

## TORCHWOOD RADIO

### The Dead Line

By Phil Ford

#### SCENE 1: INT. STELLA'S FLAT

Silence. Complete and total. Shattered by the cry of a mobile phone.

STELLA COURTNEY (50s, professional, assured) is asleep in bed.

Grabs the mobile, still half asleep.

1. STELLA: Hello? Stella Courtney. This had better be good.
2. IANTO: Professor Courtney. My name is Ianto Jones. We have a mutual... (STUMBLES FOR THE RIGHT DESCRIPTION) ... friend. Jack Harkness.
3. STELLA: Jack? Jack Harkness? My God... I haven't heard that name in years.
4. IANTO: I'm sorry to ring you like this. I know it's late.
5. STELLA: It's two in the morning... and you call me about Jack – after thirty years... (AND WITH SUDDEN DREAD) What's wrong?
6. IANTO He's dying.

#### OPENING TITLES

Torchwood. Outside the Government. Beyond the police. Fighting for the future on behalf of

the Human Race. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century's when  
everything changes. And Torchwood is ready.

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**SCENE 2. INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR**

**STELLA comes through the doors of a busy hospital, approaches a nurses station.**

7. STELLA Nurse, excuse me. I'm looking for a patient.  
Jack Harkness.

8. NURSE Sure, I'll just check for you ..../Harkness. ITU,  
Bay 2..

**As GWEN approaches and intercepts.**

9. GWEN Excuse me. Professor Courtney?

10. STELLA Yes. Who are you?

11. GWEN I'm Gwen Cooper. Thanks for coming.

12. STELLA: Don't thank me. Just tell me what's going on

13. GWEN He's this way.

**They walk down the corridor. Fast.**

14. STELLA So I presume you're Torchwood.

15. GWEN Yes.

16. STELLA I don't understand, Jack can't die.

17. GWEN This is worse than death.

**Gwen pushes open a door.**

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**SCENE 3. INT. HOSPITAL ITU ROOM**

**STELLA gasps – as she sees JACK. He's wide-eyed but apparently comatose hooked up to bleeping monitors. The hiss of equipment breathing for him.**

18. STELLA My God.

**GWEN closes the door. IANTO, in vigil beside Jack's bed, stands.**

19. IANTO You must be Stella. Sorry I called you so late.

20. STELLA It's ok Ianto. I'm glad you did.

**She goes to unconscious Jack.**

21. STELLA Jack.

22. GWEN His eyes have been open since he collapsed, but we don't think he can hear us

**Stella examines. Shines a torch in Jack's eyes, and checks his reflexes.**

23. STELLA His pupils are dilated, completely blown. No reaction to light stimulation. No perceptivity on full body check....but some basic reflexive movements, so...

24. GWEN Is that good?

25. STELLA ...this isn't a coma. It's more like a trance. How long has he been like this?

26. IANTO Thirteen hours.

27. STELLA He hasn't aged a day. Of course he hasn't.

28. IANTO Can you help him?

29. STELLA Let's find out.

**Stella types into the computer monitor.**

30. STELLA Look – there. On the monitor.

31. IANTO What are we looking at?

32. STELLA Brain activity. Small. Just like a tiny blinking light in the dark. But it's there.

33. GWEN Does that mean there's a chance?

34. STELLA It's a start. What happened? He doesn't look like he's been in any sort of accident.

35. IANTO Stella, it's not just Jack.

36. STELLA What do you mean?

37. GWEN There are twenty other people in this hospital. Exactly the same.

38. STELLA I think you'd better tell me what's going on.

39. IANTO All we know is that two nights ago, a man called Bob Roberts got a phone call...

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**SCENE 4. INT. ROBERTS' HOUSE**

**A telephone starts to ring. It's the bell of an old-fashioned 1970s phone.**  
**In bed. BOB and his wife JAN. She stirs as the phone continues to ring.**

40.       JAN                   Bob... Bob!

**Bob isn't keen on waking up...**

41.       BOB                   Hmmm? What?

42.       JAN                   The phone.

43.       BOB                   What? It's quarter past three. It'll be a wrong number. Or someone messing about. They'll give up.

44.       JAN                   Or it's bad news. It could be Ellie.

**Bob knows she could be right. Reluctantly gets out of bed.**

45.       BOB                   Oh, alright. But it'll just be some idiot

**As he goes down the stairs. Grabs the phone.**

46.       BOB                   Hello. Cardiff one eight oh, two five two.

**Silence on the other end.**

47.       BOB                   (A PANG OF WORRY) Hello? Who is this?

**No response.**

48. BOB Who's there? If this is someone having a laugh, congratulations you got me out of my bed. Very funny. Ha. Ha.

**And on the other end of the line... the sound of an old exchange making connections...**

49. BOB What the hell...?

**Bob drops the phone receiver... Just the sound of the old exchange. Sound of him falling to the floor.**

50. JAN (FROM UPSTAIRS) Bob?... Bob? Is everything all right?

**Jan comes down the stairs. Sees her husband collapsed on the floor – lifeless.**

51. JAN Bob? Bob, what's wrong? ... Bob!!!

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**SCENE 5. INT. THE HUB CONFERENCE ROOM**

**JACK drops a file of photographs on to the table. GWEN's there. IANTO has coffee .**

52.       JACK                    Okay, Gwen, Ianto – one Bob Roberts.  
                                  Photographs courtesy of St Helen's Hospital.  
                                  Where he is currently resident.

