

The Man in the Middle of the Road

A Play in One Act

by

PAFoster



Copyright © 2006, PAFoster.

All Rights Reserved.

SCENE

(SFX - Classical music plays on a car stereo. A male voice screams: No NO!!! NOOOOO!!!!!! The car swerves and crashes into a tree.)

(PAUSE)

(THE CURTAIN SLOWLY RISES)

(The stage is divided. The right two thirds, INSIDE, represent the sitting room of 'Marley View', a large family home in Surrey. The left third, OUTSIDE, represents various external locations not far from the house. The only required stage prop is a large sofa, with probably a coffee table.)

(INSIDE)

(SFX - Two large dogs bark, off, frantically as if spooked.)

(MRS CLAIRE DIGBY, 59, is discovered with her back to the audience looking out of the window, a copy of 'Country Life' magazine in her hands.)

CLAIRE: *[Calling]* Shut them in the kitchen please, Ellie!

ELLIE: *[OFF]* Okay, Mum.

(CLAIRE closes the curtains then relaxes on the sofa. She checks the time and then, after pointing a remote control to play a CD, continues flicking through her magazine.)

(SFX - A Satie CD plays low and continuous in the background, muted during the OUTSIDE scenes.)

(PAUSE)

(SFX - A large, diesel 4x4 car comes up a gravelled drive.)

(OUTSIDE)

(ADAM YATES, a young man in his early twenties, ENTERS in a daze. The headlights of the car briefly pass over him. He is blinded by the light and we see he is beaten, bruised, and naked. The headlights go out and we are left in moonlight.)

(SFX - The car engine shuts off, a door opens and slams shut.)

(BEN DIGBY ENTERS, 28, casually, but smartly dressed, carrying his coat.)

BEN: *[ENTERING]* Excuse me! This is private property!... Christ! What the hell are you playing at?... Here, take my coat... What are you doing here?

ADAM: Where am I?

BEN: Marley... Haslemere... You're not with it, are you?

ADAM: Hazel what?

BEN: Haslemere... Surrey... Stag do, was it? In the Swan? Stripped and dumped you, I suppose. Bastards. Lucky they didn't handcuff you to the bloody gate!

ADAM: It's all a blur... I'm sorry.

BEN: No need to be sorry. Come on, I'll take you up to my parent's house... You'll freeze your bloody bollocks off out here!... Come on!

(ADAM and BEN EXIT)

(INSIDE)

(CLAIRE is flicking through her magazine.)

(PAUSE)

(OUTSIDE)

(There is flashing blue light.)

(Detective Inspector GREGSON and a Police Constable ENTER separately and meet up.)

PC: That was quick. I've only just called.

GREGSON: I was on my way home. Thought I'd finished playing detective for the day.

PC: Sorry, Marm.

GREGSON: So what happened?

PC: Got a call at the station. Urgent, but odd. Male. Wouldn't leave a name. Said there'd been an accident.

GREGSON: Go on.

PC: Got here to find the Mercedes. Swerved. Hit the tree. Bit of a mess. Must have been going some.

GREGSON: Plenty of rubber on the road.

PC: Yes. But it's the boot... Probably released with the force of the crash.

GREGSON: Not unusual.

PC: No, Marm. But what's inside freaked me.

GREGSON: Oh?

PC: That's why I called CID.

(BLACK OUT)

(INSIDE)

(MISS ELLIE DIGBY, 31, ENTERS)

ELLIE: *[ENTERING]* I've finished, Mum. I'm going to have a coffee now. The kettle's boiling. Would you like one?

CLAIRE: Too late for me, Darling. I don't really like to drink coffee after half ten.

ELLIE: What about one of your herbal teas?

CLAIRE: Oh, why not. Your father should be here soon, and he's bound to want to talk for a bit.

ELLIE: I've just heard a car.

CLAIRE: Yes. Ben's. I do hate those big diesels.

ELLIE: I thought Dad had a diesel.

CLAIRE: He does, Ellie Dear. But his is a Mercedes. A lot quieter and altogether more sophisticated than that American monstrosity your brother drives.

ELLIE: Yes, Mum... I'll go and make us a drink.

(ELLIE EXITS)

(OUTSIDE)

(Flashing blue light.)

GREGSON: Anything on the Merc?

PC: Registered to a flat in London, Marm. Kensington.

GREGSON: The driver's?

PC: Yes, Marm. Found a wallet in his jacket on the back seat. Couple of credit cards. A few notes... Oh, and an envelope stuffed with six fifty in cash.

GREGSON: How much?!

PC: Six hundred and fifty pounds, Marm.

(INSIDE)

BEN: *[ENTERING]* Mum?

CLAIRE: Ben, Darling. I thought I heard your car. You're a little late. You promised you'd be back by eleven.

BEN: Only a few minutes, Mother. I'm sorry. I got diverted. A policeman told me to turn around. He was just closing off the lane at the bottom.

(ELLIE ENTERS carrying drinks.)

Had to come up round the other way.

ELLIE: Hi Ben.

BEN: Oh hi, Sis. You all right?

ELLIE: Well, aren't you going to introduce us?

BEN: What?... Oh Christ, yeah, sorry!

(BEN EXITS)

CLAIRE: Introduce who?

ELLIE: There's a flasher in the hall, Mum.

CLAIRE: Excuse me?!

ELLIE: Quite good looking, actually. Didn't say much.

CLAIRE: Ellie!

(BEN ENTERS followed by ADAM.)

BEN: Mum, has Dad got some old clothes?

CLAIRE: What?

BEN: I think he must have been at a stag do in town. Looks like his mates dumped him in the lane. Found him naked in the driveway.

ELLIE: Poor sod.

BEN: This is my mother, Claire... And my sister, Ellie... I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name.

ADAM: I'm... I'm sorry to put you out.

BEN: Not at all.

CLAIRE: I'll go and see what I can find, Dear. Won't you sit down, young man?

(CLAIRE EXITS)

ELLIE: So where was the do?

ADAM: Sorry?

ELLIE: The stag do...

ADAM: Don't remember anything.

BEN: Here, why don't you sit down?

ELLIE: Can I get you a hot drink?

ADAM: No.

ELLIE: Are you sure? I could make you a coffee. It's no hassle. Kettle's just boiled.

ADAM: No... No, thank you.

ELLIE: Ben?

BEN: Please, Ellie.

(ELLIE EXITS)

And I'm Ben by the way... Ben Digby... Take / a seat.

ADAM: Digby?

BEN: Sorry?

ADAM: Digby?

BEN: Yes. Benjamin Digby... Do you... Do you / know us?

ADAM: No!... No, I don't think so.

(PAUSE)

BEN: So... Where are you from?

ADAM: London... I think.

BEN: London! Christ! What you doing out here?

ADAM: Don't know. This is all very weird.

BEN: I should say. Were you at a party?

ADAM: Don't think so.

BEN: Have you been drinking?

ADAM: No.

BEN: No... You look sober enough. And you certainly don't reek of beer. You do look a bit battered though, mate. Have you been in a fight or something? Your face is in a right mess... and your neck's all bruised.

ADAM: Is it?

BEN: Listen, do you want me to call the police?

ADAM: No! No! Please, no! I just

(CLAIRE ENTERS)

/ want to go home.

