

Prologue

So you know what to do?

Yeah I'm on it

You're absolutely sure you want to do this?

FFS you got a better idea?

Just saying. Coz if this goes wrong...

It won't. Not if you do what I said

OK OK I get it

I wouldn't ask if I didn't have to

People like F – they think they can get away with anything. They don't give a shit about other people

Time someone turned the tables

I thought you agreed?

I do but this is way more than a
dose of their own medicine

WAY more

It's the only way to stop it happening again

You get that, right?

Yeah I get it

You'll get your revenge

I told you before. It's not revenge

It's justice

‘More fizz, anyone? Dad – how about you? You’re not even driving, so no excuses.’

Stephen Sheldon smiles up at his daughter, hovering behind him with the bottle in her hand. ‘Oh, go on then. Only good thing about being as old as the hills is not caring about bloody government drinking guidelines.’

His wife shoots him a dry but benevolent look; they both know he has to be careful about his health but it’s his birthday and she’s going to cut him some slack.

Nell Heneghan leans across and fills his glass. ‘Seventy isn’t old, Dad. Not these days.’

‘Tell that to my joints,’ he says with a quick laugh, as Nell moves on round the table topping people up.

I reach for Alex’s hand under the table and I can feel the thin fabric of her dress slipping against her damp thigh. God only knows what it must be like to be thirty-five weeks pregnant in these temperatures. There are dots of perspiration along her upper lip and a thin little frown line between her brows the others probably can’t see. I was right: this has been too much for her. I did say we didn’t have to do it – that no one would expect her to, especially in this weather, and Nell had offered to step in – but Alex insisted. She said it was our turn, that it wasn’t fair on her sister to ask her to do it two years running. But that wasn’t the real reason. She knows it; I know it. As her pregnancy advances, Alex’s world contracts; she’s barely leaving the house now, and as for a twelve-mile drive to Abingdon, forget it. I told Nell it’s because

she's anxious about the baby, and she'd nodded and said she'd felt like that herself at this stage, and it was only natural for Alex to be apprehensive. And she's right. Or at least she would be, if that's all it was.

Outside in the garden, Nell's kids are playing football with their dog, taking it in turns doing penalty kicks. They're eleven and nine, the kids. Jake would be twelve now. No longer a little boy, but not quite yet anything else. Sometimes, before Alex got pregnant again, I'd catch myself fantasizing about how they'd have been together, him and his cousins. Jake was never much interested in sport, but would he be out there anyway, if he was here now? Part of me hopes he'd have done it to be kind, or to please his mother, or because he liked dogs, but there's another part that would want him as surly and uncooperative as any other twelve-year-old. I've learnt the hard way that it's only too easy to start beatifying a child who's no longer there.

Audrey Sheldon catches my eye now and we exchange a look; kind on her part, slightly self-conscious on mine. Alex's parents understand better than anyone what we went through when we lost Jake, but Audrey's sympathy is like her lemon cheesecake – nice, but there's only so much of it I can take. I get to my feet and start collecting plates. Nell's husband, Gerry, makes a half-hearted attempt to help me but I clap him chummily on the shoulder and push him firmly back down in his seat.

'You brought all the food. My turn now.'

Alex gives me a grateful smile as I collect her dessert plate. Her father's been badgering her gently to 'eat up' for the last ten minutes. Some things about parenthood never

die. My mother does the same to me. In twenty years' time I'll be doing it myself. God willing.

Out in the kitchen, Nell is stacking the dishwasher, and though she's doing it all wrong I resist the impulse to intervene as I know it'll just piss her off; Alex says dishwashers are like barbecues – men just can't stop themselves muscling in. Nell smiles when she sees me. I like her, I always have. As bright as her sister, and just as forthright. They have a good life, she and Gerry. House (detached), skiing (Val d'Isère), dog (cockerpoo allegedly, but judging by the size of those paws there's at least a quarter polar bear in there). He's an actuary (Gerry, not the dog) and if I'm honest I find Dino a good deal more interesting, but the only person I've ever said that to is myself.

Nell is looking at me now, and I know exactly what that particular look means. She wants to Have A Word. And being Nell, she pitches straight in. Just like her sister.

'I'm a bit worried about her, Adam. She doesn't look well.'

I take a deep breath. 'I know what you mean, and this bloody heat isn't helping, but she's getting regular check-ups. Far more than most women in her position do.'

But most women in her position haven't been hospitalized for high blood pressure and ordered to take complete bed rest.

Nell leans back against the worktop and reaches for a tea towel, wiping her hands. 'She hardly ate a thing.'

'I'm trying, really –'

'And she looks *completely* exhausted.'

She's frowning at me. Because whatever this is, it has to be my fault, right? Out in the garden Ben scores a goal

and starts running around the grass with his T-shirt over his head. Nell glances over at them, then fixes her eyes back on me.

I try again. 'She's not sleeping well – you know what it's like in the last trimester. She can't seem to get comfortable.'

But Nell's still frowning. Nicky is now yelling that the goal was a cheat; Gerry gets up and goes to the window, calling to his sons to play nicely in that sententious parental tone we all swear we'll never use. Something else about having kids that never seems to change.

