

1 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY 7

1

Strike is photographed heavily by PAPARAZZI as he is led into the police station by Ekwensi and Wardle.

2 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM, POLICE STATION - DAY 7

2

Strike sits opposite Ekwensi.

EKWENSI

Let's start with the photograph.

Ekwensi puts this morning's newspaper on the desk: Strike and Kelsey, seemingly together in a coffee shop.

STRIKE

Sent to the papers by "a concerned friend", is that right? Paedophile and murder suspect. It's not a popular spot on the Venn diagram.

EKWENSI

Do you think the photo is doctored?

STRIKE

No.

Strike gets to his feet and walks back a few steps. Turns, turns again, and then approaches the table.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Is this seat taken?

EKWENSI

Nope.

STRIKE

Thanks.

Strike sits.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Simple as that. If you're trying to make me look dodgy, at some point I'll look up at the same moment you're looking at me, and the photo someone takes in that split second will make it look like a conversation.

(beat)

Find the person who took this photograph and you'll have Kelsey's killer. It's probably someone she trusted.

(beat)

What else? Nobody's wearing coats. That woman's in a vest top.

(MORE)

STRIKE (CONT'D)

So it was warm weather. Probably taken at least five months ago.

That person-

(pointing out a detail)
...is reading a magazine. If the papers were sent a high-res image that'll help you date it. Anything else? Kelsey's drinking a bottle of water. Who goes to a coffee shop to sit and drink water? I'd skew towards saying she came specifically to sit next to me, rather than to enjoy a freshly-prepared caffeinated beverage.

Strike's anger is showing despite himself.

EKWENSI

You seem annoyed.

STRIKE

Did you find the three men I told Wardle about?

EKWENSI

I can't discuss that with you.

STRIKE

Because it's now part of a murder investigation?

EKWENSI

Exactly.

Strike considers his Kafkaesque situation, and reaches for a cigarette from his pocket. He lights up. A vast relief.

STRIKE

I don't care. I'll pay the fine.

EKWENSI

I get asthma.

He grinds out the cigarette under his shoe immediately.

STRIKE

Sorry.

Strike rings the doorbell.

After a moment, the door is opened by a red-eyed woman, HAZEL. She's a mousey forty-something, still stunned by the recent news.

HAZEL

Oh my God. It's you.

STRIKE

Hi. I'd really like to talk to you about your sister.

RAY (O.S.)

(Geordie accent)

Who's it, love?

HAZEL

It's... it's Cormoran Strike.

RAY (O.S.)

Why's he here? Close the door!

HAZEL

(to Strike)

Wait. Can you wait?

STRIKE

Yes.

Hazel closes the door on him.

Strike listens to the argument that erupts inside.

RAY (O.S.)

Those photos of him and Kelsey!

HAZEL (O.S.)

I know, but the police said they think he got set up and--

5

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM/KITCHENETTE - DAY 7

5

Ray is a large guy with a bald head, bushy ginger beard and eyes, like Hazel's, red from a lot of recent crying.

RAY

How's he even allowed to come here?

HAZEL

I know what you're saying, but Kelsey looked-up to him...

RAY

And look where she is now! I'm sorry, I just...

(breaking up)

(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)

Talk to him if you want, but I'm not having any of it.

HAZEL

Don't be that way with me! Please!

Hazel is on the verge of fresh tears.

RAY

Ah... Go on. If it's what you want. I'm not happy though.

Hazel opens the front door again.

HAZEL

You can come in.

STRIKE

Thank you.

Strike steps inside. Ray, still angry about the situation, walks into the adjacent kitchenette.

HAZEL

Make us a brew, would you, Ray.

RAY

Aye.

HAZEL

Do you want to sit down? Um... how do you want your tea?

STRIKE

Just milk. Thank you.

HAZEL

(calling back)

Ray, just white for him.

Hazel gestures to the table. Strike takes the nearest offered seat.

STRIKE

I'm very sorry for your loss. What happened to Kelsey was terrible.

Hazel nods, sniffling.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

I suppose the police have asked you both a lot of questions?

Hazel gets up and brings over a sheaf of papers. Spreads them in front of Strike: Hazel's wage slip for the hospital. A photo of her in nurse's uniform.

HAZEL

Was I working? Signed statement
from my colleagues. Payslips.

Photos of Ray and a friend, RITCHIE, in sunglasses and wrapped up against springtime cold, raising cans of beer, sitting on the beach with clumps of sea-holly in flower beside them.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Ray had to print off photos of him and Ritchie fishing. Boat hire receipt, the lot. And we're the ones who've lost her!

STRIKE

Can I take copies of these?

Hazel nods. Begins to cry.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I know this is hard.

Strike takes quick photographs of Hazel's documents using his phone.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Any idea who might have got close to Kelsey?

HAZEL

No. She didn't have many friends. She came and lived with us after our mum died but there was always the age gap so... I don't know. She used to cut herself but we knocked that on the head.

STRIKE

Can I have your phone number? In case I have other questions?

Strike leafs through photos of Kelsey. Hazel writes down their landline number for him.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Could I use your loo?

HAZEL

It's upstairs.

Strike moves towards the stairs.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

You didn't do it, did you?

STRIKE

No. I didn't.

6 INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY 7 6
Strike quickly checks through the medicine cabinet.

6A INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, UPPER HALLWAY - DAY 7 6A
Strike briefly surveys a citation for "Bravery and Meritorious Conduct" awarded to Ray Williams by the Fire Service, hanging on the wall next to Hazel's "Nurse of the Month" certificate.

7 INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, KELSEY'S ROOM - DAY 7 7
Strike steps quietly into Kelsey's room. He rifles quickly through her drawers, her pink-stuffed wardrobe.
The police have left her pictures on the wall. A melange of pop band posters, Lula Landry and other models, and Cormoran Strike.
Strike moves closer. The print-outs of his face carry web URLs at their base. A fan forum. He takes a photo of it.

7A INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, TOILET - DAY 7 7A
Strike flushes the toilet, creating the fabrication that he's only just finished in there...

8 INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 7 8
Strike comes back down to find Ray hugging a weeping Hazel.
Tea has been made and is waiting on the table -- but Strike's presence feels more intrusive than ever.

STRIKE
Thanks, Hazel. Thanks, Ray. I'll call you if I find anything more.

He lets himself out.

9 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 7 9
Strike enters -- to find Robin at her desk. She has a number of red bills, final demands on the desk. He notes them.

STRIKE
I've got a lead on Whittaker and I've also got an idea about Laing. Have you got that fundraising page of his?

Robin pulls a print out from her file.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

The building in the background is called the Strata building. I drove past it last night. We can use Laing's photo to find the block he lived in. There's no guarantee he's still there.

ROBIN

I called Brockbank. Last night.

(off Strike's reaction)

He suggested meeting in Shoreditch, but then he cut me off. We know he has a history of bouncing at strip clubs. It'd be a good place to start.

(beat)

He's living in a house with children.

STRIKE

Okay. I'll try and find Brockbank.

ROBIN

And I can stake-out Whittaker.

STRIKE

No, I don't want you anywhere near Whittaker. Try and find an address for Laing. But look, no working after dark. Keep on busy routes--

ROBIN

I've done counter-surveillance.

STRIKE

If it was up to me you'd stay in Yorkshire until he's caught. He addressed the leg to you. He followed you. That's the pattern we have so far.

ROBIN

I know. I'll be careful.

10

INT. SHOREDITCH STRIP CLUB - DAY 7

10

A STRIPPER takes to the low-rise stage platform in her underwear. A scattering of DAYTIME PERVS.

At the bar Strike shows the BARMAN the photo of Niall Brockbank. Gets a shrug.

11 EXT. SOUTH LONDON STREETS - DAY 7

11

Robin checks the angle of the street in relation to the Strata Tower. No... the angle here is not quite right.