53.       GWEN                    My God, look at his eyes.

54.       JACK                    Deep trance-like state that has the doctors  
                                  baffled. And his wife says it was brought on  
                                  by a phone call in the middle of the night.

55.       IANTO                    Left on hold to his bank probably. I've found  
                                  myself slipping under before now.

56.       JACK                    Bob Roberts isn't the only one. Seven other  
                                  cases from across the city. Every one of them  
                                  found close to, or with a phone in their hand.

57.       GWEN                    I don't understand.

58.       JACK                    Nobody does. That's why it's a Torchwood  
                                  case. No time for coffee, Ianto. Car keys.  
                                  Catch.

**Jack throws the keys. Ianto catches.**

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**SCENE 6. EXT. ROBERTS' HOUSE**

**A doorbell. JACK and GWEN on the doorstep. JAN answers.**

59. JAN Hello?

60. GWEN Mrs Roberts. I'm really sorry to disturb you.  
But can we have a word? It's about your  
husband.

61. JAN My husband's ill in hospital. I'm just on my  
way back ....

62. JACK We know about your husband. That's why  
we're here. We want to help him.

63. JAN You don't look like doctors. And if you're  
happy-clappies, I know you mean well, but no  
thank you.

64. JACK Believe me – happy-clappy I am not. You  
could call us consultants. And we really can  
help.

65. GWEN Please, Mrs Roberts. I'll even make the tea.

66. JAN You'd better come in.

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## **SCENE 7. INT.ROBERTS' HOUSE**

## JACK, GWEN and JAN.

67. JAN He's a fit man. There was no sign he was ill.  
Nothing. So how did this happen? I can't lose  
him. Not like this (getting upset)

**Gwen hands her a cup.**

68. GWEN Here. Drink this.

69. JAN Thank you.

70. JACK Look, Jan, it sounds to me like Bob's a fighter. No-one is saying you gonna lose him. We want to make sure he comes home to you.

71. JAN But you didn't see him. His eyes.... like he was already dead. The doctors don't have a clue, do they? I could see it in their faces. I know there's something they're not telling me.

72. JACK Okay, I'm going to level with you. Bob isn't the only one to get ill like this.

73. JAN You mean it's a disease?

74. GWEN We need your help to find out.

75. JAN I don't see what I can do.

76. JACK Now listen to me, I'm not going to make you any wild promises I can't keep. I'm just going to tell you what I know. That I will do everything I can to bring Bob back to you. And believe me, I never give up on anything. So don't you give up on Bob.

77. JAN (SNIFFS BACK HER TEARS) What do you want me to do?

78. GWEN He was on the phone, wasn't he? When it happened.

79. JAN Yes. It rang in the middle of the night.

80. GWEN Can we see the phone, please?

81. JAN If you like. But how's that going to help?

82. JACK Trust me, Jan. Just show us the phone. Please.

**Jan gets up. Puzzled.**

83. JAN It's through there. In the hall.

**Her mobile goes.**

84. JAN It's my daughter.

85. GWEN You go ahead. We'll be fine.

**Jan gets the call, walks back into the kitchen with the mobile.**

86. JAN Ellie... No there's no change. What time is  
your train...

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**SCENE 7a In the Hall**

**Jack picks up the receiver of the Roberts' phone. There's a little ding of the bell as he does so.**

87. JACK This should be in a museum.

88. GWEN No, Jack, it's almost trendy.

89. JACK Trendy? Are you saying I don't get trendy?  
Look at me.

90. GWEN Yeah. 'Course. Museum chic.

91. JACK Classic never goes out of style.

92. GWEN Which is why old phones like this sell for a  
bomb these days.

93. JACK Style is one thing. Technology is quite  
another. Everywhere apart from Earth. Here,  
the more technology advances the more you  
people hanker for the past.

**Another ding as he replaces the handset.**

94. GWEN And on the subject of technology, put your  
foot against the door while I scan the phone  
for Rift energy.

**Gwen pulls a gizmo from her pocket. Electronic beeping as she scans.**

95. JACK You know I had a phone just like that one.  
Nineteen seventy four. The Towering Inferno,  
Abba, streakers, chiffon scarves. Good times.

**Gwen turns the gizmo off.**

96. GWEN Faint traces of residual Rift energy, Jack. We  
should take this back to the Hub.

97. JACK Are you telling me that there's something  
alien buzzing through the Cardiff phone  
network?

98. GWEN Which means that every time someone  
answers a call they could be in danger.

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**SCENE 8 INT. HARWOOD'S HAULAGE**

**Outside, the sound of a lorry pulling away – and a phone rings. RHYS calls out...**

99.       RHYS                           Ruth! Ruth – where are you?

**The phone rings insistently.**

100.      RHYS                           Ruth?! (TO HIMSELF) Haven't I got enough to do around here? Without the the invisible flaming woman for a secretary!

**Rhys grabs the ringing phone.**

101.      RHYS                           Harwood's Haulage. Rhys Williams speaking.

**It's Gwen on the other end...**

102.      GWEN (over phone)    Rhys? It's me.

103.      RHYS                           Gwen. Hello, love. This is a nice surprise.

104.      GWEN (over phone)    What are you doing answering the phone?  
   Where's Ruth?

105.      RHYS                           If I knew that, I wouldn't be answering the phone would I? That's what I pay her for. That and the paint-stripper she calls tea.

