMERON
That’s right.

ALEX
(to Cameron) What? Cameron is not sure what to say.

ALEX
(continued) Well, Cameron, are you comfortable?

CAMERON
Yes, thanks.

ALEX
Good. Well, you’ve seen the flat?

CAMERON
Yes.

ALEX
And you like it?

CAMERON
Oh, yes, it’s great.

ALEX
Yes. It is, isn’t it? We all like it. And the room’s nice too, don’t you think?

CAMERON
Yes.
ALEX
Spacious, quiet, bright, well appointed, all that sort of stuff, all that crap.

CAMERON
Well, yes.

ALEX
So tell me, Cameron, what on earth -- just tell me, because I want to know -- what on earth could make you think that we would want to share a flat like this with someone like you?

INT. STAIRWELL. DAY

As Cameron plods slowly down the stairs, his shoes striking out against the stone steps, Alex’s criticisms continue.

ALEX
(voice-over) I mean, my first impression, and they’re rarely wrong, is that you have none of the qualities that we would normally seek in a prospective flatmate. I’m talking here about things like presence, charisma, style and charm, and I don’t think we’re being unreasonable. Take David here, for instance: a chartered accountant he may be, but at least he tries hard. The point is, I don’t think you’re even trying.

Cameron has reached the bottom of the stairs. He opens the main door.

ALEX
(continued) And, Cameron -- I mean this -- good luck!

Cameron leaves and the main door closes behind him.

ALEX
(continued) Do you think he was upset?
INT. STAIRWELL. DAY

Inside the hall of the flat, David approaches the door to open it. Freeze-frame.

ALEX
(voice-over) David likes to keep spareshoelaces in sorted pairs in a box marked, not just shoelaces’, but spare shoelaces’.

David opens the door to the Woman.

WOMAN
I’ve come to see about the room.

INT. STAIRWELL. DAY

Outside the door of the flat a young Goth girl, aged about twenty, rings the doorbell.

INT. HALL. DAY

Inside the hall of the flat Alex approaches the door to open it. Freeze-frame.

JULIET
(voice-over) Alex is a vegetarian. Do you know why? Because he feels it provides an interesting counterpoint to his otherwise callous personality. It doesn’t. He thinks he’s the man for me. He isn’t, though there was a time when, well, there was a time when...

Alex opens the door to the Goth.

GOTH
I’ve come about the room.

INT. STAIRWELL. DAY

At the door of the flat a Man aged about thirty-five rings the bell.
INT. HALL. DAY

Inside the hall of the flat Juliet approaches the door to open it. Freeze-frame.

    DAVID
    (voice-over) Like one of those stupid posters -- you know, a gorilla cuddling a hedgehog, caption love hurts --- that’s what I think when I think of Juliet.

Juliet opens the door to the Man.

    MAN
    I’ve come about the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

In the living room each of the candidates is interviewed individually with the same seating arrangements as before (i.e. the trio on the sofa and the applicant on the chair). What we see are briskly intercut excerpts from each of these interviews. We do not get the responses to the questions, although we may see some facial reaction. All of David’s questions are to the Woman. All of Alex’s questions are to the Goth. All of Juliet’s questions are to the Man.

    DAVID
    All right, just a few questions.

    ALEX
    I’d like to ask you about your hobbies.

    JULIET
    Why do you want a room here?

    DAVID
    Do you smoke?

    ALEX
    When you slaughter a goat and wrench its heart out with your bare hands, do you then summon hellfire?

    JULIET
    I mean, what are you actually doing here? What is the hidden agenda?
DAVID
Do a little freebasemaybe, from
time to time?

ALEX
Or maybe just phone out for a
pizza?

JULIET
Look, it’s a fairly straightforward
question. You’re either divorced or
you’re not.

DAVID
OK, I’m going to play you just a
few seconds of this tape -- I’d
like you to name the song, the lead
singer and the three hit singles
subsequently recorded by him with
another band.

ALEX
When you get up in the morning, how
do you decide what shade of black
to wear?

JULIET
Now, let me get this straight. This
affair that you’re not having, is
it not with a man or not with a
woman?

DAVID
Turning very briefly to the subject
of corporate finance -- no, this is
important. Leveraged buy-outs -- a
good thing or a bad thing?

ALEX
With which of the following figures
do you most closely identify: Joan
of Arc, Eva Braun or Marilyn
Monroe?

JULIET
It’s just that you strike me as a
man trapped in a crisis of
emotional direction, afflicted by a
realization that the partner of
your dreams is, quite simply, just
that.
DAVID
Did you ever kill a man?

ALEX
And when did anyone last say to you these exact words: You are the sunshine of my life’?

JULIET
OK, so A has left you, B is ambivalent, you’re still seeing C but D is the one you yearn for. What are we to make of this? If I were you, I’d ditch the lot. There’s a lot more letters in the alphabet of love.

DAVID
And what if I told you that I was the antichrist?

INT. SQUASH COURT. EVENING

In a sports centre Juliet sits outside a glass-walled squash court. She is ready to play, but at present is watching Alex and David, who are inside the court.

INT. SQUASH COURT. EVENING

Inside the squash court, Alex is about to serve.

ALEX
Squash is often used as a metaphor to represent a struggle for personal domination.

DAVID
Serve.

ALEX
I was trying to educate you.

DAVID
Just serve.

ALEX
In the same fashion as chess.

DAVID
What?
ALEX
Chess. Chess is often used as well.

DAVID
Will you shut up and play.

ALEX
You’re a bad loser.

DAVID
I haven’t lost yet. Alex serves.

INT. SQUASH COURT. EVENING
The squash-court door opens and David walks out past Juliet as Alex stands behind, jabbing his finger at him.

ALEX
Defeat, defeat, defeat--sporting, personal, financial, professional, sexual, everything. Next.

Juliet walks in and closes the door.

INT. SQUASH COURT. EVENING
Inside the squash court Alex is about to serve.

ALEX
Did you know --

JULIET
Just serve.

Alex serves.

INT. JULIET’S CAR (A MINI). NIGHT
Alex sits in the back, drinking. Juliet is driving. David sits beside her.

ALEX
I wasn’t trying to win.

There is no response from Juliet.

ALEX
(continued) I don’t want to devalue your victory, but I just want you to know: I wasn’t trying to win.
DAVID
Victory is the same as defeat. It’s giving in to destructive competitive urges.

ALEX
You learn that in your psychotherapy group?

DAVID
Discussion group, Alex, discussion.

JULIET
I thought you stopped going.

ALEX
Yeah, he had one too many of these urges. You of all people should know that.

Alex leans close to Juliet. Juliet brakes abruptly and, as Alex flies forward, elbows him in the chest.

ALEX
(continued) God, you two are sensitive. All I’m doing is implying some sort of sordid, ugly, sexual liaison. Why, I’d be proud of that sort of thing.

JULIET
Maybe you should go, Alex. You’ll meet someone wonderful.

ALEX
For my life? At a discussion group? I think not.

JULIET
For the flat.

ALEX
No. Be someone else like him. One is enough. And what happened to that girl, that friend of yours, the one that came round. I liked her. I really felt we had something. She could have moved in. We had chemistry.
JULIET
She hated you --

ALEX
Well, she had problems --

JULIET
-- more than anyone she has ever met. In her whole life.

ALEX
-- I’d be the first to point that out. In all kindness I would. But, like they say, you know, she’s got to want to change, hasn’t she?

INT. STAIRWELL. DAY

Outside the door of the flat Hugo rings the bell and waits. Juliet opens the door. Hugo is in his early thirties, tall, dark and bohemian in appearance.

JULIET
You must be Hugo.

HUGO
You must be Juliet.

JULIET
Would you like to come in?

HUGO
I’d be delighted.

Hugo walks in and Juliet closes the door quite deliberately behind him.

INT. VACANT ROOM. DAY

Hugo looks around, pleased at what he sees, while Juliet watches him. He sits on the edge of the bed.

HUGO
It’s nice.

JULIET
Would you like to see the rest?
INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Hugo is seated on the sofa, Juliet sits opposite on an armchair.

    JULIET
    What do you do?

    HUGO
    Well, I’ve been away for a bit, travelling, that sort of thing, and now I’m trying to write a novel.

    JULIET
    What’s it about?

    HUGO
    A priest who dies.

    JULIET
    I see.

    HUGO
    Yeah. Well, maybe I’ll change it.

    JULIET
    No.

    HUGO
    Yes, I mean, who wants to read about another dead priest? It’s about some other guy, some guy who’s not a priest, who doesn’t die. You see, it’s better already.

    JULIET
    Writing seems easy.

    HUGO
    It’s a breeze.

The telephone begins to ring out in the hall. Juliet does not move and at first says nothing. Hugo looks at her and towards the door leading to the hall. After several rings, Juliet speaks.

    JULIET
    Do you think you could answer that?

    HUGO
    The telephone?

It continues to ring.
JULIET
Yes, the telephone, but if it’s for me, I’m not in.

HUGO
You’re not in.

JULIET
No.

HUGO
All right.

Hugo stands up. The ringing continues.

INT. HALL. DAY

Hugo lifts the phone. He turns to face Juliet and looks her in the eye as he lies on her behalf.

HUGO
Hello. Yes. Who’s calling please? Well, I’m sorry, but she’s not in right now. I don’t know. Would you like to leave a message?

Hugo replaces the receiver.

HUGO
(continued) It was some guy called Brian.

JULIET
Did he sound upset?

HUGO
A little bit. Is that good or bad?

JULIET
It’s an improvement.

The telephone begins to ring again.

HUGO
Shall I answer it?

JULIET
No, just leave it. He knows I must be at home. I’m working nights this week.

The telephone continues to ring.
HUGO
Working nights?

JULIET
I’m a doctor.

HUGO
And he’s a patient of yours?

JULIET
No. But he needs treatment.

HUGO
For what?

JULIET
A certain weakness.

HUGO
The human condition.

JULIET
You know about it?

HUGO
I write about it?

JULIET
And that’s not the same thing?

HUGO
No, but like all novelists, I’m in search of the self.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING

Juliet, dressed and fatigued, sits at the table sipping a coffee. Alex is also seated at the table, but wearing an old dressing-gown and munching at cornflakes while he reads a newspaper and talks at the same time. An array of other papers is spread over the table.

ALEX
Has he tried down the back of the fridge? I mean, that’s where I normally find things.

JULIET
He seemed like a nice guy, Alex.

Juliet gets up and leaves the kitchen. The sound of a bath running is heard.
ALEX
I’m not saying he didn’t seem like a nice guy. All I’m saying is, it’s a bit strange, and this search for the self, and what he’s on about, you know.

Alex hears the mail falling through the door and stands up to leave the kitchen and get it.

JULIET
(calling from outside) He didn’t seem strange, Alex. He seemed, you know --

INT. BATHROOM. MORNING.
Juliet watches the bath fill.

JULIET
...interesting.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING
Alex considers her reply.

ALEX
Interesting. Interesting.

