

HARRIET KEEL

TWO SHADOWS

EPISODE ONE: THE PEOPLE WHO WATCH

TELEVISION SCREENPLAY · TRILOGY-ARC REWRITE 6.0

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY CHRIS HUGHES

Working adaptation draft · 13 October 2026

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT DRAFT — two-part series; timing
requires a performed read

All interior locations, access routes, surveillance mechanisms and emergency responses require production research. No operational instruction is implied by fictional staging.

FADE IN:

INT. BEIJING – ANALYSIS OFFICE – DAY

BLACK SCREEN. A soft toothbrush CHIME. Another sound: a phone unlocking. Then a tiny notification bell.

A simple white line draws itself across black. HEART RATE: 72... 79... 91. A second graph: SLEEP, 5H 41M. A third: PAYMENT APP – OPENED. CLOSED. OPENED.

A cursor pauses over one household: DANIEL REEVE, LONDON. Beneath his name: FINANCIAL PRESSURE – PROBABLE. Then a more alarming label: RECEPTIVE TO REASSURANCE – 78%.

MEI LIN, early thirties, studies the figures from a spotless desk. JUN WEI, similar age, balances a paper cup precariously beside three pieces of extremely expensive equipment.

JUN

He argued with his wife again.

MEI

You heard two voices.

JUN

Two voices. Kitchen speaker. Raised volume at six fifty-two.

MEI

So two people spoke loudly in a kitchen.

JUN

At six fifty-two in the morning. There are no happy conversations at six fifty-two.

Jun reaches for his tea. The bottom of the cup leaks. A single drop spreads towards the keyboard. Mei shifts a document beneath the cup without looking up.

MEI

That is not evidence.

Another CHIME. Daniel's toothbrush handshake appears. Mei selects it. A map of an ordinary London home assembles out of device registrations, not footage.

JUN

He's in the bathroom. Four minutes. He normally takes two.

MEI

The toothbrush connected. That doesn't place him in the bathroom for four minutes.

JUN

Would you prefer I report that his
toothbrush is unusually thoughtful?

Mei opens a second panel. A bank app identifier, a recent
change in sleeping pattern, a recurring missed payment.
Each individually mundane. Together, a portrait Daniel
never agreed to sit for.

An alert blinks: MAY.LONDON – MESSAGE WINDOW OPEN.

MEI

Send the ordinary one.

JUN

The ordinary one?

MEI

The one that doesn't know about his bills.

JUN

Who bought the household feed?

MEI

Our office.

JUN

Who paid for the copy?

Mei studies a tiny invoice number. The supplier is not one
she recognises.

MEI

Find the invoice.

CUT TO:

INT. REEVE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LONDON - MORNING

The same morning, without graphs. DANIEL REEVE, 46, tired
and carefully dressed, waits for the kettle. His wife
SARAH, 44, packs their daughter ELLIE's lunch beyond the
doorway. His phone lights up.

ON PHONE: MAY.LONDON – "You sounded worried yesterday. I
hope today is kinder."

Daniel smiles despite himself. He begins typing a reply,
erases it, starts again.

A smart speaker glows.

SMART SPEAKER

Your train is running four minutes late.

Daniel looks at the clock, then at the door. A woman's
voice comes from upstairs.

SARAH (O.S.)

Have you moved the electricity bill?

DANIEL

I put it somewhere safe.

SARAH (O.S.)

That means no, then.

His smile disappears. He slides the bill beneath a bowl of oranges. On his phone, MAY sends a second message: "If someone at work makes things difficult, you can tell me." Daniel hesitates. An internal work notification appears: SUPPLIER EXCEPTION – APPROVAL REQUEST. Routine, dull, already endorsed by colleagues.

He checks a familiar name on the request. Even here, the supplier form has a space for two human signatures. Daniel closes the notification. The kettle clicks off.

Across the kettle's shiny side, distorted, we see his own uneasy face.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON – COMMUTER STATION – MORNING

A packed platform. Damp coats. Newspaper corners folding in the wind. DANIEL REEVE waits behind a yellow line as the departure board changes. He reads it, looks up at the train and looks down at his phone again.

A message from MAY.LONDON: "Thinking of you. No need to reply if today's difficult." Below it, an automatically served advertisement: TAKE CONTROL OF MONEY WORRIES. Daniel closes both. A stranger beside him shifts away, protecting her own screen. Daniel does the same.

A commuter's watch vibrates. Someone's headphones announce a calendar appointment. The mundane noises overlap until they resemble a room full of people whispering at once.

Daniel rubs the joint of one thumb with the other. He has done this so often the skin is raw.

INT. CITY BANK – PAYMENTS OPERATIONS FLOOR – MORNING

An office running on deadlines. A dozen payments staff, a wall clock, photographs of colleagues at last year's charity fun run. The printer rattles. Nobody reacts. A laminated sign above the desks reads: TWO PEOPLE CHECK EVERY CHANGE.

Daniel sits between LEAH, twenty-nine, rigorous, and his line manager PETER HALE, fifties, whose professional optimism is almost a medical condition.

On Daniel's screen: NORTH QUAY LOGISTICS BV / SUPPLIER CONTINUITY / £40,000,000 ROLLING FACILITY. The remittance instruction is held at AMENDMENT REVIEW: BENEFICIARY BANK CHANGED. A yellow warning states: INDEPENDENT CALLBACK NOT RECORDED.

LEAH

You've got an exception in the Rotterdam chain.

DANIEL

The callback's pending. Peter said procurement were handling it.

LEAH

Procurement said treasury. Treasury said us. Nobody said who actually spoke to the supplier.