'Look,' I say, 'it's tough with the job but I'm doing as much around the house as I can, and we've got a cleaner coming in once a week for the rest.'

Nell is watching her boys. 'We were talking earlier,' she says, without looking round. 'She says you've moved into the spare room.'

I nod. 'Just so I don't wake her up. Especially given I'm now getting up at stupid o'clock four days a week for the bloody gym.'

She turns towards me. 'Quitting still a bummer?'

The look that comes with the words is cool but not unkind: Nell's an ex-smoker too. She knows all about nicotine displacement strategies.

I try a wry smile. 'A bastard. But I'm getting there.'

She eyes me up and down. 'And toning up a bit too, I see. Suits you.'

I laugh. 'Well, that's a bloody miracle, considering I'm on a packet of Polo mints an hour.'

There's a pause and then, finally, she smiles. But it's a forlorn one. 'Just look after her, Adam, OK? She's so stressed out – this baby means so much to her. I don't

know what she'd do if –' She stops, bites her lip and looks away.

'Look, Nell – I'd never let anything happen to Alex. Not now, not ever. You do know that, don't you?'

She glances up, then nods, and I wait. I know what she wants to say, and why she's having so much trouble doing it.

'It was in the paper,' she says eventually. 'He's out, isn't he? Gavin Parrie.'

'Yes, he's out.' I force her to look at me. 'But he's on licence – there'll be strict conditions. Where he can go, who he can see.'

Her lip quivers a little. 'And he'll have one of those tag things, right? They'll know where he is twenty-four hours a day?'

I shake my head. 'Most of them aren't that techy. Not yet. The tags are linked to the offender's address. If he goes out of a specified range the monitoring service gets an alert.'

'And like Gerry said, if he came anywhere even *remotely* near here, they'd have his arse back in prison so fast he'd leave skid marks. Right?'

I take a deep breath. 'Right.'

'So why would he take such a massive risk?' She's willing me to agree now, willing me to belittle her fears. 'He's not stupid – he has way too much to lose.'

'Right.'

She sighs. 'I'm sorry. You probably think I'm completely overreacting. I just can't stop thinking about those threats he made in court –'

She can't possibly know how hard it is to be the man

she needs me to be. But I try. ‘He was just venting, Nell. It happens all the time. And I don’t think you’re over-reacting. Families always worry when offenders are released. The other victims will be going through exactly the same thing.’

‘But at least Alex has you,’ she says, giving me a wobbly smile. ‘Her own private protection officer.’

I don’t trust myself to reply to that, but luckily I don’t have to. She touches me gently on the arm and reaches for the pile of plates. ‘We’d best get on. They’ll be wondering what we’re up to in here.’

As I walk back into the dining room I wonder what she’d have said if she knew the truth.

Gavin Parrie isn’t stupid, she’s right about that. And he’d have a hell of a lot to lose, she’s right about that too. But he does have a reason. A reason that might – perhaps – be worth the risk.

Revenge.

Because he wasn’t just venting, that day, in court.

He was guilty. He knows that and I know that. But there’s something else we both know.

Gavin Parrie was convicted on a lie.

* * *

Daily Mail

21st December 1999

'ROADSIDE RAPIST' GETS LIFE

Judge calls Gavin Parrie 'evil, unrepentant and depraved'

By John Smithson

The predator dubbed the 'Roadside Rapist' was given a life sentence yesterday, after a nine-week trial at the Old Bailey. Judge Peter Healey condemned Gavin Parrie as 'evil, unrepentant and depraved' and recommended he serve a minimum of 15 years. There was uproar in the court after the sentence was announced, with abuse directed at both judge and jury from members of Parrie's family in the public gallery.

Parrie has always insisted that he is innocent of the rape and attempted rape of seven young women in the Oxford area between January and December 1998. The case hinged on forensic evidence found in Parrie's lock-up, linking him to one of the victims, which he contended was planted there with the collusion of Thames Valley Police. As he was led away, he was heard issuing death threats against the officer who had been instrumental in his apprehension, saying he would 'get him' and he and his family would 'spend the rest of their lives watching their backs'. The officer in question, Detective Sergeant Adam Fawley, has received a commendation from the Chief Constable for his work on the case.

Speaking after the verdict, Chief Superintendent Michael Oswald of Thames Valley Police said he was confident that the right man had been convicted and confirmed that no other credible suspect had ever been identified in the course of what became a county-wide

investigation. 'I am proud of the work done by my team. They went to enormous lengths to find the perpetrator of these appalling crimes and bring him to justice, and it is absolutely unacceptable that they should be subject to either threats or intimidation. Police officers put their lives on the line on a regular basis to protect the public, and you may rest assured that we take all necessary steps to ensure the continued safety of our officers and their families.'

Jennifer Goddard, mother of one of the victims who committed suicide after her ordeal, spoke to reporters outside the court after the verdict, saying that nothing was ever going to bring her daughter back, but she hoped she could now rest in peace: 'The man who destroyed her life is finally going to get what he deserves and pay the price for what he's done.'