CLAIRE: *[ENTERING]* You don't mind if he borrows your tracksuit, Ben, do you? Couldn't find anything suitable of your Father's, and this was folded up on the spare bed in your old room.

BEN: Yes, of course, Mum. I should have thought. I brought it with me to add to the charity pile. You're still volunteering aren't you?

CLAIRE: Yes, Dear. *[Passing the tracksuit to ADAM]* There you go.

BEN: Bought it to go running. Never worn it.

ADAM: Thanks.

(ADAM dresses in the tracksuit.)

CLAIRE: You can keep it, young man. Just be good enough to drop it into a Red Cross shop when you get home.

(ELLIE ENTERS with another mug of coffee, passing it to BEN.)

ELLIE: So who is he?

BEN: I don't know... *He* doesn't seem to either... Says he comes from London... Very / odd.

ELLIE: London?... So what's he doing out

(ADAM gives the coat to CLAIRE.)

CLAIRE: Thank you, Dear.

ELLIE: here with no bloody clothes on?

BEN: Beats me. Why don't you ask? You might get more sense out of him...

(CLAIRE passes the coat to BEN.)

Thanks, Mum... I'll just go and... *[To ELLIE]* Try and get his name while you're at it.

(PAUSE as BEN EXITS)

CLAIRE: Do you think he's had an accident or something?

ELLIE: Why don't you ask him, Mum?

CLAIRE: You, Dear... Go on.

ELLIE: Er... We couldn't help but notice. You look a little... Beaten up... Can you remember what happened to you?

ADAM: Think I ought to leave now.

ELLIE: No. No! / It's quite okay.

CLAIRE: You can't leave like that, Dear. Where would you go? You don't even know where you are.

ELLIE: Or who...

CLAIRE: Did you come down on the train? Waterloo?

ADAM: Don't know.

CLAIRE: Do you think we should call a doctor? He looks like / he's going to...

ADAM: No! No doctors! Nobody! Please!... I'll be all right. I'll go in a minute. Little dizzy. That's all.

CLAIRE: Oh... You poor child... Why / don't you...

ADAM: No! Don't touch me!

(BLACK OUT)

(OUTSIDE)

(Flashing blue light.)

PC: [ENTERING] A to Z, Marm.

GREGSON: What?... London?

PC: Yes.

GREGSON: Nothing from round here?

PC: No.

GREGSON: Not even a UK road atlas?

PC: No, Marm. Sorry.

GREGSON: Then he must know the area. Probably explains his speed. More likely to drive faster up a country lane you know, than one you don't.

PC: [Agreeing] Ummm...

GREGSON: Have they run a check on him, yet?

PC: Yes, Marm. One of the credit cards has statements sent to an address about a half mile up the road.

GREGSON: Bingo. So he was driving to his country home for the weekend.

PC: Yes, I suppose so... But what about all that blood in the boot?

(BLACK OUT)

(INSIDE)

BEN: [ENTERING] Is everything okay?

ELLIE: Yes. He's just a little... lost, I think.

(PAUSE)

BEN: No Dad yet, then?

CLAIRE: No, Dear. I spoke to him about a half an hour ago. He was on the A3. He'd just stopped for petrol at Milford. Should have been here by now.

(PAUSE)

ADAM: Henry.

CLAIRE: Sorry?

ADAM: Henry... Your husband's name is Henry, isn't it?... Henry Digby.

(BLACK OUT)

(OUTSIDE)

(PC is referring to his notepad.)

GREGSON: Who?

PC: Digby, Marm. Henry Digby. 62. Prominent London lawyer. Vast practice in Kensington. He has a flat there. Wife, Claire, 59, and family home up here on the edge of the common. Er... Marley View it's called... Two children. Eleonora, 31, and Benjamin, 28. Respectable family by / all accounts.

GREGSON: The road's closed?

PC: Sorry?

GREGSON: The road, Constable. Is it closed?

PC: Yes. Did it myself. And it probably will be for a while yet, Marm. Forensics have only just arrived.

(PAUSE)

GREGSON: Was he alone? I mean, could there have been a *passenger*?

PC: Might explain the call to the station, Marm.

(BLACK OUT)

(INSIDE)

CLAIRE: Papers! Oh, God! This is a set up! The papers! It'll be in the sodding papers! "*Naked Man Found in Top Lawyer's / Driveway!*"

ELLIE: Calm down / Mum!

CLAIRE: Who's paying you? Those bloody tabloids, isn't it. Come on! Which one is it? / Which one? Come on!

BEN: Mother! Please!

ADAM: No papers. I swear. I'm sorry. It's nothing to do / with...

CLAIRE: So *how* do you know my husband?

(PAUSE)

ADAM: So he is then.

CLAIRE: Yes of course he is! How do you know him?

ADAM: He's a lawyer. Sorts out the celebs.

BEN: Pretty private stuff. How do you know?

(PAUSE)

ADAM: I'm a client.

BEN: Oh! Sorry!

ELLIE: Are you an actor? I think I recognise you. You are, aren't you... That film... Back in the Summer... / Now what was it...

ADAM: I'm not an actor.

CLAIRE: Then who are you?

(PAUSE)

BEN: It's okay. You're quite safe. Dad has famous people here all the time... Are you a footballer? Premier League?... It's okay. I doubt we'd know you... My son probably would, mind. He's a Chelsea fan. Do you play for Chelsea?

ADAM: I'm not a footballer... I... I just need to speak to Hen—to... To Mr Digby.

BEN: Are you sure you can't tell us who you are? I mean, we only want to help. It's not every day you find a naked man in the driveway.

ADAM: I'd rather not say.

ELLIE: Then you are a celebrity. Someone famous.

ADAM: No! Nobody knows me. I'm just *shit*. That's all.

CLAIRE: Excuse me?!

ADAM: Look, I don't mix with people like you. I'm a nobody. All right?

BEN: There's no need / to be rude.

ADAM: London isn't all like bloody Kensington and Chelsea, you know. There are other areas!

BEN: Okay, okay. Calm down. We just want to help you remember what happened. That's all.

(PAUSE)

ELLIE: Do you work?

ADAM: I make a living.

CLAIRE: What about your parents?

ADAM: My mother is dead.

CLAIRE: I'm sorry.

BEN: And your father?

ADAM: I'd rather not speak of him.

(PAUSE)

ELLIE: So where do you work? What do you do?

ADAM: I... I provide services for clients.

BEN: Most businessmen provide services for their clients.

ADAM: I'm not a businessman, all right? My *clients* are in business... Mostly... Company Directors, Accountants, Politicians... Solicitors.

BEN: Are you saying you supply my father's law practice. Is that how you know him?

ADAM: I don't supply services to businesses.

ELLIE: You're really not making any sense.

ADAM: Tough! I really don't care to talk about it!

(PAUSE)

CLAIRE: I bet I know what you do... Nothing to be ashamed of. Audrey has one. He's always there by her side at functions. Always got something nice to say. She's told me about him.

ELLIE: Mother?

CLAIRE: Audrey James, Ellie. Colonel James. Remember?

ELLIE: He died years ago.

CLAIRE: Yes, Dear. So now when she hosts all those fund raisers for her various trusts, and the like, she has a young man around.

ELLIE: You mean a toy boy.

