

LONDON SPY

by

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EPI SODE ONE

"LULLABY"

FINAL REVISED
SHOOTING SCRIPT

EXT. LONDON. VAUXHALL. MI 6 HEADQUARTERS. NIGHT

The Headquarters of British Intelligence. An embassy of secrets. Intense security. Cameras. Bomb proof walls.

A cab parks outside. A young man steps out. Mid-twenties. Lean and handsome. He's Danny. His clothes are cool and casual. His hair styled.

Danny turns his back on MI 6, crossing the street. We follow him to the opposite side --

Gay clubs, bars and sex saunas, underneath railway arches. People queuing to gain entry to the clubs.

With a Saturday-night swagger Danny bypasses the queue, saying hi to many. Known by most. Danny gives the bouncer a handshake. And is ushered in. A socialite.

As the door opens we do not follow Danny inside, catching a fleeting glimpse of intense lighting.

The doors close --

EXT. VAUXHALL. RAILWAY ARCHES. DAWN

The doors are thrown open --

Danny emerges. Pupils huge. Skin sweaty. Re-presented with the world, he seems cowed by it.

His swagger gone, Danny appears gaunt rather than lean. His clothes are club-grimed. His hair dishevelled.

The 'gay strip' is quiet. A few hardened souls. A few taxi drivers hawking trade.

To the side of the club there's no queue, no people, just the fencing & the hoarding, flat on the ground.

The area is deserted. The buzz is gone.

Danny tries to swallow: it's painful. We hear the sound of his throat, the movements, dry slow swallow of spit.

He takes from his pocket the pack of cigarettes. It's now utterly crumpled and smashed. He opens it.

Inside is an empty drug bag. And a single crushed cigarette, broken in half.

Danny tries to light the broken half but the lighter pathetically sparks with no flame.

His hands are trembling.

He gives up.

He walks forward, looming over him is MI 6: the building means nothing to Danny. His eyes slide across it without catching on it.

He takes out his phone. He dials. His voice is broken. Fragmented. Slow.

DANNY (ON PHONE)

Hey guys... if you get this message... I wanted to know... if you were still... up... I don't feel like... being alone... if you're still up... ring me...

He hangs up. He shuffles off.

EXT. VAUXHALL. CENTRAL ROAD JUNCTION. DAWN

The enormous road junction at the heart of Vauxhall. Normally full of traffic. Now eerie-empty.

Danny crosses into the central pedestrian reservation, automatically trudging towards the passage under the train tracks, on auto-pilot, heading home.

But he stops, staring at the tunnel, a route he's taken many times. He looks in the opposite direction, towards the bridge & the morning sky.

Danny - surrounded and dwarfed by the huge empty roads - lingering and deciding.

And, finally, he changes direction, walking towards the river. Passing MI 6, he doesn't even glance at it.

EXT. LAMBETH BRIDGE. DAWN

In the middle of the deserted bridge Danny looks out over London, The Thames & Parliament.

His beautiful-saucer-eyes dart about, perplexed by this world. Drugs push his thoughts close to the surface.

He takes out his phone. And considers. We can see he knows, on every level, that this is a terrible idea. Except he does it anyway.

He dials.

The phone rings. Danny prepares what to say. The phone is answered. Danny about to speak but he's abruptly cut off. We don't hear what is said, if anything.

Danny's stunned. Offended. Finally, he's hurt.

In an act of frustration Danny leans back, arm behind him, ready to throw the 'fucking-phone' into the river but he stops, frozen in this javelinesque position.

His eyes switch from the river to the phone. From sadness and anger to pragmatic. He changes his mind.

At this point Danny realizes he's being watched.

An early morning runner, standing some five or so

His eyes on the London view; his thoughts are not.

EXT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. VAUXHALL. EVENING

Danny unlocks the door. A low rise block of apartments adjacent to the railway, the clubs and MI 6.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. CORRIDOR. EVENING

Danny enters. He shares a small, beat-up apartment.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. EVENING

Danny enters a bustling kitchen. A foreign language chatter. His flat-mate Pavel is eating pre-night shift dinner with friends dressed for construction work.

Danny peers into the fridge. Decaying scraps.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

A handwritten sign warns people to use the hot water for no more than sixty seconds. A feeble dribble flattens Danny's hair. And he does not mind.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

A tiny, narrow, chaotic bedroom, with a clothes hanger, packed with second hand clothes. On the floor protein powder jars intermingle with cheap sneakers.

Danny flops onto the bed, eyes on the bedside cabinet, atop of which sits the sports drink.

EXT. RIVERBANK. MORNING

Danny running, wearing mismatched T-shirt and Bermuda shorts. The sports drink stuffed into a pocket.

The river embankment is popular with joggers. While everyone else runs in neat straight lines, Danny runs with no strict route, turning round, eagerly checking who they are, looking back & across the river.

Not the mysterious runner. Danny isn't dismayed, he's having fun, certain he'll find this guy.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING

A jovial but tatty living room. An old television. A games console. Bashed up furniture.

An attractive, off beat woman in her twenties is sprawled on the sofa - Sara. Danny is lying beside her.

Sara's on her phone perusing an internet dating site. She moves through the men with breath-taking speed.

SARA

(with variation)

No. No. No. No. No. No. No.

To dismiss a profile you flick the screen with your finger, an act that Sara performs with relish.

DANNY

Danny studies the flyer. He picks up the straw but doesn't snort the line. Instead, he wipes it away.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Danny sets his alarm. Five AM --

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. DAWN.

Five AM -- the alarm rings.

Danny wakes. Dark outside. Tempted to go back to sleep, he almost does. But then, *remembers*, and leaps up.

EXT. VAUXHALL. 'FIRE' NIGHT CLUB. DAWN

Danny passes a club. Still open. He's beckoned in by a bouncer. Danny politely declines.

EXT. LAMBETH BRIDGE. DAWN

Danny stands on the bridge with the sports drink. Watching the north/south riverbank paths. Sunrise.