INT. HALL. MORNING
Alex is walking through the hall to the door, muttering ‘interesting’ to himself. As he passes the phone starts to ring. He stops and lifts it.

ALEX
Hello. No, she’s not in. No. No. No ideas.

Alex replaces the receiver and walks on to the door.

JULIET
(from the bathroom) Who was it?

ALEX
I don’t know. He sounded Swedish. Do you know any Swedish men? Maybe it was just the emotion.

Alex picks up the mail and looks through it. As he does so, David emerges from his room, dressed for work.
ALEX  
(continued) What do you think?

DAVID  
About what?

ALEX  
About this guy, this Hugo person.

DAVID  
I don’t have time.

ALEX  
I’m only asking what you think.

DAVID  
I don’t have time to discuss it now. I don’t care so long as he’s not a freak.

David opens the door. Alex hands him an envelope.

ALEX  
This is for you. It’s your mother’s handwriting, so I didn’t open it. I don’t like reading about your father’s constipation.

David snatches the letter and leaves, closing the door. Alex walks back across the hall, opening one of the letters and reading it quickly.

JULIET  
(calling from the bathroom) So we’ll meet him, then?

ALEX  
What? Oh, yeah, sure, if you want. I tell you, every letter this guy writes to you is the same: they all begin like pure love and descend into open pornography. I dream of your thighs, the soft touch of your white skin leading me in desire, while I, aroused and inflamed --’

Juliet’s hand and arm appear around the bathroom door. She attempts to grab the letter. Alex plays at holding the letter just beyond her reach.

ALEX  
(continued) Aroused and inflamed.
JULIET
Alex.

ALEX
He even signs them, in his own name, can you believe it? I’d sign someone else’s name. I’d sign his name. If I wrote them, that is. Which I don’t.

INT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING
Alex, David, Juliet and Hugo sit round a table towards the end of a meal. Alcohol has been consumed. Bowls containing the last of the food sit on the table, being picked at occasionally. Alex dispenses wine mainly into his own glass, alternating with Macallan malt whisky, of which he pours generous amounts.

ALEX
Interesting.

HUGO
I see.

ALEX
Yeah, well, that’s what she said. Interesting. That’s why you’re here, you see.

DAVID
Normally I don’t meet people, unless I know them already.

HUGO
I see.

DAVID
People can be so cruel.

ALEX
So, uh...

HUGO
What?

ALEX
What?

HUGO
You were going to say something.
ALEX
What was I trying to say? Oh, yes, I think, we think, or at least I suppose we think -- am I right?

JULIET
Just get on with it, Alex.

DAVID
Keep it going, Alex. You’re unstoppable now.

ALEX
We think it’s fine.

Alex starts eating again. The others watch him expectantly. David coughs.

ALEX
(continued) It’s OK. There’s no problem.

HUGO
You mean I can have the room?

ALEX
Well, that’s what I said, isn’t it?

DAVID
He made it clear.

ALEX
Why, thank you, David.

JULIET
Yes, you can have the room.

Alex pours yet more alcohol.

ALEX
I’m not usually drunk.

JULIET
Not usually this drunk.

DAVID
Only on expenses.

ALEX
It’s true. A newspaper is paying for all this. A newspaper...

With exaggerated scorn, Alex knocks over a glass of wine.
JULIET
In a moment he’s going to tell he could have been someone --

ALEX
It was you, Juliet, it was you --

JULIET
-- instead of what he is --

ALEX
What I am.

JULIET
-- which is --

ALEX
-- which is a hack.

JULIET
The man we know and love.

ALEX
A miserable, burnt-out, empty shell of a --

Alex pauses, looks at his drink, then at Juliet.

ALEX
(continued) Know and love?

JULIET
Yeah.

ALEX
I think you’re lying.

JULIET
You’re right.

ALEX
You see, they don’t really know me.

JULIET
No, Alex, we don’t really love you. Alex smiles at Juliet and drinks again.

ALEX
Can you afford this place?
HUGO
Yeah.

Hugo reaches into his pocket and pulls out a thick bundle of notes, which he places in front of Alex. Alex leans over and sniffs the notes.

DAVID
Can I ask you a question?

HUGO
Certainly.

DAVID
Have you ever killed a man?

HUGO
No.

DAVID
Well, that’s fair enough, then.

Alex raises his head.

ALEX
Certainly smells like the real thing.

EXT. A STREET. NIGHT

At a cash dispenser a man in his thirties is taking out some money. A younger man, Andy, stands beside him, looking around in a mildly agitated fashion. As the money emerges, Andy assaults and robs the man. He starts by smashing the victim’s face repeatedly against the cash dispenser until the Perspex is smeared with blood. When he has finished and the man lies on the ground, Andy takes the money and the card from the slots, then gets into a car which has pulled up alongside, driven by Tim.

INT. STAIRWELL. DAY

Hugo climbs the stairs, carrying two suitcases. He stops at the door of the flat and looks at a bunch of keys before selecting one, which he inserts in the door.

INT. HALL. DAY

Inside the flat. The door opens and Hugo lifts his cases in, kicking the door closed behind him.
INT. JULIET’S ROOM. DAY
Juliet sleeps, undisturbed by the closing of the door.

INT. HALL. DAY
Hugo walks across the hall and disappears into his room.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. DAY
Hugo unpacks his bags. Included in his things are a few syringes and needles. All these he puts into the drawer beside his bed. He checks inside a second bag.

INT. HALL. DAY
Hugo dials a number on the telephone and awaits a reply.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. EVENING
Juliet is woken by her alarm clock. The time is five p.m.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT
Alex sits watching television, constantly changing channels. Juliet walks in, wearing a dressing gown. She watches Alex for a few moments.

JULIET
Have you seen Hugo?

ALEX
No. Any idea which channel he’s on?

INT. HALL. MORNING
The telephone is ringing. Alex lifts up the receiver. Again he is wearing his dressing gown and is on his way to pick up the mail.

ALEX
No, she’s not in.

Without waiting for any more, he replaces the receiver and walks to the door, where he picks up the mail. On his way back from the door, David emerges, ready to go to work.

ALEX
(continued) Have you seen him?

DAVID
Alex, I don’t have the time --
ALEX
Yes or no, yes or no, yes or --

DAVID
No.

David leaves, slamming the door.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING

Alex returns to the kitchen, pausing only to knock at Hugo’s door, which elicits no response. In the kitchen Juliet sits dressed for work, having just returned. He casually opens an envelope and glances at both sides of the letter before handing it to her.

ALEX
David hasn’t seen him either.

JULIET
So I gathered.

ALEX
Maybe he didn’t like us.

JULIET
David?

ALEX
Hugo.

JULIET
His car’s still there.

ALEX
He’s got a car?

JULIET
So what’s wrong with that?

ALEX
What sort of car?

JULIET
Alex, how should I know? I’m just a girl.

ALEX
I will ask you once more, what sort of car --
JULIET
A blue one, OK. And it’s still there.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

We see the door to Hugo’s room, then Alex rapping sharply against it. David and Juliet stand behind him.

ALEX
Hugo. Hugo. Sorry about this, but can you open the door? It’s us, Hugo, your flatmates and companions. Your new-found friends. He’s not in. He’s left and we’ll probably never see him again.

JULIET
Alex, the key is in the keyhole on the other side.

ALEX
So?

JULIET
Open it.

ALEX
You want me to kick it open?

JULIET
Yes.

ALEX
Now?

JULIET
Yes.

ALEX
All right. No problem.

After several ineffective kicks at the door, Alex turns to David.

ALEX
(continued) You want a go?
INT. HUGO’S ROOM. NIGHT

Inside Hugo’s room we see the door as David, outside, throws himself against it. At the third attempt the lock gives way and the door bursts open. In the foreground at one side is the bed with a naked foot lying still and exposed. When the door is open, David is first in, followed by the other two. There is a period of silent shock as they contemplate Hugo’s naked corpse. Alex opens a window.

DAVID
Is this what they always look like?

JULIET
Yes.

Juliet drapes a sheet over the body, covering it completely.

ALEX
I wonder how he did it?

JULIET
Did what?

ALEX
I wonder how he killed himself. I presume that that’s what happened. What do you think?

Quite casually, Alex begins to open drawers and cupboards, emptying the contents on to the floor.

JULIET
Alex.

ALEX
What? What’s wrong?

JULIET
What are you doing?

ALEX
I’m just looking.

JULIET
Don’t.

ALEX
Don’t look?

JULIET
No.
ALEX
Why not? What’s wrong, Juliet?
Aren’t you curious? Don’t you wonder what he died from?

JULIET
No. The guy’s dead. What more do you need?

ALEX
It’s not every day I find a story in my own flat.

JULIET
That’s not a story, Alex. It’s a corpse.

ALEX
Old newspaper proverb says dead human being is living story. Be rational, please, and failing that be quiet.

In a drawer in a bedside cabinet, Alex finds needles, syringes and a small bag of powder. Without comment, he holds it up and throws it on the bed. He reaches under the bed and pulls out a case, which he opens. It is empty and he pushes it back under.

DAVID
I’ve never seen a dead body before.

JULIET
Alex, I think it’s time for you to stop.

Alex continues to search. Juliet walks out.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Juliet stands alone.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. NIGHT

Alex continues his brisk search through Hugo’s possessions while David looks on, appalled but speechless.
INT. HALL. NIGHT

Juliet listens to the sounds from the bedroom, then picks up the telephone. She dials 999 and waits for a reply. It rings and rings.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. NIGHT

Alex has found and opened a large Gladstone bag. Neither David nor we can see into it.

    DAVID
    I saw my grandmother, of course, but I don’t suppose that counts. I mean, she was alive at the time.

    ALEX
    Can I show you something?

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Juliet awaits an answer. Alex approaches Juliet with the open bag. She turns around and looks into it, then, seeing the contents, she replaces the receiver. As she does so, the Operator’s voice is audible for a second.

    OPERATOR
    Hello, emergency services.

The telephone hits the cradle.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

David, Alex and Juliet are seated in silence around the table. The bag, stacked with money, lies open on the table.

    DAVID
    No.

    ALEX
    Think about it.

    DAVID
    No.

    ALEX
    Come on, David.

    DAVID
    No.
ALEX

Juliet?

JULIET

No, Alex. It’s, it’s --

ALEX

What?

JULIET

Unfeasible.

ALEX

Is that all?

DAVID

You mean immoral.

ALEX

I’m only asking you both to think about it.

DAVID

It’s a sick idea, Alex. It’s sick.

ALEX

But don’t tell me that you’re not tempted by it. Don’t tell me that you’re not interested. I know you well enough.

DAVID

You think so?

ALEX

(amused) All right, then, go ahead, telephone. Telephone the police. Try again. No one’s going to stand in your way. Go ahead. Tell them there’s a suitcase of money and you don’t want it.

INT. HALL. MORNING

The flat is silent. Footsteps are heard outside the door and mail falls through the letter box.
INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

The living room, empty.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

The kitchen, empty. The bag of money still sits on the table.