106.      GWEN (over phone)    Rhys, listen to me. There's something in the phone network.

107.      RHYS                           What do you mean?

108. GWEN (over phone) Something dangerous.

109. RHYS (REALIZING THE INEVITABLE) Something out of the rift you mean? Something alien?

110. GWEN (over phone) We don't know yet. But it's attacking people's minds. Shutting them down. Putting them in some sort of trance. There are twenty people in St Helen's already. So please, stay off the phone.

111. RHYS Stay off the phone? I'm running a haulage operation. Just how do you expect me to do that?

112. GWEN This is more important than /haulage. (??)

113. RHYS Hey, hang on, you've rung me - on the phone - to tell me not to use the phone?

114. GWEN (over phone) I know, I know, but it's me. I know I'm safe to call you . . . I think.

115. RHYS So let me get this straight, you can /phone me, but I can't ...

116. GWEN (over phone) Rhys, please!.... This morning I went to see a woman whose husband is lying in hospital

brain-dead. Because he answered a phone call. I don't want to see you lying there, too. I just want to keep you safe.

117. RHYS But you don't know what this thing is yet?

118. GWEN (over phone) No. Look, just promise me you'll be careful.  
Screen the numbers before you answer. Any number you don't recognise...

119. RHYS I'll let it ring. I promise. And, Gwen...

120. GWEN (over phone) What?

121. RHYS You be careful, too.

122. GWEN (over phone) Love you...

**SCENE 9 INT. THE HUB**

**GWEN enters through the rolling door. JACK and IANTO have been running tests on the phone.**

123. GWEN So, how have you been getting on with the Roberts's phone?

124. JACK Not just the Roberts's phone. Look.

125. GWEN Someone's been busy.

126. IANTO I wonder who that could've been.

127. JACK The other victims' phones. Notice anything?

128. GWEN They're all the same. Old fashioned. Seventies phones.

**The ding of an old phone's receiver being lifted. Jack's talking into it.**

129. JACK Two-tone grey – standard office issue. Hi, baby. Want to come see The Texas Chainsaw Massacre tonight?

130. IANTO And they went with you?

131. JACK Hey, it was the seventies. The movies were so bad, making out was a dead cert. You

should've seen me in my platforms and five inch lapels. You'd have looked hot, Ianto. Sideburns and a Mexican moustache. You should try it. A little seventies role play.

132. IANTO Please, God. No.

133. JACK (WISTFUL) Stella Courtney liked to role play.

134. GWEN Who?

135. JACK I dated her back in seventy five for a few weeks. She was a junior doctor back then. She's one of the country's top neuro-scientists today. But boy, did she have some imagination for a boffin!

136. IANTO You're still in touch with her?

137. JACK Haven't seen her in years. But I check her out once in a while. Make sure she's okay. Anyway that's old news. - this on the other hand...

138. IANTO Is a piece of paper.

139. JACK With the phone number that, according to the records, rang all these museum pieces before their owners collapsed. Cardiff two oh five nine.

140. GWEN That can't be right. Phone numbers all have six numbers. Don't they?

141. IANTO They do now. But not thirty years ago.

142. GWEN You mean in the seventies? What the hell has the nineteen seventies got to do with what's happening to all these people?

143. JACK Well, there's one way to find out.

**As he takes out his mobile.**

144. IANTO Jack, what are you doing?

145. JACK That phone number is our only clue.

146. GWEN No, Jack.. You can't risk it.

147. JACK I told Jan Roberts I'd do whatever I could to bring her husband back.

**The beep of him dialling. A moment of tense silence...**

148. OPERATOR Sorry. The number you have called is not recognised. The number you have called is not recognised.

**Jack beeps the phone off.**

149. JACK Nothing. It's a dead line.

**And all the victims' phones start to ring. Along with Jack's mobile.**

150. GWEN What's happening?

151. JACK I guess they want to talk to us after all.

152. IANTO But, Jack, none of these phones are connected.

153. JACK That's a good trick. Maybe they'll tell me the secret.

**As Jack answers his mobile.**

154. GWEN Jack! No!

155. JACK (INTO PHONE) This is Jack Harkness.

**And something is wrong...**

156. IANTO Jack? ... Jack!

**Jack crashes to the floor.**

157. GWEN Jack! Oh, my God! Call an ambulance, Ianto. Quickly!

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SCENE 10. INT. HOSPITAL ITU ROOM

The beeping of the monitors and the sounds of the machines keeping JACK alive. GWEN, IANTO and STELLA, as before.

158. IANTO The paramedics couldn't do anything. He collapsed just like the others. Now, he's in this trance. Like he's dead with his eyes open.

159. STELLA Well Jack isn't dead.

160. GWEN: And he can't die.

161. IANTO: But if we can't reverse this - if we can't find out what did this, and stop it, and bring Jack back, he'll be like this for eternity. Can you imagine what that's like?.

Then the steady beep of the life monitor suddenly changes – it's suddenly rapid, frantic – like the beeping of a phone number being dialled rapidly over and over again...

162. IANTO Jack! What's happening?

163. STELLA Look at his brain activity on the monitor. One minute there's nothing, then... I've never seen anything like this before.