EXT. LAMBETH BRIDGE / RIVERBANK. MORNING

Unable to wait, indefinitely, on the bridge, Danny's seated, cold, on a riverbank bench near the bridge.

His patience is rewarded: he sees the mysterious runner along the riverbank path.

Danny, apprehensive, walks forward, into the path of the runner, and waits, holding the sports drink, trying to find a natural pose - an impossible task.

The runner sees Danny. And slows to a stop, catching his breath. Perplexed, again. Not unpleasantly so.

Flustered, Danny offers the runner his drink container back. It's cute. And ridiculous.

The runner doesn't accept. He just stares, assessing,

DANNY (CONT'D)

Sometimes you have to take a chance, right?

(beat)

Otherwise, how do you know...

(beat)

Obviously I got this wrong.

Danny puts the drink down on the ground.

Still no reply. Danny walks away. Humiliated. None-the-less, he braves one last glance back. Only to see --

The runner holding the drink container, contemplating it, as though trying to solve a puzzle.

He looks at Danny, the other half of this puzzle.

Danny doesn't quite know what to do. He stops. And they stand facing each other for the second time.

A greater distance between them. And yet, somehow, this time they feel closer.

EXT. RIVERBANK. MORNING

Danny and the runner walking, slowly, side by side.

DANNY

My name's Danny.

MYSTERIOUS RUNNER

(unusual emphasis)

My name is Joe.

He can't even answer a simple question with ordinary cadence. These nothing words feel like more.

EXT. RIVERBANK. MORNING

The riverbank walk continues, the pace notably more assured, Danny and Joe side by side.

DANNY

Joe, are you...

Danny pulls back on the question. Joe observes. Danny cleverly, lightly, turns it into a joke.

DANNY

Are you...?

(smiles)

I ran out of questions.

JOE

Ask me. Please.

A crucial line, pulling Danny closer.

DANNY

Are you out?

Understandably the question seems enormous to Joe.

JOE

No.

(as if it were a more
nuanced variation)

No.

Danny assesses. Joe assesses.

JOE

If you want to go - I can
understand, that reaction.

DANNY

I don't want to go.

Relief on Joe's face. First emotion we've seen from him. He tries to hide it. But Danny's caught it.

EXT. ALEX'S APARTMENT BUILDING. CHELSEA. MORNING

A square. A grand house. Expensive. Impressive. A security camera. Three locks before the door opens.

Joe observes Danny observing the level of security.

JOE

I work for an investment bank.

(beat)

It's their apartment.

(beat)

Security is a concern.

Danny nods - okay, whatever. They enter.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. MORNING

The apartment is spectacular. Modern. Immaculately clean. No personal touches. No photographs.

Danny's amazed. A grown-up life. Adulthood. He studies this other world of success while Joe studies him.

JOE

There's a terrace.

A jarring estate-agent-like boast? Actually it's Joe trying to be nice.

JOE

If you want to smoke, I mean.

Joe disappears into the bathroom.

EXT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. TERRACE. MORNING

Danny stands, smoking, on the terrace looking out over the city and square. It's incredible.

He turns to the bedroom.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. MORNING

Danny peeks inside the wardrobe. The clothes are expensive. Tailored. Elegant. Meticulously organized.

Danny catches himself in the mirror. His own clothes have ragged style, skilful purchases from second hand shops.

Then, on the surface of a cabinet, an odd looking device. Danny examines it. A personal panic alarm.

Danny puts it down just in time --

Joe enters from the shower, a towel around his waist. A great body. Not an invite. Yet not entirely naive.

We're on the borderline: a casual sex pick up, or something more. Danny must decide.

DANNY

I'll let you get dressed.

Danny passes Joe on his way out.

They're close - that flint-spark pull between them.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. MORNING

The bedroom door closes with no particular haste.

Danny's about to open the door but recovers his senses and backs off. Muttering disapproval.

Flustered, he accidentally touches the laptop on the table. It's expensive. The screen comes alive --

Complex computer code. A hypnotic kind of beauty: the soft glow of unfathomable numbers and equations.

Bedazzled, Danny briefly forgets himself and scrolls down, revealing more of this strange magic.

INT. CHELSEA. FASHIONABLE RESTAURANT. MORNING

A corner table. A swanky restaurant.

Joe's immaculately dressed. He wears his clothes well. Cuts a dashing, if austere, figure. Danny admires.

Danny and Joe at breakfast. Danny eyes the prices, daunted by them. Joe observes.

JOE

I can pay.

DANNY

No, it's fine...

(beat)

I must be easy to read.

JOE

You are.

DANNY

Is that bad?

JOE

It makes a change. The people I work with are inscrutable.

DANNY

I can be inscrutable.

Again, of no interest to Danny, a background detail.

Danny glances back for a second time. Joe is at the window - looking at him.

Danny's thrilled. He raises a hand. Joe waves back.

The white van blurred behind.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Danny stands, recounting his date with great gusto.

Sara and Pavel are seated on the sofa, back from the clubs, worse for wear. Sara smoking a joint, laconic. Pavel is gnashing his jaw, bug eyed.

An empty space on the sofa where Danny would normally have sat.

DANNY

We shook hands.

A love struck Danny checks on his wasted audience.

Sara inhales, unmoved. Pavel turns to Sara, baffled as to why Danny is so happy when he didn't even get laid.

PAVEL

I don't understand.

SARA

They shook hands.

Pavel still doesn't understand. And Danny's exceptionally pleased with their reaction.

EXT. WHITEHALL. EVENING

Danny waits outside one of the ministries. In the hub of political power.

We see Scottie. Early sixties. Emerging from the grand entrance of a ministry: a civil servant figure from a bygone era. Immaculate Jermyn Street tailoring.

We presume this man can't be who Danny is waiting for. Yet it is. A kiss as a greeting.