* * *

At St Aldate's, Sergeant Paul Woods is spending the afternoon on reception, and is very far from happy about it. He works the giddy heights of the custody suite these days but the civilian desk officer is on holiday and the PC covering her has food poisoning, and Woods drew the short straw. And along with it, a short fuse. It's far too bloody hot for a start. BBC Oxford said it might hit 30 degrees today. *30 degrees*. It's bloody indecent, that's what that is. He's propped open the main street door but all it's allowing in is fumes. And more people. A good half of them are just looking for some respite from the sun – there's never been so much interest in the leaflet stand, that's for sure. It can go weeks without needing to be refilled, but suddenly they're all out of *How To Protect Your Home From Thieves* and *Things To Look Out For When You Shop Online*.

There's a group milling around it right now – tourists clearly, and mostly Chinese.

Woods glances up at the clock. Another twenty minutes before he can take a break. The tourists around the leaflet stand are talking eagerly among themselves now. One is gesturing towards Woods; she appears to be trying to get up the courage to come and talk to him. He draws himself up to his full authority, and at six foot two and sixteen stone that's a lot of gravitas in every sense. It's not that he's trying to discourage her *as such*, it's just that he knows from dreary experience that these sorts of questions can almost always be answered by any half-decent map. He really has had his fill of unofficial trip-advising over the years.

He's saved, as it turns out, by the bell. Just as the Chinese woman starts to approach the desk, the phone goes. It's the woman on the switchboard – another civilian, Marjorie something. She must have got the short straw too.

'Sergeant Woods – can you take this one, please? I've tried CID but there's no one in. It's Edith Launceleve.'

He picks up his pen, momentarily irritated that he never has known the correct way to write that bloody place. Whose bright idea was it to call a college after someone nobody can spell?

'OK,' he says heavily. 'Put them through.'

He raises his hand grandly to the Chinese tourist as if he has the Chief Constable on the line.

'Is that Sergeant Woods? Jancis Appleby here, Edith Launceleve College.'

It's the sort of voice that makes you sit up straight.

'How can I help you, Miss Appleby?'

‘I have Professor Hilary Reynolds on the line.’

She says it as if even a minion like Woods will have heard that name. And actually, he has, but right this minute he can’t for the life of him remember when –

‘The Principal,’ she says briskly. ‘In case you may have forgotten. Hold on, please.’

Now that does bring him up short. The bloody *Prin-*
ci-
pal? What could possibly be so important that the Principal gets on the blower? What is she even doing in the office at the weekend?

The line clicks into life again.

‘Sergeant Woods?’

Not the female voice he was expecting and he loses the first few words remembering Hilary can be a bloke’s name too.

‘I’m sorry, sir, could you say that again?’

‘I said I’m afraid I need to report an incident involving a student at the college.’

Woods’ eyes narrow; ‘incident’ can cover a multitude of sins, from the mortal to the extremely mundane.

‘What sort of incident would that be, sir?’

An intake of cultured, well-educated but slightly irritated breath. ‘A serious incident, Sergeant. I’m afraid that’s all I’m prepared to say at this stage. Could you put me through to Detective Inspector Fawley?’

* * *

It’s hot in Boars Hill too, but somehow it seems a lot more bearable up here. No doubt some of that comes with the altitude, but the thirty-foot swimming pool and

well-stocked poolside bar are definitely helping. Those come with the altitude too, though that's an elevation of a rather different kind. Given the address, you don't need to be a fully paid-up member of CID to make some shrewd deductions about the sort of house this was likely to be, but Gareth Quinn was, all the same, quietly impressed when he saw what lay behind the wrought-iron gates that swung silently open for his Audi A4, newly valeted for the occasion. A good acre of lawns (also valeted for the occasion, though he wasn't to know that), a parterre and orange trees, and a scatter of what estate agents probably call 'useful outbuildings', shunted discreetly out of sight of the chiselled neo-Palladian pile and its uninterrupted prospect of 'That View'. The bristle of construction cranes is unfortunate but in all other respects the spires lie dreaming down there this afternoon in the shimmering heat, just as Matthew Arnold once saw them.

Quinn had no idea how loaded Maisie's parents were when he met her. At first glance, she was just another of those pony-tailed French-nailed girls with their soft smiles and their crisp vowels. Avocados, he calls them: ripe, ready and green. Though not quite so green, in this case, that she was prepared to go to bed with him on the first date, and in the almost unprecedented ten days it took for that to happen he realized she had rather more to her than most of her identikit predecessors. She made him laugh and she listened, but she didn't give him an easy ride, and he found himself having to articulate *why* he believed what he did, some of which surprised even him. He also realized – and this was fairly unprecedented too – that he actually liked her, as much out of bed as in it.

Which is why, even though he's always had an almost anaphylactic reaction to the idea of meeting his girlfriends' parents, he's not only here but *still* here, long after he'd agreed with Maisie that they would leave. The beef was rare, the wine likewise, and Ted and Irene Ingram are decidedly not what it said on the tin. Yes, they have a lot of money, but they're not shy of showing it, which was never going to be a problem with Quinn. The two men edged around the Brexit bear trap for a good half-hour before Ingram let slip which side he was on, whereupon they fell on each other with all the relief of oppressed fellow devotees. In Oxford, at least, theirs is most definitely the Leave that dare not speak its name.