12 INT. SARACEN STRIP CLUB - DAY 7

12

Strike sits in a larger club. All mirrors and banquettes.

A Polish girl, ELA, in a pink micro-dress sashays up to him.

ELA

Fancy a dance, darling?

STRIKE

I'm looking for a friend.

ELA

I'll be your friend.

STRIKE

Not that kind of friend, sadly.

She starts to move off--

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Can I buy you a drink?

ELA

(beat)

Alright. Vodka coke.

STRIKE

How much are they?

ELA

Fifteen quid.

STRIKE

Each? Fuck me.

ELA

Well, we can talk about that.

(to the Bartender)

Robbie? Two vodka cokes.

Ela sits beside him.

STRIKE

Maybe you know my friend? Niall Brockbank? He owes me money.

ELA

Des fired Niall. You're no use as a bouncer if you have a fit and piss yourself.

STRIKE

Would anyone have an address for him?

ELA

I think he lives with Alyssa. She's got the worst taste in men.

STRIKE

Is she one of the dancers?

ELA

Des fired her as well.

STRIKE

So Des is the person to speak to?

ELA

Des'll have you smacked around just for asking. They're in some council flat over in Bow. She bitches about it but she likes the nursery her kids are in, so...

Robbie delivers the drinks. Ela rises; her work here's done.

STRIKE

Can you introduce me to Des?

ELA

Thanks for the drink, darling, but I reckon you're trouble. Normally I like trouble.

Ela departs, letting her fingers trail across Strike's shoulders as she goes.

Strike rises. Finishes his drink as he approaches a BOUNCER.

STRIKE

Can I have a word with Des?

The Bouncer takes his time looking Strike over. Then shakes his head -- no.

13

EXT. STREETS NEAR LAING'S FLAT/INT. SARACEN STRIP CLUB -DAY¹³⁷

Robin looks at a council block -- the angle of the tower -- rooftop details: they align with the printed-out photo.

Robin smiles. She reaches for her phone and dials.

STRIKE (V.O.)

What is it? What's wrong?

ROBIN

Nothing! I'm fine. I think I've found Laing's street. It could be any one of a hundred flats though.

STRIKE (V.O.)

Make sure you're home before sunset.

ROBIN

How are the strip clubs?

STRIKE (V.O.)

Expensive. I'm going to go and take a look for Whittaker in Catford.

14 EXT. SARACEN STRIP CLUB - DAY 7

14

Strike exits, his phone clamped to his ear.

STRIKE

Where are you now?

INTERCUTTING:

15 EXT. STREET NEAR LAING'S FLAT - DAY 7

15

Robin, walking.

ROBIN

You have to stop treating me like I'm part of the problem.

Robin sees movement behind her. Turns quickly. Someone nearby. A beanie hat. Perhaps paranoia, perhaps not.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

I'll speak to you later.

Robin hangs up and crosses the road. Checks again to see if she's being followed.

16 EXT. CARIBBEAN TAKEAWAY - DAY 7 (STUNT)

16

Strike stakes out the flat. He is leaning against the back of a parked windowless van, rolling himself a cigarette.

A light goes on briefly, rousing his interest. But the curtains stay drawn.

WHITTAKER (O.S.)

Oi. Fat boy. Move.

Strike turns. And in an instant they recognise each other.

Whittaker is with a young, skaggy-looking girl, STEPHANIE, and a BAND MATE in a frayed metal T-shirt. Whittaker looks skinny but big-framed. Teeth fucked-up, his dreads thinning.

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)

Looky look. It's Sherlock fucking Holmes.

(to his bandmate)
Get us some fags.

The Bandmate slinks off.

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)

(to Stephanie)
Come 'ere.

Stephanie smiles up at Whittaker as he gathers her close to him. Whittaker lets a hand drop down to squeeze one of her breasts. Stephanie smiles up at him, devoted.

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)

(to Stephanie)
Fat boy here goes by the fine family name of Cormorant. I did his mummy for awhile. Back in the day.

STEPHANIE

Oh yeah?

WHITTAKER

I gave her a kid an' all. She was a juicy old slag.

STRIKE

(to Stephanie)
This man kills women.

WHITTAKER

You think she gives a shit?

(to Stephanie)
Do you, Steph?

Stephanie shakes her head.

Whittaker, his eyes on Strike, begins to squeeze Stephanie's throat with one hand. She begins to panic.

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)

What Cormorant's mummy liked best was to suck me off after I sung to her. D'you think you'd like that?

Steph claws at her throat.

No thought, no reflection. Strike punches Whittaker hard in the gut. Whittaker caves over, wheezing...

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)
Motherfucker...

STRIKE
(to Stephanie)
Come with me. I can find you
somewhere to stay.

Stephanie instead crouches to help Whittaker up, glaring at
Strike like she hates him.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
Don't stay with him.

Whittaker starts laughing as Stephanie helps him up.

Whittaker thrusts his tongue into Stephanie's mouth. It's a
kiss like an assault.

Whittaker turns back to Strike.

WHITTAKER
See you later, mummy's boy.

Whittaker opens up the back of the van and shoves Stephanie
in, slamming the door closed behind her.

Whittaker turns back to Strike. Makes the throat-slashing
gesture at him. Laughs again, and walks past Strike to the
driver's seat.

Strike finds that he is trembling. And that he has an
audience. People gawping at the spectacle.

He turns and walks hurriedly away, furious. People scatter to
let him pass.

17

INT. LONDON RESTAURANT - NIGHT 7

17

Robin and her mother LINDA eat together.

ROBIN
Matt shouldn't have called you.

LINDA
I'm glad he did.

ROBIN
I'm not stopping doing this job.
Not for anyone.

Linda smiles.

LINDA
We all know you love your job. Now,
how'd you feel about Matthew?

Robin sits silent.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Whatever you do, you'll always have mine and Dad's full support, but Robin, I do think it's time to make a decision. The wedding day's nearly here.

ROBIN

I don't know...

LINDA

You don't need to worry about anything, but--

ROBIN

Mum, I just don't know.

LINDA

Would you like to come back and live in Masham for a bit? Be a bit looked after?

ROBIN

No.

(beat)

Sorry. I don't mean it like that... I worry I'd feel like I did before. Like I was shutting out the world. I want to stay in it.

(beat)

I looked at flats but everything's so expensive. I don't know.

Robin looks down at her plate.

Linda passes her an envelope.

Robin opens it. Rows of ten and twenty pound notes.

LINDA

There's five hundred pounds. It can be your deposit for renting a flat of your own. Or it can be a pair of really beautiful wedding shoes.

ROBIN

(tears coming)

I can't take this. You've already--

LINDA

Take it. It's a gift. Just... don't keep living in limbo. It's not good for you, pet.

18

INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 7

18

Strike sits at his desk. Sifting through the evidence accrued so far. The pictures of Hazel's documents. The map of Shoreditch strip clubs.

He taps in the URL from the photo he took in Kelsey's room. It takes him to a Lula Landry tribute site... and a particular thread where he appears to the subject of ardent discussion.

One of the pictures that's been posted to the site is the same as one on Kelsey's wall. He reads for a moment, then closes it off.

The photo he comes back to a blurred one of Leda and Whittaker. Strike weighs it in his hand.

WHITTAKER (PRE-LAP)

"She was the quicklime girl. She wanted to die."

19

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK, STUNT)

19

Whittaker -- younger, mid-twenties and scrubbed in a suit -- is giving evidence at his own trial.

Seated in the gallery, a young Strike looks on with his sister Lucy beside him.

WHITTAKER

There's poetry in the darkness,
your honour. Leda understood that.

DEFENCE COUNSEL

Mr Whittaker, being candid with the court now, was it the case that Leda Strike was a drug user?

WHITTAKER

I'm afraid that she was.

SHANKER (O.S.)

She never shot smack!

Strike turns to where Shanker is sitting a few seats away.