EXT. WHITEHALL STREETS. EVENING

Scottie and Danny walking. An excitable energy in Danny movements, compared to Scottie's steady steps.

SCOTTIE
Has he rung?

DANNY
He will.

Danny adamantly unconcerned.

SCOTTIE
(gentle)
A week...?

DANNY
I've never been more certain of
anything in my life.

SCOTTIE
Why?

DANNY
Because --
(thinks)
That can't be it.
(thinks)
There's more. There has to be.

SCOTTIE
You love falling in love. The
moment when it's all possibilities
and dreams.

Danny misses Scottie's point.

DANNY
You think he's out of my league?

SCOTTIE
The thought never crossed my
mind.

Danny's caught. Changes subject. He's breezy.

DANNY
Where are we drinking tonight?

SCOTTIE
(without much hope)
Somewhere dimly lit and terribly
old fashioned.

Danny locks an arm through Scottie's.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD. DAY

After meeting in Whitehall Danny and Scottie have
travelled and are walking.

Danny recounting his date with great gusto. But we're primarily interested in Scottie's reaction.

DANNY

We're at the doorstep, saying goodbye, I'm trying to give him my flat mate's number because I don't have a phone, except he doesn't write it down. And I'm like, "if you don't want to see me again" and he says:

(acting)

"Numbers, Danny, I have no problem with." Like he could remember every phone number in the world. And then - we shook hands.

(beat, fondly)

If you'd told me a week ago I would've been this happy with a handshake at the end of date...

Scottie has been patiently listening. Tolerant of his friend's indulgent recounting.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'll stop talking about

DANNY

Isn't that what you do when you
meet someone? I tell you stuff.
You tell me stuff.

Joe ponders.

JOE

Like facts?

DANNY

(amused)
Facts. Sure.

Joe ponders some more. But does not offer any facts.

INT/EXT. JOE'S CAR / COUNTRYSIDE. ESTUARY. MORNING

The countryside. The car's parked. There's nothing
around. Joe steps out. Danny follows.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. ESTUARY. MORNING

Picturesque landscape. Bleak. Steel edged. Unusual.

Joe's at the back of the car. Danny walks towards him.

INT/EXT. JOE'S CAR BOOT / COUNTRYSIDE. MORNING

An antique boarding school trunk in the boot. Cracked
leather trim. Rusted metal locks. Seventy years old.

Joe rummages through. A pair of hiking boots. There are
numerous ordinance survey maps - at least fifty.

Danny's intrigued by this many maps.

DANNY

You've walked all these?

Joe's nervous it implies he's weird. Danny reassures him.

DANNY

A lot of miles.

Joe calculates the exact amount but catches himself.
Instead, he takes out the relevant map for their walk.

JOE

This is us.

They sit side by side, map open, each holding half.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. ESTUARY. DAY

Danny and Joe walking. Not typical English countryside. Nothing quaint. Odd. Powerful.

Though Danny might not be expertly dressed, he's fit and enjoying the walk.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. ESTUARY. DAY

Danny and Joe at the water's edge. The mud flats. The water's ebb. A kind of magic here.

Danny turns, looking at Joe as he observes the view. Joe turns to Danny. Both looking at each other, not the view.

Danny wants to thank Joe for taking him here but doesn't quite have the words.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. ESTUARY. DAY

Huddled behind the remains of an old fishing boat. Joe has a backpack. Takes out an elegant thermos. Danny watches him fuss with the picnic apparatus.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. ESTUARY. DAY

They're eating a handmade sandwich. Not thin processed bread. Wedges from a nice loaf. They sip tea.

DANNY

(through a mouthful)

You're so grown up. You drink tea.
Out of a thermos. You go on
country walks. I must seem young?
Compared to the people you work
with?

JOE

You do.

There's an autistic yet ever gentle directness about Joe. Danny - far from being offended - seems to enjoy it.

DANNY

Why are you so grown up?

JOE

I skipped childhood.

DANNY

You're not joking, are you?

JOE
A joke? No. I started university
when I was fifteen.

DANNY
You've never... messed around?

JOE
In what sense?

DANNY
Any sense.

JOE
I've been serious. For a long
time.

DANNY
Why did you change your mind?

JOE
About?

DANNY
Me.

JOE
I wondered what it would be like
to do one of these walks with
someone.

DANNY

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. ESTUARY. DAY

Danny and Joe returning to the car. Danny's increasingly excited with how the date's going. Not fatigued by walk, his pace and energy increasing, orbiting Joe.

DANNY

(playful - mid-flow)

-- you show up, on my doorstep -
which is wonderful - except I
never told you where I lived - so
I'm wondering - and just to be
clear, in advance, I don't mind -
but did you carry out some kind of

Joe looks at him - bewildered and impressed. Danny has no empirical evidence, he just sensed 'Joe' was a lie.

Alex catches his glance.

EXT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

Danny and Alex standing outside the apartment

Alex sunk under the water, head submerged, but his eyes wide open, looking up through the water at Danny.

Danny's hand breaks the water's surface touching Alex's face, as if calling him back from his hiding place.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Alex still in the bath. Danny perched on the edge.

ALEX
Had you guessed?

DANNY
I'd guessed you hadn't slept with guys. I'd thought maybe you'd slept with a few women.

Alex shakes his head.

DANNY
Can I ask a question? I don't want you to feel under pressure. I'm trying to understand. Can you trust me on that?

Alex nods.

DANNY
What's stopped you?

Alex entering completely new territory.

DANNY
You don't have to answer --

ALEX
I want to.

Alex considers. In the end, he settles for:

ALEX
When people tried to kiss me I said things like: "For a gift to truly be a gift".

But Danny doesn't smile. Or laugh. He waits, patiently, his fingers in the water. He wants to know. For real.

No more hiding. Alex goes deeper.

ALEX
At school I was old. At university I was young. I've always been out of step with the people around me. In the end, I left it so late, I gave up.