So all in all, Quinn has been enjoying himself royally. By the time the phone call comes through there's even an imp in the back of his brain whispering that Maisie is the Ingrams' only child, and if in-laws are inevitable then these two might not be such a bad option. There's a bottle of 1996 Sauternes on the table now, and a box of Havana cigars, and Quinn has slid Maisie his car keys. Which, as the look on her face makes clear, is also pretty much unprecedented. She glances at him now, as his mobile goes: it's the ringtone he uses for calls from work.

As he reaches for the phone, Quinn glances round the table, smiling his contrition. 'I'm really sorry – they wouldn't be calling if it wasn't important.'

Ingram waves the apology away. 'Of course. Maisie explained this might happen. I completely understand. It's an important job, what you do.'

Irene Ingram pushes back her chair tactfully and Maisie gets to her feet. They start clearing the plates, and

Quinn walks away down the garden. Perhaps he's doing it to get a better signal, but then again, perhaps he'd rather Maisie's father didn't hear him answering with his current rank.

A few yards further on he finally takes the call.

'DC Quinn.'

'Woods here.' Quinn can hear the traffic in the background; Woods must be at the front desk. He makes a perfunctory apology for ruining Quinn's Saturday but it's clear from his tone that he's not getting a bloody weekend so why the hell should CID.

'Just had the Principal from Edith Launceleve on the blower asking for Fawley.'

Quinn frowns. 'What's wrong with the duty inspector?'

'Tried that. Nothing doing. Sorry.'

'OK, so –'

Woods interrupts him. 'I'd have called Gislingham, *as DS*, but given he's out till Wednesday –'

Quinn ignores the snipe. He's got used to all the not-so-subtle digs about his demotion. He could have got a transfer, but when he decided not to, he knew the price would be sucking it up. And some of the bolder wags have, of course, taken great delight in using exactly that phrase. But he only has himself to blame: he let his dick rule his head and got involved with a suspect. He was lucky he didn't get fired. But he'll show them – he'll get his stripes back. It's just a matter of time. In fact – who knows? – perhaps this call is a golden opportunity. With Gis away, a slam-dunk chance to show his class.

'No worries,' he says airily. 'What is it – what have you got?'

By the time Woods has finished, the opportunity is looking rather less than twenty-four carat, but there's no need for Ted Ingram to know that. As far as he's concerned, this is a mega-important hush-hush murder case requiring the attention of a fast-track officer destined for greater things. The sort of man, whispers the imp, Ingram would positively welcome as a son-in-law. Quinn squares his shoulders, lifts his chin and starts back up the grass towards the pool.

* * *

Adam Fawley
7 July 2018
14.35

A call from Quinn is just about the last thing I was expecting. He's at his girlfriend's parents' today – he made a big thing about how nonchalant he was about it, which rather indicated the opposite to me, but that's Quinn all over. He's been deputizing for Gis while he's away, but we don't have a big case on at the moment – certainly nothing that would merit a call at the weekend. I'd have thought Quinn would relish the chance of flying solo again, even though I did make it abundantly clear it's just unofficial 'standing in' not official 'Acting'.

We're all still in the dining room when he calls. The afternoon is reaching the fuggy stage, though Alex's dad is still chirpy – as garrulous as I've seen him in years. I've always liked Stephen. It's the anomaly of in-laws: the same age as your parents, and you can end up knowing them almost as long, but if you're lucky – as I've been – they have your back but they don't press your buttons. Though

that could just be because they don't know where the dangerous buttons are.

Alex flickers an anxious look at me as the phone goes, but says nothing. She has one hand curled round her belly and she's fiddling with her napkin with the other. She's getting tired. I need to start manoeuvring people to leave.

Out on the patio, I take the call.

'Quinn? What is it?'

'Sorry to bother you, boss. I'm meeting Ev at Edith Launceleve. There's been an incident involving a student.'

I frown – I know Quinn's being uber-careful not to balls anything up at the moment, but does he really need to call me about this? But then I remember that most of the students have already gone down for the summer so it's unlikely to be just the usual vomit-and-shouting undergraduate excess.

'What are we looking at?'

'Not sure yet.'

'So why –'

'Apparently the Principal asked for you specifically. His name's Hilary Reynolds. Ring any bells?'

A small one, a long way away – a conference a couple of years ago?

'I googled him,' says Quinn, 'and apparently he's some hot-shot human rights lawyer.'

I was right – it *was* that conference –

'He's just been appointed to that parliamentary advisory panel on whole-life tariffs. You know, the one Bob O'Dwyer is on.'

That's all we need: Robert O'Dwyer is the Chief

Constable. But creds to Quinn for checking, rather than just ploughing straight in like the Lone Ranger.

‘OK, I’ll need to take my in-laws home first, but I can be there in about an hour.’