INT. HUGO’S BEDROOM. DAY

His corpse lies on the bed, covered as before, incompletely, by a sheet, with parts of his body still showing (a foot, a hand, part of his face or abdomen).

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE. DAY

The open-plan office of a busy newspaper. Alex sits at his desk. He is talking on a telephone jammed against his shoulder and while he does so he is casually acknowledging and waving at colleagues.

ALEX
Now, was there a pet in the house? Yes, a pet, like a dog or a budgie or a gerbil. You see, what I need is PC Plod rescues Harry the Hamster from House of Horror’. All right... well, that’s a pity, you see, no pets, no human angle.

Alex hangs up.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. DAY

Another view of the body: for example, from above.

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY

In the accident and emergency department of a busy hospital, Juliet sifts through a set of casenotes. Another Doctor approaches her.

DOCTOR
Hi, there. Juliet does not look up.

JULIET
Hello.

DOCTOR
What happened to that guy?
JULIET
What guy?

DOCTOR
That guy, the one that died. Juliet looks up.

JULIET
What guy that died?

DOCTOR
That one, last week.

JULIET
Here?.

DOCTOR
Yeah, here, I mean, where else?

JULIET
Oh, him. Well, he died.

DOCTOR
(satisfied) That’s what I thought.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. DAY

The body, still present, exposed and motionless. The curtain flutters by the open window.

INT. LUMSDEN’S OFFICE. DAY

Lumsden, a middle-aged chartered accountant, is seated in a large chair behind a desk. He is talking to David, who appears distracted.

LUMSDEN
What do we do here, David?

DAVID
Sorry?

LUMSDEN
Here.

DAVID
Right here?

LUMSDEN
In this firm.
DAVID
Well, it’s a wide range of, eh --

LUMSDEN
Accounting, David, chartered accounting --

DAVID
Exactly what I was --

LUMSDEN
-- is often sneered at. Are you aware of that?

DAVID
Not any real sneering as such, no.

LUMSDEN
There’s a whole wide world out there, and it all needs to be accounted for, doesn’t it?

DAVID
Eh --

LUMSDEN
But they sneer, don’t they?

DAVID
I’m not sure --

LUMSDEN
Oh, it’s unfashionable, I know, but, yes, we’re methodical, yes, we’re dilligent, yes, we’re serious, and where’s the crime in that, and why not shout it from the rooftops, yes, maybe sometimes we are a little bit boring, but by God, we get the job done.

DAVID
Yes, sir.

LUMSDEN
And that’s why I think you fit in here.

DAVID
I’m boring?
LUMSDEN
You get the job done.

DAVID
Oh, I see, I thought you meant --

LUMSDEN
Which is why I’m trusting you with this account.

Lumsden throws a heavy folder into David’s lap.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. EVENING

It is almost dark. Only the familiar contour is visible through the gloom.

INT. STAIRWELL. EVENING

David ascends the stairs to the flat.

INT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING

Alex sits in an armchair facing out of the window. Juliet stands facing into the room. David, the last home, appears in the doorway.

DAVID
He’s still here.

ALEX
He couldn’t get his car started.

DAVID
When are you going to let the police know?

ALEX
You call them if you want.

DAVID
(to Juliet) And what about you?

JULIET
Well, I’m getting used to having him around.
INT. HUGO’S ROOM. DAY

The corpse as before.

INT. ACCOUNTANT’S OFFICE. DAY

David sits at his desk, looking across the office. Crouched over a large array of other desks, young men and women in suits are pouring over folders and columned books. No one is speaking except in muted tones on the telephones. David watches them. He looks to his left and to his right: on either side young men like him are toiling over accounts. He turns and looks behind him, where another array of accountants sit. He turns back to his desk and opens the file he was previously given. He looks at the columns of records of profit, with a large total at the bottom. When David looks up he sees Juliet seated beside his desk. She smiles and directs his gaze, with her own, to the surrounding scene.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. EVENING

The body in silhouette.

DAVID

(voice-over) OK. Let’s do it.

INT. DIY STORE. DAY

Inside a large, brightly lit DIY store with Muzak playing in the background. We start with a tracking shot along an aisle stacked with potentially vicious tools.

ALEX

(voice-over) All right, now listen. We have to dispose of the body in such a way as to make it unidentifiable, so that even if it is found, then it’s never anything more than an unknown corpse. Burning, dumping at sea, and straightforward burial are all flawed either by fingerprints, or, more commonly, by dental records. This I have learned. Now, what I suggest is that we bury him out in the forest, but first of all we remove his hands and his feet, which we incinerate. And his teeth, which we just remove. It’s as simple as that.
As the tracking shot ends, we see David’s head and shoulders as he looks at something off picture. Suddenly a spring-loaded screwdriver appears and is fired’ so that the tip stops a few millimeters from his face. David winces as we see that Alex is holding it.

ALEX
(continued) I always wondered what these were for.

Alex places the screwdriver down on the shelf and walks across the aisle to pick up a saw and a hammer.

ALEX
(continued) Now this is what we need. And this.

Alex hands the tools to David, who looks at them with disgust. Alex walks on.

ALEX
(continued) Now what else?

DAVID
I don’t know.

ALEX
A spade, we need a spade -- I wish you would concentrate -- we need a spade if we’re going to dig a pit.

DAVID
So who’s going to do it?

ALEX
Dig the pit, I don’t know.

DAVID
No, not that.

ALEX
Then what? Who’s going to do what?

DAVID
You know what I’m talking about.

ALEX
Do I? What? What? What are you talking about?

DAVID
You know what. Who’s going to do it.
ALEX
We all are, David, we’re all going to do it. Each of us, you, me and Juliet, will do his or her bit. Is that fair enough?

DAVID
I can’t do it.

ALEX
I don’t hear this.

DAVID
I won’t be able to.

ALEX
You’re telling me you want out? Already? You’re telling me you don’t want the money? Hugo is going off. He smells. The flat smells. We can’t wait any longer.

DAVID
I’m just telling you I can’t cut him up.

Alex turns away in disgust.

EXT. LANE. NIGHT

Late at night, in a quiet lane at the back of the flat, a hired Ford Transit is parked.

INT. VAN. NIGHT

Inside the dimly lit van, Alex and Juliet are laying down plastic on the floor.

JULIET
Who’s going to do it?

ALEX
I thought we all were.

JULIET
I don’t think I can.

ALEX
But you’re a doctor. You kill people every day.
JULIET
I don’t want to. It’s different.

ALEX
And now you tell me.

INT. UNDER WATER/BATHROOM. NIGHT

A Man’s face is being held under water. Bubbles escape from his mouth and his eyes bulge. Tim hauls the Man’s head out of the bath. His legs and arms are bound with cord. Andy sits on a chair, watching. Tim ducks the Man’s head under the water again. The Man’s face as before.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. NIGHT

We see Hugo’s face just before Alex, David and Juliet wrap him in a sheet and thick, black plastic. They wear masks over their noses. The smell is making them uncomfortable and irritable.

DAVID
There’s something I want to ask.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

The Man’s head has just been lifted from the water.

MAN
I don’t know. I swear to God, I don’t know.

Tim ducks the Man’s head back under the water.

INT. HUGO’S ROOM. NIGHT

ALEX
Family? Family? Friends? Drugged-up wandering suicidal search of the self fuck-ups don’t have families, David.

DAVID
I just thought we should discuss it.

ALEX
Take his legs.
INT. STAIRWELL. NIGHT

In the stairwell of the flat, grunts of effort are heard as Alex, David and Juliet struggle with the heavy corpse, carrying it down the stairs wrapped in plastic sheeting. They come into view and go down the stairs. They are all very tense and freeze with panic after accidentally banging against another flat’s door. They swear at one another and continue their descent.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Tim is ducking the Man again. He writhes and struggles but is powerless to stop it.

EXT. BEHIND THE FLAT. NIGHT

The back yard and back door of the flats. The door opens and Alex, David and Juliet emerge, carrying the corpse out towards the van.

INT. LANDING OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM. NIGHT

From the landing we can see along the floor into the bathroom. The Man’s legs extend away from the bath. They are completely still. Andy and Tim stand beside them, looking down.

ANDY
You stupid bastard.

INT. VAN. NIGHT

Inside the back of the empty van. The door is opened and the body is half slid and half thrown inside. The door is closed and in the dark interior, the outline of the plastic lump is just visible, thanks to a streetlight. One of the doors opens again and David throws a bag of tools in. He then closes and locks the door.

INT. VAN. NIGHT

In front of the van, David is climbing into the passenger side. Juliet and Alex are already in, with the latter at the wheel. Alex turns to the other two.

ALEX
Why don’t we just draw lots for it?

The other two remain silent.
ALEX
Whoever draws the short straw does
it all. That way, you either do it
or you don’t. All or nothing.

JULIET OK. ALEX
David?

DAVID
I don’t know.

ALEX
Look, if I draw the short straw,
then I’ll do it, but I’m not going
to do it just because you won’t.

Alex starts the engine of the van.

EXT. FOREST. NIGHT
Through the darkness we hear an engine, then the headlights
of the van come into view. It pulls off the track onto a
patch of grass. The engine is switched off but the light
remains on. The trio descend from the van. In front of the
van, Alex, illuminated by its lights, Alex, David and Juliet
stand together. Alex is showing them two long stems of grass
and one short one. He encloses them in his fist and holds
them out.

ALEX
All right, then, here we are and
this is it. Do you want to play or
not?

Alex holds his hand out towards Juliet, who takes the tip of
one of the stems. It is one of the larger ones. Alex and
Juliet turn to David. Alex holds out the stems. David
reaches out and takes one of the tips. It is the short
straw.

DAVID
I can’t do it.

EXT. FOREST. NIGHT
Deeper in the forest, with the headlamps still casting a
little light through the trees, we see David’s head and
shoulders. His right arm is moving briskly back and forth
accompanied by a vicious sawing noise. The sawing stops as
he evidently finished with one extremity. He shuffles back
and starts sawing at another. Alex leans against the spade
in a shallow pit that he has dug. He observes David
impassively. The sawing stops again.
DAVID
Finished.

ALEX
But not quite.

DAVID
Is that going to be deep enough?

Alex bends down to pick up the hammer, which he holds out towards David.

ALEX
Don’t you worry about that.

DAVID
Is this necessary?

ALEX
Yes. Now come on, all or nothing.

Most reluctantly, David takes the hammer and looks at Alex, who gestures as if to say, "On you go." With revulsion on his face, he raises the hammer above his head.

INT. DAVID’S ROOM. DAY

David’s face is visible against the plain white backdrop of his pillow. He lies fully clothed on his bed, looking up at the ceiling. There is a knock at the door, then Juliet walks in.

JULIET
Are you all right?

DAVID
(without looking at Juliet)
Oh, yes, I’m fine, thanks, just fine.

JULIET
Would you like to talk about it?