Shanker's not having this. Shanker attempts to climb towards Whittaker, but is immediately grabbed by TWO GUARDS, who lead him out of the court still screaming--

SHANKER (CONT'D)

He done it!

With the eyes of the court on Shanker, Strike and Whittaker make eye-contact. A thin smile rises on Whittaker's face.

20 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 7 20

Strike leans forward and dials the number given to him by .
IT RINGS. Then Ray picks up.

RAY (V.O.)

Hello?

STRIKE

Is that Ray? It's Cormoran Strike.

INTERCUTTING:

21 INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 7 21

Hazel is watching TV while Ray is on their landline.

RAY

Have you found anything?

STRIKE

I'd like you and Hazel to look at a
couple of photos of some men.
They're not great pictures, but
something might jog a memory. Can I
email them over to you?

RAY

raywilliams999@hotmail.com

(beat)

Hazel needs space. Don't you
understand that, feller? After
this, that's it from you, alright?

STRIKE

Thank you. I appreciate it.

Ray hangs up.

22 EXT. CENTRAL LONDON STREETS - NIGHT 7 22

Robin hurries along, eyes flitting from one pedestrian to the
next. Paranoid being out late.

23 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 7 23

Robin creeps in. The night streets are busy below.

ROBIN

Cormoran?

A desk lamp on in his study. He has fallen asleep in his
chair.

Robin takes Strike's coat from a coat-hook and carefully lays it over Strike's legs and upper body, gently tucking it in around him.

He wakes. Knows it's her immediately. There's such intimacy in the way she cares for him that it kills him.

After a moment--

STRIKE

Thanks.

Robin looks up. They are close. The moment holds.

Then she is embarrassed, flustered. Steps back.

ROBIN

I came back for some files and you were...

Strike rubs his sleep-clinging eyes.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Look. I got given some money. It's only five hundred pounds but we need to at least pay off the electricity or we won't be able to work here.

Strike gets up and stretches. Walks to the window.

STRIKE

Someone's trying to destroy me. I think I make a fairly poor prospect for investment. Under the circumstances you're better off putting it on a horse.

ROBIN

I'm best off here. Let me do this for us.

A long beat.

He checks his watch.

STRIKE

Shit...

ROBIN

What?

STRIKE

Slept through a date.

ROBIN

Oh. Who's... the lucky girl?

STRIKE

Swedish. Pretty. Doesn't give a shit.

ROBIN

Sounds perfect.

STRIKE

I should go to bed.

(beat)

I really don't like you being out after dark. Take a cab.

(exiting)

Night, Robin.

23A INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE - NIGHT 7

23A

Robin lets herself in.

23B INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT 7

23B

Robin pads in to find Matthew washing up pans.

ROBIN

What're you doing?

MATTHEW

I made that Nigel Slater salmon thing you like. Yours is in the fridge, if you want it.

ROBIN

Thanks but I ate with Mum.

MATTHEW

How is she?

ROBIN

She's okay.

Robin pours herself a glass of wine from the open bottle.

MATTHEW

I've got something I need to say to you. Will you sit down a minute?

Robin does so. Matthew sits opposite her.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

What I did was unforgivable. I was twenty-one and in so much pain. You wouldn't touch me. I was incredibly lonely and then I made a mistake.

(beat)

You are the love of my life. I want to marry you.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

More than anything that's what I want. But it's for you to decide.

Matthew puts Robin's engagement ring on the table.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

So I'm asking you again. And if you say no, I'll accept it, and I'll leave the flat in the morning.

24-26 OMITTED

24-26

27 INT. STRIKE'S BEDSIT - NIGHT 7

27

Strike lies in bed unable to sleep.

After a moment he swings himself out of bed.

28 OMITTED

28

28A INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT 7

28A

Matthew climbs into bed next to Robin.

A beat, and then she slides into his arms, resting her head on his shoulder. Not everything solved -- but together again.

29-30 OMITTED

29-30

31 OMITTED

31

32 INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 8 32

Robin jumps as she sees someone's shoulder near the back door. Panicked, she grabs a knife from the block on the counter.

The rest of Strike appears at the back door, eating a banana. He waves.

STRIKE
(through the glass)
Went for the knife. Very good.

Robin, annoyed, puts the blade down and lets him in.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
I'm going to check your locks. I
can already see the back door--

Strike tries to hide his distraction at the sight of Robin's engagement ring being back on her finger.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
...well it's not... adequate.

ROBIN
I need to go home to Masham for a
few days for dress fittings and
stuff. Is that okay? I know it's
not good timing.

STRIKE
No, it's... It's good. Keeps you
out of harm's way. Good.

Strike turns and leaves. Just like that.

33 EXT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 8 33

Strike isn't delighted to find Wardle and Ekwensi waiting for him outside his front door. Nor do they look happy with him.

WARDLE
You stupid bastard.

34 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 8 (MOMENTS LATER) 34

Strike is with Wardle and Ekwensi. Wardle highly-animated.

WARDLE
Ray said it felt like you were
harassing Hazel. Can you imagine if
he'd gone to the papers instead of
us? "Murder suspect shows up at
grieving relatives house and
demands to check their alibis"?

STRIKE

That is not what I was--

WARDLE

You went there! It's unbelievable!

STRIKE

So what do you want me to do?

WARDLE

Stay out of it! Work your own cases.

STRIKE

I don't have any work to do! Nobody wants to hire a detective who's accused of being a paedophile and a murderer. I can't even afford to rent this place next month. I'll have to make my partner redundant while she's on her honeymoon! What exactly do you think I should be doing while someone cuts up little girls on my account?

EKWENSI

You have to trust us to do our job--

STRIKE

Right, so the three names I gave you. Who've you found?

The two police officers glance at each other.

WARDLE

We're still making enquiries.

STRIKE

Whittaker's in Catford. Laing was in Corby but recently had a flat in Elephant and Castle. Brockbank just got fired from a strip club in Shoreditch. And your suggestion is I sit back and wait for London's finest to plod to the finish line? By the time you figure things out, I'll be homeless on the street and Robin'll be dead.

WARDLE

We're on your side, you idiot! If he's trying to get in your head, I'd have to say he's winning.

STRIKE

I know he is.

(beat)

(MORE)

STRIKE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I don't know what else to do.

WARDLE

Stay away from Hazel and her family. And give us what you've found on those three. Maybe we can plod our way to doing something.

(beat)

I'd feel the same in your shoes, but we all know how it is.

34A EXT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY 8

34A

Robin arrives home in her Land Rover. The beautiful countryside around her lifting her spirits already...

34B INT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 8

34B

Robin is greeted by her parents, indifferent brother Martin, and the wagging-tail of Rowntree, their brown Lab.

35 INT. ROBIN'S PARENT'S HOUSE, ROBIN'S OLD BEDROOM - DAY 8 35

Robin is gently manipulated by the Dressmaker. An arm lifted, a pin carefully inserted. Linda watches from the bed.

DRESSMAKER

You've lost weight. Everyone always says they will but most of them don't.

ROBIN

(distant)

Thanks.

LINDA

You look so beautiful.

Robin's room is unchanged since she last lived in it.

FLASH ON: OMITTED

ROBIN

You should redecorate in here.

DRESSMAKER

It's not 'til you're married that
you're really gone though, is it?

LINDA

It'll always be your room, love.

36

INT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 8

36

Robin lies on the sofa, tickling the dog's ears with one hand, browsing the internet on her laptop with the other.

Googling a list of nurseries in Bow.

Her younger brother, Martin, is reading the sports pages on the opposite sofa.

Robin picks up her phone. Dials.

ROBIN

(mousy London accent)

Alright? It's Zahara's mum. I
haven't got any letters from your
lot in ages and I'm thinking you've
got my address messed up?

Martin corpses LAUGHING.

MARTIN

(Mockney)

Shine yer shoes, guv'nor?

ROBIN

(covering the phone)

Piss off!

(back on the phone)

Yeah, Zahara's mum, Alyssa. No?