* * *

Edith Launceleve College – EL to its students – sits on fourteen gardened acres straddling the Banbury and Woodstock Roads. Not very far from town, according to any normal notion of geography, but still the equivalent of Outer Mongolia in the excitable microcosm that is the University of Oxford. It’s been mixed for more than thirty years, but it was founded as an institution for the education of young women, by a vigorous Victorian spinster who simply wouldn’t take no for an answer, and named after the twelfth-century patroness of the nearby Godstow nunnery, who was by all accounts equally energetic and equally bloody-minded. EL’s accumulated an impressive roll call of alumnae in its hundred-plus years, including several generations of women who had – and needed – exactly the same tenacity. Quinn’s not to know, but DC Asante’s mother was one of them. She now runs a FTSE-100 company, but the number of other women doing the same can be counted on the fingers of one hand. EL’s splendid isolation from town and all its temptations was no doubt seen as an advantage by its uncompromising foundress, but it’s definitely a downside these days – when the University has open days they have to resort to chalk marks on the pavement to tempt sixth-formers that far north. On the other hand, it does have

one Unique Selling Point: there's almost always somewhere to park. Maisie finds a space right opposite the lodge and turns off the engine. Quinn sits for a moment, staring across at the gates.

'One of the girls in my year at Burghley Abbey went here,' says Maisie.

Quinn turns. 'Yeah?'

She nods. 'She said it was OK but it didn't really feel like Oxford. I mean, there are blokes there now and everything, but she said it still came off like a girls' boarding school.'

Quinn turns back to look again. There's a group of young people standing chatting by the main door. They're clutching files and the obligatory water bottles, but there are ID cards on lanyards round their necks, so it's a fair bet they're summer school, not permanent. They seem happy enough, either way. Smiling, looking to the future with confidence, perfectly balanced across race and gender. It could be the cover shot for the college brochure.

'Do you want me to wait till your colleague arrives?' asks Maisie.

He turns to her again. 'Nah, no need. Ev only lives ten minutes away – in fact, I'm surprised she's not here already.' He pushes open the door. 'I'll see you back at the flat – if it's going to be a long one I'll give you a bell.'

'OK, see you later.'

She starts the engine and pulls away, turning right at the junction in a screech of rubber. Quinn smiles, despite his precious tyres. That girl has balls; she drives almost as fast as he does.

He crosses the road as Everett's Mini pulls into the space Maisie just left. He assumed she'd walk down from

her flat in Summertown, but perhaps she wasn't at home when she got the call. He hardly ever sees her off-duty so the clothes come as a surprise. Whatever she's been doing, it seems it required a skirt.

'Very natty,' she says as she comes towards him, nodding to his chinos and pink shirt. 'I hope they were suitably impressed.'

He could take umbrage but he decides to smile instead. 'Slayed 'em,' he says. 'Eating out of my hand.'

She hitches her bag higher up her shoulder. 'So what's all this about?'

'Some sort of "incident". But not a 999 job so I'm assuming no one's dead. Woods says it was the Principal who called it in. Refused to say anything more, just kept on saying he wanted to speak to Fawley.'

'Serious, then.'

He nods. 'The boss is on his way. But, right now, your guess is as good as mine.'

Ev has a guess all right, but decides, for now, to keep that to herself.

Quinn goes to check in with the lodge, and Ev waits outside; he doesn't need her holding his hand, especially if he's bigging himself up as surrogate DS. The group by the door has dispersed now, and the courtyard is empty. Bits of glitter and confetti are caught in the paving, the last fragments of Finals. She can feel the heat coming off the stone through her thin sandals.

'OK,' says Quinn, coming back towards her again. 'They said Reynolds' office is on the first floor. Turn right down the corridor and up the stairs. The PA will meet us there.'

*

It's surprisingly cool inside, but something about the parquet flooring and the echo of their feet has Ev thinking of disinfectant and imminent hockey sticks. The upstairs corridor is a good deal plusher, and the PA is hovering, looking slightly irritated. She gives the impression she knows to the second how long it should have taken them to cover the distance and they have woefully underperformed.

'Professor Reynolds is just on a call – please take a seat, it won't be long.'

The PA returns to her desk, but the visitor chairs have a distinct waiting-for-detention look about them which is hardly appealing. As for Quinn, he doesn't seem able to keep still. He spends the next five minutes scrutinizing the framed photos of the teaching body, until the PA's intercom beeps and she gets to her feet.

'This way, please.'

The office is certainly impressive, if only in terms of size. Wood panelling, windows over the garden, more framed photographs, this time of the previous heads of the college. They're all women. Unlike the person walking towards them, hand outstretched.

'Hilary Reynolds – you must be Detective Sergeant Quinn?'

Ev sees Quinn open his mouth but Reynolds has already moved on.

'DC Everett? Please – take a seat.'

'So,' says Quinn, after a moment. 'You asked to see us?'

Reynolds frowns. 'You don't think we should wait until DI Fawley arrives?'

Quinn shifts a little. 'He said we should start without him. You know what it's like, weekend traffic, tourists –'

Reynolds sits back, fingertips together. ‘This whole situation is *extremely* delicate.’

Quinn nods. ‘We do understand, sir, but until we know what it’s about –’

Ev glances at him and then at Reynolds. ‘If it helps, I have done sexual offences training.’

Reynolds turns to face her. He doesn’t say anything but she can see from his face that she’s bang on.

He clears his throat. ‘Yes, DC Everett, well guessed. This is indeed an issue of that sort.’

Everett takes out her notebook; Quinn may be playing at being one of the grown-ups but someone still has to do the heavy lifting.