DAVID
No.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Alex sits with his feet up watching a noisy game show, while eating a snack and drinking from a can of beer. Newspapers lie scattered at his feet.
INT. LOFT. DAY

The loft above the flat in darkness, but the trapdoor is opened, letting in a pool of light.

INT. HALL. DAY

David is pulling himself through the trapdoor up into the loft. Beneath him is a stepladder. Juliet stands half-way up the ladder, while Alex stands on the floor beside it. As David enters the loft, Alex hands up the bag of money to Juliet, who passes it on up to David.

JULIET
Be careful.

ALEX
Yeah, we don’t want another stiff on our hands. Don’t fall through the ceiling. OK? Is he listening to me?

JULIET
Stop nagging.

ALEX
(to himself)
I don’t know why we couldn’t stuff it in a mattress or put it under the floor like any normal human being. We could have hid it in the fridge.

INT. LOFT. DAY

David moves on into the dark cavernous loft, edging his way across beams and pipes. There are no skylights. He stops and leans against some structure (the water tank). He strains to see in the darkness. Suddenly there is a loud sucking and flowing noise as water empties from the water tank. David is startled and steps forward, tripping. He reaches out as he falls, striking a light switch. Briefly the loft is illuminated: David blinking as he lies across some beams, the large cavernous area, the pipes, the water tank, the bag of money lying between two rafters, and then the old brass switches beginning to spark and the light goes out. David scrambles towards the trapdoor.
INT. HUGO’S ROOM. DAY

Now clean and empty, with no trace of recent habitation.

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY

In a basement corridor in the hospital, pipes run along the ceiling. Above a fenced-off area is a sign saying For Incineration Only -- No Aerosols’. On the floor of this area are yellow plastic sacks. Juliet appears around a corner carrying one of these. Quite casually she clumps it on the pile and continues past.

EXT. QUARRY. EVENING

Alex pushes a blue car into a quarry.

INT. SUBURBAN LOCK-UP GARAGE. NIGHT

In the garage there is a car, gardening equipment, several sacks of fertilizer and a trunk-style deep freeze, on the lid of which sit Andy and Tim. Tim takes out a cigarette and offers one to Andy, who declines. They slide off the deep freeze and open it. Inside the freezer there is a man, naked and bound with cord. They lift him up. He is very cold and weak. The Man begins to whisper inaudibly. Andy moves his head so that he can hear the whisper. He listens, then nods approvingly. They push him down again and close the lid. Andy holds the lid while Tim dumps the sacks of fertilizer on top.

INT. CHARITY BALL. NIGHT

Alex, David and Juliet are attending a charity ball. Everyone is dressed very smartly, in ball gowns and black ties with the addition of a significant number of kilts. Neither Alex nor David wears a kilt. The trio seem to know a number of people there but do not seem especially keen to speak to them. A middle-aged, podgy, mustachioed Master of Ceremonies is standing on a platform in front of the band, making a speech to the diners who are still sat at their tables.

MC

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please. First of all, may I thank you all for coming along tonight and supporting our appeal to raise funds for the sick children’s unit.

There is a quick drum roll and applause breaks out. We move to the table where Alex, David and Juliet are seated. Alex leans across to Juliet.
ALEX
You didn’t tell me that this was
for children. I hate children. I’d
raise money to have the little
fuckers put down.

Some other guests around the table cast critical glances at
Alex.

JULIET
Sshh.

ALEX
I want my money back. Excuse me.

Alex signals to the waiter by lifting his hand and snapping
his fingers, then indicates another bottle of champagne that
already ists in front of him.

MC
For all too often there’s a
complacency: out of sight, out of
mind, let someone else bother about
these things.

Alex cheers once and starts to applaud on his own. Juliet
nudges him viciously.

MC
(continued)
But just before the dancing, I’d
like to say a special thank-you to
a few of the people who’ve worked
so very hard to make this occasion
happen.

The MC’s drone continues in the background while
conversation continues back at the table.

DAVID
Do you know many of these people?

JULIET
Yes. They’re my friends.

ALEX
I see, so if they want to talk to
you, we say you’re not in.

MC
And now, ladies and gentlemen, and
those of you who are neither or
both --
Drum roll.

    MC
    (continued)
    -- would you make your way to the
    floor for Strip the Willow.

    JULIET
    Are we going to dance?

    ALEX
    Well, it’s physical contact, isn’t
    it?

INT. DANCE FLOOR. NIGHT

The dance floor a few minutes later. It is packed and rather
chaotic. Sweaty, dishevelled dancers sling one another
around, with the thud of flesh against flesh. Toes are stood
on and jackets discarded. Juliet dances with Alex, who
plunges in with the maximum of violence, eventually tripping
up and tumbling forcefully among the other dancers. He
starts to get up, then rests his head back against the
floor. David has not been dancing. Instead he remains at
their table and at the bar, drinking steadily and watching
the other two.

INT. TABLE. NIGHT

Back at the table, while most people are still on the dance
floor, the trio sit drinking and Alex smokes a cigar.

    ALEX
    That was good.

    DAVID
    Can we talk about something?

    ALEX
    Not now. I have an idea.

Alex pours champagne on to a stack of glasses.

    DAVID
    Listen, it’s important. We need to
talk about what we’re going to do
--

    ALEX
    Just stop worrying.

Alex stands and raises his glass.
ALEX
(continued)
Love and happiness for ever.

JULIET
For ever and ever.

Alex drinks, then puts his glass down. Juliet drinks but does not drain her glass. David sits still.

ALEX
What’s the problem?

DAVID
I want to talk now.

ALEX
After you drink to love and happiness forever.

DAVID
Now.

ALEX
After.

JULIET
David, I promise we will. Keep him happy.

ALEX
It’s not for me. It’s for love and happiness forever.

David reaches out to take his glass. Suddenly, Alex flings an arm out to point, knocking over David’s glass and completely losing interest.

ALEX
(continued)
Look over there. It’s Cameron.

JULIET
Who?

ALEX
Cameron. You remember Cameron.

JULIET
No, I don’t.
ALEX
What’s he doing here?

JULIET
That’s not him.

ALEX
Yes, it is. It’s him. Cameron, Cameron, come on over. Yo!

From some distance away, Cameron becomes aware of Alex and cautiously makes his way across until he stands a few feet from the table.

CAMERON
What?

ALEX
Nothing. We thought you were someone else.

Alex falls forward, laughing, and the other two also laugh as Cameron walks away, humiliated again.

ALEX
(continued)
Good luck. I love that guy, but why does he have to follow us around?

DAVID
Anyway, what I was wanting to say was this --

BRIAN
(unseen)
The divine Juliet. Long time no see.

Brian approaches and is standing behind their table.

JULIET
Brian.

BRIAN
Would you care to dance?

DAVID
Hold on there. Who do you think you are?

BRIAN
What?
DAVID
Who do you think you are? You interrupted us.

BRIAN
I’m Brian McKinley, and who are you?

DAVID
Well, Brian McKinley, if you want to talk to my girlfriend, you talk to me first. If you want to dance with her, then you apply in writing three weeks in advance or you’re gonna end up inside a fucking bin-bag. You didn’t apply, so you don’t dance.

Shocked and frightened, Brian backs away, then turns around to complete his departure. Juliet restrains David with a touch as they watch him go.

JULIET
Do you think you could be a little more forceful next time?

DAVID
I’m sorry.

JULIET
It’s alright. I think he got the message anyway.

DAVID
That was stressful. I found that stressful.

ALEX
Yeah, but you were good, you were really good. Fucking bin-bag’, I liked that. You were good. You explored your maleness to the full there.

DAVID
You think so?

JULIET
Well, you certainly had a good look around.
ALEX
You were magnificent.

INT. TOILETS. NIGHT

The gents’ toilet. Brightly-lit and white-tiled. Alex walks in and goes into a cubicle and closes the door. We hear him whistling and laughing as he passes urine. He keeps muttering bin-bag’ to himself. Then he flushes the toilet and opens the door. As he does so a look of surprise appears on his face as he sees someone waiting for him.

ALEX
Cameron! What a surprise.

As Alex is speaking Cameron’s fist flies forward, hitting him in the face and sending him flying backwards. Cameron enters the cubicle and closes the door behind him.

INT. HALL. MORNING

Mail falls through the letter box.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Alex does not stir.

INT. HALL. MORNING

David emerges from his room, ready for his work. He looks towards the kitchen, then walks to the door and opens it.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING

We hear the main door closing as David leaves. Alex jolts with energy with every sound. The telephone begins to ring. Juliet looks at Alex expectantly, but he does not move. Eventually she gets up and answers it.

JULIET
Hello. Hello.

ALEX
Who was it?

JULIET
Don’t know. No one said anything.

ALEX
Rendered speechless with desire. I recall that feeling, from the days when I had such a thing.
JULIET
Are you all right?

ALEX
No.

JULIET
Then let’s spend some money.

INT. FLAT. DAY

There follows a video depicting the results of Alex’s and Juliet’s spending spree. It opens with Alex seated at the kitchen table talking to the camera, absolutely deadpan.

ALEX
Hello. It’s been a struggle, but now the days of worry are over, the light at the end of the tunnel has expanded into a golden sunrise and at last, at long last, nothing will ever be the same again.

Alex leans out and the camera follows him as he presses the play button on a tape recorder. The music begins. Fast cuts follow, occasionally interrupted by out-of-focus shots of the floor or ceiling as the camera swivels round and is switched on and off. Alex wearing several different suits, outfits and silk pyjamas. Juliet wearing several different outfits. Both of them posing with small objets d’art. The expensive watch on Alex’s wrist. Juliet’s jewellery. Expensive toys. Juliet takes a picture of Alex with a Polaroid camera. Alex holds the camcorder out at arm’s length in order to film himself and turns to the camera and adjusts his tie.

ALEX
(continued)
This is Alex Law reporting from the scene of his own life, and you know, I’m so happy I could die.

Darkness. TV. Turned off.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

The music has stopped. David presses the eject button and lifts the video from the player. Alex and Juliet are seated on the sofa, surrounded by their acquisitions, and are evidently a little embarrassed. Juliet is holding the Polaroid of Alex.
DAVID
I think we ought to scrub this, don’t you?

David reinserts the tape and presses record.

ALEX
Will you calm down.

JULIET
Yeah, you’re making us all nervous.

David picks up the Polaroid of Alex and throws it down, then picks up a vase.

DAVID
How much did you pay?

ALEX
I don’t know.

DAVID
How much did you pay?

ALEX
I don’t know.

DAVID
How much?

ALEX
I don’t know.

JULIET
Two hundred.

DAVID
Two hundred pounds?

JULIET
Two hundred pounds.

DAVID
You paid two hundred pounds for this?

JULIET
That’s what it cost, David.

DAVID
No, no, no. That’s what you paid for it. Two hundred pounds is what you paid for it. We don’t know what (MORE)
DAVID (cont’d)
it cost us yet, for you two to have
a good time, we don’t know the cost
of that yet.

From out in the hall, the phone starts to ring. Nobody moves.

INT. DAVID’S ROOM. NIGHT

David lies awake in his bed.