ALEX (CONT' D)
(with sadness)
I gave up.

DANNY
Did you imagine you'd spend the
rest of your life alone?

ALEX
I did.

DANNY
I can't begin to understand what
that must feel like.

ALEX
You were always sure you'd find
someone?

DANNY
Always.

Alex can't imagine what that feels like.

ALEX
Being alone has a rhythm, like
running. It's when you stop that
you realize how tired you are.

Alex not just saying this for the first time, he
understands this for the first time, in this moment.

ALEX
How do you admit you've never had
a relationship? Who wants to hear?
When they do, who wants to stay?

DANNY
I do.

A rare and precious flash of emotion from Alex.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Danny by the door. Alex wrapped in towels. They're close.

ALEX
I'd like to try again.

DANNY
We don't have to.

ALEX
You don't want to?

DANNY
We can wait.

ALEX
I've waited long enough.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Danny rummages through the alcohol stash. He finds a brightly colored spirit in a preposterous glass bottle.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Alex, wrapped in towels, on the bed. Condoms and lube on the side. Danny enters with the bottle. And glasses.

They each have a shot. Evidently revolting.

DANNY
Again?

Alex nods. They take a second shot.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Danny and Alex are both tipsy. The bottle half empty. Alex is no longer protectively wrapped up in towels. The mood is mellowing, intimacy intensifying.

ALEX
Drugs?

DANNY
I've been using them to make me believe that the sex was special. That the person I was with was special. But I'd love to know what that feels like for real. Because I bet it's the best feeling in the world.

They're nudging closer.

Alex's peculiar sense of humour is also returning.

ALEX
Can we pretend that alcohol isn't a drug?

Danny pours them both another shot.

DANNY
Absolutely.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

They're standing. Close. Not touching. Apart.

DANNY
(gentle)
Will you stop worrying about me?

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Danny & Alex. A sex scene.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Playing with chronology, before the scene sex, Alex and Danny standing, not touching, apart. Alex echoes --

ALEX
(gentle)
Will you stop worrying about me?

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Danny & Alex - the sex scene continued.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Back before the sex scene, Alex & Danny standing apart. Their hands tentatively break the gap between them.

As if this was their first touch. And, in a way, it is.

TO BLACK:

EXT. LONDON. VAUXHALL. EMBANKMENT RIVERSIDE. DAY

Close on Danny. Seated on a bench. Looking at camera. Handsome and happy. With tenderness he addresses 'us'.

DANNY (TO CAMERA)
You saw me.
(beat)
What I mean is... You... saw...

Danny struggles to express himself, trying to say 'we saw him the real him, not the facade'.

Unable to put that idea into words Danny touches his chest.

DANNY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)
You saw me.

And Danny can see that the person he's talking to - who

DANNY (TO CAMERA) (CONT'D)

And you asked if I was okay. Not like most people ask it, like they've asked it a hundred times that day already. You asked it like nothing else mattered to you. And I thought: "How does this... stranger... this person I've never seen before... how are they the only person in the whole world who knows..."

(sad)

That I'm not okay.

(beat, then happy)

But I was sure if I could just find out your name - if I could just find out who you were - everything would be okay.

Danny sure that everything is now okay. But 'we', the audience, should feel unease, that last line resonates off kilter, it doesn't land as sentimental, it lands as Not True.

Everything is not going to be okay.

Just as Danny is about to smile we --

We flip around to reveal that he's been talking to Alex.

Clearly we're much further along in their relationship. They're completely at ease with each other.

Danny is expecting his words to provoke a sentimental and warm moment. But Alex's reaction is troubled.

Alex considers carefully. Unsure if he should say something. Finally, softly, it slips out --

ALEX

What if everything isn't okay?

Danny's expression alters. As far as he's aware everything is perfect. With sophistication, he proceeds carefully.

DANNY

Then we tell each other. And we deal with... whatever it is. We deal with it. Together.

Alex looks at Danny and nods.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Is there something you want to tell me?

With MI6 in the background.

ALEX

No.

EXT. LONDON. VAUXHALL. EMBANKMENT. NIGHT

The exact same location. The same set up from the last frame of the previous scene. Except the bench where Danny and Alex were seated is now desolate and empty.

It's a bleak winter night. A light snow falls.

MI 6 glows in the darkness.

We pan across - drifting towards a door - as we get closer we hear the faint sound of Japanese music.

We drift towards this nondescript door, closer and closer, passing through it into the strange underground club --

Over the darkness we hear singing, by the sound, a woman's voice, tremendous depth of heartbreak and hurt.

FADE IN:

INT. BALLROOM GAY CLUB. STAGE. NIGHT

Reveal a drag act - not comedic - singing a powerful song. A fragile, sorrowful, Japanese man, dressed as a geisha. Singing a Japanese lullaby.

The voice is brittle and female: probably lip sync.

A bright spotlight on the mournful singer. Make up beginning to melt in the heat.

INT. BALLROOM GAY CLUB. BOOTH. NIGHT

The club is old and frayed, a neglected relic, popular forty years ago, now unsettling.

Danny's seated in a shadowy booth upholstered in worn fabric. Opposite him is Scottie in crushed velvet. Attire contrasting with civil service persona.

Their body language is strained. Scottie's watching the act on stage. Danny's watching Scottie.

DANNY

I'm excited you two are going to meet.

(no reply)

I should've organized it sooner.

Scottie belatedly nods, emptily.

SCOTTIE

A month or two, I could understand, I'm not so old I can't remember what it's like to be smitten. But eight months of listening to you declare how wonderful he is while failing to introduce us. Eight months feels wilful.

DANNY

I'm sorry.

Scottie's eyes remain on the stage and the singer.

Danny's troubled. Watching the depth of Scottie's hurt.

INT. BALLROOM GAY CLUB. STAGE. NIGHT

The fragile, sorrowful, geisha. Hurt and pain. A bright spotlight. The make up continues to melt.

