

HOME AT THE END

by Duncan Ley

-SCENE EXCERPT-

ACT TWO - SCENE ONE.

Flat, grey walls. Clean, bland space. JOE in a hospital bed with a drip, isolated. A dressing on his shoulder. He wears nothing but a patient's gown.

A rubber ball rolls into view. JOE stares at it neutrally. MOLLY then enters, chasing it down. JOE does not react to her presence. Once she captures the ball, she sits down and quietly plays with it, in the middle of the floor.

ANDIE enters, as a NURSE. Neither pay any attention to MOLLY. For them she is not there. She checks the drip, checks his pulse, writes in the chart, gives him medication, and so on.

JOE *(after a while)* What, what happened?

ANDIE *(as she goes about her nursing duties)* Well, he got us, Joe. Molly and me. While you were in the bathroom. Shot us, killed us dead. Bang bang, and all that.

JOE Are, are you sure?

ANDIE Oh yes, it's a done deal, Joe, I'm afraid. No going back now. 'Course, it wasn't just us. Many, many more. Men, women, children. Terrible.

JOE But not me?

ANDIE Not you, Joe. Not you, my love. Now, now, stop that, don't cry, no need to cry. No need to cry, my beautiful man. Let me have a look at your shoulder, thank you. Healing nicely. Quite lucky you were, really. Two rounds went through the plaster wall, into the bathroom. One merely grazed your ear. The other, lodged in your shoulder. It's out now, of course, once they operated. Very lucky.

JOE Lucky?

ANDIE Let's have none of that now. Let's call it luck and move on.

JOE Molly?

ANDIE I told you before, Joe.

JOE *(calls out weakly to her)* Molly. *(but MOLLY picks up the ball and leaves)* Don't go, Molly, come play with daddy. Come back and play with daddy.

ANDIE She's not there, Joe.

JOE *(reaching out and holding ANDIE's hand)* You, you won't leave, will you?

ANDIE *(stares at his hand on hers, then gently places her other hand on his, becoming not ANDIE, but the NURSE, and gently:)* I need my hand back to pour you some water. Mr. Smith? Mr. Smith.

JOE You... you, you remind me of my wife.

NURSE I'm sure she's much prettier than me.

JOE *(absently)* Yes.

NURSE And I'll need you to take these three pills, Mr. Smith. There's an anti-inflammatory for your shoulder, I love you Joe, and the two panadeine-forte will help with the discomfort, and help you sleep. I need to tell you that there's a police officer outside who wants to ask you a few questions, but anytime you want to stop, or if you start feeling sleepy, why did you do it Joe, you just tell him so and he'll stop. You can also call myself or the doctor on your call button. Dr. Wicks will also be there – do you remember Dr. Wicks, Mr. Smith? He had a brief chat with you after your second operation. *(JOE thinks, but shakes his head)* He'll be on hand if it all gets a bit upsetting for you.

JOE Andie?

NURSE That's the name of your wife, isn't it?

JOE Yes.

NURSE Could you swallow those pills for me please, Mr. Smith? *(he does so, with her assistance)* That's great, and if you can lean forward for me, I'll just position your pillows so you're a little more upright. *(he does so)* There. *(she kisses him on the mouth)* Remember what I told you, Mr. Smith. Anytime you feel tired or disorientated or upset, you tell the police officer or Dr. Hicks or just press your call-button. Are you ready? Alright, I'll leave now, and let them in. *(backing away)* Stay calm, Joe, stay calm baby.

JOE Wait. Please.

ANDIE *(as she leaves)* On the count of three, Joe, Three, Two, One, Go. POLICE VOICES flood the room. They continually over-lap, repeat, echo – a montage of interrogation)

POLICE #1 Mr. Smith?

POLICE #2 Mr. Joseph Smith?

POLICE #3 You're Joseph Smith?

POLICE #1 Joseph Smith

POLICE #4 Can I call you

POLICE #1 Joseph

ALL Joe!