She examines Jack.

164. STELLA                    But there's no physical change. He's not coming out of it.(A THOUGHT!) Where are the other patients?

165. GWEN                    This way. I'll show you.

**Gwen opens the door.**

166. IANTO                    I'll stay here. I'm not leaving him.

**As they go...**

167. IANTO                    Not 'til you wake up, Jack. I'm not going anywhere.

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**SCENE 11 INT. HOSPITAL WARD**

**GWEN and STELLA rush onto the ward. Twenty patients the same as Jack. The same rapid beeping from twenty monitors.**

168.     GWEN                   My God. The monitors. It's like they're all connected.

169.     STELLA                Perhaps they are.

170.     GWEN                   You mean like telepathy?

171.     STELLA                I don't know. It sounds mad. But it could be.

**Abruptly, the noise stops – goes back to the rhythm of the monitor...**

172.     STELLA                Their brain activity has reverted. All but dormant again. Fascinating. (THEN, ALL BUSINESS-LIKE) I'll need to review the hospital's tests and then I'll want to run some of my own.

173.     GWEN                   Do whatever you can, Stella. Please.

174.     STELLA                Where are you going?:

175.     GWEN                   I'm going to find whatever did this.

**Gwen walks away.**

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**SCENE 12. EXT. ROALD DAHL PLAZ**

**GWEN is walking across the Plaz. It's early morning. Sea gulls calling. Sounds of the city gearing up for the day. She finds RHYS waiting for her.**

176. GWEN Rhys? What are you doing here?

177. RHYS Well, as you haven't been home all night and phones are apparently such a danger to life, limb and sanity, camping out in the bay seemed like the best bet for finding you and asking you what the hell is going on.

178. GWEN I'm sorry, Rhys. This thing has jumped into the mobile network. It got Jack.

179. RHYS Jack? But I thought he was indestructible. Like Captain Scarlet, or something.

180. GWEN I'm sorry. I should've tried to get a message to you...He's just lying there, ... like a corpse. And it's Jack. That's just not supposed to happen.

**Rhys pulls Gwen into a hug.**

181. RHYS Come here... All right, Gwen, all right. You know what you need? A mug of tea and a trucker's breakfast. Come on.

**SCENE 13. TRUCKERS' CAFÉ**

The sounds of a busy transport caf. The clatter of cutlery and plates.  
Conversation. Music. And the occasional grumble of a passing truck.  
As GWEN and RHYS finish their fry-ups. Very busy and noisy.

182.      GWEN                      Now do you see why I told you to stay off the phone. Why I didn't ring you.

183.      RHYS                      ...Blimey love, I don't know what to say.

A mobile phone rings in the background. Just twice, then someone answers it...

184.      GWEN                      Look around you... Everybody in here has a mobile in their pocket. It's like they're all carrying around a time bomb. What if this thing has just been finding its feet up to now? Stretching its muscles? Just picking off the odd person here and there? What if it decides to up its game?

185.      RHYS                      It's not just Cardiff, either is it? I mean the phone network, it connects the whole country – the whole world. There must be some way of closing it down.

186.      GWEN                      The phone network? The whole phone network?

187.      RHYS                      It'll be trapped then. No-one gets hurt.

188. GWEN Until we turn it on again, and it's still there.  
Besides how do you call an ambulance with  
no phones, Rhys?

189. RHYS Well, we have to do something.

190. GWEN We?

191. RHYS With Ianto at Jack's bedside you're on your  
own. And you need help. Just tell me what to  
do and I'll do it.

192. GWEN Rhys, it's dangerous. You don't know the first  
thing about what I do.

193. RHYS I went under cover for you didn't I? I took on  
that thing at our wedding with a chainsaw.

194. GWEN And ran out of petrol.

195. RHYS That's right. And Jack saved my life. And  
yours. So maybe it's time I paid him back.

**Gwen considers. Around them, the sounds of the café...**

196. GWEN What about Harwoods?

197. RHYS Ruth will have to get used to me disappearing  
for a change. Come on, Gwen. The phone  
number – you said it's a dead line, but maybe  
it connected to somewhere once.

198. GWEN      And there's you always saying you don't  
                          spend enough time with me, Rhys Williams.  
                          You're starting to think like a copper.

199. RHYS      I got the feet for it, too. Come on.

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**SCENE 14. HOSPITAL ITU ROOM**

**IANTO has remained with unconscious JACK. STELLA returns to the room with coffee.**

200. STELLA I brought you a coffee.

201. IANTO Thanks. He's just the same.

202. STELLA I've seen Jack's brain scans. There's no apparent physical cause for his condition. No tumors and no haemorage. ...I think what's going on here is some sort of electro-chemical reaction to what came down that phone line.

203. ANTO An electrical signal?

204. STELLA Signal, some sort of sentient electrical lifeform. Who knows? I saw too much stuff back in the seventies to discount anything.

205. IANTO With Jack, you mean?

206. STELLA Never meant to get mixed up in Torchwood, but somehow....changes how you see the world.

207. IANTO So how do you see this?

**[Beat.]**

208. STELLA It's an amazing thing the brain, Ianto. Basically, it's like a crazy thunderstorm of energy going on all the time. A hundred billion neurons sending electrochemical pulses to each other along thin protoplasmic fibres, up to a hundred of them every second at practically the speed of light. Whatever was on the other end of that phone has acted like some sort of computer virus, turning those pulses off.