INT. BALLROOM GAY CLUB. BAR. NIGHT

Danny at the busy bar. The lullaby continues on stage. He turns to see Alex enter.

Alex stands, smartly dressed, formal, straight from work, a little out of place.

He searches the crowd --

Danny doesn't wave, or signal, he waits. Sure enough, Alex and Danny's eyes connect.

With that connection, Alex seems to relax. No longer out of place. But then Danny checks on Scottie.

Scottie's been watching him. Caught, he turns his attention back to the stage --

INT. BALLROOM GAY CLUB. STAGE. NIGHT

The Japanese drag act, at the most intense peak of the song, more and more make-up melting with sweat.

INT. BALLROOM GAY CLUB. BOOTH. NIGHT

Alex and Danny at the table where Scottie is sitting. Scottie pays no attention to Alex, intent on the drag act. She's coming to the end of the song.

DANNY

Scottie, this is Alex.

Scottie raises a hand, asking for silence, as the

SCOTTIE (CONT'D)

I saw him in his tatty jeans, with his cropped hair and his puppy dog eyes. I could guess his sad story without hearing a word. I presumed, if I bought him a drink, that there wouldn't be a single second when he wasn't waiting for someone better to come along. What can I say? I'm a soft touch so I bought him that drink and to my surprise Danny talked to me the whole night. He didn't leave even when others stalked him. A small gesture, but it meant a great deal. We've been friends ever since. I'm the person he comes to when times are tough. And they often are. Poor Danny has a terrible track record of picking the wrong man. I'm sure he told you about --

DANNY

I did.

SCOTTIE

And yet Danny stayed with him, believing love meant sticking by your man even when they split your lip. And bruise your eye. He's an insufferable romantic. One of the last. When I asked him, once, what he wanted to do with his life...

(To Danny)

Do you mind?

Danny does mind.

DANNY

Go ahead.

SCOTTIE

He said: 'I always dreamed of being a better dad than my dad'.

DANNY

That wouldn't be hard.

SCOTTIE

So what are my duties tonight? Does it fall upon me to say - 'Don't break his heart'.

ALEX

I could never hurt Danny.

SCOTTIE

May I ask, as someone who has witnessed the breaking of many a heart, how you can be so sure?

ALEX

Because he's the only friend I have.

An exceptionally open remark. The force of it takes Danny by surprise as it does Scottie, who is struck full of wonder at this statement.

The wind goes out of Scottie's rhetorical sails.

Scottie raises his glass. His tone changes. His toast is affectionate. Melancholy. And genuine.

SCOTTIE

I'm pleased for you. I'm pleased for both of you.

EXT. BALLROOM GAY CLUB. NIGHT

Danny and Alex exit into a bitter winter night.

DANNY

Had you two met before?

ALEX

No.

Danny's about to say something but Alex moves off. Danny, troubled, lights up a cigarette.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Danny smoking, still troubled. Looks out of window --

EXT. DANNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING. COURTYARD. NIGHT

We see all the flats as before. Except one change:

The old man's flat is empty. All furniture gone. On the floor is a polystyrene cup of steaming coffee, beside a glass ash-tray, smoke rising from a cigarette.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Danny stares for a moment, thinking nothing of it.

At the sink he uses mouthwash. Looks at his reflection - clearly weighing something up.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Danny enters. The room has been transformed. Organized. Cleaner, less student-like.

Alex is already in bed, his body language communicates that he wants to sleep.

Danny shuts the door. He sits on the bed. Alex's back is turned to him. Danny puts a hand on him.

DANNY
Scottie asked if you knew how I
became his friend.

Alex turns and sits up. He judges Danny's expression.

ALEX
Danny, you don't need to tell me
anything --

DANNY
I need to tell you this.

ALEX
I love you.

The words strike Danny. His reaction suggests it's the first time Alex has said them.

ALEX
And I don't need to know.

DANNY
I love you. And I need you to
know.

Danny takes a moment. Then speaks calmly, softly, his control faltering only slightly.

DANNY
I was nineteen, like he said. A
bad time. I'd left home. I was

And they must have thought their
luck was in... Because they
didn't make a sound.

(beat)

The next day I couldn't stop
crying. I went to see Scottie.
I'd only met him a few times.
But he was the only person I
could trust. He took me straight
to the hospital. They put me on
a course of PEP --

Danny checks to see if Alex knows what PEP is.

DANNY

Emergency medication. In case you
might have been exposed to HIV. I
was on the drugs for twenty eight
days. There were... side effects.

Terrible ones, we sense, but no detail.

DANNY

I took so much time off work they
fired me. Because I couldn't
explain why... Scottie looked
after me. Sixteen weeks later I
had an HIV test. I was clear.

(beat)

And we were friends.

(beat)

I've never done anything like that
again. I swear. I was out of my
mind. I'm always safe. Always. I
don't know what happened to me
that night. I look back and I
don't recognise that person.

EXT. ALEX' S APARTMENT BUILDING. EVENING

Bag by his side, Danny rings the doorbell. The security camera a bulbous black spot. No reply. He waits.

Danny rings the bell again. Checks his watch. He takes out his phone. Dials Alex. Goes straight to voicemail.

Mild anxiety creeps over Danny. He dials again --

EXT. ALEX' S APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

Danny seated on the steps. Grim-faced. The house is dark. He looks at his phone. No calls.

Leaving his bag on the steps he walks into the street and looks up at the flat window.

The terrace. The bedroom. No lights. No sign of life.

EXT. ALEX' S APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

Danny still seated. Upset. Cold. He dials again. But a sense of futility prevails. No reply.

Suddenly it beeps - it's painful how excited Danny is. But the phone has a low battery. There are no messages.

INT. DANNY' S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Danny enters. Sara and Pavel and a group of friends are wasted, drunk, high, seated in a circle, chatting.

DANNY
Has anyone called for me?