Alright, I'll try the other place.

Robin hangs up. Kills one tab of her browser, revealing a different web page.

MARTIN

That was horrific.

ROBIN

It's my work.

MARTIN

So what accent would you have used
to catch Jack the Ripper? Aust-
raaalian? Maybe *Le Francaise*?

Robin rolls her eyes as she dials a new number.

ROBIN

It's Alyssa, Zahara's mum 'ere...

The Labrador WUFFLES happily as Robin tickles his ears. Her DAD brings her a cup of tea, setting it down on a side-table beside her.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

(still as Alyssa)

I'm thinking you got my address wrong, yeah, 'cos I ain't getting letters from your lot in ages.

Her Dad gives her a supportive thumbs-up, to Martin's hand-waving expressions of sibling dissent...

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Alyssa, Zahara's mum? No? Alright then, sorry about that.

Robin ends another call.

ROBIN'S DAD

Alright to put the rugby on now?

ROBIN

Yeah, it's fine, I'll move.

ROBIN'S DAD

You stay put. It's only highlights.

36A

OMITTED

36A

36B

INT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT 8

36B

Robin helps her mum prepare dinner.

LINDA

Make a gravy will you, love?

Linda takes a roasting pan out of the oven. It holds a full leg of lamb on the bone.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Plate for the meat. Come on, come on!

Robin sets a china serving plate down on the unlit hob next to the pan. Looks at the leg of lamb. The bone cleaved clean.

FLASH ON:

The leg in the box on her desk. The white of the tibia.

BACK TO SCENE.

Linda takes over the pan from Robin, wielding a spatula.

LINDA (CONT'D)

You can mash the potatoes. This
needs a bit more pace.

36Ba OMITTED

36Ba

36Bb OMITTED

36Bb

36C INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 9

36C

Matthew pads in, sleepy in his dressing gown and flicks the already-filled kettle on. The kettle is made of transparent coloured plastic.

He puts the radio on, catching The Lighthouse Family's "High" midway through.

Matthew sticks some toast on, joins in with the song.

Matthew pours boiling water into a mug with a tea bag. Something dark and solid is bobbing inside the kettle. He hasn't noticed.

He fetches milk from the fridge and whitens his tea, then returns the milk to the fridge.

It's only on his way back from the fridge that he notices the dark lump floating in the kettle.

Matthew opens the lid -- dodges the steam -- and pours what remains out into the sink. He looks down to see: a steaming, severed human thumb.

36D OMITTED

36D

36E INT./EXT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE - DAY 9

36E

Strike rings on the doorbell. A POLICE OFFICER opens the door to him.

STRIKE

Friend of... Matthew's. Here to see if he's doing alright.

36F INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 9

36F

Scenes of POLICE activity throughout the flat. Strike enters to find Matthew sitting on the sofa in silence.

STRIKE

Robin asked me to check in on you. She's driving down now. You know that, obviously.

MATTHEW

What would it take for you to let her go?

STRIKE

What's that?

MATTHEW

She's been followed. She's had body parts sent to her and she's had her flat broken into by someone who butchers women. Are you just going to... see what happens to her next?

STRIKE

I realise you're having a difficult morning--

MATTHEW

Piss off!

STRIKE

Robin's good at what she does. She's very good. She manages the risks. If she ever decided to hand in her notice, that'd be her decision.

(beat)

But I'd try to persuade her to stay.

(beat)

Police'll watch your flat at night.

(MORE)

STRIKE (CONT'D)

I don't think he'll try anything here again.

MATTHEW

You don't know anything, really though, do you?

STRIKE

It's proving challenging.

37-40 OMITTED

37-40

41 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 9 41

Strike is surprised to see Robin back. She looks knackered.

STRIKE

How's Matthew?

ROBIN

He went into work in the end. No point in sitting around.

STRIKE

You alright?

ROBIN

I spent about an hour bleaching everything and then checking the flat over.

STRIKE

The police will have--

ROBIN

(snapping)

I know.

Beat.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Let's just find this guy. I got an exact address for Brockbank.

(off Strike's look)

I rang around all the nurseries in Bow pretending to be Alyssa until one of them confirmed they had my address details right.

STRIKE

Cleverly done.

ROBIN

36 Bonding Street. London E3.

STRIKE

We'll give that straight to Wardle.
He can have him watched. I can't go
back to Whittaker. He saw me there.
But...

ROBIN

What?

STRIKE

I don't know. He's too chaotic. He
looked fried on crack. The person
we're looking for is careful and
deliberate. That doesn't feel like
Whittaker. But I don't know.

(beat)

I'll see if Laing's still in
Elephant.

ROBIN

I'll watch Whittaker.

STRIKE

Look, I know it's a long drive
down. If you want to take--

ROBIN

I'm fine. I'll be careful.

42

EXT. WHITTAKER'S FLAT, CATFORD HIGH STREET - DAY 9

42

Robin is watching the flat. She checks the time on her phone.
She's about to go when--

The flat door finally opens, revealing Stephanie: her face
beaten, one eye almost closed.

Robin walks over to her. Affects casual friendliness.

ROBIN

Can I buy you some lunch?

STEPHANIE

What?

ROBIN

You look like you're having a
difficult day and we've all been
there. I just thought maybe if you
order what you want, I'll pay.

STEPHANIE

I don't know you.

ROBIN

Are you hungry?

43 OMITTED

43

44 INT. BACKSTAGE CAFE, CATFORD HIGH STREET - DAY 9 (LATER) 44

Stephanie is hungry, cramming chips into her mouth. She's painfully thin. Can't be much older than seventeen. She winces on a bite.

ROBIN

Sore tooth?

Stephanie nods.

FLASH ON:

Robin's attacker in the stairwell, years before, face clad in the gorilla mask.

BACK TO SCENE:

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Did your boyfriend do this? Is he here?

STEPHANIE

He's going away. I didn't want him to go. That's why he done it.

Robin is calm, soothing.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I wanted to go with him. I think he's got someone else. He says he's only away with the band, but I don't believe him.

Stephanie cries, the salt stinging her bruised eye.

ROBIN

What kind of music does he play?

STEPHANIE

Metal. The band's called Death
Cult. He's lead guitar.

ROBIN

Do you go to all their gigs?

STEPHANIE

Yeah. They're good.

ROBIN

Must be fun being with the band.
What do you do before gigs?

STEPHANIE

They... sound-check? And I... I
sort of just wait for them.

The girl looks down.

WHITTAKER (O.S.)

What's this?

Robin and Stephanie turn to find Whittaker standing there.

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)

Who are you?

(to Stephanie)

Made a new friend?

STEPHANIE

No.

ROBIN

I just got her something to drink.

Whittaker's eyes look Robin up and down. Every inch of her. Stephanie sees it -- and resents Robin for it immediately.

WHITTAKER

Maybe I'll make a new friend. Budge
up, darlin'.

ROBIN

It's okay, I was just going--

WHITTAKER

Were you? Seems like a shame.

Whittaker eyes Robin's bag on her seat. She stands hurriedly. But Whittaker's body blocks her way. His eyes on hers. Magnetic through the grime.

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)

Sit down.

ROBIN

Stephanie--

STEPHANIE

Fuck off.

WHITTAKER

(laughing)

Well look at that. You didn't make a friend after all. And here's you trying so hard.

Whittaker's low laugh is full of malice, sweetness and seduction. Whittaker continues to block her with his body.

WHITTAKER (CONT'D)

What's your name, gorgeous girl?
Would you buy me a drink as well?

He places an arm again the wall, caging her. Robin is forced to press herself past him as she wriggles away. He presses himself into her.

Robin hurries out of the cafe--

44A EXT. BACKSTAGE CAFE, CATFORD - DAY 9 (CONTINUOUS) 44A

Whittaker follows Robin out of the cafe.

Robin has to contain the urge to run.