209. IANTO But if all those pulses were stopped, that would shut down his breathing and his organs. He'd be dead.

210. STELLA That's right, and that's the interesting part. Whatever's turned off the action potentials in Jack's brain, has left just enough turned *on* to keep his body, and those of the other victims, functioning.

211. IANTO You mean it's *not* killing them? On purpose?

212. STELLA ...Yes. Whatever it is. I think it needs these people alive.

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**SCENE 15 EXT. DERELECT OFFICE BUILDING****The SUV doors slam shut.**

213. RHYS This is it?

214. GWEN Cardiff hasn't had four digit phone numbers for more than twenty years. But when it did, if you rang two-oh-five-nine you were calling this place, Madoc House, head office of the Cardiff and West Building Society.

215. RHYS Looks like it's seen better days.

216. GWEN The C and W moved shop to Swansea in the mid-seventies.

217. RHYS And it's stood empty since then?

218. GWEN If they were waiting to make a killing on the property market they missed the boat. But apparently the developers are due to move in any day now.

**Gwen tries to pull back some metal sheeting to get access.**

219. RHYS See, I said you'd need me. Even if it is to help you break into some derelict old office block... There you go.

**'He pulls the sheeting back. And Gwen slips through.'**

220. GWEN That's you and me, Rhys, Team Torchwood.

221. RHYS                    Does that mean I get a gun like yours?

222. GWEN                    No, I think it's safer that way, don't you?

**And she's gone. Rhys follows. The metal noisily falling back into place.**

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**SCENE 16. INT. DERELECT OFFICE BUILDING**

**GWEN and RHYS take in the delapidated, echoing and spooky building interior.**

223. RHYS God, it stinks in here. Eau de flaming tramp!

224. GWEN Good to know the Cardiff and West are still putting a roof over people's heads.

225. RHYS Looks like someone's been making some withdrawals, too. Been in and torn out the wiring. This old place was probably full of copper wire. Got to be good for a few litres of super-strength from the supermarket. This is just a smelly old dump, Gwen. What do you think you're going to find here apart from rats and winos?

226. GWEN I don't know Rhys, but this is the way it works. You pick up a trail and you see where it leads you. Two oh five nine led us here. We have to see where this takes us next. That's the way you do it. A link at a time.

**Gwen takes out a scanner.**

227. RHYS What are you doing?

228. GWEN Scanning for Rift energy. If there's a connection between this building and what's happened to Jack then there's going to be residual energy here.

229. RHYS And is there?

230. GWEN Barely.

231. RHYS Then we're wasting our time. Come on, I'm choking on the stink. I need some fresh air.

**From elsewhere in the building – the sound of an old telephone ringing... echoing through the floors. Chilling.**

232. GWEN Listen!

233. RHYS There's no wiring. That phone can't be ringing.

234. GWEN Just like those phones back at the Hub.

**She heads off.**

235. RHYS So where do you think you're going?

236. GWEN To find it.

237. RHYS (departing) I thought phones were supposed to be bad news.

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**Scene 16B**

They're going upstairs

238. GWEN Up here. Come on.

**They're going up steps. The sound of the phone getting slowly louder.**

239. RHYS God! It smells even worse up here. What is that?

**As they come to the top of the stairs.**

240. GWEN Maybe you should wait here, Rhys.

**As she pulls her gun. Ka-chink, as she loads it.**

241. RHYS When you're getting tooled up like Lara Croft?  
Come on.

**The phone is ringing just behind a door.**

242. RHYS It's coming from behind that door.

243. GWEN Rhys, wait. Let me go first.

244. RHYS Hold on, what's that?

245. GWEN What's what?

246. RHYS Listen...

**And now as well as the ringing phone there's the buzzing of flies. Lots of**

them.

247. RHYS: I'm going in.

And Rhys opens the door. The ringing phone's louder – the buzzing flies louder still – as they come pouring out.

248. RHYS Get off, you filthy beggars! Get off!

Then they're both coughing, spitting. Overwhelmed by the flies and the stink. And then the buzzing of the flies subsides a little... And they see what lies around the still ringing phone.

249. GWEN Oh, my God. ...

250. RHYS Oh. Hell.

And Rhys throws up.

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**SCENE 17. EXT. DERELICT OFFICE BUILDING****RHYS is leaning against the SUV. GWEN beside him.**

251. GWEN Are you okay?

252. RHYS Yeah. Sort of. I just never saw anything like that before. Sorry I puked up.

253. GWEN A dead body is one thing, love. It's never good. But after the flies and the rats have got to it? Everybody pukes.

254. RHYS Just lying there, poor sod. Phone in his hand.

255. GWEN Must've heard it ringing. Probably out of his head, so never even questioned the fact that it wasn't plugged in. Answered it and collapsed just like the others.

256. RHYS Nobody around to find him – so he starved to death.

257. GWEN I need to put this phone somewhere safe.

**Gwen opens the back of the SUV.**

258. GWEN This case is designed to contain Rift energy.

259. RHYS Grief- it's heavy!

**Gwen is locking the phone in the case.**

260. GWEN Some sort of super-dense alien alloy. There,  
That'll keep it out of trouble.(A THOUGHT)  
You know, the first lot of victims had retro  
phones just like that one. What if they all  
came from here?