CLAIRE: No, Dear. Escort. He's a male escort. She pretends they're sort of attached. He does the functions with her, they go for dinner and stuff, and she picks up the tab... Very professional... [To ADAM] Are you an escort?

(PAUSE)

Thought so. You're very good looking.

ELLIE: Are you? Really?

BEN: You're an escort for a celebrity, aren't you. Things getting a bit out of hand? Is that why you want to speak to Dad?

ADAM: I'm not an escort... Well, sort of not. It's sort of like that, but not like that... Look, I really don't wish to talk about this anymore.

(PAUSE)

ELLIE: You go further, don't you.

CLAIRE: Excuse me?!

ELLIE: Oh don't be such a prude, Mother. I'm sure Audrey's escort doesn't refuse a night cap.

CLAIRE: Ellie!

ELLIE: He gets *paid* for / it!

CLAIRE: That's *quite* enough!

ELLIE: It's his *job*, Mother!

(PAUSE)

CLAIRE: So do... Do mature women pay young men like you to... To have...

ELLIE: Sex, Mother. Go on. Say it!

CLAIRE: Sex! There I've said it. I really can't believe we're having this conversation.

BEN: You started it, Mum.

CLAIRE: I did no such thing!

ELLIE: Yes you did! You brought up / Audrey.

ADAM: Yes!... Old women do pay young men to have sex. But my clients are *not* old women... My clients are old men.

CLAIRE: ...Men?! Good God! You have sex with old men! Ellie, Dear! Take your Father's client up to the guest bathroom! Now! I'm sure he could do with a very long, hot shower!

(OUTSIDE)

GREGSON: So... Why did he swerve?... Was he drunk?... Another vehicle?... A deer, maybe?

PC: Don't know, Marm.

GREGSON: Come on. Let's take another look in the boot. You say it was already open when you got here?

PC: Yes, Marm.

GREGSON: And no one has seen the driver?

PC: No, Marm. Nobody here when we arrived. Nobody at all. Just the silver Mercedes wrapped round the tree.

GREGSON: So did he take something from boot after he crashed?

PC: Might explain the blood, Marm.

(BLACK OUT)

(INSIDE)

(CLAIRE and BEN are alone.)

BEN: Look, Mum, I'm sure there's an explanation for all this... Dad'll sort it out.

CLAIRE: Better not make him late for the funeral. That's all I can say.

BEN: Don't worry about that now.

CLAIRE: He's never brought his work home with him. The odd summer party for the big names, yes. But not actual *clients* turning up here on business. He's got his flat in Kensington for all that. And what sort of clients is he taking on?... I mean, that man surely couldn't afford the kind of fees your father charges. And why turn up here, for God's sake?... And looking like that!

BEN: I really don't know, Mum.

CLAIRE: Oh Henry! Where the sodding hell are you?!

(*ELLIE ENTERS*)

ELLIE: [*ENTERING*] I've left him to it.

BEN: Well did he say anything?

ELLIE: Two sorrys and a thank you. I closed the door and waited, but I couldn't hear any water running.

(*PAUSE*)

CLAIRE: I don't think I want people like that in this house.

ELLIE: Each to their own, Mother.

CLAIRE: Disgusting! And respectable men *pay* for it?! I'm sure if your father knew, he wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole.

ELLIE: Mother! He's Dad's client. What he does for a living is *his* business, not ours.

CLAIRE: There must be a law against it.

ELLIE: Let's just leave it with Dad, okay?

(*A LONG PAUSE. CLAIRE flicks quickly through her magazine.*)

New CD, Mum?

CLAIRE: No. Satie. He was funny on the phone...

ELLIE: Sorry?

CLAIRE: Your father. When I called him on his mobile. Couldn't wait to hang up. I *thought* something was wrong.

BEN: Oh, Mother. You know how he hates his hands free thing.

ELLIE: Doesn't like the idea of other people listening in to his conversations.

CLAIRE: You think there was someone in the car with him?!

ELLIE: Mum! Don't be ridiculous! I was just explaining why Dad doesn't like the hands free. Why would he have someone in the car with him? He's coming home for the weekend.

BEN: We've all come home for the / weekend.

CLAIRE: All right, I'm sorry! He's just been a bit *funny* this week. That's all.

BEN: Mother. Nanna passed away. I'm sure we've all been a bit 'funny' this week.

ELLIE: It's okay, Mum. We're here. We'll get through Nanna's funeral together. There'll be a beautiful service tomorrow and then we'll scatter her ashes in the wind over Black Down, just like she asked. It'll be lovely... Don't worry, Mum. Please don't worry.

(PAUSE)

CLAIRE: I just wish Henry was home... Will you call him, Ben? Please?

(BEN pulls out his mobile phone and dials.)

(OUTSIDE)

PC: [ENTERING] Marm, you'd better come quick.

GREGSON: What is it?

PC: They've found a body, Marm.

GREGSON: The driver?

PC: In the woods, Marm. There's a dead body in the woods.

(INSIDE)

BEN: Nothing.

CLAIRE: What?

BEN: It's just ringing.

(OUTSIDE)

GREGSON: Stop!

PC: What?

GREGSON: ...Can you hear that?

PC: ...Hear what?

GREGSON: Music, I think... No, it's gone... What were you saying?

(GREGSON AND PC EXIT)

(INSIDE)

BEN: Dad?... Voice mail.

ELLIE: What?

BEN: It's just his answer message.

CLAIRE: But—

(BLACK OUT)

(PAUSE)

(OUTSIDE)

(PC, carrying a torch, and GREGSON ENTER walking fast.)

GREGSON: So he managed to get out of the car, stumbled his way through the woods, disorientated, bleeding from the head. Then had... What, a brain haemorrhage? On account of crashing into the tree?... Collapsed and died? What do you reckon?

PC: You need to have a look, Marm. It's not the driver's body. It's not Henry Digby.

(BLACK OUT)

(INSIDE)

(HENRY DIGBY ENTERS. He is 62 and has a serious wound on his forehead with dried blood down the right hand side of his face. He is dishevelled and wears suit trousers with no belt, a blooded shirt and loosened tie.)

BEN: Dad!

CLAIRE: Henry? I didn't

ELLIE: Dad!

CLAIRE: hear the car.

ELLIE: Good God, / what's happened?

CLAIRE: Oh, Darling. Your head, it's / bleeding

BEN: / Christ!

ELLIE: Here, let / me

HENRY: No!

(BLACK OUT)

(OUTSIDE)

(GREGSON and PC are walking fast.)

GREGSON: How far?

PC: Bit further in. Just taping off the area.

GREGSON: I could do with a torch.

(GREGSON and PC EXIT)

(INSIDE)

CLAIRE: I'll get you a brandy, Dear.

HENRY: I don't want a drink. I'm fine... I'm okay... Just a bit dizzy.

ELLIE: What happened, Dad?

HENRY: Minor accident. That's / all.

CLAIRE: Accident?! What, in the car? / When?! Where?!

HENRY: I'm okay, Claire!... Don't fuss!

CLAIRE: But your / head!

HENRY: I'm okay... Honestly...

BEN: What happened?

HENRY: I was nearly home... Just driving round the bend at the bottom of the lane... Then there was a man... In my headlights... A stupid man standing there right in the middle of the bloody road.

BEN: Christ!