WHITTAKER

Just being kind were you, darlin'?

Robin takes a breath. Turns.

Stephanie, miserable, is hanging back and watching them.

ROBIN

I was worried about her. She looked injured.

Whittaker darts round the front of Robin to block her way, walking backwards.

WHITTAKER

She's a clumsy little cow. You can't worry about her. Whyn't you come back with us? I know girls like you. We'll show you a good time.

Robin turns back to Stephanie. Her voice wobbling:

ROBIN

(to Stephanie)

Get help, okay? For your tooth.

STEPHANIE
FUCK OFF!

Whittaker LAUGHS, unbridled. Robin hurries past him and now he lets her go. Her breathing is fast and shallow.

45 EXT. LAING'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT 9

45

Strike is staking out Laing's block of flats when his phone rings. He picks up fast.

STRIKE
Is everything okay?

INTERCUTTING:

46 EXT. CATFORD SHOPPING PRECINCT - NIGHT 9

46

Robin is on the other end of the line. Walking.

STRIKE
Are you still out? It's late.

ROBIN (V.O.)
I'm heading back now. But listen: I
spoke to Stephanie. Whittaker's in
a band called "Death Cult".
(beat)
Hang on.

STRIKE
Everything okay?

ROBIN
Yes, fine, I was looking something
up. I've taken a wrong turn.

STRIKE
Where are you?

ROBIN
Just going under the shopping
precinct.

She fumbles for her rape alarm in her bag.

STRIKE
Have you seen something?

ROBIN
I don't know. No, I'm just jumpy.

STRIKE
Where exactly are you? Street name?

ROBIN

Hang on. Here we are. I'm--

The sound of two quick steps behind her -- too rapid for her to turn -- a bag is pulled over her head so that she cannot see, as it tightens around her neck she drops her phone.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

NO!

A MAN in a balaclava drags Robin backwards into a narrow pathway that leads into the park. He reaches into his coat for a knife -- but before he can get it out Robin twists, kicks out blindly, bringing her knee up into his crotch. He GRUNTS in pain.

Robin elbows him in the mouth and breaks free headed out into the park. He follows. Robin starts pulls the bag off but trips and falls as the man catches up. She fumbles desperately in her pockets for the rape alarm as the man, sitting on her, holding her by the neck so that she cannot turn her face, reaches for his knife.

Three teenage youths come round the corner from the precinct one of them sees Robin's phone lying on the ground and picks it up.

STRIKE

Robin? Robin?!

Robin finds the rape alarm and sets it off. He tries to stab Robin -- she parries it, her forearm getting slashed in the process. She manages to get a hold of the knife arm, struggling to control it.

The teenage youths look across and see the struggle.

And now lights are coming on.

The man looks across at the boys as Robin twists her body and pushes him off. The boys start to run towards them.

He wrenches himself from Robin's grip and runs away.

On the other end of the line Robin's rape alarm is going off.

STRIKE

THE POLICE ARE ON THEIR WAY RIGHT
NOW. HOLD ON!

Strike runs into the path of an oncoming taxi. It screeches to a halt and he climbs into the back.

48 INT. LEWISHAM A&E - NIGHT 9

48

Strike, sweating and limping, enters.

A PASSING NURSE sees him.

PASSING NURSE

Take a seat and the doctors will--

He marches straight past her.

49 INT. LEWISHAM A&E, CUBICLE - NIGHT 9

49

Strike enters to find Robin -- bruised, slashed on her arm -- being attended to by a YOUNG DOCTOR.

YOUNG DOCTOR

(to Robin)

Stay still please.

ROBIN

(to Strike)

He cut me.

YOUNG DOCTOR

I see tendon damage. You'll need to go to theatre. He missed your brachial artery by half an inch.

ROBIN

I'm sorry I screwed up.

STRIKE

I'm not here to tell you off. How did you manage to--

ROBIN

I told you. I did a self-defence course.

Strike is speechless.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

I heard him coming from behind me and I did what they taught me. Hit him in the groin.

STRIKE

The police are looking for Whittaker.

ROBIN

Whittaker's sort of thin. And he has a... well, he smells. The guy who attacked me had a different build.

(beat)

(MORE)

ROBIN (CONT'D)

I checked on his band. They were playing a gig. When Kelsey got killed they were doing their sound-check on the other side of the city. I don't think it's him.

The door opens behind them. It's Matthew, pale and sweating. He shoulders past Strike, fuming.

MATTHEW

You should leave us alone now.
Robin needs to rest.

But if anything, Robin is exuberant.

ROBIN

(to Strike)

He ran away from me.

STRIKE

I'm not surprised.

Robin smiles at Strike.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Matthew's right. You should rest.

ROBIN

I still want to work.

STRIKE

You've got the wedding--

ROBIN

Don't patronise me.

Strike half-smiles.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

What are we doing about Brockbank?

Robin's eyes betray her. She turns her head away from him.

STRIKE

The police are watching him.

ROBIN

It's not where he goes, it's what he does inside that flat.

STRIKE

We can't save everyone.

MATTHEW

You were nearly killed tonight. Let someone else take this one on.

ROBIN

Cormoran? We can't leave him with
children.

Strike says nothing. A long beat. Robin stiffens.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Okay. I need to rest now.

STRIKE

I get why you want to help her but--

ROBIN

I really do need to rest.

Matthew shepherds Strike out into the corridor, following
him, closing the door behind him.

50

INT. LEWISHAM A&E DEPARTMENT, CORRIDOR - NIGHT 9 (CONTINUOUS)⁵⁰

Matthew is eye to eye with Strike.

MATTHEW

This has to end. She's barely-
trained and you sent her out, with
no support. You're a sociopath.

Strike doesn't stay.

DISSOLVE TO:

50A

INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 10

50A

Hazel sits in tears, again. Ray has a bag packed.

HAZEL

I'd rather have you here and have
less money.

RAY

If they're offering work, I have to
take it while I can.

HAZEL

I'm not happy, Ray. You're doing
too much. Your back'll go. And I
need you here!

RAY

I know, pet.

(beat)

If that Cormoran Strike calls, you
hang up. I don't trust him with
you. Not when I'm away.

Ray, in some pain with his back, stoops forward to kiss Hazel goodbye.

HAZEL

Look at you! You're feeling bad, I can tell.

51

INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 10

51

Matthew is surprised to find Robin preparing to go out. Her arm is heavily bandaged.

ROBIN

Police interview.

MATTHEW

Can't they come to you?

ROBIN

They want me to look at some stuff they can't take off-site.

MATTHEW

Are you fit enough?

ROBIN

I'm fine. I won't use the arm.

52

EXT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE - DAY 10

52

A pink/purple Mini draws up beside the plain-clothes policeman.

Shanker winds down his window to speak to him.

SHANKER

Taking the girl to get her stitches out, innit.

53

EXT. BONDING ST., ALYSSA'S FLAT - DAY 10

53

Robin waits around the corner of a building, nervous.

Shanker jogs up to join her.

SHANKER

She's coming.

ROBIN

Are you sure it's her?

SHANKER

Fit black girl, two kids. Sure you don't want me in there?

ROBIN

Just keep an eye out for him.

Shanker heads back up the road.

Robin watches as Alyssa and her daughters enter the block of flats. Zahara is 3, Angel is 11.

Robin takes a breath and crosses the road.

Knocks on the door with her good hand.

54

I/E. ALYSSA'S FLAT, HALL/LIVING ROOM - DAY 10

54

Alyssa takes Zahara out of the pram and opens the door. Alyssa is beautiful. Strong.

ROBIN

Alyssa?

ALYSSA

(holding Zahara)

Yeah?

ROBIN

Could I have a quick word. It's about Niall.

ALYSSA

What about him?

ROBIN

I'd rather tell you inside. Please, it's important.

Alyssa hands Zahara to Angel.

ALYSSA

Upstairs, Angel. Take your sister.