261. RHYS How do you mean?

262. GWEN Like the copper wire – stripped out and sold  
on. What if something happened here, Rhys?  
Back in the seventies?

263. RHYS Like, something got into the phones?

264. GWEN This place is at the heart of it, I'm sure.

**She opens the SUV's door.**

265. GWEN Come on, Rhys. Get in. Looks like we're  
going to Swansea.

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**SCENE 18. INT. HOSPITAL ITU ROOM****IANTO is alone with JACK.**

266. IANTO They say that you're supposed to talk to people when they're in a coma, don't they? I have absolutely no idea whether or not you can hear me, Jack. I never heard of anybody coming out of one and carrying on the conversation, so I suspect it's probably something the doctors tell us to do to make us feel better rather than help you. We don't feel quite so useless and helpless. We get the feeling there's still some sort of purpose in our lives – we're not just waiting. Waiting for the science to work, or the miracle to happen. Or the nightmare to end. I'm not much of a talker, Jack, you know that, but I'll talk to you now on the off-chance that it helps. Just promise me, if you're hearing this, that when you come round – and you're going to, Jack, you're going to come out of this – just promise me you'll never bring up anything I say to you now. How's that? Have we got a deal?...

**Ianto just gazes at Jack for a moment.**

267. IANTO

This must be the longest I've ever looked at you and not seen you smile. I've watched you in your sleep, did you know that? So many times. Just woken up beside you in the middle of the night, and watched you, watched your eyes moving behind your eyelids as you dreamed and tried to imagine what a man like you could possibly dream about. The things you've seen, and the lives you've lived. The people you've loved. I wondered if you were dreaming about me. I hoped you were dreaming about me. But let's be honest, Jack, I'm nothing more than a blip in time for you. Every day I grow a little older, but you're immortal. You've already lived a thousand life times. How could you watch me grow old and die, Jack? How can I watch you live and never age a day? I suppose we both know that will never be a problem. Not in this job. No-one in Torchwood ever lives to draw their pension, do they? Even if by some miracle I survived to see my hair turn grey – or, God forbid – fall out, I don't kid myself that you'd still be around to see it. One day you'll go again – just like you did before. And this time you won't be back. Maybe that's what you're dreaming about those nights when I watch you sleeping. Maybe that's why, even when you sleep, I see you smile. But you haven't gone yet, Jack. I know that. I know you're coming back to me.

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**SCENE 19. INT. MR TYLER'S OFFICE**

**GWEN and RHYS have just been shown into the office of Cardiff and West property manager, ROD TYLER (fifty-ish).**

268.     GWEN                   Thank you for seeing us, Mr Tyler. Looking after Cardiff and West's offices, you must be a very busy man.

269.     TYLER                   Well, I'm not exactly running up and down a ladder with a paintbrush, Miss err...

270.     GWEN                   My name's Gwen Cooper. This is Rhys Williams my – err – associate.

271.     TYLER                   Delighted to meet you Miss Cooper. You're a lucky man Mr Williams, to have such an attractive associate.

272.     RHYS                   (THROUGH GRITTED TEETH) Yeah. You spotted that, did you?

273.     TYLER                   I believe you want to talk to me about Madoc House. You know the site is being redeveloped, don't you?

274.     GWEN                   It's not so much the building as the telephone system we're interested in, Mr Tyler.

275. TYLER Oh. The telephones? I see. I'm sorry, I believe the developers have already made arrangements All the telephony equipment has been sold on.

276. RHYS Can you tell us to where?

277. TYLER (EVASIVE) Well, that's not really something I have at my fingertips.

278. GWEN But you could bring it to hand?

279. TYLER Why would you need it?

280. GWEN Mr Tyler. Were there ever any problems at Madoc House? Something involving those phones?

**Nervous Tyler clears his throat...**

281. TYLER (CONCERNED NOW, EVASIVE) I'm afraid you're going to have to be more specific.

282. GWEN No, Mr Tyler. I think you know exactly what I'm talking about.

283. RHYS Come on, mate, we're talking about people's lives. People in hospital. In trances, like flipping zombies. A man dead. Now stop messing us about and tell us what we want to know.

284. TYLER Trances?

285. GWEN In St Helen's Hospital. All of them after a phone call. A call that came from the telephone number your company used at Madoc House. On phones that came from there too.

286. TYLER That's impossible.

287. GWEN All the same, I can see from the way your hands are shaking that you sort of understand it. Don't you?

288. TYLER Who are you people?

289. GWEN We're Torchwood. Now what have you got to hide?

290. TYLER We're not hiding anything. The Cardiff and West has always been a caring business. A family business.... We look after our own.

291. RHYS Look after who, Mr Tyler?

292. TYLER I think, perhaps, you should come with me. See for yourselves. Please.

**Tyler opens a door. Gwen and Rhys get up.**

293. GWEN Where are we going?

294. TYLER It's not far. Just on the coast. A private nursing home. Our's as a matter of fact.

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## **SCENE 20. EXT. NURSING HOME**

**Car door slam. Crunching gravel as RHYS and GWEN approach the nursing home. The sound of seagulls and distant shoreline.**

295. RHYS Nicer than Madoc House. That's for sure. But what's the Cardiff and West doing running a private nursing home.

296. GWEN I'm guessing Mr Tyler's going to show us.

**TYLER** meets them.

297. TYLER I've rung ahead. They're expecting us. Look, I'm showing you this to prove that we have nothing to hide.

298. GWEN I'm not interested in whether you're hiding anything, Mr Tyler. All I want is a clue to how we can help those people in hospital.