But his voice is lost among the noise. No one hears him. There's laughter. Danny raises his voice:

DANNY
Has anyone called!

Shocked silence.

INT. DANNY' S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. DAWN

Danny seated on the bed. His phone beside him. He hasn't undressed. He hasn't slept.

EXT. CHELSEA. NIGHT

Heavy rain, Danny walking towards Alex's apartment.

EXT/INT. ALEX' S APARTMENT BUILDING / HALLWAY. NIGHT

Dripping wet, Danny posts a letter written to 'Alex'. As he's posting he sees a silhouette in the hallway.

Excited, Danny raps on the glass. The silhouette disappears into the darkness.

INT. DANNY' S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Danny still hasn't slept. Sara and Pavel are opposite him. Concerned, Sara places a pill in front of him.

PAVEL

You need to sleep.

Sara reaches out, touches Danny's arm. He looks up, putting on a weak imitation of his usual self.

DANNY

You never sleep.

PAVEL

(kind)

No. But you used to.

To appease them, Danny accepts the pill.

INT. DANNY' S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Danny drops the pill down the sink. Washes it away. Takes out his cigarettes instead.

He sits at the window. About to smoke.

We see the view --

EXT. DANNY' S APARTMENT BUILDING. COURTYARD. NIGHT

The room that previously belonged to the old man. A fleeting glimpse of a figure, and then the shutters slam shut, leaving only cigarette smoke.

EXT. DANNY' S APARTMENT BUILDING. COURTYARD. NIGHT

A ragged-sleep-deprived Danny, uncertain as to what he is doing, or why, enters the courtyard.

He lights his cigarette, smoking outside, eyes on the apartment with the shutters.

On the ground: a great many discarded cigarette butts.

He moves forward, without a rational explanation of why, about to tap on the window of the shuttered apartment, but he stops, ready to knock, but not doing so --

EXT. SCOTTIE'S HOUSE. HAMPSTEAD. DAY

Danny's hand knocking on Scottie's front door.

It opens.

A bedraggled Danny outside Scottie's home. Scottie looks him up and down.

There's concern. But also weariness.

IN the window of the shuttered apartment,

DANNY
I've fucked it up. I'd fucked it
up before I'd even met him.

SCOTTIE
You've tried everything?

Danny nods.

SCOTTIE
There's only one thing left to do.
Accept that it's over.

DANNY
I can't.

SCOTTIE
What other choice do you have?

Danny sits, head in his hands.

SCOTTIE
You'll get over it, Danny. Not

DANNY

Is this what you want?

He continues to strip. Not erotic. Pitiful. His shirt gets stuck over his head. He rips it free.

He stands, top off, jeans unbuttoned, in the middle of the flat. He's angry.

DANNY

What do I owe you? Five nights?
Ten nights? Tell me!

The reference to escorts hurts. As it was intended. A flash of shame. Danny sees that he's upset his friend.

DANNY

I'm sorry.

Scottie slowly picks up the dropped clothes.

DANNY

Scottie, I'm sorry.

Scottie folds them neatly and hands them to Danny.

His pain is clear. Not unrequited sexual desire. But of unrequited love. Danny's ashamed.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING. COMMUNAL HALLWAY. DAY

In his ripped shirt Danny climbs the stairs towards the front door, taking out his key --

Only to see it's been smashed open.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. HALLYWAY. DAY

The flat is in disarray.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. DAY

Danny enters his room to find it turned over. The mattress ripped open.

He stands - numb, believing it to be misfortune.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. DAY

Danny, Pavel and Sara are seated around the table. We play this scene on Danny, barely listening. His friends chat and banter in the background. He's not part.

PAVEL

We should call the police.

SARA

Nothing was taken. We couldn't give our stuff away.

INT. WAREHOUSE. ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE. DAY

Danny seated opposite his boss. Danny looks dreadful. His boss eyes him with genuine concern.

DANNY

I'm fine. You know me: I'm always fine.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. YARD. NIGHT

Very few people around.

Danny sips an energy drink. And smokes.

INT. WAREHOUSE. NIGHT

A graveyard shift.

Danny is leadenly following instructions on his handheld computer. Collecting orders.

On screen we see a route mapped through the maze.

Suddenly the computer screen goes blank. It reboots.

Danny stops walking. Waits.

On screen we see a different route mapped to a different location on the warehouse floor.

Danny changes direction, heading towards the gloomy far corner of the warehouse.

He arrives at the only aisle in shadow.

On screen the computer tells him to walk forward.

Danny steps into the darkness, nearing his destination. Straining his eyes in the gloom.

On screen the computer beeps loudly. He's at the destination. He stops.

He looks about, unsure. Until he spots a small package. Incongruous with the normal items.

Puzzled, Danny reaches forward. He takes the small box and examines it. Checks around. No one about.

He opens the box --

Inside are a set of four unmarked keys.

EXT. ALEX' S APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

Danny stands, unsure, keys in hands. He looks at the camera - the black eyeball staring at him.

He tries the first lock. The key doesn't fit. He switches. Second doesn't fit. Switches again --

It fits. The key turns.

INT. ALEX' S APARTMENT BUILDING. COMMUNAL HALLWAY. NIGHT

Danny enters. And examines the tray that collects the post. His letter to Alex isn't there.

Danny turns to the dark stairs leading up.

INT. ALEX' S APARTMENT BUILDING. STAIRWAY. NIGHT

Danny climbs the stairs, tentative, passing the doors to several apartments on the way up to --

The top floor. He knocks. No answer. He waits.

Danny uses the final key. And opens the door.

INT. ALEX' S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Danny enters. The apartment is dark. And spotlessly clean. Nothing seems disturbed.

DANNY

Hello?

Silence.

Danny tries the lights. They don't work. The room is in shadow. No laptop on the table.

Danny walks to the bedroom. Door shut.

He reaches for the handle --

INT. ALEX' S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Danny enters. The bed is made. Untouched. Clean.