The two girls go upstairs as Alyssa pushes the pram out of the way. Robin crosses into the living room. Alyssa follows and closes the door.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)

Spit it out then.

ROBIN

My name's Robin. I'm an investigator and in the course of a case we've been doing--

ALYSSA

Sorry, who's this "we"?

ROBIN

It's-- well it's an agency run by a
guy called Cormoran Strike.

The change in Alyssa is immediate.

ALYSSA

Alright then. You can get out.

ROBIN

No, I need to tell you this--

ALYSSA

I know who Cormoran Strike is. He
gave my boyfriend epilepsy. Get out
right now.

Alyssa pushes Robin roughly towards the door. Robin tries to stand her ground.

ROBIN

No-- Please listen--

ALYSSA

Framed him up. Ruined his marriage.
I know all about your lot.

ROBIN

Niall sexually abuses little girls.
I'm sorry but it's the truth.

Alyssa is caught off guard. It's a terrible thought -- too hard. Can't be true.

ALYSSA

Get out of my house before you get a proper smack.

Alyssa grabs at Robin's clothing and pulls her roughly towards the door.

ROBIN

(as she's dragged)
He's been doing it a long time. Ask your daughters. Ask them.

ALYSSA

Out!

ANGEL

Mum.

Alyssa turns to the stairs -- and sees that Angel has crept down.

ALYSSA

Go back to your room, Angel.

Brockbank comes in through the front door. His frame is massive.

BROCKBANK

What's going on?
(he looks up)
You alright Angel?

ALYSSA

(uncertain)
This bitch is telling lies about you.

BROCKBANK

Is she now?

ALYSSA

Says she's with Cormoran Strike.

Alyssa marches up the stairs, scooping her daughter up as she goes.

Brockbank steps towards Robin. Robin breathes hard. Takes out her phone -- but Brockbank swats it away.

BROCKBANK

You're not phoning anyone.

ROBIN
(shouting)
Shanker!!

BROCKBANK

What's the idea barging into peoples' houses? Upsetting their kids.

Brockbank grabs Robin's arms. He looks down at her bandage. Takes it with one hand and squeezes the wound hard. Robin screams at the intense pain.

54A INT. ALYSSA'S FLAT, ANGEL'S BEDROOM - DAY 10

54A

Alyssa carries Angel to the bed, where Zahara is playing.

ALYSSA

You stay put until--

ANGEL

He done it to me. He did.

ALYSSA

What?

ANGEL

What the lady said.

Alyssa is stopped in her tracks. Her face greys.

ALYSSA

What you talking about, Angel?

Alyssa's eyes are filling. The unbearable new truth.

54B INT. ALYSSA'S FLAT, LIVING ROOM - DAY 10

54B

The front door shatters inwards as Shanker shoulders it in. Shanker has a knife raised. Brockbank tosses Robin aside and sizes up Shanker. And Shanker's blade. A moment of stillness as the two men think through their options. A small man with a knife, a huge man without.

ROBIN

Don't stab him.

We hear a WAIL from Alyssa upstairs.

Shanker's eyes slide to Robin, in a flash Brockbank drops his shoulder and charges Shanker, barging him to the side. He runs straight out of the shattered door. Swearing, Shanker springs back to his feet and gives chase.

SHANKER

You nonce! I'll skin ya!

Robin is left alone, pale and shivery.

54Ba EXT. BONDING ST., ALYSSA'S FLAT - DAY 10 54Ba

Brockbank running down the street and Shanker running after him.

54C INT. ALYSSA'S FLAT, ANGEL'S BEDROOM - DAY 10 54C

Alyssa draws Angel to her. Alyssa is broken by the truth.

ALYSSA
(to Angel)
Why didn't you say?

ANGEL

He said he'd hurt Zahara.

ALYSSA

Oh sweet Lord. Oh, sweet Jesus.

Her tears roll down her daughter's back.

54D EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HAZEL'S HOUSE - DAY 10

54D

Ray limps along carrying a small holdall. He doesn't look back.

In the house behind him, Hazel watches through the curtains as Ray departs. She rubs at her reddened eyes.

Ray turns the corner of the road, walking towards the bus stop. And in an effortless movement, straightens his back and stops limping. Looks suddenly powerful. Unbroken.

54E INT. LAING'S LONDON FLAT - DAY 10

54E

In the mirror, with the help of surgical spirit, Ray peels away the full beard he has worn for Hazel.

He fits a tight, long straggle-hair black wig onto his head. A grubby baseball cap follows. It transforms him.

He reaches for a pair of crutches and lets his body sag onto them, testing the feel of them again...

55 INT. LAING'S BLOCK OF FLATS, CORRIDOR - NIGHT 10

55

Strike goes door-to-door, knocking. Showing people the file photograph of Laing from his military days.

Nobody answers at the final end of this corridor.

He enters the lift and presses 'up.'

56 EXT. ALYSSA'S FLAT - NIGHT 10

56

A joiner finishes fitting the new door. Checks the locks.

Alyssa stands with Robin, who pays the joiner with the last of her mother's banknotes.

ALYSSA

(to Robin)

Listen. Thanks.

ROBIN

No problem.

ALYSSA

I met him at a church! He was good with them. This girl Brittany would call him and threaten him.

ROBIN

Brittany was his step-daughter.

ALYSSA

Oh Jesus...

ROBIN

It's not your fault. Just make sure you call the police and then he won't be able to do this again. It might feel frightening, but it could save someone else.

Shanker has been lingering nearby.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Shanker, will you drive me home?

SHANKER

(to Alyssa)

I'll drop her, then bring you some stuff back. Food an' that.

ALYSSA

You don't have to.

SHANKER

Nah, but I will. I got paid today.

57

INT. LAING'S APARTMENT BLOCK, CORRIDOR - NIGHT 10

57

Strike is about to knock on yet another door, when he hears a door opening a few flats away. And from out of it emerges -- Donald Laing.

Laing is clean shaven, with long, thick, greasy hair beneath a grubby baseball cap. Walking painfully on crutches. Every step a burden.

Laing and Strike's eyes meet. Laing walks slowly towards him.

LAING

(Scottish)

Is that the famous Cormorant Strike? You here to see me? I'm not on license or anything.

STRIKE

I'm a private investigator now.

LAING

Are ya? Well. What're you here for then?

STRIKE

I recently spoke with a woman in Corby.

LAING

Not Lorraine, was it?

STRIKE

That's right.

LAING

I never hit her, you understand? Lesson learned first time.

STRIKE

Did you steal her jewellery?

LAING

You've come to find...? That's years go!

STRIKE

They had sentimental value.

LAING

Tell her I'm sorry but her stuff's long gone. That's the truth. I didn't feel good about it.

STRIKE

I'll pass that back to her.

LAING

Is that it from you?

STRIKE

Yes.

LAING

(laughing)

A fine fucking private investigator you turned out! Tracking down old bits of tat!

Laing drags his way slowly towards the elevator. His smirk dropping once his face is out of Strike's sightline. He hadn't expected to be tracked down to this place.

58

INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 10

58

Strike sits alone in the silent office, surrounded by a sea of notes, headlines, photos -- every scrap of evidence collected since their investigation began.

Studying it in silence. Thinking.

He closes his eyes and SEES:

A SUPERFAST flip-book style carousel of evidence... Rhona tied to the bed... Robin exiting the Crow's Nest pub... the BAE systems building... Whittaker grabbing Stephanie by the throat... Hazel weeping... the photo of Ray and his buddies on their weekend away at the coast... the leg in its box... Robin driving the Land Rover at night... Robin's face near to his own, eye to eye, drunk together... Robin having her slashed arm examined...

His phone rings, shattering his reverie.

He picks it up.

EKWENSI (V.O.)

Did you send her to do it?

STRIKE

What?

59

INT. EKWENSI'S DESK - NIGHT 10

59

Ekwensi is on the other end of the line.