299. TYLER This way...

## He leads them into the nursing home...

SCENE 21. INT. NURSING HOME. BEDROOM

TYLER leads GWEN and RHYS into a bedroom. There's the familiar sound of monitoring and life support equipment. A woman lies unconscious in the bed.

300. TYLER This is Gillian. She's been here thirty three years.

301. GWEN Oh, my God - her eyes. She's just like all the others.

302. RHYS But this happened in 1976?

303. TYLER September 24<sup>th</sup>. Three o'clock. That's when the phones started to ring. We worked in the same office (HE REMEMBERS WITH BITTER-SWEET FONDNESS). Gillian was only seventeen. She was beautiful... It had been so hot that summer. I'd been trying to work up the courage to ask her out for weeks... And then she answered that damned phone.

304. GWEN I'm sorry. Mr Tyler, how many of your employees do you have here?

305. TYLER Now? Only six. The younger ones.

306. RHYS You mean there were others?

307. TYLER        Thirty four years ago? Thirteen. Being in a trance doesn't stop you growing old. But we've looked after you, haven't we, Gillian? (TO GWEN) The company took care of all of them all. Whatever happened to them, it happened on our premises. We recognized our responsibilities. And we closed Madoc house and moved our operation. I don't know what was going on there, I don't even begin to understand it. But we did what we could.

308. GWEN        What happened wasn't your fault.

309. TYLER        It was the thunderstorm. That's what started it.

310. RHYS        Thunderstorm?

311. TYLER        September 24. The day the drought ended. I thought the sky itself was going to fall in, I never saw anything like it.

312. GWEN        But why do you think the thunderstorm had anything to do with the comas?

313. TYLER        The building was hit by lightning. Every light bulb in the place exploded. Every fuse blew. And that's when the phones rang. I saw her answer the phone. I saw what happened to her eyes. I'll never forget it. Whatever got into that building and did that to her – it came in the lightning. You think I'm mad, don't you, Miss Cooper?

314. GWEN No, Mr Tyler, I don't. But tell me something else. Gillian and the other patients – did something happen first thing this morning?

315. TYLER Yeah, it did. The monitors went crazy /some kind of interference..

316. GWEN Exactly the same thing happened at St Helen's.

317. TYLER It's never happened before. Not in over thirty years.

318. RHYS So, why now?

319. GWEN: I dunno but we'd better get back to the hospital.

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**SCENE 22. INT HOSPITAL CORRIDOR/ ITU ROOM**

320. GWEN Any change? Have you heard that sound again?

321. IANTO No. Nothing. But there have been more cases. Another twenty people across Cardiff.

322. RHYS And guess what, we just found another six that have been like that since 1976.

323. STELLA What? How's that possible?

324. GWEN Seventy six is when it all started.

325. RHYS With a bolt of lightning that hit the Cardiff and West Building Society.

326. GWEN September 24, 1976.

327. IANTO Have you checked the historical Rift records?

328. GWEN Not yet.

329. IANTO Give me your PDA.

**Gwen hands him her hand-held computer. We hear it bleeping as Ianto gets to work on it...**

330. STELLA I've been checking the patients' brain scan records from the incident this morning. It's

fascinating. This is the electro-pulse rate of the cerebral cortex. Look, the rates match exactly for every one of the patients. That is simply impossible.

331. RHYS                    Might be impossible, Proff. But you get used to that around here.

332. STELLA                Oh, I know. And it gets better. When their brains started pulsing – that was when the telephones started to ring again across Cardiff. Twenty more victims.

333. GWEN                    Hang on. Are you saying they rang those phones with their brains?

334. STELLA                The brain's own electro-magnetic energy somehow amplified. Just like some sort of organic mobile phone transmitter.

335. RHYS                    My God...

336. GWEN                    But why didn't this happen in 76? Why only the Cardiff and West lot?

337. STELLA                Maybe this time they've reached some sort of critical mass. Created a network. They're all connected somehow.

338. RHYS                    Question is - what happens next?

339. IANTO                Okay. I've got the Rift records for 1976. September 24<sup>th</sup> was the end of the longest drought across Wales in 300 years.

340. RHYS Hang on, you're not telling me that the Rift has some sort of effect on the weather?

341. GWEN Of course. Why do you think they never saw the hurricane coming back in the eighties?

342. IANTO There's a Rift match with the storm of September 24<sup>th</sup>.

343. GWEN A storm that hit Madoc House and then all the phones started ringing – and that's how it began.

**And Jack's monitor suddenly starts to make the “dialling” sound again...**

344. STELLA It's started again! We have to stop it!

345. GWEN They're ringing more phones. Creating more victims!

346. RHYS Can't we just turn the monitors off?

347. IANTO The monitors are just picking up interference. It's their brains that are doing this...

348. STELLA And forty six other brains accessing another forty, or God knows how many more...

349. IANTO Like a virus. Like a computer virus. That's exactly how it works, replicating exponentially. An electrical virus that's carried by electro-

magnetic signals. It attacks organic brains, but it needs the phones to act as a carrier.