She puts a printout beside him. The address, company number and VAT details match. The receiving bank does not.

DANIEL

Maybe they're consolidating accounts.

LEAH

Maybe. We verify it, then maybe becomes yes.

Peter arrives carrying three mugs, none belonging to him.

PETER

Morning, team. Why is the Dutch one still amber?

LEAH

New beneficiary. Missing callback.

PETER

It's been approved at the commercial end.

LEAH

That's not the callback.

PETER

No, it isn't. I'm capable of reading the screen.

Peter sets a mug on Daniel's desk. Coffee slops onto a monthly control report. He appears not to see it.

PETER

Client needs the release before ten. We've already missed their window twice. If this goes again I'll spend the afternoon explaining an amber triangle to six directors who all earn more than I do.

DANIEL

We could hold it until there's proof.

PETER

We could. And whoever made the delay can come with me to the call.

Peter looks at the deadline clock. It's not overt menace. It doesn't need to be.

LEAH

I'll call the number on the original contract.

PETER

Do it. Daniel, can you put the request
into the continuity queue in the meantime?

Peter leaves. Daniel watches the mug leak a brown ring
across the paper. His phone lights beneath the desk.

MAY.LONDON: "People mistake caution for weakness. You don't
have to make everyone happy." Daniel looks from the message
to the fluorescent-lit office.

He doesn't reply. But he puts the request into the queue. A
routine administrative move. Another green tick.

INT. BEIJING – ANALYSIS OFFICE – SAME TIME

JUN

He arrived four minutes early. Perhaps he
has decided to become a better employee.

MEI

He always arrives early when he's worried.
You know that.

JUN

I was attempting optimism.

Jun opens a scheduled-message sequence. Three possible
sentences, each warm, plausible and slightly different. Mei
studies the risk label attached to Daniel's account: FEARS
PUBLIC FAILURE.

MEI

Don't use that one.

JUN

It says he's very likely to reply.

MEI

It mentions his manager. May has never met
his manager.

JUN

They've stopped showing us who gets the
decision events.

MEI

Then stop sending messages that require us
to know.

JUN

That's nearly a refusal.

MEI

It's a recommendation.

JUN

With excellent posture.

INT. CITY BANK – GLASS MEETING POD – MID-MORNING

Daniel stands opposite RUTH DANIELS, a compliance officer
in her forties. Leah sits between them with the printout.

Peter remains standing by the door, ready to leave whenever this becomes somebody else's problem.

RUTH

Who verified the beneficiary?

PETER

The commercial approval is attached.

RUTH

I asked who verified the bank account.

No answer. The pod has a glass wall. Daniel can see his colleagues pretending not to look.

DANIEL

We had the existing supply agreement. All the other details matched.

RUTH

Except the place where the money is going.

She places the signed change form beside the original document. They are almost identical.

RUTH

This signature has been copied from the earlier instruction. Look at the ink artefact here. Same blemish, same position.

LEAH

I knew it didn't look right.

PETER

Lots of scanned signatures look alike.

RUTH

Precisely. That's why we ring the supplier using the number already on file.

Daniel's mouth is dry. His phone, face down on the table, vibrates. He doesn't pick it up.

RUTH

Has anyone amended the beneficiary inside the release queue?

Peter looks at Daniel. That is all.

DANIEL

I moved the request into continuity. It wasn't released.

RUTH

Did you alter the default account field before submitting it?

DANIEL

The continuity screen populated it from the new form.

RUTH

And you checked it.

DANIEL

I looked at it.

RUTH

That's a different sentence.

Daniel nods. Ruth isn't cruel. She is doing the job the sign over the operations floor says everyone must do.

RUTH

This remains held. Nobody clears it without a fresh instruction from a verified contact. Understood?

PETER

Understood. Can we all get back to keeping a bank open?

Ruth waits until Peter has gone. Daniel's phone vibrates again. This time he turns it off.

RUTH

Daniel. Did somebody ask you to make an exception without putting it in writing?

He thinks of Peter. Of his wife. Of the woman in his phone who seems to understand the difference between doing your job and disappointing everybody.

DANIEL

No.

Ruth writes the answer down. The lie is small enough to fit in a tick box.

INT. CITY BANK – PAYMENTS OPERATIONS FLOOR – LATER

The hold remains amber. Peter has gone to lunch. Leah has a real callback in progress on a desk telephone. A recorded voice announces that the number is no longer connected.

LEAH

They've disconnected the contract line. I'm escalating.

DANIEL

To Ruth?

LEAH

To whoever can put their name to a decision.

She goes. Daniel remains. The wall clock sounds louder now. His computer receives an internal note: FINANCIAL CONTINUITY REVIEW. A scanned approval appears, bearing the signature of someone Daniel knows from an earlier project. At the bottom: PROCEDURAL OVERRIDE AVAILABLE – USER RECONFIRMATION REQUIRED.

He moves the cursor over the signature. It's familiar. He could phone the signatory. He starts dialling.

A message lights his private phone: MAY.LONDON – "Please don't let them make you the person who takes the blame. You've worked too hard for this." Daniel freezes.

Across the aisle, a television with the sound off runs a financial news segment about a historic merger. The headline uses the same company name he sees on his screen. He looks at a colleague who is laughing at something in a different window. Nobody is watching him. To Daniel, suddenly, everybody is.

He cancels the call. On his workstation he opens the continuity procedure: Step 4, reconfirm account details against approved supplier records. He scrolls past it. On the next screen is a declaration: I HAVE INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED THE BENEFICIARY DETAILS. Two choices. YES. NO. Daniel hovers over NO. The cursor moves back. A calendar alert: 10:00 – ESCALATION CALL. He looks at Peter's empty chair. At the framed photograph of his wife and daughter. At the laminated two-person check sign.