INT. A FLAT HALLWAY. NIGHT

Hearing the noise, David sits up in bed, then gets out, reaching for his clothes.

INT. STAIRWELL. NIGHT

David looks down the stairwell. Other neighbours, in nightclothes or hurriedly dressed, are standing at the open door of the flat below. David descends the stairs and looks into the hall of the other flat where the occupant, an Elderly Woman, lies groaning on the floor. A hand on David’s shoulder pushes him out of the way and two uniformed policemen walk past, followed by an ambulance man carrying a stretcher.

DAVID
Did they take anything? Did they take anything?

No one acknowledges his question or answers it. The ambulance men emerge carrying the woman, her face bruised and cut. Everyone else begins to melt away.

INT. STAIRWELL. NIGHT

David stands alone on the darkened stairwell.

INT. DAVID’S ROOM. NIGHT

David lies awake in his bed.

INT. DOOR OF THE FLAT. DAY

Someone attempts to open the door but cannot because there are two new security chains on the inside. The door is forced against the chains with no success and Alex calls from the other side.
ALEX
What is this? What is going on?
David!

David approaches the door.

DAVID
I’ll let you in.

David closes the door and looks through a new spyhole to see Alex grinning at him while he releases the chains and then opens the door again. Alex walks in.

ALEX
What is this?

DAVID
Security.

DAVID
From what? Jehovah’s Witnesses?

DAVID
There was a break-in.

ALEX
Downstairs, I know. Pensioner’s terror ordeal: page six.

Alex hands David a rolled-up newspaper.

DAVID
Doesn’t it worry you?

ALEX
No, it doesn’t. I tried to let it worry me but it won’t. I’ve worked on that paper for three years. There is a pensioner’s terror ordeal on page six every day. Every day. Maybe when I’m a pensioner it’ll worry me.

Alex notices some more tools and the stepladder leading up to the trapdoor.

ALEX
(continued)
What’s all this for, more security?

DAVID
I fitted a lock up there. On the inside.
ALEX
Oh, that’ll come in useful.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Alex is serving on plates from a large bowl of pasta. David and Juliet sit at the table.

JULIET
Is this the same stuff you made last week?

ALEX
No, no, it’s different.

JULIET
I hope it tastes better than the other stuff.

ALEX
It tastes different.

JULIET
I don’t want it to taste different. I don’t know why I bother. Is that enough for you? Hey!

DAVID
What? Yes, that’s fine.

ALEX
You’re sure? There’s lots more.

DAVID
No, I’m sure, that’ll be enough.

ALEX
What’s wrong?

DAVID
Nothing.

ALEX
You’re not eating.

DAVID
Not eating what?

ALEX
Not eating like you used to, that’s what.
DAVID
If you give me the plate, I’ll eat.

Alex hands him the plate and he starts to eat. Alex watches him chew a mouthful.

ALEX
Now swallow.

David does so.

ALEX
(continued)
You know, you should spend some of that money instead of worrying about it. That’s my advice.

JULIET
He’s right. You’d feel much better about it.

David has stopped eating.

ALEX
Once it’s spent you won’t have to worry about it.

JULIET
Be like a weight off your shoulders.

ALEX
You know we’re right.

JULIET
Don’t you?

DAVID
I want to secure it.

ALEX
Secure it? What do you mean -- you’re gong to take it to a bank? You’re not going to take it to a bank? You’re not going to take it to a bank Or what, you want to bury it? Is that it?

JULIET
I don’t see the point in that.
ALEX
Because that’s no good. Remember, we did what we did, we took the money. It was a material calculation. But what’s the use if it’s underground, or in some funny bank in some funny place? If you can’t spend it, if you can’t have it, what use is it? None. It’s nothing, all for nothing, if you do that. I didn’t get into this for nothing, so that I could have nothing --

DAVID
Yeah, and you didn’t saw his feet off.

There is silence. David resumes eating.

DAVID
(continued) It tastes different.

INT. HALL. NIGHT
Alex stands at the sink doing some washing up. He hears footsteps from the loft above. He stops what he is doing and walks slowly out ot the hall.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT
In the darkness we can just make out David’s eyes as he sits in darkness.

ALEX
(calling from below)
David, David, what are you doing up there?

The torch goes on. David lifts the bag of money from between the rafters. He puts it inside another thick yellow plastic bag, which he ties tightly with string. David opens the water tank. Alex’s voice can be heard throughout.

ALEX
(continued; calling from below)
Will you come down now. It’s not safe up there. Are you listening to me. Security and insanity are not the same thing.
INT. HALL. NIGHT

ALEX
Shit.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Juliet sits drinking coffee, while Alex sands in the doorway looking up towards the trapdoor.

JULIET
Leave him alone.

ALEX
He can’t stay up there.

JULIET
He’ll come down. Leave him alone.

ALEX
Yeah, he’s got to go to work, hasn’t he? You think he’ll come down for that?

JULIET
No, but he’s looking after the money, so what’s the problem?

ALEX
Looking after it -- he’s probably fucking well eating it.

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY

Juliet looks through the door from a small office out into the main waiting area in the casualty departmet. It is busy and there are rooms of people nursing injuries waiting to be seen. More file past the door while she watches with no enthusiasm.

INT. HALL. DAY

The trapdoor opens. David’s head appears. He looks around and listens carefully.

INT. LUMSDEN’S OFFICE. DAY

Lumsden answers his telephone.
INT. HALL. DAY

David speaks on the telephone.

    DAVID
    It’s my mother, sir, she’s very ill
    and I think I need to be with her
    just now. I don’t know. The doctors
    aren’t sure. It could go either
    way. Yes, sir, I’ll certainly stay
    in touch.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY

David shaves carefully with a safety razor.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Bacon and eggs fry in a pan. David attends to them while
drinking from a large tumbler of orange juice.

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY


    JULIET
    Painful groin? What does that mean?

    SISTER
    I don’t know. He wouldn’t show me.

Juliet draws back the curtain of a cubicle. Alex is sitting
on a trolley.

    ALEX
    Boy, am I glad to see you.

    JULIET
    What are you doing here?

    ALEX
    We have to talk.

    JULIET
    Your painful groin?

She turns and walks away. Alex chases after her.

    ALEX
    Later. But first -- him.
JULIET
David?

ALEX
Exactly. Now I’ve been thinking --

JULIET
Oh, good.

ALEX
He won’t do anything for me, but for you --

JULIET
Forget it.

ALEX
He isn’t safe up there. If you really cared about him, you’d use your influence to get him down, then he’d be safe.

JULIET
And the money?

ALEX
We could put it somewhere.

JULIET
Where he can’t get it?

ALEX
Now you thought of that, not me.

JULIET
Forget it -- he’ll come down.

Juliet walks away.

INT. HALL. DAY

The hall is empty and the flat is silent. We see the trapdoor.

INT. LOFT. EVENING

David sits in the darkness. A crack of light penetrates beside the trapdoor.
INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Alex and Juliet sit at the table, eating in silence. The doorbell rings. Alex and Juliet look at one another.

ALEX
Expecting anyone?

JULIET
No.

ALEX
Oh. Alex resumes eating.

JULIET
Aren’t you going to answer it?

ALEX
Well, I’m not expecting anyone either.

Juliet glares at him.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Alex approaches the door and is about to open it. At the last moment he checks himself and looks through the spyhole.

INT. THROUGH THE SPYHOLE. NIGHT

Tim and Andy stand outside the door.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Alex, slightly puzzled, fixes the security chains before opening the door. As soon as he opens it, the door is kicked wide open as the security chains break off. Tim and Andy enter the flat. In a whirlwind of force they drag and shove Alex and Juliet into the living room and bind them up with cord. There are no words apart from slightly muffled cries. At the end of this Andy stands in front of Alex holding a crowbar. Swiftly and without warning, he cracks it across Alex’s shins. Then Andy slowly puts one one end of the crowbar into Alex’s mouth. For a moment he does nothing, then just as slowly again, he takes the crowbar out.

ALEX
It’s in the loft.
INT. HALL. NIGHT
The trapdoor is closed but the sound of it being unlocked can just be heard (although not by anyone in the flat.

INT. HALL. NIGHT
Tim pulls the ladder across to the trapdoor.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT
It is completely dark in the loft, but as the trapdoor opens a shaft of light strikes upwards and illuminates a small pool around the opening.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT
Away from the trapdoor there appears to be a wall of uniform darkness, but then we see a pair of eyes in the darkness. It is David. He stands perfectly still. There is a hammer in his right hand.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT
Tim’s head appears through the trapdoor. Cautiously he lifts himself through and balances on the beams.

INT. HALL. NIGHT
The hall is empty, but we can see the open trapdoor. Suddenly there is a single thud, as might be caused by a body landing heavily on and across some beams in the loft.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT
David stands motionless in the dark, exactly as before.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT
Andy has heard the single thud. He strains to hear anything else but does not. Slowly he backs away to the door of the living room, keeping the crowbar trained on Alex as he does so. He looks back and up towards the trapdoor.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT
Once again a small pool of light emanates from the open trapdoor. Andy emerges into the front of this, crowbar in hand, peering into the darkness. Carefully he stands up and moves out of the light and steps across the beams. His foot strikes something and he looks down. Tim’s body lies spread-eagled beneath him. He looks up. To one side of him is the brass light switch. Andy lifts his arm, reaches
towards it and switches it on. Sparks pour out for a moment and then the light comes on for a fraction of a second, long enough for Andy to see David’s face is only centimetres from his own.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Alex and Juliet are bound together as before. There is a loud thud from the ceiling, following by a few heavy steps. Then Andy’s body falls headfirst through the trapdoor, straight down to the floor below, landing awkwardly and coming to rest with his head hanging back, looking towards Alex and Juliet. Andy takes one agonal breath and dies. Blood trickles from the side of his mouth. Tim’s body lands on Andy. David drops himself from the hatch to the floor. David takes a large knife from a wooden block. Back in the hall he kneels, holding the knife, beside Tim. Noticing something at the top of tim’s neck, he uses the knife to lift away Tim’s T-shirt. A tattoo covers Tim’s neck. David looks at it, then stands up. He walks through to the living room, where Alex and Juliet, still bound, watch him approach. He looks at them for a moment, then extends the knife and cuts the cord in one place.

EXT. FOREST. NIGHT

In a scene similar to the dismemberment of Hugo, we see David’s shoulders as he saws back and forth at something unseen. He stops and reaches out for the hammer, picks it up and raises it above his head.

EXT. ROAD. DAWN

The van is silhouetted against a rising sun.

INT. BACK OF THE VAN. DAWN

The tools and the yellow sack slide about in the back of the van.

INT. VAN. DAWN

David is driving. Alex and Juliet are huddled silently away from him. David seems quite at ease. A thick bunch of keys dangles from the ignition. Juliet observes them.