HENRY: He was just... Stood there... Staring... He didn't move...

ELLIE: Dad?

HENRY: I swerved and hit a sodding tree.

CLAIRE: Darling!

HENRY: Everything stopped... Black... But I could see the moon... My head hurt... Branches and stuff through the windscreen... The air bag... I don't know... I climbed out, but he was gone... The man had gone.

BEN: A man?

HENRY: Just... Gone!

BEN: In the middle of the road?

CLAIRE: Oh, Henry...

ELLIE: And you walked home?

HENRY: Yes. Yes I must have done... It's all a blur... The car was a wreck... But the man... The bastard just vanished!

BEN: Describe him.

HENRY: What?

ELLIE: The man, / Dad.

CLAIRE: What did he look / like?

ELLIE: The man in the middle of road.

BEN: What was he wearing?

HENRY: But that's the point... He wasn't *wearing* anything... He was naked.

(BLACK OUT)

(OUTSIDE)

(There is a DEAD NAKED MAN, lying face down.)

GREGSON: *[OFF]* ID?

PC: *[OFF]* Difficult, Marm.

GREGSON: *[OFF]* May I borrow your torch, lad. We could do with another one... Thank you... Here, hold this.

(GREGSON ENTERS, she is putting on a pair of latex gloves.)

Male or female?

(PC ENTERS carrying two torches, one lit.)

PC: *[ENTERING]* Male, Marm. There. Look.

(PC reluctantly waves his torch over the body, keeping his distance.)

GREGSON: Shit! No wonder they haven't been able to ID him...

PC: They've paged the coroner. He was—

GREGSON: Torch?

PC: Sorry. *[Turning on and passing torch]* He was at the hospital, Marm. On his way up.

GREGSON: *[Lifting DEAD NAKED MAN's wrist]* ...No watch, jewellery, nothing.

PC: Er... No, Marm.

GREGSON: And we're sure this man isn't the driver.

PC: This guy can... Only... Only be in his... In his twenties, Marm. Henry Digby is 62.

(INSIDE)

HENRY: What! Here?!

BEN: Yes, Dad.

HENRY: You can't be serious.

ELLIE: He's upstairs. In the / bathroom.

HENRY: It can't be him! Impossible! This is sick! I don't believe you!

ELLIE: Bloody amazing coincidence then.

BEN: Dad, he was in the driveway. Naked. It's got to be the same guy. I mean, one naked man on Marley at gone eleven on bloody cold Friday night in November is quite ridiculous enough, don't you think?... But *two*?

(PAUSE)

(OUTSIDE)

(PC is retching)

GREGSON: Jeesh, look at his neck... He didn't die here... He's been—Constable?

PC: Sorry.

GREGSON: Your first?

PC: Yes, Sorry.

GREGSON: Don't be...

PC: So how did he...

GREGSON: Die?... He was strangled... Thin leather belt by the looks of it.

PC: So he was... Murdered?

GREGSON: Difficult to strangle yourself to death with a belt and then take a walk through the trees in the dark, wouldn't you say, Constable?

PC: Yes, Marm... Sorry... Do you think he was in the boot?

GREGSON: Possibly...

PC: But killed before?

GREGSON: I don't know. But unlikely our driver would have had the energy to strangle the guy after wrapping his Merc round a bloody great oak tree.

PC: Ummm...

GREGSON: Have we found any clothes?

PC: No.

GREGSON: And nothing in the car?

PC: Nothing of his, Marm.

GREGSON: Then we'd better find this Digby chap. He's got a lot of bloody questions to answer.

(BLACK OUT)

(DEAD NAKED MAN EXITS taking GREGSON's torch.)

(INSIDE)

CLAIRE: The young man knows you, Darling. Says he's a client... Though I can't think why you'd have *him* as a client—

ELLIE: Mother!—

CLAIRE: Well...

HENRY: Client?... He said he was a client?

BEN: Yes, Dad. He knows you're a lawyer in Kensington. We thought perhaps he was a celebrity... Actor, or a footballer, / maybe.

CLAIRE: Yes, well! Famous people don't earn a living doing what *he* does, / do they!

BEN: Shush, Mum.

HENRY: Ben!

BEN: / Sorry.

HENRY: So what did he say he does?

(ADAM ENTERS, unnoticed by the others and stands in the doorway.)

...Darling?

CLAIRE: He... He...

ELLIE: Oh, for God's sake!... He's what's commonly referred to as a *rentboy*, Dad! Old, desperate men pay him for sex!

ADAM: Old, desperate, *married* men.

(BLACK OUT)

(OUTSIDE)

(GREGSON and PC are walking again. GREGSON has removed her latex gloves.)

PC: So crashing the car forced him to get the... out of his boot and...

GREGSON: Yes... But why just dump the body? Why not bury it?

PC: Perhaps he didn't have time. Maybe he was disturbed. Panicked. Made a run for it.

GREGSON: You're right... He must have heard the bloody sirens.

(GREGSON and PC EXIT)

(INSIDE)

(ELLIE and BEN are EXITING.)

CLAIRE: I'll go and freshen up the guest room, Darling. And please don't be too long. We have an early start tomorrow.

(CLAIRE EXITS)

(PAUSE)

ADAM: So what's going on?

HENRY: Shut up!

ADAM: Oh that's great! And a very good evening to you to! How lovely to see you—not!

HENRY: I can't hear you! You're not here!

ADAM: Oh, I'm here all right. How the hell I *am* here, I really don't know. I thought we were in your flat. I seem to remember your kitchen, your bathroom. Oh, and your bedroom. Yes it's coming

HENRY: You're NOT here.

ADAM: back to me... We were on your bed arguing, weren't we? Yes, I remember now... But then it's blank... The next thing I know I'm standing stark bollock naked in a country lane blinded by car headlights... Then I'm in the driveway of a large house with *more* bloody headlights! Oh, but I'm not cold... Weird... Then somebody speaks to me! Benjamin Digby, he said, after he'd brought me in and introduced me to his lovely, caring family... Digby... Shit, not Digby?... Surely not *that* Digby?... Then I learn it *is* you. You've got a wife and house in the country! And two kids older than I am! You never told me you were *married*, Henry. In fact you distinctly told me you weren't.

HENRY: I'm sorry.

ADAM: Sorry? Bit bloody late to be sorry. Why did you bring me here?

HENRY: I didn't!

ADAM: You did! You must have done!

HENRY: I did NOT!

ADAM: Then who did, you prick?

HENRY: Nobody did! You're not *HERE*, for Christ's sake!

ADAM: / What?

HENRY: You're not *HERE*! You don't exist. You're in my *head*!

ADAM: Makes a change from your ar / se

HENRY: Piss off! Just *piss* off!

ADAM: And where am I going to *piss* off to, I wonder? I don't even know where the hell this bloody hazel whatever place is?

HENRY: You're not *HERE*!

ADAM: Why do you keep saying that? I'm right here in front of you! Touch me! Go on!

(ADAM grabs HENRY's hand and pulls it to his face.)

See! I'm here. Standing in your oh so lovely living / room!

HENRY: No! No!! No!!! No!!!! YOU ARE NOT *HERE*!

ADAM: Oh Henry... What are you playing at?!

HENRY: For Christ's sake, *get lost*!

ADAM: / Henry?