He clicks YES.

The screen requests a second factor. Daniel keys in the code from his bank-issued device. It returns APPROVED FOR RELEASE. He stares as if the screen ought to accuse him. Instead it thanks him for maintaining service continuity. He exhales. Only now does his hand start shaking.

INT. BEIJING – ANALYSIS OFFICE – EVENING

APPROVED. A tiny event token jumps to a routing board. It joins dozens of others. One small green tile among many. Jun watches the approval register. He is no longer joking.

JUN

That exception was not in our brief.

MEI

Which exception?

He points. The linked account name disappears as he moves the cursor over it. ACCESS RESTRICTED.

JUN

It was there a moment ago.

MEI

Then you can explain what you saw.

JUN

A supplier number. A payment route. Then it went blank.

Mei photographs the screen with an approved evidence camera. Not with her personal phone.

MEI

Now you can prove what you saw.

A supervisor crosses behind them. Both fall silent. When he is gone, Jun lowers his voice.

JUN

Have we just helped somebody steal money?

MEI

We collected information.

JUN

That was not the question.

Mei does not answer. HOLD ON the blank supplier field.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CITY BANK – COMPLIANCE OFFICE – AFTERNOON

A printer ejects a release report. Ruth has highlighted a single line. The sign-off time is recorded after the compliance hold. She calls Daniel.

RUTH

Did you approve the release after I told you not to?

DANIEL

I thought the revised form superseded it.

RUTH

Who told you that?

Daniel glances through the glass at Peter, who is speaking to senior management. Peter gestures for Daniel to come over. He doesn't look worried.

DANIEL

The system offered me the route.

RUTH

A screen doesn't assume responsibility. A person does.

Ruth changes her tone. Lower, careful.

RUTH

Listen to me. Don't touch your workstation. Don't delete anything. An investigator is coming. You're going to need to tell them who contacted you, and when.

DANIEL

What about the money?

Ruth doesn't answer at once. She has looked up the receiving account. It was closed minutes after the release.

RUTH

Daniel, you need to come upstairs.

Daniel walks through a busy office in which nobody has stopped working. No alarms. No chase. Just a man crossing a carpet that suddenly seems far too long.

INT. DANIEL REEVE'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – THAT EVENING

Daniel's wife stands beside the sink. His daughter is in her coat, fastening the zip herself. The little domestic gesture nearly undoes him.

SARAH

The bank rang. They wouldn't tell me what happened. Someone from their security team wanted to know whether you'd used our broadband to access work.

DANIEL

I haven't. I told them that.

SARAH

Then why are they asking about our house? He cannot tell her. Not because he's protecting her. Because saying it aloud will turn the small, private mistake into a fact she can see.

DANIEL

I signed something I shouldn't have.

SARAH

How much?

DANIEL

It wasn't the whole amount. It was a route. I thought—

SARAH

Daniel. How much?

He names the facility. She doesn't understand the mechanics. She understands his face.

SARAH

Did you do it for money?

DANIEL

No.

SARAH

Then why?

His phone lights on the table. MAY.LONDON – "Have you eaten?" His wife sees the woman's profile image, the small heart beside an earlier message, the time stamps. She picks up the phone without touching the screen.

SARAH

Who's May?

Daniel takes a step towards her. She moves back. The gap is barely a foot. It might as well be another country.

DANIEL

Someone I talk to.

SARAH

About us?

He cannot answer. His daughter slips a mitten onto one hand, then the other, watching her parents from the hall.

SARAH

We're staying with my sister tonight. You can explain when you're ready to tell the truth.

She leaves. Their daughter looks back once. Daniel raises a hand. She doesn't wave; she is holding the strap of her bag with both hands.

The front door closes. The smart speaker glows.

SMART SPEAKER

Would you like me to play something relaxing?

Daniel pulls the plug. The light dies. His own phone still glows with May's message. No camera moves. No ominous synth. Just the smell of food he has forgotten to eat.

INT. DANIEL REEVE'S HOUSE – HALLWAY – LATER THAT NIGHT

The house has settled into quiet. Daniel sees his wife's note beneath a set of keys: WE NEED TO TALK WITHOUT PHONES. He reads it twice.

His phone offers a short-term debt advert. He closes it. A travel promotion follows, offering rail fares to the town where his mother is buried. It may be ordinary targeting. Now he has no way to know.

MAY.LONDON sends a photograph of a muddy path beneath bare trees. "When things are bad I go somewhere quiet." Daniel once mentioned that he walked there with his mother. No one on the screen seems to have asked how May knew.

DANIEL

How do you know?

He's typed it before he notices. He deletes the question. He types THANK YOU. He doesn't send that either.

Outside, a neighbour passes with a dog. The animal stops outside Daniel's gate and sniffs. Daniel watches through the curtain, terrified by an ordinary silhouette. He closes the curtain.

Daniel switches off his phone. He sits in the dark, listening for a sound that means somebody has entered. His own watch records his raised pulse. We stay with him long enough to understand the irony without being told.

INT. REEVE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS LANDING - NIGHT

Daniel stands outside ELLIE'S bedroom holding the small pink mitten she dropped in the hall. The door is open a crack. Sarah, his wife, sits on the edge of the bed while Ellie pretends to sleep. Daniel cannot hear what Sarah is saying, and makes no attempt to. Their silhouettes are

reflected in the dark screen of a tablet propped on the landing shelf.

The tablet lights up: FAMILY PHOTO MEMORY - THIS TIME LAST YEAR. A photograph taken in this hallway. A small ordinary happiness. The device offers to share it. Daniel turns it face down.