Danny notices the cupboard door is ajar. He opens it --
All Alex's clothes are there. Perfectly organized.
Nothing has been taken. No bags packed.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Danny stares at the bathroom door. It's closed. He takes the handle.

He opens the door --

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Danny enters. The bathroom is spotless.

The bath is empty.

Danny opens the vanity closet. Everything there.
Toothbrush included.

Confused, Danny perches on the edge of the bath.
Staring at the keys which are in his hand.

Then he notices on the glistening white tiles: his shoe
has left damp footprints.

Danny crouches, examining the marks.

Not from the bathroom.

He stands and follows the footprints out --

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Danny traces his own footprints. They lead back to --

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

A spot in front of the wardrobe. There's a damp patch
on the floor. A small puddle.

Danny looks up at the ceiling and sees a corresponding
damp stain on the white ceiling.

He steps onto the bed, examining the ceiling more
carefully. It's soaked. Something leaking through.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Danny staring at a small steel handle in the ceiling.
An access panel. Concealed. Hard to spot.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Danny stands on a chair. He grips the handle and pulls. With a jolt down come a flight of stairs.

Evidently, from his reaction, Danny has never seen this before. He looks up.

A faint flickering light beckons him.

DANNY

Alex?

He climbs the steps.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. ATTIC. NIGHT

Danny climbs up through a narrow portal-like gap, entering a dark & unsettling space.

Imagine climbing into the inside of a hollow timber brain, sloping shallow lobes at the front, high in the middle, shallow at the back.

This is a raw attic space. Exposed beams. There are no windows. Not continuous with the apartment.

And yet...

In the very centre, the hub of this space, is a mattress. A bed. Disturbed sheets. But not set up like a domestic bed.

It's a Japanese style low bed. With no headboard. There are lights underneath creating a pool of soft light around the bed. Noirish & enticing.

Opposite the bed is a wardrobe. Much like the wardrobe we saw in Alex's bedroom. Except instead of white this one is black.

Hanging from the ceiling, creating a clearly defined zone, is a circle of soft glow exposed filament bulbs.

Each beautiful bulb hangs from an individual wire. Each beautiful bulb is a slightly different height creating the effect of a halo around the bed, the shape of which mirrors the pool of light on the floor.

This is someone's special space.

The whole set up fits into a single frame - a single image.

Someone has taken time and care to create this place.

Danny is amazed. What-the-fuck-is-this? It's odd and intriguing and beautiful all at the same time.

Danny is drawn forward.

In order to reach the bed he must pass through the cordon of orange bulbs, he brushes them aside and they swing back and forth behind him, like wind charms.

Danny looks down at the bed. The sheets are expensive. Crumpled. Used.

The pillows are arranged, but not for sleeping.

On one side of the bed is cabinet. And on it is antique Victorian box. Danny opens it. A music box. A ballet figure turns. A song plays slowly, warped and distorted.

Danny explores this box further. He lifts up the ballet figure. Underneath her we discover --

Set up like a Victorian chemist, exquisite glass jars. Inside the jars are powders, liquids, pills.

Poppers in a glass bottle. Danny sniffs. Powders in glass bottles. Of different kinds. Some crystals. Some chalk fine.

There's a silver straw. A mirror.

Danny empties some of the white powder onto the mirror. He touches it, leaving a clearly defined white finger print.

He tastes the powder. He recognizes the drug.

And now he notices above the bed: a series of mirrors. Not just one, but several rectangular mirrors arranged in a lattice shape. Danny stares up at his multiple reflections.

And beyond the mirror, on the ceiling is sound proof foam.

The entire attic has been insulated. Danny stands on the bed and squeezes it, as though trying to understand it.

He looks down, seeing Alex's specialist laptop on the other side of the bed, on the floor.

Danny sits on the edge of the bed, beside the laptop.

He touches the strange metal keypad.

The screen comes to life. The laptop has been connected to a bank of screens. They all come to life. Bright light.

Grainy footage begins playing on the screens - hard to distinguish. Sexual in nature. Pleasure that sounds like pain. A man. Gay porn.

Danny shuts the laptop, turning the screens off, plunging the attic back into the previously soft orange light.

And now Danny turns his attention to the wardrobe.

In a direct parallel of the apartment sequence Danny opens the doors --

Instead of Burberry suits there are sex suits, carefully hung up, glossy black leather. Perfectly smooth. A discrete zip down the back. Beautiful stitching and expert craftsmanship.

One after the other.

They're works of great skill. Expensive.

Danny looks down. There are boxes underneath the suits.

He opens one, coming face to face with a mask, mounted on a plastic head, black plastic eyes staring at him.

A zipper for a mouth.

Now Danny crouches down, opening the drawers under the wardrobe doors.

Again we parallel the apartment footage.

Instead of ties, in the first drawer, we find ropes, carefully arranged, in neat knots, some fine, some coarse.

Neatly arranged, from the thickest to the finest.

In the drawer below we discover sex toys - dildos, butt plugs. Not cheap, expensive, each in a special case.

Everything perfect. Everything beautiful.

Danny stands. Confused. He shuts the wardrobe door and as he does he sees something behind the wardrobe.

Beside the glow of a heater is the boarding school trunk we saw earlier on the walk.

On its side, upright, like an obelisk.

There are clear damp marks around the base. The timbers it rests upon are soaked.

For the first time Danny becomes scared.

He takes a step towards it, pushing his way out of the ring of bulbs which sway back and forth behind him.

Danny looks down, noticing the scratch marks on the

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT HALLWAY. NIGHT

Danny takes the first few steps at speed and loses his footing, tumbling down and landing hard on his back.

His breathing is panicked.

On his back, terrified, he stares up at the attic. He takes a moment. Then slowly stands.

He reaches for the telephone. A portable phone. He picks it up. But then sees on the back of his hand --

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. ATTIC. NIGHT

Danny tentatively enters the attic. The trunk has largely emptied.