INTERCUTTING:

EKWENSI

Your partner. Did you send her round to Brockbank?

STRIKE

Where's Robin?

EKWENSI

Brockbank's a murder suspect and now she's sent him to ground.

Strike lowers the phone. Strike looks very pissed-off.

60

INT./EXT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY 11

60

Matthew opens the front door to Strike.

MATTHEW

We're actually packing to--

STRIKE

I don't care.
(calling in)
Robin?

ROBIN (O.S.)

Yes?

Strike barges inside without being further invited.

61

INT. ROBIN/MATTHEW'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 11

61

Strike steps into the kitchen. Robin is sitting in a chair looking washed-out, exhausted.

Strike stays on his feet.

STRIKE

I told you we were leaving
Brockbank to the police.

ROBIN

I know.

STRIKE

But you went anyway.

Robin stands. Defiant. Nobody's employees in this moment. Matthew follows, standing just out of the room -- sensing this argument might just go his way...

ROBIN

He was raping Alyssa's daughter.

STRIKE

Wardle thinks I sent you in there.
And now, thanks to you, Brockbank's
vanished.

ROBIN

Don't you dare put that on me!

STRIKE

I do.

ROBIN

If you hadn't messed-up, Brockbank
would have been in prison long ago.

STRIKE

Now the police can tell the press
their investigation has been
hampered by us. Laing's a cripple
and you ruled out Whittaker. That
left Brockbank as our number one
suspect. And now he's off the
radar!

Strike is cold, slow in his anger.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
We're finished.

ROBIN
You don't--

STRIKE
You put yourself in danger. You
ignored my explicit instructions.
And you've sent a murder suspect to
ground. I'm finished with you.

Robin's face is flushed. She steps back knocking a rugby
calendar off the wall. Her surety draining away...

ROBIN
Cormoran--

STRIKE
And don't ever call Shanker again.
I'll send your last month's salary
on. Quick and clean. Gross
misconduct.

Strike leaves.

Robin sits heavily back in her chair. Like the worst beating.

After a moment, Matthew steps forward into the room.

MATTHEW
Probably for the best though?

Robin shoulders past Matthew, fleeing upstairs.

She has left her phone on the table.

Matthew sits. Picks it up.

Taps in her passcode, and goes into the contacts, finds
Strike. Selects:

BLOCK CALLER

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
And... goodbye forever, Cormoran.

He returns Robin's phone to the table.

Strike arrives with a bag of tinned lagers. He settles down
at the graveside.

He sits, opens a can, runs his hands through his hair. Burned out, exhausted, racked with guilt. And getting nowhere.

There is a new pot-plant on Leda's grave since he was last here.

Strike leans forward to look at it --

It's a sea-holly plant, not yet in bloom.

He looks up. A thought gathering...

He reaches for his phone. Dials.

STRIKE

Uncle Ted?

TED (V.O.)

Hello Cormoran.

INTERCUTTING:

62A INT. TED'S HOME, CORNWALL - DAY 11

62A

Strike's UNCLE TED has a home full of pot-plants.

STRIKE

Were you at mum's grave recently?

TED

I wasn't, but I had a friend pop something on her grave for the anniversary.

STRIKE

It's a sea holly, isn't it?

TED

Not much to look at now, but come June it'll be rather special.

Strike grins.

STRIKE

Call me next time you're up, alright?

At the grave, Strike stands.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Got you.

The pleasure of a puzzle revealing itself.

He strides away, phone already to his ear again.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

I need the number of the fire service. Not the emergency number. The people who employ firemen.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

UK Fire Service Resources? Would you like to be connected?

63 INT./EXT. ROBIN'S LANDROVER - MOTORWAY - NIGHT 11 (DRIVING)⁶³
Matthew drives them North. Robin's arm too injured for it.

64 EXT. LAING'S FLAT, FRONT DOOR/CORRIDOR - NIGHT 11 64

Strike KNOCKS. Knocks again.

Nothing.

Strike places a propane gas canister on the ground and turns the tap. It HISSES.

Strike puts on latex gloves and unrolls a lock-picking kit. Gets to work with a skeleton mortice key.

Sweating.

Finally -- success. The door swings open, with an unexpected bang on the interior wall.

NEIGHBOUR (O.S.)

That you, Bonnie?

Strike rolls up his lock-picks and stashes them as the NEIGHBOUR arrives.

NEIGHBOUR (CONT'D)

What's that smell?

STRIKE

Gas. We had a call from upstairs. Probably coming from here.

NEIGHBOUR

We're not going to blow up, are we?

STRIKE

Well don't be lighting a cigarette.

NEIGHBOUR

Shit. Alright.

(beat)

Is Bonnie in there? He owes me forty quid.

STRIKE

(closing the door)

He's a little busy at the moment.

(louder)

Mr Laing?

Strike turns his attention back to the gloomy interior of the flat. He takes out his phone. Dials.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Shanker, I'm heading in now. Don't ring, just text.

65

OMITTED

65

66

INT. LAING'S FLAT - NIGHT 11 (CONTINUOUS)

66

There is an untidy mattress on the floor and some bedding. A large window looks out onto the lights of the Elephant and Castle roundabout.

Strike checks through the kitchen cupboards.

Strike opens the fridge. Is repulsed by what he sees inside. The stink of it. We see blood congealed on a shelf, other items wrapped.

STRIKE

Christ.

He shuts the fridge door.

Strike heads up the stairs towards the bathroom corridor taking on his mobile he begins to tap in 99-- as he reaches the fire door at the end of the corridor and looks up the escape stairs.

Laing crashes into him hard slamming him against the wall, before he has a chance to recover Laing drags him out into the bathroom passage, punching quickly and expertly. Strike defends himself as best he can from the blows, Laing's wig detaches. Strike using his prosthetic leg stamps hard on Laing's foot and makes for the stairs.

Laing slams into him knocking him down the stairs and Strike crawls towards the living room followed by Laing who pins him down and reaches for his knife. Laing raises the knife and Strike jags into Laing's gut hard with his knee. Laing drops the knife -- but then his hands are on Strike's throat -- Strike pinned down, struggling -- Strike tries to punch, but Laing is choking the life out of him.

Suddenly there is the sound of a THUMP at the front door. Laing is momentarily distracted -- and Strike grabs a tool from his toolbag and slams Laing hard, semi-concussing him.

Laing is dazed. Strike kicks at him with his prosthetic leg three times. Laing lies still. Strike cuffs him to the fridge door.

Leaving Laing prone, Strike staggers to the front door and opens it -- letting Shanker in.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
Lend us your phone.

SHANKER
That's a steel door! You alright,
Bunsen? Did he get ya?

STRIKE
(on phone)
Police please...

Strike mops at the blood streaming from his nose. Shanker walks over to check on Laing. He prods him with his toe.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
(to Shanker)
Meet heroic retired firefighter Ray
Williams.

Strike hands his lock-pick tools to Shanker.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
(quietly, to Shanker)
Get rid of this stuff, alright?

SHANKER
You going to be alright with him?

STRIKE
(vaguely touched)
I'll be fine.

Laing stirs. Strike dials another number.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
The cops are on their way.

NETWORK (V.O.)
Calls to this number have been
blocked.

STRIKE
They're coming for you, Donnie.

LAING
Your mother was a whore.

Shanker kicks him hard.

STRIKE
Maybe. But at least she loved me.

He throws the phone back to Shanker.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
You'd better get out of here.

FADE TO:

67

INT. STRIKE'S BEDSIT - NIGHT 11

67

Beaten and bruised, Strike tells his story to Wardle, handing him a beer from his fridge.

STRIKE

The photo that "Ray" gave police has him on the beach next to sea holly in full bloom, supposedly in April. It was like the coffee shop photo. It was staged.

INSERT: Ray Williams' alibi photo on the beach

FLASHBACK FOOTAGE: Strike at him mother's grave, seeing the new pot plant placed there by his uncle's friend.