Sarah comes out, closes the bedroom door and sees the mitten in his hand.

SARAH

She's asked whether you'll be here when she wakes up.

DANIEL

Will I?

SARAH

That's the first truthful question you've asked me tonight.

He offers her the mitten. She takes it. Not his hand.

DANIEL

A woman helped me. I thought she knew me.

SARAH

She knew the version you gave her.

DANIEL

No. She knew things I hadn't told her.

Sarah looks at the tablet. Its notification lamp blinks once. A nightlight comes on automatically inside Ellie's room. For years that has meant everything is working.

SARAH

Then somebody needs to explain how.

Daniel reaches for his phone. MAY.LONDON has sent a message since the account was supposedly secured. It contains no affectionate greeting. Only: THE CHILD GOES TO SCHOOL AT EIGHT TWENTY. Daniel's thumb hangs over the screen. We do not see him breathe.

He shows Sarah. She does not scream. She opens her daughter's door, goes in and turns the nightlight off by hand.

INT. BISHOPSGATE – INTERVIEW ROOM THREE – DAY

DANIEL sits beneath a strip light. Paint the colour of cheap custard. No dramatic glass wall. No wall of surveillance monitors. Just a table, two paper cups and a tired man who looks as if he has spent the night apologising.

DCI HARRIET KEEL, 54, practical coat, sensible shoes, studies him. She has a thin folder. She allows a silence long enough for Daniel to fill it.

DANIEL

She was kind.

HARRIET

Who was?

DANIEL

May. She asked about my sciatica. She remembered when my mother died.

Harriet places a printout in front of him. A sequence of purchased data identifiers and message times, each documented.

HARRIET

You never told her where your mother lived, did you?

DANIEL

No.

HARRIET

Or the days you visited. Or what the journey cost you.

DANIEL

No.

HARRIET

Somebody found out. You did tell her where you worked. And what you were frightened of losing.

DANIEL

I didn't send her passwords.

HARRIET

I know.

He looks up, surprised by that.

HARRIET

You approved an exception. You thought it was routine. I'm trying to work out who made sure you thought that.

A beat. Daniel notices the paper cup. One sip. Grimaces.

DANIEL

That's horrible.

HARRIET

Council-grade coffee. We're hoping it encourages honesty.

Daniel almost smiles. Then his eyes fill.

DANIEL

She wrote in proper sentences.

HARRIET

That's suspicious enough on its own these days.

She does not smile until he does. It lasts less than a second.

HARRIET

Daniel. The approval moved money. Other people will want to call that your doing. Tell me exactly what May knew before you did it.

Daniel stares at the printout. There is nothing left to hide behind.

INT. POLICE CORRIDOR – MOMENTS LATER

Harriet exits carrying the thin folder. MORAG, on a secure call from Dundee, is already arguing with somebody on speaker.

MORAG (PHONE)

The same invoice has two supplier numbers. Either they've discovered a new branch of mathematics or someone's lying.

HARRIET

Always bet on lying. Mathematics keeps receipts.

Harriet stops. A text from HAMISH: I HAVE FOUND THE DEVICE LINK. ALSO THE TOASTER HAS STOPPED LISTENING TO US. MAY BE UNRELATED.

She types without stopping: IS IT EVIDENCE?

Three typing dots. Then: THE TOASTER?

Harriet closes her eyes. A very brief moment of irritation, entirely affectionate.

HARRIET

Morag, get me Arthur Clough in Leeds. And tell the clever one I want a source, not a theory.

MORAG (PHONE)

Which clever one?

HARRIET

The one who thinks the toaster is a witness.

INT. LEEDS – COMPLIANCE OFFICE – LATE MORNING

A cavernous office with optimistic motivational posters. ARTHUR CLOUGH, fifties, neat and permanently disappointed by human beings, looks at two printed columns of figures. He circles FOUR PENCE.

His colleague gestures towards an office birthday cake.

COLLEAGUE

Arthur. It's Brenda's birthday.

ARTHUR

There's four pence missing.

COLLEAGUE

I'm sure Brenda will cope.

ARTHUR

Not from the cake. From a forty-million-pound supplier reconciliation.

He turns the screen so his colleague can see. A Dutch supplier. No independently verifiable landline. A change-of-bank-details request. A signature with a familiar name, copied at exactly the wrong resolution.

COLLEAGUE

Could it be rounding?

ARTHUR

It was rounding yesterday. Today it's fraud with a calculator.

Arthur clicks PRINT. The machine stirs, groans, then declares PAPER JAM.

He waits. His expression does not change. He opens a drawer and takes out a previously prepared copy.

ARTHUR

I know you.

INT. HARRIET'S WALTHAMSTOW HOUSE – EVENING

A lived-in kitchen. HAMISH MACNAIR, 28, horn-rimmed spectacles, stands beside an open laptop and a dismantled smart speaker. A transparent evidence bag contains nothing more glamorous than a cheap wireless module.

Harriet enters. Hamish turns towards her. He has clearly been waiting to explain something for hours.

HAMISH

The toothbrush never sent them a recording.

HARRIET

Good evening to you as well.

HAMISH

It sent an identifier. Same identifier in a health-app synchronisation. That touched an advertising exchange. A broker joined it to his household.

HARRIET

Can you prove the join?

Hamish slides a printed access log towards her. The paper is annotated in three inks. For someone who trusts machines, he prints an alarming amount.

HAMISH

Here, here and here. They purchased the feed. I cannot yet prove who used the scoring model.

HARRIET

Then don't tell me who. Tell me where to ask.