350. STELLA Brilliant!

**And then Rhys's mobile starts to ring...**

351. RHYS Sorry. That's mine. Be Ruth wanting to know where I am.

**And then Gwen's mobile is ringing, and Ianto's, and Stella's.**

352. GWEN My God, they're ringing us.

**Stella opens the door – there's the distant sound of every phone in the hospital ringing...**

353. STELLA No, they're ringing every phone in the hospital.

354. IANTO Or Cardiff...

**As the “dialling” sound on the monitor gets ever more frantic...**

355. RHYS How the hell do we stop it?

356. IANTO If this really is like a computer virus we can deal with it in the same way. An electro-

magnetic pulse. Calibrated to the frequency recorded on Stella's brain scans. It's the same process the Hub computer system uses to repulse virus attacks.

357. STELLA The MRI scanner. It uses electro-magnetic energy.

358. IANTO I can rig it up to the Hub with Gwen's PDA – but we need some way of accessing the virus itself.

359. GWEN We've got a phone from Madoc House in the SUV.

360. IANTO Get it. But we don't have much time!

361. GWEN Rhys! Come on!

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**SCENE 23 EXT. HOSPITAL CAR PARK**

**RHYS and GWEN come through the hospital's main doors. Heading across the car park for the SUV.**

362. RHYS Where did we leave the SUV?

363. GWEN Over there!

**They run towards the SUV. The sound of an approaching car –**

364. RHYS Gwen, look out!

**The car crashes into another parked vehicle.**

365. GWEN I'm okay. I'm okay.

366. RHYS You sure....

367. GWEN Yeah, I'm fine. Check the driver.

**Rhys yanks open the crashed car door.**

368. RHYS You all right, mate? You gonna crash, may as well do it outside a hospital....oh my god

369. GWEN Look at his eyes. He was using his mobile. Come on, Rhys – we have to stop this!

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**SCENE 24 INT. HOSPITAL MRI SCANNER ROOM**

**IANTO is wiring the PDA into the scanner's computer as STELLA wheels JACK in there with them.. His monitor still "dialling"...**

370. STELLA Help me with this trolley. I need to keep Jack monitored. How much longer?

371. IANTO Nearly there. The PDA's wired in. Accessing the Hub computer system...

372. STELLA They're still dialling. The whole city could be out by now.

373. IANTO I need that phone!

**As Gwen and Rhys burst in.**

374. GWEN Ianto! This had better work.

375. RHYS Here's the phone. Whatever you're going to do – do it now.

**Ianto hesitates...**

376. IANTO But Jack... what if this kills the virus – and he's stuck like this forever?

377. GWEN (GENTLE) We have no choice, Ianto. We have to do it.

378. STELLA Gwen's right.

379. IANTO (STEELS HIMSELF) Come back to me, Jack.

Ianto activates the scanner. It thrums into life. In the same instant the old phone starts to ring. The electricity builds. The cacophony of phones ringing around the building, louder and louder. Crescendo to ....

Sudden silence, for a heartbeat or two, and then the steady bip bip bip of

Jack's monitor. Normal once more.

380. IANTO Jack!

381. STELLA He's breathing – and look at the monitor. His brain scan is returning back to normal!

382. IANTO Jack!

As Jack begins to stir...

383. JACK Ianto? Whoah! My head... Stella – Stella Courtney, is that really you?

384. STELLA Hello, Jack. Long time no see.

385. JACK So is someone around here going to tell me what's going on?

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**SCENE 25 INT. THE HUB****STELLA has just finished examining JACK**

386. STELLA Okay, Jack, you can get dressed now.

387. JACK So how did I score, Doc?

388. STELLA It's Professor now, Jack. And it was a medical, you didn't score. Not this time.

389. JACK Not like the old days?

390. STELLA Not even close. I'm a grandmother now.

391. JACK And such a glamorous one.

**Stella laughs.**

392. STELLA You never give up, do you?

393. JACK You know me.

**They're interrupted by GWEN and IANTO entering.**

394. GWEN Well, how is he?

395. STELLA Oh, the same as ever. Impossible. But charming. No ill effects. Just like the other patients.

396. IANTO There are medical teams working across the region on a mop-up. But it looks like everyone will be okay.

397. GWEN Seems the electro-magnetic pulse destroyed the virus and re-set the victims' brains as they were. Half the phone network is burned out, mind...

398. STELLA Then I should be getting back. It's been good to see you again. Jack.

399. JACK What, now? I thought we could tell Ianto and Gwen about the seventies?

400. IANTO Oh, please God, no.

401. STELLA I don't think so Jack. You'll only start dancing again and you were never John Travolta.

402. JACK Hey, I was the Saturday Night Fever.

403. STELLA I know. And for that there is absolutely no cure. Bye, Jack.

**She kisses him.**

404. JACK Goodbye, Stella. And thanks

405. GWEN Come on. I'll find you a cab.

**Gwen leads Stella away. Jack and Ianto are left together.**

406. IANTO So, Jack., you don't remember anything about the trance?

407. JACK No. Did you talk to me while I was out of it?  
They say that's what you should do.

408. IANTO I talked. A little. But I'm not really much of a  
talker.

409. JACK No. I know.

410. IANTO That's just me.

411. JACK Yeah. But you will never just be a blip in time,  
Ianto Jones. Not for me.

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THE END

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