Danny has no option but to look in its direction.

It's a struggle. The smell: he gags.

But he remains focused. His attention is on the laptop.

Danny walks towards it.

His actions are uncertain, acting on instinct, not knowledge. He takes hold of the laptop, flipping it over and opening the battery case.

Danny takes out the battery and peers at it. Something wrong. A crack down the side. He breaks it open --

The battery case is hollow.

Inside is a small cylindrical object, taped in place.

Danny pulls it free, examining it. We can't identify what it might be. Wrapped tight in plastic tape.

We hear the sound of police sirens.

Danny hurries to the stairs. About to go down.

But then a thought occurs to him. He returns to the laptop and hastily reassembles the hollow battery. And puts it back in place. He wipes his prints off.

The police sirens are getting louder.

Danny hurries to the stairs.

EXT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. TERRACE. NIGHT

Danny opens the terrace doors, looking out.

Seven police cars have pulled up outside.

The officers are in a hurry.

Danny looks at the cylinder.

He hides it in his pocket.

The intercom system rings loudly.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Danny at the intercom.

On screen we see the police officers.

Danny buzzes them in.

He looks down at his pocket. The cylinder is clearly visible. He takes it out. And stuffs it in his sock.

There's a loud knock on the door.

Danny is about to open it when he has second thoughts about the cylinder in his sock --

Leaving the door shut, he runs to the kitchen.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Danny opens the fridge door, grabbing a bottle of water. He takes the cylinder and puts it in his mouth.

The knocking on the door is urgent and angry.

POLICE (OFF SCREEN)

Open up!

Danny gulps the water, swallowing the cylinder. We should see it forced down his neck.

POLICE (OFF SCREEN)

Open the door!

The knocking is now so loud it feels like they're going to smash the door down.

Danny is red faced. We think he's going to choke. But it goes down. With excruciating difficulty.

He hurries to the door.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Danny opens the door.

A wall of police officers flow into the apartment.

THIS SCENE IS CUT

INT. POLICE STATION. INTERROGATION ROOM. NIGHT

Stark white. The room is strange, disorienting and bizarre. Proportions odd. Abattoir-like.

Danny is seated. No lawyer present.

The Detective opposite him is in her forties: Detective Taylor. Her hair is cropped short, not as a style, but having returned to work after chemotherapy.

She makes no reference to this, a silent fact, imbuing her character with a sense of experience, wisdom, and world weariness. Sagacity & Lassitude.

There's a second officer present but we're not interested in them. This is between Danny and Taylor.

Danny is emotional. Confused. When he sips a coffee his hand trembles. All of which is noticed by Taylor.

DANNY

His name is Alex.
(beat)

Danny is thrown.

DANNY
This is Alex.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
Your partner?

DANNY
Yes.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
What kind of relationship did you
have with him?

Suddenly Danny is wary of her. Of this room.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
Did it involve sadism? Drugs?

Not moralistic. She's matter of fact.

DANNY
No.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
You see - it's hard for me to
believe you were in a serious
relationship, when you don't
even know his name.

Danny in disbelief. Taylor watches his reaction closely.
Danny's instinct is to protest but he loses his nerve.

Taylor takes the photograph, holding it up.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
This man is called Alistair.
(beat)
His parents are alive.
(beat)
He did not work for a bank.

Silence. Danny is bewildered.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR
Is it possible that you enjoyed
extreme sexual encounters with
someone who didn't want you to
know their name? With someone who
wanted that side of themselves a
secret?

Danny bewildered as this alternate history of their love
story is mapped out, with evidence and facts.

She puts down photographs of the extreme and
provocative sex instruments found in the attic.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR

Is it possible?

Photographs of the drugs. Of the video footage.

DETECTIVE TAYLOR

Is it possible?

More and more photographs. A layer of them over the image of Alex/Alistair until he can't be seen.

INT/EXT. BLACK CAB / LONDON. DAWN

Danny and Scottie are on the back seat.

DANNY
He lied. About everything.

SCOTTIE
When we met --

DANNY
You knew?

SCOTTIE
Not exactly. Our paths had never
crossed. But I recognized the
type of person he was. I see
them in the corridors of
Whitehall. People with power.
And secrets. Their importance
emanates from them. I felt it
strongly in his presence.

Danny doesn't follow. He doesn't understand.

Scottie looks at him with affection. He's an innocent.

SCOTTIE
Danny, he was a spy.

The age of innocence comes to an end.

EXT. DANNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING. DAWN

The taxi has parked. Waiting. Door open. Danny is on the
street. Scottie beside him.

DANNY
I'm not sure how I'll ever be
able to repay you.

They embrace.

Scottie moves to the cab but as if struck by an
afterthought, he stops and turns.

SCOTTIE
Danny, the police are concerned
you might have taken something
from the crime scene. Some
personal item. Something of
sentimental value. But you
wouldn't have done that, would
you?

Danny looks at his brilliant friend. And for the first
time doesn't quite trust him.

DANNY

Of course not.

Scottie holds the look, wondering.

SCOTTIE

No. Of course not.

Scottie gets into the cab and shuts the door.

Danny waits, watching him go. Scottie looks at him through the window at the cab pulls off.

Once the cab is gone Danny turns to look at the street. At the cars parked. At the windows overlooking him. At the strangers passing. At the traffic.

And then, in the distance, over the railway - MI 6 headquarters. Looming in the skyline.

Danny stares, as if seeing it for the first time.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. FRONT DOOR. DAWN

Danny stands in front of the door to his apartment. His finger on the scars from the break-in.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. DAWN

Danny looks at the room with new eyes. The smashed drawers. The ripped mattress.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. DAWN

Danny sits on the window ledge - looking out.

We see the view --

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. DAWN

Danny unplugs the radio and takes it with him.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. DAWN

Danny plugs the radio in. Turns it to the news.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. MORNING