‘Perhaps I can take some details? I’m assuming no one is in need of immediate medical assistance?’

Reynolds gives a quick, sharp shake of the head. ‘No, nothing like that.’

Quinn sits forward a little; he evidently feels the need to reassert the initiative. ‘An official complaint has been made to you, as head of the college?’

Reynolds nods. ‘The appropriate internal processes will in due course be put in motion as required by University protocols, but I felt the circumstances warranted an immediate referral to the civil authorities.’

Sounds like he cut-and-pasted that from the latest Equality and Diversity policy handbook, thinks Everett, as she makes a note. Leaving no arse uncovered, that’s for sure.

‘I see,’ says Quinn. ‘Perhaps you could talk us through the “issue” as you understand it. You told my colleague at St Aldate’s that one of your students was involved?’

Reynolds starts fiddling with something on his desk. ‘A postgraduate. One of our brightest. Transferred here from Cardiff at the beginning of Michaelmas term.’ He glances at Ev and waves a finger at her notes. ‘October, in other words.’

Gee, thanks, she thinks. As if a low-life like me could possibly know that.

‘And the other person involved?’ she says evenly.

Reynolds’ expression has darkened. ‘I’m afraid the other party is one of the college academic staff.’

It doesn’t come as any surprise – certainly not to Ev, and not only because she’s done sexual offences training.

‘OK,’ says Quinn, who’s going to lose his patience very quickly if there’s much more pussy-footing about. ‘Perhaps it would be easier if we talked direct to the parties involved?’

* * *

‘Do you want another glass of wine?’

Erica Somer looks up, shielding her eyes against the sun. She’s sitting on the terrace of Giles Saumarez’s house. Three fishermen’s cottages knocked together into a long, low, whitewashed space with polished stone floors and windows overlooking Southampton Water. It’s cool and airy inside, but out here the sunlight is blinding. At least a breeze has got up now; out on the estuary, among the tankers hauling towards the refinery, there are four or five small yachts leaning into the wind. Somer has never sailed, never wanted to, but she yearns suddenly to be out there, on the water, on her own. No

one to think about, no one to answer to, wholly at the mercy of the current and the bright blue air. It's the impulse of a moment only, and hard on its heels comes a pang of remorse. She should be grateful she's here at all – at this amazing house, with Giles, who's put so much effort into this weekend but doesn't undo it all by telling her so every five minutes, like most blokes would. He's bought the wine he knows she likes, put flowers in their bedroom, fresh towels in the shower. It's been a beautiful day, and they've had a beautiful lunch. Literally. Crumbly white cheese, golden focaccia sprinkled with rosemary and salt, ripe figs, prosciutto, cubes of deep-orange quince jelly – the table was crying out for a #foodporn hashtag.

She shakes her head now: the glass Giles poured for her more than half an hour ago is still almost full.

He pushes up his sunglasses so he can look her in the eye. 'Everything OK?'

She nods quickly, reaching for the glass, making an effort.

'Yes, fine, just felt a bit off earlier, that's all.'

He sits down next to her.

'We don't have to go out tonight if you don't want to. It's just that last time you were here, you said –'

'No,' she says, cutting across him. 'I want to go. Will you please just stop *fussing*.'

She looks away, at the water, the gulls, the wheeling boats. Anything to block out the hurt and bewilderment in his eyes.

* * *

Hilary Reynolds isn't the first head of house I've come across in this job. Principals, Provosts, Wardens – the handles may differ but they all grow the same masterly veneer; that grand self-assurance that comes of habitual High Table dining, an entire organogram of domestic staff and a great deal of getting your own way. Reynolds is no different; or at least not at first sight. It takes me a moment to realize quite how much anxiety is running in this room. And who's generating it.

He's in the far corner, leaning against the window seat. He must be twenty-two, twenty-three; pale skin, toffee-coloured hair bleaching to blond at the ends. A dark tattoo on one forearm, something spiky and sinister, like a Venetian mask. He's taller than me, and broader too. The physique of an athlete; I'd go for rugby if you forced my hand.

'Inspector Fawley,' says Reynolds with a small cough, 'I'm grateful you were able to join us. This is Caleb Morgan. He's with the Mathematics faculty, working on compressed linear algebra for large-scale machine learning.'

Condescending *and* inconsequential; I have to hand it to Reynolds – as irrelevant information goes, that was pretty stellar.

Quinn must be sensing my irritation because he steps in quickly. 'There's been an allegation of sexual assault, boss.'

I stare at him. What the fuck is he playing at? This is Policework 101 – get your facts together *before* you go anywhere near the perp. And I mean, *all* your facts.

I pull Quinn to one side. ‘What’s he doing here?’ I say quietly. ‘You didn’t think you ought to speak to the *victim* first?’

He flushes. ‘I did,’ he says. ‘He *is* the victim.’

I turn to look at Morgan. His pale-blue eyes are intent on my face and I feel myself flush. And now I look properly, I can see the livid red mark on his neck. But even though it goes against all the training, against everything they drum into us these days, I just can’t stop myself thinking – this lad is six foot two, he’s built like a full back, surely he could have defended himself –

‘So,’ says Reynolds, looking at Quinn and then at me, ‘now we’ve got that straightened out, I imagine you’ll want to speak to Professor Fisher?’