INT. LOFT. DAY

David sits still in the darkness.
INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE. DAY

Alex sits at his desk fidgeting, about to write something but unable to start. On the screen of his word processor is a page mock-up with the headline CATS EAT PENSIONER’. As the telephone on his desk rings, he is startled, then reaches out, slowly lifts it fractionally and replaces it.

INT. TRAVEL AGENT’S. DAY

Hunched over a VDU, the Salesman is offering Juliet a range of flights.

SALESMAN
October 15th, direct flight, London Heathrow to Rio de Janeiro, British Airways, you are looking at seven hundred and sixty-five pounds. Seven six five.

JULIET
That sounds fine.

SALESMAN
Air Portugal, on the other hand, via Lisbon, same day, five hundred and sixty-five. Five six five. It’s up to you. Catering important?

JULIET
What?

SALESMAN
Air France. Glasgow. Direct, but then you’re looking at the wrong end of nine hundred and twelve pounds. That’s nine one two. It’s up to you.

JULIET
Yes, the first one’s fine. Heathrow direct.

SALESMAN
It’s up to you. Air Patagonia. New outfit: via Caracas and Bogot. No catering. Four hundred and eleven pounds. Four one one. Good value, but refueling at Bogot is variable.

JULIET
The first one was fine.
SALESMAN
  Well, it’s up to you. Seven six five. How will you be paying?

INT. HALL. NIGHT

The hall is empty but we can hear David’s footsteps on the beams above.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Alex sits watching The Wicker Man on television. He can hear the footsteps above. He turns the sound up on the television so that he cannot hear them, but he keeps looking up at the ceiling, as though he expects to hear them or see something. Eventually he turns the sound back down and, after a moment’s silence, the footsteps start again, back and forth, then stop. Alex looks up. Without warning there is the sound of an electric drill. The blade of the drill appears through the ceiling and is then withdrawn. Alex is shocked. Other drill holes appear.

INT. VARIOUS CEILINGS. NIGHT

Holes are drilled in the ceilings.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

Rods of light penetrate up from the holes, interrupting but not obliterating the darkness. David sits back, pleased with his work.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. NIGHT

Juliet sits at her desk. Alex stands in the doorway. He is about to speak. Juliet raises a finger to her lips. They both look at the ceiling.

EXT. GARDEN AT FRONT OF THE FLAT. NIGHT

Establishing shot of Alex and Juliet in garden.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

The trapdoor is open.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT

David is searching through Alex’s desk, looking through letters and folders, then shoving them back into drawers.
EXT. GARDEN AT THE FRONT OF THE FLAT. NIGHT

ALEX
No, definitely not. And that’s that. I refuse to discuss it further.

JULIET
It’s the only way.

ALEX
I refuse.

JULIET
You’re frightened.

ALEX
No, I’m not frightened. A little terrified maybe. Did you see what happened to the last two who tried that? They went up alive and they came down dead -- the difference, I mean, alive dead alive, that sort of thing. It wasn’t difficult to spot. He killed them both: he cut them up.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. NIGHT

David is now searching through Juliet’s desk. He picks up a large brown envelope and looks into it. Beneath it is the airline ticket envelope. The doorbell rings.

INT. THROUGH THE SPYHOLE. NIGHT

McCall and Mitchell stand outside the door.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

David opens the door. McCall smiles.

MCCALL
Good evening. I’m Detective Inspector McCall and this is DC Mitchell. I wonder if we could ask you some questions.

DAVID
What about?

MCCALL
It’s about the burglary.
DAVID
Burglary?

MCCALL
Downstairs.

DAVID
Of course.

MCCALL
Can we come in?

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

David sits on the sofa while the two policemen sit on armchairs several feet apart.

DAVID
So I just heard her cries for help and all that, and when I went downstairs there were already those other people there, so I just stood around really, waiting -- you know how people do -- and then when your colleagues arrived I came back upstairs. And that’s about all, I think. I didn’t actually see anything useful, I don’t think.

MCCALL
did you hear anything before he cries?

DAVID
No, not that I recall, I was asleep.

MCCALL
Have you seen anything or anyone suspicious around here in the last few days?

DAVID
No, nothing, sorry.

MCCALL
Well, if you do, you’ll let us know?

DAVID
Of course.
MCCALL
And the other three people on the flat, did they hear anything?

DAVID
There are only two other people in the flat.

McCall consults a notebook.

MCCALL
Two?

DAVID
Who said there were four?

MCCALL
We understood there were four people living here. Not always, of course, but now, four.

DAVID
No, three. Who said there were four?

MCCALL
How strange. And how unsatisfactory to have misleading information. Only three people here. You’re sure?

DAVID
Yes, absolutely.

MCCALL
Take a note of that, Mitchell. Only three, rather than four. Write it down. You can use numbers or words, I have no preference. Which are you using?

MITCHELL
Both, sir.

MCCALL
Excellent. DC Mitchell is a rising star, Mr. Stevens. Under my tutelage he will undoubtedly make the grade.

DAVID
I see.
MCCALL
I doubt it. And these two other people, did they hear anything?

DAVID
No, they were asleep. They didn’t even wake up.

MCCALL
Yes. Why do you think you woke and they didn’t?

DAVID
I don’t know. Maybe I’m a light sleeper.

Uncomfortably, David realizes that Mitchell has noted down even this last, trivial remark in a painful longhand and has underlined a short segment of it.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

In the hallway of the flat Mitchell stands at the open main door, waiting to leave. McCall is kneeling at the door to Hugo’s room, tracing his finger down the broken lintel and lock. David looks on.

MCCALL
Loks like you had a break-in up here as well.

DAVID
Someone lost the key.

McCall gently pushes the door open and the light from the hall illuminates Hugo’s room.

MCCALL
Is this where no one stays?

DAVID
Yeah, that’s right, that’s it.

David notices that Mitchell is writing this down.

INT. GARDEN AT FRONT OF THE FLAT. NIGHT

ALEX
You’ll wait in the hall?

JULIET
I’ll wait there.
ALEX
And if it sounds like I’m being
killed, you’ll phone the police,
you’ll tell them everything?

JULIET
Everything.

ALEX
Everything. Except maybe that it
was his idea and not mine in the
first place. OK? That’s important
to me. I need to die misunderstood.

JULIET
Alex.

ALEX
What?

JULIET
As smart as you are, you’ll need a
little help.

She hands Alex a Yale key. Alex stares at it.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

In the darkness, the sound of the lock being turned is
heard.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Alex stands at the top of the ladder, holding the key in the
trapdoor lock.

ALEX
All right, David, what I’m going to
do is, I’m going to open this lock
and I’m going to come up, and
what’s important is that you remain
calm.

There is one light on. Juliet stands at the bottom of the
ladder. Having opened the trapdoor, Alex stops and listens,
but there is no sound above his own breathing. Juliet throws
up a torch, which he catches. He switches it on. It shines,
then goes out, and he knocks it against the ladder, making
it work again. Slowly he pushes the trapdoor open.
INT. LOFT. NIGHT

The trapdoor opens. Below it, Alex crouches on the ladder, expecting attack at any moment. He looks back down to Juliet, who returns his gaze, then he slowly raises himself into the loft. He turns around quickly, darting the torchlight around into corners and squinting in the darkness, but he sees nothing. The torch goes out. Cursing, he knocks it against a beam and it shines again. Slowly he moves further from the trapdoor into the centre of the loft, still turning around and worried about what might be behind him.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Juliet stands waiting, braced for sounds of conflict.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

Alex is still looking but has relaxed a little, feeling less in danger. In one corner he notices David’s pile of left possessions and the mat on which he has been sleeping. He moves towards it.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Juliet stands, still waiting.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

Alex stands in David’s corner. With another sweep of the torch he can still see nothing. He calls to Juliet.

    ALEX
    He isn’t up here.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

A close-up of Juliet’s face, just as David’s hand slams across her mouth, gripping her tightly while his other hand clamps on the back of her head. David’s mouth is right up against her ear as he spits a warning into it.

    DAVID
    Tell him to look for the money.

Slowly, David relaxes his grip on Juliet.

    JULIET
    Look for the money.
INT. LOFT. NIGHT  
Alex, cheerful now, is looking in the rafters.

    ALEX  
    Don’t worry, that’s what I’m doing.

INT. HALL. NIGHT  
David holds Juliet across her face again. She is terrified and does not struggle.

    DAVID  
    Expecting anyone?

    JULIET  
    What?

    DAVID  
    Were you expecting anyone? Tonight?

    JULIET  
    No.

    DAVID  
    Visitors? Some friends maybe? Someone you talked to?

    JULIET  
    No one. I promise.

    DAVID  
    Who have you talked to?

    JULIET  
    No one.

    DAVID  
    If I think you’re lying --

INT. LOFT. NIGHT  
Alex stands gazing around the loft.

    ALEX  
    (from the loft) Well, it’s not up here.
INT. HALL. NIGHT

David pulls Juliet to one side.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

Alex is about to descend when he notices the water tank. He walks over and lifts the lid. His face breaks into a smile as he realizes what it holds. He dips an arm into the tank, raises the yellow bag, then quickly lowers it again. Alex steps back from the water tank.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Alex appears at the top of the ladder. Without looking, he slides down as quickly as he can, calling out as he does so.

    ALEX
    Juliet, I have --

Alex reaches the base of the ladder. He turns around to find himself facing the blade of the battery-operated drill, held by David. Juliet stands off to one side.

    ALEX
    (continued)
    -- a problem.

David holds the drill even closer until it is almost touching the centre of Alex’s forehead and presses the trigger’ to turn the blade slowly as he speaks. Alex does not move at all.

    DAVID
    You looking for me?

    ALEX
    Looking for you? Yes.

    DAVID
    What for? What did you want? The money? Was that it?

    ALEX
    We just wanted to speak to you.

Alex’s hands and sleeves are wet. A few drops of water fall from his fingertips. Unnoticed by the other two, he slowly wipes his hands on the back of his jeans.

    DAVID
    Who else have you wanted to speak to? Maybe you thought they’d already got me.
The blade of the drill scrapes Alex's skin.

ALEX
Who?

DAVID
Your friends.

ALEX
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

JULIET
He doesn’t know David.

David holds the drill back slightly while he thinks. It could go either way.

DAVID
Well, maybe you don’t --

David lowers the drill and smiles.

DAVID
(continued)
I’m talking about the police.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. DAY

Alex has just woken up. He rubs his forehead. There is a nick in it, where the drill has scratched. He rubs at it and examines the drop of blood on the end of his finger.

INT. DAVID’S POINT OF VIEW. ALEX’S ROOM. DAY

Looking down from a hole in the ceiling, we see into Alex’s room, where he is getting dressed.

INT. HALL. DAY

Alex leaves his room and enters the hall.

INT. LOFT. DAY

Looking down from a hole in the ceiling, we see into Alex’s room, where he is getting dressed.
INT. LOFT/HALL. DAY

Looking down on Alex as he leaves the flat and closes the door.

INT. LOFT. DAY

David scurries back across the beams to look down through another hole. He looks for several seconds. NOTE In the following sequence, Juliet’s face is not seen until her comment on it.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. DAY

Juliet lies on her bed. She throws the covers back.