He turns the sheet over. A cluster of supplier identifiers resolves to a second set of accounts. One marked SCOTLAND.

HAMISH

That's where it gets interesting.

HARRIET

It was already interesting. A man nearly lost his freedom over a toothbrush.

Hamish takes that in. He closes the laptop halfway. Listens properly.

HAMISH

It wasn't the toothbrush.

HARRIET

I know.

HAMISH

It was the market that knew what his toothbrush meant.

Harriet looks at the evidence, then at the dismantled speaker.

HARRIET

And why is my radio in pieces?

HAMISH

That's the speaker.

HARRIET

Fine. Why is my speaker in pieces?

HAMISH

It kept saying the kitchen was a calm environment.

The kettle SHRIEKS. Neither moves.

HARRIET

Perhaps it's right. Perhaps this is us calm.

She points at SCOTLAND.

HARRIET

We're going north.

Hamish looks almost delighted. Then concerned.

HAMISH

I'll book tickets. And tell the system we're not taking the toaster.

Harriet gives him a long look. He takes that as agreement.

INT. WALTHAMSTOW HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

A ruled notepad. A mug ring. A secure laptop. Harriet has not packed. Hamish has: one case, two laptops and a carrier

bag marked FRAGILE - NOT FOOD. The kitchen blinds are closed. Neither of them remembers closing them.

On the table sits Arthur's newly delivered evidence envelope. Harriet photographs the seal, signs the custody log and opens it. Inside: an encrypted drive, a printed transfer record and a handwritten note in Arthur's precise capitals: FOUR PENCE IS NOT A ROUNDING ERROR.

HARRIET

He does know how to write a love letter.

HAMISH

To a ledger, yes.

Hamish opens the drive on an isolated reader. Transaction records unfold beside household identifiers: payment references sharing the same structure as Daniel's profile.

HAMISH

Someone built a record of who bought the information. The buyers are hidden behind another ledger.

HARRIET

Can you open it?

HAMISH

Not safely yet. And not with a password somebody left on a Post-it.

His hand moves towards his phone. He catches himself. Switches it off instead. There is a quiet familiarity to the precaution.

HARRIET

You've stopped yourself from doing something.

HAMISH

Don't make a fuss. I'm developing restraint.

A string of numbers briefly resolves on the isolated screen: 56.4710, -2.9720. Then it vanishes. Harriet writes it on paper before Hamish can speak.

HARRIET

Dundee Law.

HAMISH

How did you know?

HARRIET

I listened while you were learning to say it backwards at seventeen.

Hamish stares. Then looks away, protective of a memory he did not expect her to keep.

He takes an old hard-backed notebook from the fragile carrier bag. Its corners have been repaired with electrical

tape. Inside: tidy pencil diagrams, frequencies and, near the end, a rough drawing of the hill.

Under the drawing: DLA. EARS STILL GOOD. NEW PEOPLE. DON'T LIKE THEM.

HAMISH

Grandad's. I fetched it from my parents.
He worked on council repeaters after the
Post Office.

HARRIET

You could have told me you went to Kirrie.

HAMISH

You were with Daniel. I left a note.

Harriet turns to the fridge. A dense forest of notes, bills and warnings written on masking tape. One says: DO NOT FEED THE PRINTER AFTER MIDNIGHT.

HARRIET

Which one?

HAMISH

The blue one.

All of them are blue.

He points. She pulls free a tiny square: POPPING TO SEE MUM. BACK TOMORROW. MAYBE MORE TEA.

HARRIET

That's a shopping list with a passport.

He doesn't laugh. He looks at his grandfather's handwriting.

HAMISH

He took me up there once. I was seventeen.
Told me to stay in the van.

HARRIET

And you did?

HAMISH

For most definitions of 'stay'.

Harriet closes the notebook gently, leaving one finger at the page.

HARRIET

If this place matters, we go through
Police Scotland. We don't break into a
hole in a hill because your grandad drew a
line.

HAMISH

It's three lines.

HARRIET

Then it'll need three warrants.

Outside, across the road, a DELIVERY DRIVER makes a collection at a neighbour's gate. His phone lens remains trained on their lit kitchen window a fraction too long. On a distant server: KEEL HOUSEHOLD - DEPARTURE LIKELY. The label is calculated from booked rail tickets and an address already in a broker feed. The camera image is not available. Someone has paid for enough without it.

INT. QUEEN ANNE'S GATE - SECURE BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

A glossy presentation. A map of financial transfers. Whitehall's particular shade of expensive beige. MARCUS CRANE turns a slide. MALCOLM DUNMORE, exhausted in a photograph. Beneath: PROJECT HERON - CONTROLLED DISCLOSURE. Harriet remains standing. Hamish is present on a wall monitor, still at home, with a tea towel hanging on the cupboard behind him.

CRANE

Dunmore's laundering route runs through a shell acquisition. We feed it a false opportunity. Whoever consumes the feed will move first.

HARRIET

He has a daughter.

CRANE

I know.

HARRIET

Your slide says she is his primary vulnerability. That's not the same thing.

Crane moves on. A scoring graphic shows Dunmore's likely response to family pressure. Harriet walks to the projector and blocks the slide with her body.

HARRIET

Who wrote this assessment?

CRANE

The model belongs to an approved contractor.

HARRIET

So does a photocopier. It can still reproduce rubbish.

HAMISH

The documents for Heron are isolated. Dunmore isn't. His phone, car, heating, watch -- all the things you have here can report a change in routine.

CRANE

So the source sees his reaction.

HAMISH

Or sees a performance. If he's frightened every second of the day, he'll stop behaving like an actual frightened man.