HENRY: You don't understand, do you?... You're dead! I *killed* you! You're dead, for Christ's sake!

ADAM: / What?

HENRY: *YOU-ARE-DEAD!!!*

(PAUSE)

ADAM: Rubbish... You're talking out of your arse.

HENRY: Oh, believe me. You're dead, all right. Drove down the A3 with you in the boot of my car! Even stopped for petrol! I was nearly home, damn it! Plenty of empty space out here. They'd never bloody find you buried on Marley Common... But no, you had to screw it up didn't you! Haunt me, why don't you! Stand there in the middle of the bloody road, like some hammer house of bloody horror!... It was you, wasn't it!...

(PAUSE)

ADAM: You killed me?

HENRY: Yes, I killed you! Now go and be *dead* for Christ's sake! Get out of my / house!

ADAM: Henry! You prick! You can't have killed me... I've just been talking to your family... I'm alive... Dead people don't have conversations with the living.

HENRY: Look who's bloody talking!

ADAM: This isn't funny, Henry.

HENRY: Too sodding right, it isn't funny! I killed you, for Christ's sake! I strangled you to *death*!

ADAM: You... You strangled me?...

HENRY: Yes! I *strangled* you!

(PAUSE)

ADAM: Fuck... I remember... I was in your flat... In your flat in Kensington... In your bedroom... On your bed... Yes... Oh fuck, yes... You strangled me... You... You killed me... No, you murdered me... You fucking murdered me... You BASTARD!... You FUCKING BASTARD!

HENRY: Oh Adam, I think you were the bastard doing the fucking...

ADAM: You cunt... That's why, isn't it! You couldn't live with what you'd done... Oh it's coming back to me now... Oh yes, indeedy... You murdered me because of that... I'm dead... I'M DEAD... I'M *FUCKING DEAD!!*

(BLACK OUT)

(In the darkness we hear a major scuffle, weird noise, and the dogs barking loudly. In addition, a lighting effect - possibly a strobe DSL and/or bright flashing light in the auditorium - serves to distract the audience during HENRY's speech as ADAM is discarding his tracksuit out of sight behind the sofa.)

HENRY: NO! You're not here, for Christ's sake. You don't exist. You're dead!... Get off!... Leave me alone!... Just piss off, will you... Get off!...

ADAM: You Bastard! You / BASTARD!!

HENRY: No! NO!!! / NOOOOO!!!!!!

ADAM: *YOU-FUCKING-MURDERING-BASTARD!!!*

(Simultaneously - 1: All the additional lighting and sound effects cease abruptly. 2: The light and music in the living room is as before and 3: CLAIRE ENTERS rushing in, followed quickly by BEN and ELLIE. ADAM is strangling HENRY, but soon stops as he is disturbed by the family entering.)

CLAIRE: / Henry!

ELLIE: Dad! / Dad!

BEN: What's / going on!

CLAIRE: Darling! / Please!

BEN: Dad, what happened?

HENRY: Nothing. / I'm okay

ELLIE: We heard you / shouting.

BEN: All the lights went out!

(PAUSE)

CLAIRE: Where is he?

HENRY: What?

BEN: Your client. Where did he go?

ADAM: I'm right here, you little prick!

HENRY: Shut up!

BEN: / Dad!

ELLIE: Dad? What the hell's going on?

ADAM: Oh, Henry. They can't see me anymore

CLAIRE: Darling?

ADAM: can they? Oh dear. Now I know I'm dead, they can't see me. Oh

CLAIRE: Darling, are you okay?

ADAM: dear Henry. Oh what a / shame.

HENRY: *[Not able to see ADAM, either]* Piss off!

CLAIRE: Henry! How dare you speak to me like that!

ADAM: And you can't see me either, can you? / Oh dear, Henry. Oh dear!

HENRY: *[Wildly flapping about]* Piss OFF, I tell you! Leave me alone.

ADAM: Oh, but you can hear me, can't you!

HENRY: Just FUCK OFF!!

ADAM: I'm still here, Henry. I'm still / here!

CLAIRE: He's never sworn like that before. He's going mad.

BEN: Dad... / Dad?

ELLIE: It's his head. The accident.

BEN: Dad, sit down. Take it / easy!

ADAM: Cool! I can really *fuck* with you now. Can't I, Henry!

HENRY: No! Please! Just go! Leave me / alone!

CLAIRE: We're not going anywhere, Darling. You've had a nasty bump. Now, let me take / a look.

HENRY: Don't touch me!

ADAM: *[Mimicking]* Don't touch me! Don't touch me! – Oh, Henry! You wet pussy!

HENRY: Get lost, will you! Just *bugger off* and leave me / alone!

CLAIRE: Oh, Henry! Stop it! Please! / Stop it!

ELLIE: Mum... Mum! It's okay.

CLAIRE: But he's / never been...

ELLIE: He must think he's talking to / someone.

BEN: I'm going to call the hospital.

HENRY: No! No! / I'm okay.

ADAM: That's right, Henry. Can't have them calling a shrink, now can we? Not exactly a textbook case / is it?

HENRY: I'll be all right. I'm just a bit dizzy. That's all.

CLAIRE: You're far more than 'just a bit dizzy', Darling.

BEN: Why don't you sit down, Dad?... Please?

HENRY: No, no, leave it. / I'm okay.

CLAIRE: Ellie get him a brandy, will you?

HENRY: No! Nothing to drink. I'm fine.

BEN: Then for Christ's sake sit down, will you? You're scaring us.

HENRY: I'm sorry. It'll all be okay.

CLAIRE: A doctor, Darling. I still think you need / a doctor.

ELLIE: / Yes Dad!

BEN: I'll call / the hospital

HENRY: No! Shut up! All of you! I'll be all right. I promise. Just... Leave it!

(PAUSE)

ELLIE: So what happened to your client?

ADAM: Oh, I'm still / here.

BEN: You sounded like you were having an argument, Dad.

CLAIRE: Has he left, Henry?

ADAM: No, you stupid / bitch!

HENRY: Shut it!

CLAIRE: Henry!

HENRY: I'm sorry, Darling. It's... It's my head.. The accident... It must have done more than I thought... I'll be okay... I promise... I'm sorry...

ADAM: Do you a deal, Henry Digby. You tell them about me I'll leave you alone.

HENRY: No! Piss off!

BEN: Dad?

ADAM: Good looking son you've got there, Hen. Does *he* want to *fuck* me too?

HENRY: Shut up!!

ADAM: What about your wife, Hen? She's obviously not been getting any, has she? Shall I poke her pussy for / you?

HENRY: *Bugger off!*

ADAM: Oh

CLAIRE: Henry! Please!

ADAM: and what about your dear Ellie? I could show *her* a / thing or two.

HENRY: All right! All right! Just shut up!

CLAIRE: Henry! Darling! Please let me call a doctor. I'm worried now. I really am very worried / about you.

BEN: She's right, Dad. I'm calling for / a doctor.

HENRY: No! I'm okay... I just need to talk. That's all. Just need to talk. Get it out of my system. I'll be all right. I promise. Just let me talk.

CLAIRE: Talk?

ADAM: Yes, Love. Shut your / cake-hole.

HENRY: He's not my client.

BEN: What?

HENRY: The young man who was here. The man in the middle of the road. He's not a client.