INT. LOFT. DAY

David is still looking down through the hole.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. DAY

Juliet moves about her room. She is wearing a large, baggy T-shirt.

INT. LOFT. DAY

David still watching.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. DAY

Juliet’s legs are seen as the T-shirt lands on the floor beside them.

INT. LOFT. DAY

David sits back suddenly, recoiling from the activity. He scrambles back across to his mat, where he sits back down and closes his eyes. Then he opens them and scrambles back to look down again.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. DAY

The room is empty. The sound of the flat door closing is heard. From David’s point of view we see:

INT. LOFT/HALL (EMPTY). DAY INT. LOFT/LIVING ROOM (EMPTY). DAY INT. LOFT/KITCHEN (EMPTY). DAY INT. HALL. DAY

David’s head appears beneath the trapdoor. He hangs from the hatch and drops down to the floor.
INT. BATHROOM. DAY

David showers.

INT. HALL. DAY

David emerges from the bathroom and walks towards the kitchen. We follow him in.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

David takes orange juice out of the fridge and pours himself a glass. He sits at the table and looks briefly into a corner that we cannot see. The expression on his face does not change and his voice is impassive.

DAVID
I thought you’d gone to work.

JULIET
(unseen)
With a face like this?

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Juliet’s face. There are bruises across it where she was gripped by David.

INT. MONITOR SCREEN/NEWSPAPER OFFICE. DAY

In close-up we track along the following half-sentence: In the event of my death I want the following facts to be known:’ — The remainder of the screen is blank. Alex sits at his desk, deciding what to type next on the screen seen before. A young Office Boy approaches his desk.

OFFICE BOY
The editor wants to see you.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING

David sits while Juliet talks. She is now seated behind him.

JULIET
I remember how things used to be here, and I see how they are now, and I don’t know why it is. I don’t know how we let you become like this. We were your friends and we should have looked after you.
INT. EDITOR’S OFFICE. DAY

Alex sits nervously while the Editor sits on the side of his desk.

   EDITOR
   Out in the woods. Three bodies.

   ALEX
   I don’t know anything about it.

   EDITOR
   Of course you don’t know anything about it. If you knew anything about it, I wouldn’t have to send you over there to cover it.

   ALEX
   Cover it?

   EDITOR
   Well?

   ALEX
   But there’s no --

   EDITOR
   Animals involved? I know, but you need a change. And besides, we’re short.

   ALEX
   I don’t know.

   EDITOR
   Don’t know what?

   ALEX
   Well, I’ve got this story, it’s really good, I’m working on, that is good, I feel it could be big, it this, eh, and it’s, you know, it’s incredible. Am I right, did you say beyond recognition’?
INT. KITCHEN. DAY

David and Juliet are seated as before.

    DAVID
    I’m sorry.

    JULIET
    I should hope so.

david turns towards her. He reaches out and softly touches her face.

    DAVID
    Maybe we can still sort everything out.

Juliet takes his hand.

    JULIET
    We can try.

They look at one another.

EXT. FOREST. DAY

Several police and unmarked vehicles, including one mobile incident room’, stand on a rough track. Another car arrives at the end and is parkeed to one side. Alex steps out. From where he stands, Alex can see towards the site of the burials. There are a few policemen, uniformed and plain-clothes, and a small knot of journalists, kept at bay by plastic tape draped from tree to tree. Mounds of earth mark the site of the exhumations. Alex walks past the other journalists into the woods. He looks back towards the sight, then turns to look in the opposite direction. He finds himself at the edge of a golf course. From the green to the graves is hardly any distance. To one side, Alex sees McCall and Mitchell, hunched in earnest discussion. Mitchell looks up briefly and ctaches Alex’s eye.

INT. KITCHEN/HALL. DAY

The kitchen is empty. We track through the kitchen and out into the hall, stopping at the door to Juliet’s room.

INT. JULIET’S ROOM. DAY

David and Juliet are seated on the bed. Among the junk on her bedside table is the Polaroid photograph of Alex, propped up against a tumbler. Juliet reaches out and turns it away before pulling David towards her.
INT. MOBILE INCIDENT ROOM. DAY

Several journalists sit close together on plastic chairs. Alex sits at the back, near the half-open door. At the other end, three police officers face them. They are a medium-ranking Uniformed Officer, and to one side of him Mitchell and then McCall, both of whom sit in silence.

**UNIFORMED OFFICER**

All right, ladies and gentlemen, the releasable and print-worthy facts of the day so far are as follows. Late yesterday afternoon, forestry workers came across one set of human remains lying in a grave which appeared to have been recently dug. Further excavation on our part has revealed two similar, deeper graves, again containing human remains.

Alex turns his head and looks out of the door towards the burial site, now enclosed in a plastic tent. He continues to stare at it. While Alex is looking, the sound of laughter and Uniformed Officer’s subsequent comments become muted and we hear the memory of a sound in Alex’s head: it is the noise of the saw going back and forth across the victim’s limbs.

**UNIFORMED OFFICER**

(continued)

As and when the corpses are removed, we will endeavour to ascertain the mode of death and duration of burial, as well as identification, which will of course be passed on to you after informing, where possible, the next of kin.

Alex discreetly stands up and slips out of the van.

EXT. FOREST. DAY

Alex walks away from the incident room towards his car. He breaks into a run for a few paces. The noise of the sawing continues. As he reaches his car, Alex fumbles in his pockets for his keys. He is sweating and trembling. He drops his keys. As he bends down to pick them up, his foot slips on the wet grass. He falls to his knees, his forehead banging against the car door. He kneels for a moment, gripping the keys, his head resting against the door. The noise of the sawing stops. From behind, the arm of a Police
Constable reaches out and his hand rests on Alex’s shoulder.<br>Alex turns around to see the Constable looming over him.

    CONSTABLE
    Are you all right sir?

INT. MOBILE INCIDENT ROOM. DAY

The Uniformed Officer continues. McCall is staring impassively at the empty chair by the door.

INT. ALEX’S CAR. DAY

Alex sits in his car, staring ahead. Eventually he puts the key in the ignition.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT

The outside of the tenement.

INT. STAIRWELL. NIGHT

Alex ascends the stairs. He is carrying copies of the next day’s edition.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

Alex enters the flat. The hall is dark but light comes from the living room. He moves towards it.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Alex opens the door. Juliet sits with her back to him, while David looks out of the window. Concerned for Juliet, Alex approaches her.

    ALEX
    Are you all right?

    JULIET
    Yes, of course. Why wouldn’t I be?

Rebuffed, Alex takes in the situation.

    ALEX
    I don’t know. I thought maybe I was
    --

    JULIET
    We were just sorting things out.

She and David exchange a glance.
ALEX
Well, you’d better read about it.

Alex drops the newspapers on the table in front of Juliet. The headline reads TRIPLE CORPSE HORROR’.

DAVID
We already know. All about it.

JULIET
It was on the television.

Alex picks up the papers.

ALEX
(nervously)
Of course, but I think you’ll find the print medium provides a more lucid and detailed --

JULIET
Oh, shut up, Alex.

DAVID
It wasn’t deep enough. I told you it wasn’t deep enough, but you wouldn’t listen.

ALEX
It doesn’t neccessarily matter. They don’t even know who those people are, and even if they did, they have nothing to connect them with us, nothing at all.

DAVID
I’m glad you’re so certain, Alex. It makes us feel a whole lot better.

ALEX
I beg your pardon?

JULIET
It makes us feel a whole lot better.

ALEX
That’s what I thought he said.
INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT
Alex lies asleep. Slowly track towards him.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY. DREAM

McCall and Mitchell are standing in the centre of the kitchen. They say nothing. Mitchell leans down and begins to poke at the slender gap between two floorboards as though trying to get his fingers into it. This appears impossible but he manages nevertheless. His finger digs in, while McCall watches. Gradually Mitchell takes a grip on the floorboard. It is nailed down fast and Mitchell strains as he pulls. Eventually the nails fly out and, in a flurry of cracks and splinters, the plank comes away. McCall and Mitchell look down. In the gap between the rafters, Alex is lying face down and trying to crawl away under the floorboards. Mitchell grabs Alex’s ankle and McCall is now holding a saw.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT
Alex awakens abruptly and in shock. He is sweating. Just as he recovers his composure, he sees a form, almost hidden in the darkness, sitting at the end of his bed.

ALEX
Who the fuck?

He braces himself for a fight and fumbles for the bedside light switch.

JULIET
Sshh. Stop.

Alex leaves the light off.

ALEX
What are you doing here?

Juliet pauses.

JULIET
It’s about me and David.

ALEX
The perfect couple, I should say.

JULIET
You mustn’t take it so badly.
ALEX
Don’t worry about it. I’d do exactly the same, but I don’t think I’m his type.

JULIET
Don’t you ever stop?

ALEX
No.

Alex slumps back, eyes closed, asleep almost instantly. Juliet watches him.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

McCall and Mitchell sit opposite Juliet, who is being questioned. They watch her while she studies photographs of Hugo, Tim and Andy intently. Eventually, McCall breaks the silence. Mitchell takes notes continuously.

MCCALL
Take all the time you like, doctor.

JULIET
I’m sorry, I’ve never seen any of them.

MCCALL
Look again if you like.

Juliet glances at the photographs.

JULIET
No. I haven’t seen them.

MCCALL
Do you think you have a good memory for faces?

JULIET
Same as everyone else.

MCCALL
But in your work you must meet lots of different people, every day -- new people, new faces. No?

JULIET
Yes.
MCCALL
And what do you recognize, names or faces?

JULIET
Diseases.

MCCALL
Like recognizing criminals by their crimes.

JULIET
I suppose so.

MCCALL
I mean, that’s what it’s like.

JULIET
Sorry?

MCCALL
And you said you supposed so, but I wasn’t offering it for debate.

MITCHELL
Offering it for debate.

MCCALL
It’s like recognizing criminals by their crimes.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. DAY
Alex sits on his bed. Beside him are copies of the newspaper that he brought home with the headline TRIPLE CORPSE HORROR’. He lifts one and tears at the front page.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY
McCall and Mitchell sit facing David. He is looking at the photographs of Hugo, Tim and Andy (as they were when they were alive). They are official, mug-shot snaps. David shows no hint of recognition.

DAVID
No, I’ve never seen them.

MCCALL
You’re sure of that.

DAVID
Yes.
MCCALL
That wasn’t a question.

MITCHELL
You can tell by the intonation.

MCCALL
One other thing. Do you have any tattoos?

DAVID
No.

McCall points at the photograph of Tim.

MCCALL
Neither does he.

David and McCall both look at the photograph. A small trickle of plaster and dust falls from the ceiling and lands on McCall’s knee. He wipes it off and looks up. David sees but does not look up.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

McCall and Mitchell sit opposite Alex.

ALEX
Is this being recorded?

MCCALL
This is just an informal discussion.

ALEX
Are you recording it?

MCCALL
What does it look like?