Ev glances quickly at me. ‘Professor Fisher is Mr Morgan’s supervisor –’

Reynolds cuts across her. ‘I would, of course, prefer that you did *not* conduct that interview on college premises, especially given that the incident did not take place here. Professor Fisher’s address is Monmouth House, St Luke Street,’ he says, sitting back in his chair. ‘And it being a Saturday afternoon, I would imagine it’s more than likely you will find her at home.’

Her?

Morgan’s assailant was a *woman*?

* * *

In Risinghurst, Alex Fawley is saying goodbye to her sister. It’s taken the best part of half an hour to get both the dog and the boys into the car, and the dog was definitely

the easiest of the three. Gerry is in the driving seat now, impatient to be away before one of his sons decides he needs the loo for the third time.

Nell reaches her arms around her sister, holding her close.

‘You will tell me if you need anything, won’t you?’

‘I’m fine, really. Adam’s being wonderful.’

Nell pulls away. ‘When he isn’t rushing back to work when he’s supposed to be having a day off, you mean.’

‘It’s not his fault. Comes with the job.’

Nell makes a face. ‘You don’t need to tell me – I’ve known him almost as long as you have.’

There’s a sudden bang in the street – a couple of skateboarders, taking advantage of the hill and the speed bump to try out some tricks – but Nell sees her sister flinch, then try at once to disguise it.

‘It’s only a few lads mucking around – you’re just being paranoid. That man – Parrie – he won’t be allowed anywhere near you. You do know that, don’t you?’

Alex forces herself to smile. ‘It’s just my nerves – they’re all over the place.’

The car door opens and Gerry leans out. ‘You coming?’

Nell gives her sister’s arm a quick squeeze. ‘Remember what I said, OK? If you need anything – and I mean *anything* – I’m only a phone call away.’

Alex nods and Nell gets into the car, but even after they’ve pulled away, Alex lingers there, her arms wrapped tightly around herself. The two skateboarders are still coasting up and down, flipping and twisting as they come off the slope, but Alex isn’t looking at them. She’s looking beyond them, through them, at the white van parked a

few doors down. There's a man in the driver's seat, with a baseball cap pulled down low over his eyes.

It doesn't matter how many times people tell her that Gavin Parrie will be miles away, that he'll be strictly monitored, under electronic curfew, she still sees him on every corner, in every van, in every shadowed and half-glimpsed face.

Because he knows. And one day – maybe not today, maybe not this week or this month or this year – but one day, he's going to find her, and he's going to make her pay for what she did.

It's 30 degrees but she's shivering suddenly, her hot skin iced with sweat.

* * *

PODCASTS > DOCUMENTARIES > TRUE CRIME



Righting the Wrongs, s3: The Roadside Rapist Redeemed?

5 JULY 2018

S3 Ep1: Prologue

/ 25:20



Righting the Wrongs: The Roadside Rapist Redeemed? Episode 1. Gavin Parrie served more than 18 years for a series of brutal sex crimes he has always claimed he did not commit. In this podcast, Jocelyn Naismith of The Whole Truth revisits the case and tries to find answers to some of the worrying questions that remain unresolved. Was the original investigation botched? Did one of the victims collude with the police in providing the crucial evidence? Could the real perpetrator still be out there?

[IVY PARRIE]

'Hi, Gav, it's your mum. Just wanted to let you know I got your message about the hearing. We're all rooting for you here, love, and Jocelyn and the team are working really hard on your behalf. See you next week.'

[SOUND OF PHONE CALL ENDING]

[JOCELYN]

My name is Jocelyn Naismith and I'm the person referred to in that clip. The voice you heard was Mrs Ivy Parrie. Ivy is 76, she lives in Coventry, and you just heard her leaving her son a voicemail. She couldn't call him direct because he was in prison. In Wandsworth, to be precise. Serving a life sentence for a crime he has always claimed he did not commit.

The clip was recorded in April 2018, shortly before Gavin Parrie appeared before the parole board. Thanks to the work done by my team, and with the support of Gavin's solicitor, the long battle for justice was finally won, and he regained his freedom in May this year.

This podcast series tells Gavin's story. How he was convicted in the first place, what The Whole Truth organization has discovered about the original investigation, and why we think the real perpetrator is still out there.

I'm Jocelyn Naismith, and I'm co-founder of The Whole Truth, a not-for-profit organization that campaigns to overturn miscarriages of justice. This is Righting the Wrongs, series 3: The Roadside Rapist Redeemed?

Chapter one: Prologue

[THEME SONG – AARON NEVILLE COVER VERSION OF 'I SHALL BE RELEASED'
[BOB DYLAN]]

*Standing next to me in this lonely crowd
Is a man who swears he's not to blame
All day long I hear him shout so loud
Crying out that he was framed
I see my light come shining
From the west unto the east
Any day now, any day now
I shall be released.*

[JOCELYN]

Bob Dylan wrote that song in 1968, the same year Gavin Parrie was born. He was the second of three Parrie boys, sandwiched between the oldest, Neil, and the youngest, Robert (who the family called Bobby). His mother worked part-time as a shelf-stacker in a local supermarket, and his father, Vernon, was employed at what was then the British Leyland car plant in Cowley, on the outskirts of Oxford. The family lived in a small terraced house off the Cowley Road, and all three boys attended the local primary school, and then Temple Green Secondary Modern.