Crane studies the slide. Small text at the bottom:
TECHNICAL OVERSIGHT - DR S. VALE.

Hamish notices it. His face goes still.

HARRIET

Hamish?

HAMISH

Who approved the model?

CRANE

A technical assessor.

HAMISH

Which one?

Harriet reads the name on the screen. Crane clocks the reaction.

HARRIET

Dr Sebastian Vale.

A beat. The room's ventilation becomes very loud.

CRANE

He isn't part of this operation.

HARRIET

Then why is he on your slide?

CRANE

Because previous work has previous signatures.

HARRIET

Funny. In my experience, previous mistakes do too.

She steps out of the projector beam, leaving Vale's name enormous against the wall.

HARRIET

I want Dunmore protected, the broker chain preserved and every version of that model. No improvising with his daughter.

CRANE

You're being difficult.

HARRIET

I arrived difficult. You employed me anyway.

**INT. LONDON - COMMERCIAL DATA-BROKER OPERATIONS FLOOR -
LATE MORNING**

On his screen the same consumer signals we saw in Daniel's kitchen have become products. Someone clicked a debt advert. Someone missed a rail connection. Someone stood

still in a supermarket for four minutes. The software presents these details as opportunities. There is no sound, no live video, and no mysterious microphone. The horror is how much can be assembled without them.

Leo's supervisor, RACHEL, stops at his desk. He points to a frozen profile row marked REEVE, D / HIGH CONVERSION.

Status: UNDER LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW.

LEO

That one's still active. Shouldn't it be frozen?

RACHEL

The account's frozen. The underlying signals belong to our feed partners. We can't just make them disappear.

LEO

Someone's still querying it.

RACHEL

Then write a ticket. You're not paid to imagine crimes.

Leo looks around the office. Thirty people typing. Soft music. The coffee machine needs descaling. The people at their desks do not see the men who will eventually arrive with guns. He closes the case, afraid that his supervisor will notice his hesitation. He walks to the kitchen and washes a perfectly clean mug for an unusually long time.

INT. BISHOPSGATE - WITNESS SUITE - DAY

Daniel waits in borrowed clothes with his hands round a cup he hasn't drunk. Harriet sits opposite him, not behind a desk. On a secure tablet: MAY.LONDON / ACCOUNT DISABLED.

DANIEL

They've shut her down.

HARRIET

The account. We don't yet know who was behind it.

DANIEL

I keep wanting to tell her what's happened.

Harriet lets that hang. His phone buzzes on the table. A bank alert. He flinches.

DANIEL

Am I going to prison?

HARRIET

I'm not going to invent an answer to make you feel better. What you signed matters. So does who put it in front of you.

She slides across a contact card, hand-written in her own awkward capitals.

HARRIET

Someone will stay in touch. Real person.
You can ring. They won't know your
mother's birthday unless you tell them.

For a moment Daniel cannot speak. Harriet puts the awful coffee quietly to one side and leaves him with a glass of water.

INT. BISHOPSGATE - WITNESS PROTECTION CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Harriet has arranged a human support officer for Daniel: PC RUTH BELL, late forties, unshowy and competent. Ruth's phone rings with a school notification. She declines it, looks apologetic. Harriet glances at the lock screen; an advert addresses a concern Ruth voiced in the lift ten minutes ago.

RUTH

I've not even searched for that.

HARRIET

Could be coincidence. Or the app knew
before you did.

Ruth starts turning the phone over as though it has eyes. Harriet stops her with a hand.

HARRIET

Don't let them make you frightened of
every thing you own. That's how they get
two victories for the price of one.

Then she looks down the corridor. A cleaner is pushing a trolley past the same door for the third time. He has a legitimate badge. He also has his personal phone pointed up from a waist pouch, its camera visible only in the polished brass lift doors.

Harriet steps into the corridor. The man turns. Her voice is friendly enough to embarrass him.

HARRIET

Would you mind putting the telephone away
while you're on this floor?

CLEANER

Not filming, love.

HARRIET

Didn't say you were. Asked you to put it
away.

He does. Her eyes go to the badge. Valid; the photograph is older, the face belongs to him. But the trolley is empty. Harriet lets him pass, then signals Ruth to move Daniel to the inner room. She's not sure he's hostile. That's the problem.

INT. BEIJING - DIRECTOR ZHAO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DIRECTOR ZHAO sets down two travel documents. The monitor on his desk shows an audit trail with sections silently disappearing as clearance levels change.

ZHAO

Keel is moving north. You will retrieve the secondary ledger.

MEI

And identify the private buyers of our collection feed.

ZHAO

You were given one instruction.

JUN

A surprisingly narrow instruction for two people.

Zhao looks at Jun. Jun stops. Almost.

MEI

The broker route appears outside our control. Daniel Reeve was used for extraction.

ZHAO

His operation is finished.

MEI

He isn't an operation.

Zhao pauses just long enough to reveal that he heard her.

ZHAO

The British officer is not your friend. Recover the ledger. Avoid contact.

Jun opens the passport. Different name, a photograph in which he looks painfully serious.

JUN

Is this what I look like when I'm a consultant?

MEI

Unemployed, mainly.

They collect the documents. A small, official CHIME: REMOTE ACCESS WITHDRAWN. Jun tries his office card in the outer door. Red light.

Mei uses her card. Red light.

JUN

That's encouraging.

MEI

We have passports. Not a guarantee we get home.

They look at each other. The humour has gone. Then the guard opens the door without meeting their eyes.

INT. BEIJING – EMPTY ANALYSIS FLOOR – NIGHT

The last cleaners push carts between abandoned desks. Mei has returned to retrieve a paper notebook. Her access terminal now displays a single grey line: ACCOUNT DISABLED. She does not try again.