ALEX
It looks like he’s writing everything down.

MCCALL
That’s because he is. Does that upset you?

ALEX
No. Why should it?
MCCALL
Well, then?

ALEX
I’ve never seen any of these men before.

MCCALL
Take another look at these two.

ALEX
I don’t know them.

MCCALL
And if I told you their car was parked outside, would that surprise you?

ALEX
Yes, I suppose so.

McCall gathers up the photographs and puts them into an inside pocket.

ALEX
(continued)
Well, is it?

MCCALL
What?

ALEX
Parked outside?

INT. LOFT/LIVING ROOM (FROM ABOVE). DAY

MCCALL
No, not any more. I just wondered if it would surprise you.

INT. LOFT. DAY

David steps back from the hole above the living room. He is puzzled.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Alex’s interrogation continues.

MCCALL
That’s it, then.
ALEX
That’s all?

MCCALL
Sorry to waste your time.

ALEX
Oh, no problems. Don’t worry.

MCCALL
Just one thing.

ALEX
Yes.

MITCHELL
That watch.

ALEX
What?

MCCALL
Your watch.

MITCHELL
Is it real?

MCCALL
Or a fake?

ALEX
What? Uh, no, no, it’s a fake. I picked it up in Thailand. The second hand doesn’t sweep, you see.

MCCALL
I see. Mitchell takes a note of this.

ALEX
Right.

MCCALL
Tell you what. If you do remember seeing any of these guys, maybe you could give me a phone, on this number, any time you like.

He holds out a card for Alex. Alex hesitates and then takes the card.
INT. HALL. NIGHT

The hall is empty but we can hear voices from the living room.

    ALEX
    I didn’t tell them anything. Nothing at all, absolutely nothing. They’re plods, that’s all they are. If they had anything, anything at all to connect us, any witnesses, any forensic evidence, they’d have whipped it out there and then.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Alex, Juliet and David are in the room.

    DAVID
    But they know.

    ALEX
    They can know all they like, it won’t do them the slightest bit of good --

    DAVID
    They know.

    ALEX
    They know? So what? They have nothing, there is nothing, to connect us to that bodies stuff.

    DAVID
    Except the money.

    JULIET
    He’s right, Alex. They know.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

The empty hall and closed door as before.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

The loft is dark but a small amount of light filters in, revealing David’s face on the pillow. He is awake. In his hand he holds the Polaroid of Alex. He examines it, then, reaching up, he pins it to a rafter so that Alex’s face stares down at him. There is a movement in the bed beside him. It is Juliet, asleep.
INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT

Alex is also awake. He sits up and reaches for some clothes.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

Juliet sleeps, while David slowly extricates himself from the bed. He lifts the lid of the tank and pulls at a piece of string, on the end of which is the thick yellow plastic bag.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT

Faintly lit by a dimmed lamp, Alex opens the door to the hall.

INT. LOFT. NIGHT

David makes his way to the trapdoor and slowly opens it. The door creaks once and Juliet mutters in her sleep but does not wake.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT

Hearing the creak, Alex freezes in mid-dial, but hears nothing more. He starts to dial again, then stops and replaces the receiver but continues to hold it.

INT. HALL. NIGHT

David drops to the floor with the money.

INT. DAVID’S ROOM. NIGHT

The light is on. David dresses quickly but quietly and pulls a bag from under his bed, into which he puts some clothes, his passport, etc.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT

Alex lifts the receiver again and dials. He stares at a card in his hand. It is the one given to him by McCall.

INT. DAVID’S ROOM. NIGHT

David is now wearing a coat and is finished packing. He glances quickly around his room for the last time, then lifts the two bags and switches off his light.
INT. HALL. NIGHT

As David closes his door behind him he disappears into the darkness of the hall. Suddenly he is brightly illuminated as the main light goes on. Juliet stands by the door to the flat, dressed to leave.

    JULIET
    You forgot to wake me.

INT. ALEX’S ROOM. NIGHT

Alex sits still, listening to David and Juliet. He ignores the message that can be heard coming over the telephone.

    WOMAN’S VOICE
    This office is closed at present. In the event of an emergency, please contact the duty officer via the switchboard. If you wish to leave a message, please speak clearly after the tone, leaving your name, address and telephone number.

Over this, David and Juliet can be heard from the hall.

    JULIET
    So let’s go.

    DAVID
    You and me?

INT. HALL. NIGHT

David and Juliet stand as before.

    JULIET
    Together.

David nods, then steps across the hall, leans down and pulls the telephone cable from its socket in the wall. He calls out to Alex.

    DAVID
    Hey, Alex, who are you calling at this time of night? Come on out and talk to us.

Alex appears at the door of his room. He is not angry, but wary. Juliet is not sure what David is playing at.
DAVID (continued)
Well?

Alex says nothing.

DAVID (continued)

ALEX
Yeah, I was phoning your mother.

DAVID
You old devil. Well, anyway, as you can see, we’re leaving.

ALEX
So I gathered.

DAVID
Yeah, I’m sorry, but that’s the way it is.

ALEX
It’s all right. I’ll forward your mail.

DAVID
No, really, I am sorry, sorry to be ducking out on you like this. I hope you won’t take it personally.

ALEX
Oh, no, no, no. Don’t let it worry you. Not at all. It’s probably for the best.

DAVID
For the best. Exactly. I wouldn’t want things to end on a downer.

ALEX
Not at all.

DAVID
I mean, we’ve had ups and downs, right -- good times, bad times?
ALEX
Yeah?

DAVID
But more laughter than tears, I think? Yes. On balance? I mean, remember that time when -- oh, we could talk all night, but we have to go. Don’t we, Juliet?

JULIET
Yes.

DAVID
And you need your sleep.

ALEX
Yes.

David pauses in thought.

DAVID
No, can’t think of anything else that matters.

ALEX
About the mail --

DAVID
It’s very kind of you to offer, but --

ALEX
Where do you think you’ll go?

DAVID
Where will we go? Where will we go? Juliet?

He turns to her.

JULIET
Eh, I don’t know.

DAVID
Oh, don’t be so coy, dear. You’re going to Rio.

JULIET
What?
DAVID
That’s right. You’re going to Rio.
Rio de Janeiro. On your own. Come on, you should know. You bought the fucking ticket.

David produces Juliet’s airline ticket from a pocket and hands it to Alex, who looks at it before putting it in a pocket.

DAVID
(continued)
Did you see that? Did you know about it? I’ll bet you she didn’t tell you about that before she sent you up there. You could have died. What did she say, We’ll split it together, you and me, fifty fifty’?

He turns to Juliet.

DAVID
(continued)
But I bet you didn’t say you were going to split on him.

JULIET
It wasn’t like that.

DAVID
Don’t lie to me. Don’t treat me like that.

ALEX
I bought it.

Juliet looks at Alex in surprise. David is momentarily confused.

DAVID
What?

ALEX
I bought the tickets. One for her and one for me. It was my idea.

DAVID
Your idea? Well, that fits. I mean, the two of you, that fits together. I should have seen that long ago.
David picks up his bag and starts walking to the door. Juliet bars his way. He stops. David gently shove past her, but Juliet overtakes him and stands right in front of the door. David stops again.

JULIET
Stop him, Alex. You’ve got to stop him.

ALEX
Let him go. Let him take it all.

David steps forward, but Juliet is pressed against the door. He drops his holdall and reaches for the door handle. Juliet tries to push him back. They struggle but neither is winning. David relaxes.

DAVID
I’m going.

David pauses for a moment, then hits Juliet once in the face, knocking her to the ground. David looks at her with disdain, then reaches for the door handle. As he does so he is hit from behind by Alex. Surprised as much as hurt, David stumbles round and touches his cheek. Alex is almost apologetic.

ALEX
You shouldn’t have hit her. You can do whatever you like, but you shouldn’t have hit her.

David takes a step towards the door again, but Alex launches himself at him, forcing him back, where trips over Juliet’s outstretched leg and drops his case. As Alex and David fight briefly on the floor, Juliet picks up the holdall containing the money and throws it into the kitchen. David forces Alex off and, pushing past Juliet, he enters the kitchen after the bag.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

David stands holding the bag, but a few feet from him, Alex and Juliet block his exit. David holds out the bag temptingly towards Alex.

DAVID
You want it? You want it?

As Alex lunges at the bag, David shifts and kicks Alex in the groin, but is himself immediately stunned again by being hit in the face with the edge of a toaster held by Alex. A brutal and angry fight ensues, mainly between Alex and
David, around the kitchen and involving various implements and artifacts in it. Eventually, just as Alex seems to be gaining the upper hand, David reaches out, pulls a long knife from the wooden holder and plunges it with great force through the upper part of Alex's right lung, just beneath his shoulder, pinning Alex to the wooden floor. David sits up and reaches for a second knife but, as he does so, a blade is forced through his own throat, appearing at the front. Clutching his throat, David falls to the floor, burbling and bleeding to death. Juliet surveys the scene with shock. She approaches Alex, who cannot move his left arm over to the knife in his chest. They look into one another's eyes. Neither she nor Alex speaks. As Juliet carefully touches the knife in his chest, Alex winces. With his right hand he grasps her ankle. She tries to shake herself free, but Alex holds on. She stops and takes off one of her shoes.

**JULIET**

Alex, you did the right thing, but I can't take you with me.

Holding the toe of her shoe, she hammers the top of the knife two or three times, driving it firmly into the floor. Alex's grip falls away. She then puts her shoe back on and picks up the bag of money. Juliet leaves the kitchen carrying the case. Alex looks to one side, where David is breathing his last, and to the other into the hall. In the hall, he can see Juliet reappearing from her room, carrying the holdall of money and another bag. She walks back into the kitchen, kneels down and kisses Alex's forehead. At the same time, she takes the airline ticket from his pocket. She stands again and leaves. She disappears from sight and we hear the main door close.

**INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT**

Alex lies alone, with David's body beside him.

**INT. KITCHEN. DAY**

It is brightly lit now. Policemen's legs swarm around Alex, who blinks as a flashlight fires. He looks out to the hall again, where he sees McCall and Mitchell. Alex lies back, a faint smile on his face.

**INT. KITCHEN. DAY**

The handle of the knife fills the screen. Moving slowly, the picture tracks down the blade, past Alex's shoulder and down to the pine floor, then through the floorboard to the tip of the blade on the other side. A drop of blood falls from the tip, a few centimeters, on to a thick pile of banknotes.
INT. AN AIRPORT DEPARTURES HALL. DAY

Scraps of ripped newspaper lie scattered around the holdall. Two of the scraps contain the headline TRIPLE CORPSE HORROR’.

INT. DAY. MORGUE

A horizontal strip of face. The eyes unmoving and unblinking. We draw back to reveal David laid out on a mortuary slab.

DAVID
(voice-over)
Oh, yes, I believe in friends, I believe we need them, but if, one day, you find you can’t trust them any more, well, what then, what then?

Two attendants in white approach across the mortuary and slide the tray into its slot. Darkness.

THE END