Ken Waring was Gavin's form teacher in his first year at Temple Green.

[KEN WARING]

'He was a bit of a tearaway, there's no getting away from that. Always getting into scrapes. But I never thought he was a bad lad. He struggled with his reading, but looking back with the benefit of hindsight I suspect he may have been dyslexic. But of course, back then, you didn't get assessed for things like that, and you didn't get any extra help either. Kids like him often became disruptive just because they were having trouble keeping up. He was good with his hands, though, I remember that – he always got good marks in Woodwork and Metalwork. I guess I assumed he would follow his father into the car industry. That's what the majority of our lads did.'

[JOCELYN]

By 1984 the family had moved to Manchester. Vernon Parrie had been made redundant from Cowley, but managed to secure another job at a truck assembly plant up north. It came at a bad time for Gavin, who as we've heard, was already finding schoolwork difficult. The transition to a new school proved a challenge too far, and Gavin left the education system that summer with no formal qualifications.

He spent the next two years moving from job to job – some office cleaning, some mini-cabbing, the odd stint labouring alongside his brother Bobby, who was an apprentice plasterer by then. Remember that – it's going to be important later.

It was around this time that Gavin first met the woman who would become his wife. Sandra Powell was 16 and photos of her in the family album show a typical fun-loving 80s teenager. Big shoulder pads, a big smile and big hair. *Really* big hair.

[SANDRA]

'I know, I know, but we all had perms like that back then. My mum used to do mine in the back kitchen.'

[SOUND OF PAGE TURNING]

'I can't even remember the last time I looked at these. And I definitely can't believe I wore all this stuff – look at those legwarmers – what were we even thinking?'

[JOCELYN]

That's Sandra. As you can tell from her voice, there's still some of that bright, sassy teenager left in her, though the intervening years have taken a heavy toll. She lives in Scotland now, and has reverted to using her maiden

name (we'll hear why in a later episode), but through it all, she's remained in contact with Gavin and has always been a firm believer in his innocence. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Back to 1986.

[SANDRA]

[SOUND OF PAGE TURNING]

'Ah, I love that one – that's me and Gav at Blackpool a couple of weeks after we first started going out.'

[JOCELYN]

It's a sweet picture, and not just because they're both clutching candyfloss. Gavin has a shy smile and a mullet haircut that makes him look a bit like David Cassidy. Sandra is acting up for the camera, and even though she's two years younger she looks a lot more worldly, a lot more mature. And according to Sandra, that's a pretty accurate reflection of the early days of their relationship.

[SANDRA]

'It took Gav a long time to adjust to moving to Manchester. He'd left all his mates behind in Cowley, and I think he resented that a bit. He didn't get along that well with his dad either, so I think he was quite lonely. I was definitely his first serious girlfriend, that I do know. He really wasn't that confident back then – it took him so long to ask me out I was beginning to think he wasn't interested.'

[JOCELYN]

But once their relationship started, things moved very fast. Within three months Sandra was pregnant, and by the end of that year they were the parents of a baby girl, Dawn.

[DAWN MACLEAN]

'What's my first memory of Dad? Probably him teaching me to ride my bike when I was about 6.'

[JOCELYN]

That's Dawn. She's a qualified beautician now, married and living in Stirling with two children of her own.

[DAWN]

'I got the bike for my birthday, and I remember it absolutely poured down all day – you know what Manchester's like – but he spent hours outside

with me in the rain while I wobbled up and down. He wasn't always that patient though. I remember he hated anything to do with paperwork or filling in forms – Mum always had to deal with Social Services or the council or our schools. I guess he was always a bit wary of people like that. People in authority. He said they were all out to get you. And let's face it, he wasn't wrong, was he?'

[JOCELYN]

Sandra and Gavin had two further children in the next ten years. Sandra had a job as a hairdresser but Gavin was still stuck with casual labouring jobs, so money was tight, and they couldn't get by without benefits. After a while, the strain began to tell.

[DAWN]

'By the time I was about 11 I knew my dad was struggling. I mean, I wouldn't have used that word, but I knew he wasn't happy. He seemed to be angry all the time, and I think he was drinking, and that just made him even more angry. And sad. I remember finding him in tears one day, upstairs in their bedroom. It was the first time I'd ever seen a man cry and it really scared me. It was after that that everything started to go wrong.'

[JOCELYN]

It was 1997. On May 2nd that year, a 16-year-old girl was attacked in Lockhart Avenue, Manchester. She was dragged into the undergrowth, sexually assaulted and left there, on the side of the road.

Three nights later, Sandra got a phone call.

It was Gavin. He was at Greater Manchester Police HQ, and he'd been arrested.

For rape.

[UNDER BED OF 'I FOUGHT THE LAW AND THE LAW WON' – THE CLASH]

I'm Jocelyn Naismith and this is Righting the Wrongs. You can listen to this and other podcasts from The Whole Truth on Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[FADE OUT]

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