STRIKE (V.O.)

Sea holly doesn't flower in the wild 'til June. If you find Ray's friend Ritchie I'm sure he'll tell you they were taken last year. Height of summer, but they put coats on to try and look cold. Ritchie probably thought he was part of a benefits scam or something. I'm betting Ritchie's none too clever.

(beat)

So I knew Ray was lying. Then I remembered something Laing's ex had said.

FLASHBACK FOOTAGE:

Lorraine, in Corby:

LORRAINE

Donnie did some work for Mrs Williams next door. Eighty-seven with a lawn to cut, you know? Her kids are all gone abroad and there was nobody else for her.

BACK TO SCENE:

Strike continues.

STRIKE

There was a certificate for bravery hanging in Kelsey's sister's house. I called the fire service.

(MORE)

STRIKE (CONT'D)

The real Ray Williams, Mrs Williams' son, retired to Spain six years ago. Laing stole his identity. He was good at accents and he spent a lot of money disguising his appearance. He fooled me but he'd planned it a long time. He even managed to find a girl who'd made the mistake of having a crush on me.

Wardle checks a message BUZZING on his phone.

WARDLE

They've caught Brockbank. Thought you'd want to know.

68 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 11

68

Strike enters. Snaps on the light. The rest of the street sleeping.

He looks at Robin's desk. The fastidious way she has arranged her files and stationery. He rights an out-of-place pen, as if honouring her presence.

He opens her case file. Photographs:

Whittaker. Laing. Brockbank.

Kelsey.

And finally, Brittany Brockbank. Along with the details on Brittany's whereabouts that Robin dug up. His eyes linger there.

69 INT./EXT. SHANKER'S CAR - TRAVELLING - DAY 12

69

Strike, in the passenger seat. Bruises purpling today.

Shanker draws the car to a stop outside the commune.

STRIKE

I won't be long.

70 INT. BRITTANY WOODED COMMUNE - DAY 12

70

Brittany lives on a commune out in the countryside. All self-sufficiency.

She is now maybe twenty, but still recognisable despite her piercings. She puts a bottle of beer down in front of Strike.

STRIKE

Thank you.

BRITTANY (OLDER)

You look like you need it.

(beat)

What will happen with him now?

STRIKE

Nothing that involves you, Brittany. He'll be tried and put away and when he's released he'll be on the sex offenders register for life.

Brittany nods. Sips her mug of tea.

BRITTANY

That's good.

STRIKE

I wanted you to know. I feel... He should have been in prison a long time ago. We failed you there, Brittany. I failed you.

BRITTANY

You believed me though. And you tried. That helped a lot.

(beat)

Was it you who caught him?

STRIKE

No. It was my partner.

BRITTANY

For a case you were doing?

STRIKE

No.

BRITTANY

But she did it anyway?

STRIKE

Yes.

BRITTANY

Is she alright?

STRIKE

A bit bruised, but she'll live.

BRITTANY

Will you thank her for me?

STRIKE

(nods)

I've thought about you a lot over
the years. About what happened.

BRITTANY

It's alright. Will you tell her I'm
honestly really happy about what
she's done? I am.

(breaking down)

Because I lied. I got scared and I
lied that he didn't do it.

STRIKE

None of it was your fault. You were
a child.

BRITTANY

What's her name? Your partner?

STRIKE

Her name is Robin.

71

INT./EXT. SHANKER'S CAR - DAY 12

71

Strike jumps into the car newly energised.

STRIKE

There's a second stop. Yorkshire.

SHANKER

Where's that?

STRIKE

It's Yorkshire! The county? Just
keep going north until I tell you
to stop. I need to pick up a suit
first.

72

INT./EXT. SHANKER'S CAR - MOTORWAY - DAY 12

72

Doing at least ninety.

STRIKE

Put your foot down.

SHANKER

It's down.

STRIKE

Put it down further.

SHANKER

I'm not having this for the next
hundred miles!

73 INT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE, ROBIN'S OLD BEDROOM - DAY 12 73

Linda helps her daughter get ready. Robin not looking happy.

74 INT./EXT. SHANKER'S CAR - SERVICE STATION - DAY 12 74

Strike runs back to the car.

Strike has also bought a tabloid newspaper. The headline is a vindication of him: KILLER STRIKES OUT.

Shanker starts the engine and pulls out. The landscape has changed. They're in Yorkshire.

SHANKER

That's you sorted then. Back to being the hero of the hour.

STRIKE

I suppose so. It's not like I fixed everything though. Some things are going to stay broken.

SHANKER

Yeah, well, that's just how life is, innit?

75 INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 12 75

As Wardle shows Hazel the picture of Donald Laing -- explaining -- Hazel buckles. Her world collapsing anew.

76 OMITTED 76

STRIKE (V.O.)

Maybe if you're lucky and you've got people you care about and people who love you, you can learn to live with it.

77 INT. ALYSSA'S FLAT, BEDROOM - DAY 12 77

Alyssa lies on the bed, Zahara and Angel tight beneath her arms, reading them a story.

78 INT./EXT. SHANKER'S CAR - TRAVELLING - DAY 12 78

STRIKE

I mean, we were loved, weren't we?

SHANKER

By Leda? Yeah, she loved us.

79 EXT. CHURCH IN MASHAM - DAY 12

79

Robin, beautiful in her wedding dress, is escorted from the car by her father.

STRIKE (V.O.)

I don't know. Not to become the things we've lost. I think maybe that's the biggest struggle.

80 EXT. AFGHANISTAN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

80

Strike, screaming, his leg gone.

81 INT./EXT. SHANKER'S CAR - TRAVELLING - DAY 12

81

Shanker turns to Strike.

SHANKER

The direction you're headed, I'm worried you're going to tell me you love me.

STRIKE

I think you're a cunt. (arsehole)

Shanker LAUGHS, but deep down he's pleased.

82 INT. CHURCH IN MASHAM - DAY 12

82

White Yorkshire roses adorn the church.

Robin stands wearing a coronet of white roses in her long hair. A bandage wrapped around the cut on one bare arm.

The vows are in progress.

VICAR

Do you, Matthew John Cunliffe, take this woman...

Robin's face is sober, still, like a marble carving.

83 EXT. CHURCH IN MASHAM - DAY 12

83

Strike, sweating, runs from Shanker's car towards the closed church doors.

He reaches the door.

He rests his head on the door. Takes a moment.

84 INT. BACKSTAGE/ROCK CONCERT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 84

Strike (aged 16) with his mother, Leda.

LEDA

I love him, darling. One day you'll feel that about somebody.

85 INT. CHURCH IN MASHAM - DAY 12 85

Strike opens the door as quietly as he can and slips inside--

Strike edges along the rear wall, unnoticed, eyes on Robin as the Vicar continues the vows.

VICAR

Do you, Robin Venetia Ellacott, take this man to be your lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold...

Strike edges further round the back of the hushed pews.

VICAR (CONT'D)

...from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death--

Strike, eyes on Robin, collides with a flower arrangement on a thin bronze stand. The arrangement falls the flagstones with a deafening clang.

Congregation and couple turn to the disruption. Matthew's face is like granite.

VICAR (CONT'D)

...do you part?

STRIKE

Sorry, sorry...

86 INT. BACKSTAGE/ROCK CONCERT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 86

Younger Strike looks to his mother.

YOUNGER STRIKE

And then what?

Leda kisses the top of his head.

87 INT. CHURCH IN MASHAM - DAY 12

87

Robin smiles at Strike. Sheer delight. Looking into his eyes as she says:

ROBIN

I do.

THE END.

87A INT. CHURCH IN MASHAM - DAY (FOR STRIKE BOOK FOUR!)

87A

Robin and Matthew walk down the aisle together to cheers, confetti and applause. Her smile is radiant now; Matthew's smile tight with dread at seeing Strike.

As bride and groom pass Strike, the bride beams at him. And Strike's smile back is broad and sincere.