ELLIE: What?...

CLAIRE: Then who is he?

HENRY: He's gone now... It doesn't matter... We'll never see him again.

ADAM: Poor start, Henry... And I thought we were just beginning to understand each other... Ah, Ben...

(ADAM lightly kisses BEN on the cheek. BEN visibly reacts.)

ELLIE: Ben?!

ADAM: Fancy a *fuck*?

HENRY: Okay! Okay!

CLAIRE: Henry?

(PAUSE)

HENRY: I knew his mother.

ADAM: Oh very good, Henry. Let's start at the beginning. *Excellent* place to start / I say.

CLAIRE: His mother?

HENRY: Her name was Sandra. Sandra Yates. She was at the firm. Work experience during her law degree. Must be twenty or so years ago, now. Not long after we set up the practice.

ELLIE: Go on.

ADAM: Yes, Hen. Go on.

HENRY: She got pregnant.

ADAM: Oh yes, she did, didn't she.

HENRY: We heard she'd dropped out... Then we got a letter. She claimed the father was one of the partners, and as she was unable to continue with her studies and her career she wanted compensation. The / firm dealt...

BEN: Compensation?... Blackmail, more / like.

ADAM: Compensation, you prick!

HENRY: The firm dealt with the matter efficiently and quietly paid her off.

ADAM: Oh, now, now, Henry!

HENRY: But... She...

ADAM: Not quite so simple, was it.

HENRY: She took a lot of persuading. She kept coming back for more money.

ADAM: Tell them, Henry.

HENRY: We agreed a final settlement. She'd keep quiet

ADAM: Tell them!

HENRY: and we'd pay her a lump sum.

ELLIE: How much?

ADAM: Go on, Henry. How much? How much?

HENRY: Twelve thousand.

CLAIRE: And did she come back?

HENRY: No.

ADAM: Tell her why.

HENRY: No. She never came back...

ADAM: Tell her why, Henry!

HENRY: She died a couple of months / later.

ADAM: Died?! Is that it, Henry? What about the pain she was in, trying to bring up a kid on her own with no help? What about the shame of not having the father around? What about the booze, Henry? What about the depression? The fear? The guilt?

HENRY: She spent money on alcohol... Lots of it... She went under a lorry. They don't know if she meant to do it, or whether it was because she was drunk... A mess by all accounts.

ADAM: Oh, a fucking mess all right! No thanks to you! She left me a letter, Henry! Remember?

BEN: Oh, Christ.

ADAM: And me, Henry? What happened to me?

HENRY: The kid was taken into care. Various homes. He was eight by then. No one fostered or adopted. Too old.

ADAM: Eight. That's right! Eight! No mother and a father who couldn't care a shit!

CLAIRE: So how did he find you?

HENRY: He turned up about six weeks ago... One of the new partners mentioned him. Put him on to me. Said he needed help finding his father.

ADAM: Oh, that's right, Henry. Cover it up with a little *lie*, why don't you? Go on... Skip over the desperate gropes out on Hampstead Heath in the dark...

CLAIRE: Go on.

ADAM: Whitewash the lovely young slim lads in your flat that would take your money and do what ever you wanted. Go on... Accidentally forget about the *lurid* gay sex that would *horrify* your darling wife!

CLAIRE: Well come on, which one of the partners was it?

ADAM: I'm a nobody, I am. I don't matter, do I, Henry? I just took your / money!

CLAIRE: Darling?

HENRY: Sorry?

CLAIRE: Which one? Which one was the father?

ADAM: Admit it, you bastard!

CLAIRE: Henry?... Come on. Who was it?

ADAM: Sandra Yates, Henry. Sandra Yates. You fucked my mother on your huge antique office desk and I was the result! Tell her, you bastard! / Tell her!

CLAIRE: Please, Darling. I have to know. Who is that man's father?

ADAM: Tell her! *Tell her!* / TELL HER!!

HENRY: *Fuck off, Adam!* / FUCK OFF!!

ADAM: Tell her, or I kill / her

HENRY: JUST FUCK OFF!!

CLAIRE: HENRY!

ADAM: I'll strangle your wife, Henry!

(ADAM wraps his hands around CLAIRE's neck. CLAIRE screams!)

Watch me strangle her, Henry!

ELLIE: / Mum! MUM!! What's wrong?

BEN: / MUM! What's the matter?

HENRY: All right! All right! *Stop it! Stop it!* STOP IT!!

(BLACK OUT)

(OUTSIDE)

(Flashing blue light again.)

(GREGSON ENTERS)

(PAUSE)

(PC ENTERS)

PC: *[ENTERING]* Marm!

GREGSON: I'm busy, Constable.

PC: Marm! Please!

GREGSON: *What is it?!*

PC: Sorry, Marm... You *did* hear music. You were / right.

GREGSON: Music?

PC: It was a mobile phone, Marm. It rang again. Thought it might be the driver's so I got the number from one of the credit card companies. Tried it myself.

GREGSON: And?

PC: Well, I was right, Marm. It was. We found it.

GREGSON: What? Back in the woods?

PC: Yes, Marm. Bit further on from the / body.

GREGSON: He must have dropped it running away.

(INSIDE)

(CLAIRE is recovering. BEN and ELLIE fuss around her.)

CLAIRE: Cold... Like cold hands... Round my neck... Oh / my God...

ELLIE: It's okay. It's / all right Mum.

BEN: It's all right. You're / okay.

HENRY: I'm sorry... It's just the shock... My accident... All this...
I'm so sorry... You're okay, Darling... I promise...

(OUTSIDE)

(Flashing blue light.)

PC: Think you'd best come and take a look, Marm.

GREGSON: What?... At a mobile phone?

PC: It's not just that, Marm. There's something else.

GREGSON: What?... Oh, all right. If I must.

PC: Thanks Marm. When you've had a look I'll take you up to Marley
View, Marm. The Digby house. We know where it is now. Just

GREGSON: Go on.

PC: up the lane.

GREGSON: I'm right behind you.

(PC and GREGSON EXIT)

(INSIDE)

CLAIRE: I'm scared, Darling. I really don't like this. Who were you
talking to?

ADAM: I'm waiting, Henry...

(PAUSE)

TELL HER HENRY!

HENRY: Okay! Okay! / Okay!

CLAIRE: Henry?!

HENRY: It's me!

BEN: What?!

HENRY: It's me, all right?!

ELLIE: Dad?!

HENRY: I'm his sodding father! The man in the middle of the road. The
naked Man. His name is Adam. Adam is my son, for Christ's sake.
Adam Yates is my son!

CLAIRE: Henry!... How... How could you?... Oh!... / Oh, Henry!

HENRY: I'm sorry... I'm sorry you had to find out like this... I didn't
know. I promise I didn't know... Not till tonight... I didn't
know till / tonight.

ADAM: Henry, I'm still here. I'm *still* here, you / bastard!

HENRY: Just go will you! Leave us alone!

ADAM: Not till you've told them what you did.

HENRY: Bugger off, for Christ's sake!

ADAM: Tell them, Henry. Or

HENRY: NO!

ADAM: else I'll kill them... I'll kill them all... I will... Slow, Henry... Real slow... Not like you killed me... No, I'll make it nice and slow... And you can watch them *suffer*, Henry.