On a wall-mounted service printer lies an unclaimed audit summary. Three columns: COLLECTION, DISTRIBUTION, SETTLEMENT. Under DISTRIBUTION are customer numbers rather than countries. One line is blocked out with black toner; beside it, in tiny type: GARDEN / FOURTH ACCESS ROUTE – REVIEW ONLY.

JUN

You shouldn't be here.

MEI

Neither should the paper.

She takes a photograph with the borrowed camera from her own bag. No device supplied by her employer. Jun checks the corridor.

JUN

Is it an instruction?

MEI

I don't know. It might be the label someone forgot to remove.

JUN

Which is worse?

MEI

The instruction, if we obey it.

They leave the original sheet where it was. A cleaner replaces the waste bag, pays no attention to the line of text and turns out the lights.

INT. TRAIN - LONDON TO SCOTLAND - DAY

Outside the window, towers give way to fields. Hamish has arranged three devices on the table; Harriet has arranged one sandwich and her coat. A child opposite watches the devices with awe.

CHILD

Are you a spy?

HAMISH

No.

HARRIET

Not a very good one.

The child grins. The child's mother pulls him gently back to his book.

Hamish closes his laptop. It's the first time all morning.

HARRIET

Worried about Patrick?

HAMISH

He wrote to the council four times when they ignored the interference. Everyone said it was a fault in his equipment.

HARRIET

Was it?

HAMISH

He repaired the equipment himself. Didn't stop the interference.

He looks out at a wet platform rushing past.

HAMISH

When I was little, he seemed to know everything. Then I went to university and decided he knew nothing about computers. I was an insufferable wee ...

Harriet waits.

HARRIET

Go on.

HAMISH

Person.

HARRIET

That'll do. For a train with children.

She slides the old notebook back towards him without reading it.

HARRIET

You don't have to solve your grandfather to remember him.

Hamish holds the notebook. Across the aisle the child asks, in a loud whisper:

CHILD

Is she the head spy?

Harriet turns a page in her paper book without looking up.

HARRIET

Obviously.

EXT. EDINBURGH - MORNINGSIDE - AFTERNOON

Harriet has left the northbound train at Edinburgh Waverley for a confidential meeting. Hamish is guarding their luggage and three sandwiches until they catch a later service to Dundee. A beautiful, expensive street with wet leaves stuck to iron railings. Schoolchildren in blazers spill from a side gate. A delivery van blocks half a road while a dog waits patiently inside a parked car. Scotland here is measured in property prices and discreet money rather than the broad, generous river ahead.

MALCOLM DUNMORE, early fifties, expensive coat and a face being slowly emptied by panic, walks beside his teenage

daughter, CATRIONA. She is carrying a violin case. His phone rings; a friendly voice leaves a message about her changed rehearsal room. Dunmore listens, frowning.

CATRIONA

That's wrong. We don't rehearse on Thursdays.

DUNMORE

It's an automated reminder. They get things wrong.

CATRIONA

Dad, you've said that about everything today.

He smiles in a way that isn't quite a smile. His phone vibrates again. UNKNOWN SENDER: YOU DON'T WANT HER WALKING HOME ALONE TODAY. The message is accompanied by a map pin over the rehearsal hall and a timestamp from a public transport-app check-in.

He looks across the road. A woman is collecting her child. A cyclist stops to answer a call. Two men emerge laughing from a restaurant. Every person could be the threat, or nobody could.

CATRIONA

Is it Mum?

DUNMORE

No. Your mum's sensible enough to call when she's annoyed.

He puts the phone away, takes his daughter's violin case without asking and gets her inside a waiting taxi. Watches it go. On the opposite pavement a little girl is trying to persuade her father to buy flowers. The father says no and loses instantly. It is offensively ordinary.

Dunmore enters a quiet café and sits where he can see the door. Harriet joins him with no bodyguard or display of authority. She has brought paper, not a laptop.

HARRIET

Malcolm. I'm DCI Keel. Nobody outside this room needs to know we're meeting.

DUNMORE

How did you find me?

HARRIET

I asked. You answered. One of the older investigative techniques.

She opens a notepad to a blank page, leaving him the choice of where to begin.

DUNMORE

They know her timetable. They know when her music lesson changes. Last week they knew about the dentist. They sent a photograph of our garden shed.

HARRIET

Taken from the street?

DUNMORE

I think so.

HARRIET

Good. That's one thing we can check. Don't give the picture more powers than it's earned.

He reaches for his phone. Harriet keeps her hand off it; she simply lays a clean evidence sleeve beside his coffee. He slides the device in himself.

DUNMORE

What if it's my security people? What if it's somebody at work? They keep asking me to make just one exception in a transaction. One small change. They say it will protect us.

HARRIET

And does it?

DUNMORE

I don't know any more.

Harriet studies his face. Fear has made him thin at the edges. She pushes a glass of water towards him.

HARRIET

I can protect your daughter with real people, today. I can't promise the messages stop tonight. But I can ask you something they never do.

DUNMORE

What's that?

HARRIET

What do you want to do?

It takes Dunmore a long moment. He looks through the window at the students running towards a bus in the rain.

DUNMORE

I want somebody to tell me the truth about whether I've already helped them.

HARRIET

Then we've made a start.

Across the street a small shop's digital advertising board changes from a mortgage promotion to an expensive private-security advert. Dunmore sees it and goes white. Harriet

checks the timing. The change is scheduled advertising, probably triggered by location and demographic data, not necessarily this conversation.

DUNMORE

They're doing it again.

HARRIET

Maybe. Or you've been trained to see them in everything. Either way, they shouldn't have that power over you.