HENRY: No! Please, NO!

ADAM: Tell them what you did, Henry. I'm not going till you tell them what you *did* to me.

(*ELLIE gasps as she feels ADAM drag his finger across her cheek.*)

HENRY: All right!!

ADAM: I'm listening, Henry.

HENRY: He came round...

BEN: What?!

HENRY: Adam came round to the flat... Earlier this evening.

ADAM: You *called* me, Henry. Remember? You wanted another one of your filthy little sessions before going to the country for the weekend. Funeral. That's what you said.

HENRY: I... Invited him round.

ADAM: Every week, Henry. Boy, you were a good client. Six fifty for two hours. I'd do anything for six hundred and fifty quid, Henry. Anything you wanted.

ELLIE: Dad?

HENRY: We talked—

ADAM: We *fucked*! Then we talked—

HENRY: I must have mentioned my firm... Turns out he was Sandra Yates' son.

ADAM: Terrible. There you are having a private Friday evening frolic in the bedroom of your Kensington flat, and then all hell breaks loose... And what could be worse? Having people find out you were paying a young man for sex while your wife and kids were at home in the country?... Or the fact that you'd just spent the last six weeks *fucking* a rentboy who turns out to be your *bastard* son!

(*PAUSE*)

CLAIRE: How could you, Henry? Another woman, no less. Just a quickie was it? And how many, I wonder. She wasn't the first was she? Or the last. Serves you right, Henry.

HENRY: I...

CLAIRE: So he found you. Is that why he was here? Followed you home?

HENRY: He... I feel dizzy...

CLAIRE: Where is he now, Henry?

BEN: Dad?

ELLIE: I'll check the study.

(*ELLIE EXITS - a different one - probably DSR.*)

CLAIRE: Where's he gone? Your love child. Your little mistake, Henry? What have you done with him?

(PAUSE)

Answer me, Henry!

(ELLIE ENTERS)

ELLIE: [ENTERING] Well he's not in there. And we didn't see him go through the hall, we were

ADAM: No I didn't, did I?

ELLIE: all with the dogs in the kitchen.

CLAIRE: Henry?

BEN: Ah, I've got it.

ELLIE: I'll go and check upstairs.

(ELLIE EXITS)

BEN: Money.

HENRY: Eh?

BEN: He wanted money, didn't he, Dad.

ADAM: And a *shit* load of good that'll do!

CLAIRE: Well?

HENRY: No... He's... He's gone... I got rid of him.

ADAM: Yeah! You sure got rid of me, all right!

HENRY: We argued... I told him to leave... He's not coming back.

ADAM: Tell her why, Henry!

BEN: Are you *sure* he's gone?

HENRY: Yes.

CLAIRE: I really don't know what to / say.

ADAM: Tell her *why* I'm not coming back!

CLAIRE: There's nothing else, is / there?

ADAM: Tell your wife what you did to me, Henry.

CLAIRE: You've told me *everything*, haven't / you?

ADAM: Tell your *darling* wife what the *fuck* you did to me!

(PAUSE)

CLAIRE: Henry? Please?

(ELLIE ENTERS)

ELLIE: [ENTERING] Definitely gone.

BEN: What!?

ELLIE: Disappeared. Checked the bedrooms, bathrooms. Definitely gone. Even left the tracksuit. Folded up on the spare bed in your room, Ben. Almost as if he was never here.

(PAUSE)

HENRY: That's because he wasn't.

CLAIRE: What are you saying?

HENRY: Ellie's right...

CLAIRE: Henry?

HENRY: He was never here.

BEN: What!?! I damn near ran him over in the bloody driveway!

HENRY: I... I need... I need to explain.

ADAM: Go on, Henry. Tell them you *murdered* me. Tell them, Henry. Tell them they've been talking to a corpse! Tell them how I realised who you were, Henry. Tell your dear family how we argued about me and my mother and you. Tell them how you beat me up in your bedroom.

HENRY: I'm... I'm sorry...

CLAIRE: Henry?

ADAM: Yes. I can see it all, now... I'm floating above you, Henry... Just below the height of the ceiling... We're in your posh flat in Kensington... Chandeliers and oil paintings... Bird's eye view up here, Hen... Bird's eye view...

I'm in your bedroom, undressing in front of you. You like that... I take everything off, slowly... My shirt, my jeans, my Calvins... My watch, my gold chain that was Mum's... Even my silver signet ring... All for you Henry... You're the client... I do what you ask... Everything comes off... You like me like that... Naked, completely...

I'm watching you, Henry... Watching you.

CLAIRE: Henry, what have you done?

ADAM: Watching you *fuck* me!

(PAUSE)

CLAIRE: Henry?

ADAM: And now we're arguing, Hen... You've told me where you work. You've told me the name of your firm... I tell you about my Mother, and we argue. Shouting. Screaming.

I'm watching you *hit* me now, Henry... I'm watching you beat me up... We're on your bed... I'm losing consciousness... You're thrashing me across my head... I'm fading, in and out... Can't believe what's happening to me... Why me?... What have I done?

BEN: Dad?

You strangle me, Henry... You take the belt off your tailored suit trousers and you wrap it around my neck. I can see you now, Henry. Pulling hard from behind... I choke and see the stars collapsing in on me... You hold me there... Lost and limp... And I stop breathing.

ELLIE: Dad. Please say something.

ADAM: I'm lying there, now... On your bed... Naked... Dead.

You throw me over your shoulder... I'm high above you, Henry... Watching you.

BEN: Dad?

ADAM: You dump me in the boot of your car... You don't care, do you... Your little problem is solved... I'm dead now... All the guilt has gone... But I didn't mean sod all to you anyway, did I... I was just something for you to *fuck*.

(PAUSE)

HENRY: I'm sorry, Adam... I'm really sorry.

CLAIRE: Henry? What have you done?

ADAM: You drive, Henry... Down the A3... Stop for petrol in Milford. Cool as Cool. Nearly home. Plenty of space on Marley Common. Get a spade from the shed in the middle of the night and bury the bastard. No-one'll find him here.

But you saw him didn't you. Standing in the middle of the road. Not him! Surely not him! You'd *murdered* him. He was dead. In the boot. How could he be standing in the lane? Staring. Naked.

HENRY: No! Please!

ADAM: You scream.

HENRY: No! No! Noooo!

ADAM: Swerved and hit the tree, didn't you, Henry? Crashed your flashy Merc into an old oak tree with me dead in the boot!... *Naked. Fucked. Murdered.*

(PAUSE)

ELLIE: I think he's going to faint, Mum.

ADAM: I wonder what the police will say, Henry? Can you hear them? I can, Henry. I / can.

HENRY: No!

ADAM: They're coming up the lane—

HENRY: No! No!

ADAM: Can't you hear them, / Henry.

HENRY: Stop it! STOP IT!

ELLIE: Dad?!

BEN: Christ! He looks awful!

ADAM: They're coming to get you, Henry! Oh yes, / indeedy!

HENRY: You're lying! You're bloody lying to me!

CLAIRE: Who's lying, Darling? What's

BEN: Who, Dad?

CLAIRE: happening? Oh, God! What's wrong? Please, Henry! / Please!

ADAM: They've found your car. All smashed

HENRY: No!

ADAM: up! It was me, Henry. I remember

HENRY: No!