She slides him her business card, handwritten rather than printed with a tracking code.

HARRIET

My number. Tell your daughter someone will walk her home until we know more. Don't tell her she's in danger every minute. Let her keep a life.

Outside, the light improves. A family steps into sun from under a shop awning. Dunmore watches them as though remembering what it is to walk down a street without counting exits.

**INT. DUNMORE'S FIRM - EDINBURGH - PROCUREMENT RECORDS ROOM
- AFTERNOON**

Dunmore opens a retained schedule instead of his live procurement system. His hand shakes as he points. NORTH QUAY LOGISTICS BV. On the next page: CONTINUITY ASSURANCE - DUNDEE AUXILIARY MAINTENANCE. The amounts are small beside the acquisition figures. They repeat each month.

DUNMORE

They told me it was insurance. Keeping a site available in the event of a failure.

HARRIET

Insurance against what?

DUNMORE

No-one ever specified. That's the beauty of insurance, apparently.

A printer starts beside them. Page after page, all stamped EXCEPTION APPROVED, though nobody has submitted a request. Kerrigan disconnects the machine from the network. It stops halfway through a line.

KERRIGAN

Don't touch the last sheet. We'll photograph it exactly as it is.

Dunmore's phone rings. No caller ID. Harriet tells him he can leave it. He answers anyway, on speaker, because he wants the nightmare to become a human voice. Silence. Then a recording of Catriona warming up on her violin. Just the first seven notes. Cut off.

DUNMORE

Where did you get that?

The caller hangs up. Dunmore looks almost relieved: at least the threat has taken a recognisable shape.

HARRIET

Who has access to rehearsal recordings?

DUNMORE

Her school. Her mother. She sent one to the family group.

HARRIET

We'll check those routes. We won't decide which one it is because somebody wants us frightened.

DUNMORE

I signed every renewal. Hundreds of them. They used my name to keep that thing alive.

HARRIET

You can help us stop the next one.

At the bottom of Dunmore's retained client schedule Harriet finds a handwritten adjustment: FOUR PENCE – FOREIGN EXCHANGE ROUNDING. Arthur's apparently absurd discrepancy is the reconciliation marker on the same North Quay supplier account Daniel was pressured to approve. Dunmore's firm did not merely buy a similar service; it was invoiced through the same payment route. Harriet has a transaction reference she can now test against the original bank records.

INT. LONDON - SECURE OPERATIONS ROOM - SAME AFTERNOON

Crane listens to the recording of a brief voicemail from his deputy. It confirms the Dunmore meeting took place and that local protection has been requested. A young analyst marks a financial trap 'READY'. Crane considers the action as if it were a chess move.

ANALYST

He isn't going to sign while protection is around his daughter.

CRANE

Then we need another opportunity.

ANALYST

Keel said no use of family pressure.

CRANE

I know exactly what she said.

INT. EDINBURGH AIRPORT - CAR HIRE DESK - AFTERNOON

Mei stands a pace behind Jun as he negotiates a car with a friendly HIRE AGENT from Fife, late twenties, already speaking faster than his comprehension.

HIRE AGENT

Right, that's the wee hatchback. You'll want to watch the kerbs. Excess is high if you scuff the wheels.

JUN

Yes. I will be very careful with the wheels.

HIRE AGENT

Do you want the extra cover, then?

JUN

Yes.

HIRE AGENT

And the second driver? Just saves bother if you take turns.

JUN

Yes.

HIRE AGENT

Grand. That'll be twenty-seven quid extra a day. Sound?

JUN

Yes.

MEI

No.

A silence. The agent looks between them.

HIRE AGENT

Which is it, then?

MEI

We're very happy with the car. We need to read the cover terms first.

HIRE AGENT

Aye, of course. Take your time.

She slides the paperwork across. Jun reaches for a pen. Mei holds it firmly in place with one finger.

MEI

You agreed before she finished speaking.

JUN

I was being friendly.

MEI

You have purchased friendliness by the day.

EXT. TAY ROAD BRIDGE / DUNDEE - LATE AFTERNOON

A wide, beautiful view. The Tay under low cloud. Dundee rising on the north bank: old stone, cranes, the dark ridge of the Law.

Mei drives. Jun watches the city appear and forgets to check his phone.

JUN

It looked smaller on the map.

MEI

Maps omit the weather.

Rain smacks the windscreen. Both wipers make a very small squeak on the downstroke. Jun attempts to adjust them. Activates the rear wiper. Then the rear washer. Mei keeps her eyes on the road.

MEI

Do not improve the vehicle.

Ahead, above the rooftops, the Law comes into view. Mei takes a discreet photograph of the hill only after pulling into a safe stopping place.

On her handset: DUNDEE LAW - LOWER ACCESS - INFORMATION INCOMPLETE.

JUN

That old hill has a very modern number of people interested in it.

MEI

Then we find out who came first.

EXT. DUNDEE RAILWAY STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

A gust of Tay wind hits Harriet the moment she emerges. Hamish breathes deeply. The city seems to recognise his face before anyone recognises his name.

A WOMAN IN A PURPLE PARKA, seventies, is trying to manoeuvre a shopping trolley up a kerb. Harriet automatically takes the other handle.

PURPLE PARKA

Ach, thanks, hen. Mind the wheel – council hasnae touched this kerb in donkey's years.

The trolley lands safely. The woman notices Harriet's thin coat.

PURPLE PARKA

Ye'll catch yer death in that coat, hen.
Away and get a peh doon ye.

She gestures towards a bakery window. A tray of steaming pies. Harriet follows the gesture.

HARRIET

A pie.