ADAM: now. I called the police.

BEN: Dad!

ADAM: I used your phone, Hen. You were unconscious. Remember?

CLAIRE: Talk to us, Darling. / Oh, Please.

ADAM: Didn't give my name, Henry.

(SFX - The dogs begin barking again, off. Weird music starts low and builds.)

(Lighting effects similar to before begin building.)

Wouldn't give my name.

ELLIE: Mum?

ADAM: They're in the driveway, Henry. Coming to get you now.

HENRY: No!

ADAM: Gonna get you, / Henry.

HENRY: No, Adam! Stop it!

ELLIE: / Dad!

ADAM: Getting out of the car, / Henry

HENRY: No! No! You're lying!

BEN: Dad, Please!

ADAM: They found the body, Henry.

HENRY: No! No!

ADAM: My body, Henry. They found my *fucked* and *naked* body in the
(SFX - A loud knock at the front door. The dogs barking louder.)
woods.

HENRY: Don't let them in! I'm not here!

ADAM: Oh yes you are, Henry.

ELLIE: The dogs, / Mum.

BEN: There's someone at the door!

CLAIRE: At this time of / night?

HENRY: Don't let them in!
(SFX - Another loud knock.)
Please!

BEN: I'll go. Call a doctor, Mum. This has gone / far enough!

ELLIE: Yes, Mum. / We must.
(BEN EXITS)

ADAM: The games up, Henry... They're coming to arrest / you!

HENRY: Claire, it's the police! They've found the / car!

ADAM: They're coming to get you, / you bastard!

HENRY: Tell them I'm not here, Claire. Please, Claire! Please!

CLAIRE: But / Henry!

HENRY: I'm not here. It wasn't me. Tell them it wasn't me! I didn't do it, Darling. Please! I didn't do it.

CLAIRE: Do what, Henry? What are you / saying?

ELLIE: He needs a doctor, Mum. Now! He's getting worse. Look at him. We've got

CLAIRE: Henry, please.

ELLIE: to take him to the hospital.

CLAIRE: You're scaring us, Darling. You're really / scaring us now!

HENRY: I'm not here!

ADAM: They're coming, Henry. They're

HENRY: NO!!

ADAM: in the hall. Your lovely oak panelled / hallway!

HENRY: No! No! I'm not HERE!

CLAIRE: Henry!

HENRY: You don't understand!

ADAM: Coming / for you

CLAIRE: Understand what?!

HENRY: He was in the car!

CLAIRE: Henry, what are you

HENRY: When I crashed!

CLAIRE: talking about?!

HENRY: Adam!

ELLIE: What / are you...

HENRY: *Adam* was in the sodding car!

CLAIRE: But / he was...

ADAM: Coming, Henry

HENRY: I'm not here! Just tell them, Claire! / I'M NOT HERE!

(HENRY EXITS into the study.)

ADAM: Can't face them, can you, Henry! Just can't face the truth!

(The additional sound and lighting effects cease abruptly as BEN ENTERS, followed by GREGSON, and the PC who waits in the doorway.)

(PAUSE)

GREGSON: Mrs Digby?

CLAIRE: Yes?

GREGSON: Detective Inspector Gregson.

BEN: Guildford CID, Mum.

CLAIRE: *[Turning off the CD with remote control]* My husband is not here, I'm afraid.

GREGSON: Perhaps you had better sit / down, Madam.

BEN: *[To ELLIE]* Where's Dad?

ELLIE: *[Nodding towards the study]* Shush!

GREGSON: I am sorry to have to tell you, Mrs Digby... There has been an accident...

CLAIRE: An accident?

GREGSON: You're husband's Mercedes swerved and crashed into an oak tree at the bottom of Marley Lane. Haslemere Police Station received a call, but your husband wasn't at the / scene when...

BEN: The man in the middle of the road.

GREGSON: Pardon?

BEN: There was a naked man standing in / the road.

ELLIE: It must have been him that called / the police.

BEN: I found him in the driveway earlier. When I got / back.

GREGSON: What?... A *naked* man?

CLAIRE: Yes. We don't know who he was. *He* never gave us his name.

BEN: Early twenties. Bit beaten up. Bruised. Said he was here to see Dad.

ELLIE: He left, what, ten minutes ago?

BEN: Doubt he would have got far.

GREGSON: No, I'm sorry. You must be confused. We found the body of the young man you're describing in the woods near the accident at least a quarter of an hour ago now.

BEN: / Eh?

ELLIE: What?

GREGSON: He was naked, bruised and beaten just like you said. He'd been strangled to death...

CLAIRE: Excuse me?!

ADAM: Yes! That's right! You've been talking to a bloody / ghost!

GREGSON: I need to explain. The naked man had been killed – But not where we found him. He'd been murdered earlier this evening and brought to Haslemere in the boot of your husband's / Mercedes.

CLAIRE: Do you know what you're saying?

GREGSON: Yes, Madam. I'm afraid I do.

ADAM: Oh yes, indeedy!

GREGSON: We know that something must have caused your husband to swerve as he was coming up the lane, forcing him to crash into the tree.

BEN: So?

GREGSON: Well, remembering he had a *corpse* in the boot of his car I imagine he thought he'd best dispose

CLAIRE: I don't believe I'm hearing this.

GREGSON: of it. He carried it into / the woods.

CLAIRE: Are you saying my husband... *killed someone?*

ADAM: Yep! 'Fraid so!

GREGSON: We think he managed to get the body so far but was panicked by the police sirens coming up / the lane.

CLAIRE: I can assure you, Madam. My husband is *not* a murderer. I think you had better talk to him.

GREGSON: / I really...

CLAIRE: [*Calling*] Henry!

(HENRY ENTERS)

GREGSON: I really don't think so, Madam.

CLAIRE: Excuse me?!

GREGSON: Mrs Digby... Your husband is dead.

(PAUSE)

CLAIRE: What?!

ADAM: Oh dear, Henry.

HENRY: [*Seeing ADAM again*] NO!

GREGSON: He probably heard the sirens

HENRY: No!

GREGSON: then dumped the body and tried to run

HENRY: No! No!

GREGSON: away. We found him about a hundred yards from the naked man. He was just a couple of feet from where he'd dropped his phone.

ADAM: Ha! They can't see you, Henry!

GREGSON: The coroner thinks he must have had a brain haemorrhage as a result of crashing into / the tree.

ADAM: Bugger me! Brain haemorrhage... You all right, Hen'?'... Still a bit dizzy, are you?...

GREGSON: I'm sorry... There was

HENRY: No! No! No!

GREGSON: nothing we could do.

ADAM: Peaceful though, isn't it?

(ADAM is able to EXIT unnoticed in the darkness as the light is concentrated on the family and GREGSON around the sofa.)

HENRY: No! No!

GREGSON: I am very sorry, Mrs Digby...

HENRY: Please! No!

GREGSON: Your husband is dead.

(PAUSE)

(We see HENRY, caught in the strobe lighting DSL. ADAM's voice is heard loud and echoing around the auditorium. The others all look up on hearing HENRY scream his last 'no'.)

ADAM: Fancy a *fuck*, you MURDERER!!

HENRY: No! NO!!! NOOOOO!!!!!!

(BLACK OUT)

(CURTAIN)