POLICE #2 Joe-boy

POLICE #3 Smithy

POLICE #1 Mr. Smith ever so sorry Mr. Smith

POLICE #5 I'm a police

POLICE #3 Man

POLICE #4 Woman

ALL Officer

POLICE #3 I'm a detective

POLICE #2 Constable

POLICE #1 Detective Constable

POLICE #3 Detective Chief Constable

POLICE #4 Sergeant

POLICE #1 Inspector

POLICE #5 Chief-Inspector

POLICE #3 Superintendent

POLICE #1 Chief-Superintendent

POLICE #4 Head-chief-Sergeant

POLICE #2 Grand-Crown-Constable-Inspector

POLICE #5 Detective-Constable-Sergeant-Inspector-Super-Super-Super-Super

ALL Officers

POLICE #1 We're Police Officers

POLICE #5 And there are a few questions

POLICE #3 Only a few

POLICE #2 Just a few

POLICE #4 A couple

POLICE #5 The usual

POLICE #1 No not the usual this is not the usual this is

POLICE #2 Terrible

POLICE #4 Tragic, it's a tragic

POLICE #1 Tragedy, a tragic

ALL Event

POLICE #3 A tragedy for the

POLICE #5 Locals

POLICE #2 The local community

POLICE #1 Region

POLICE #2 Area

POLICE #1 State

POLICE #2 Nation

POLICE #1 World

POLICE #2 The Whole Entire Universe

POLICE #3 And

POLICE #4 And I'm shocked, we're all shocked

POLICE #5 Shocking shocking truly

POLICE #3 Awesome

ALL Awful

POLICE #3 It fills one with awe

POLICE #2 Awful, awful

POLICE #4 Horrific, what a

POLICE #1 Loss

POLICE #5 What an awful

POLICE #1 Loss

ALL So sorry so very

POLICE #1 Sorry for your loss

POLICE #3 I'm at a loss

POLICE #4 For words

POLICE #2 So

POLICE #5 So very sorry

POLICE #2 Condolences

POLICE #4 Sympathies

POLICE #2 Condolences and sympathies and

POLICE #3 That sort of thing and

POLICE #5 Lots and lots of flowers

POLICE #1 Outside, in the hall, outside the hospital

POLICE #4 Your home

POLICE #3 You should see your home

POLICE #5 Now I know you can't

POLICE #2 Oh a shame

POLICE #5 Go home

JOE Home

POLICE #5 You can't go home can you?

POLICE #3 Can you go home?

JOE No

POLICE #4 No, the operation, what was it, one?

POLICE #2 No, two?

POLICE #3 Three?

JOE No, two

POLICE #5 Two operations, must recover

POLICE #1 Get better

POLICE #2 Get well

POLICE #3 Get well soon

POLICE #4 Well enough to heal and then you can

POLICE #5 Answer some questions

ALL Just a few only a few just a few

POLICE #3 Questions questions questions questions questions

POLICE #4 Will you will you will you

POLICE #1 Can you can you

POLICE #5 To help

POLICE #2 To help us

POLICE #3 To help all of us

ALL To help all of us understand

POLICE #2 To help you

POLICE #1 Understand, we want to understand

POLICE #4 We want you to understand

POLICE #5 We all want to understand

ALL What happened

POLICE #1 What did happen?

POLICE #3 Something happened?

POLICE #1 Yes something happened

POLICE #5 What happened when why how what where there?

POLICE #4 There where we why

POLICE #2 How there when where

POLICE #1 What were how why there why there

POLICE #3 Why there why anywhere

POLICE #4 Why you you why

JOE There was this other man, standing there

ALL Ooooooh! Another man!

JOE Not the shooter, another man

POLICE #2 Not the shooter?

JOE Just standing there

POLICE #1 Standing where?

JOE There

ALL Standing there!

POLICE #2 Tall or small?

POLICE #5 Fat or thin?

POLICE #4 Black or white?

POLICE #1 Clothes loose or tight?

POLICE #5 A patron?

POLICE #2 A waiter?

POLICE #4 Passer-by?

POLICE #3 Asylum-seeker?

JOE I don't know, I had to go to the bathroom

POLICE #1 You had to go to the bathroom

POLICE #3 Of course!

POLICE #5 Of course (*singing*) you had to go, you had to go, you simply had to go to...

ALL (*singing*) ...the bathroom!

POLICE #3 Ones or twos?

POLICE #2 Wees or poos?

POLICE #5 Piss or shit?

POLICE #1 Mama's favourite golden shower

POLICE #4 Or dropping a couple of kids off at the pool?

JOE Well I

POLICE #3 Wipe or shake?

POLICE #2 Flush? Half-flush? Was it

POLICE #5 Before or after

POLICE #3 The gunshots

POLICE #1 Oh don't be stupid he's hardly going to flush after

POLICE #2 the shooting

POLICE #4 Mass shooting

POLICE #3 Heaps of

ALL Shooting shooting shooting your

POLICE #4 Partner

POLICE #5 Better half

POLICE #3 Ball and chain

POLICE #1 Wife

POLICE #2 Husband

POLICE #4 Married to Andrea Josephine –

POLICE #3 Bit of a stunner

JOE What?

POLICE #3 Not now of course, not now

POLICE #5 Joseph

POLICE #1 Josephine

POLICE #4 One Andrea Josephine Smith, shot at close range

POLICE #3 Very

POLICE #4 Close range

POLICE #3 Point blank really

POLICE #4 Shot at point blank range, twice

POLICE #5 First shot

POLICE #3 Bang

POLICE #5 In the back

POLICE #2 Second in the head

POLICE #1 Killed her instantly

POLICE #4 Dead dead dead

POLICE #5 And of course we mustn't forget

POLICE #1 Mustn't forget

POLICE #3 Milly!

ALL Milly?

JOE No

POLICE #5 Molly Milly

POLICE #2 Milly Molly

ALL Milly Molly Mandy!

JOE No!

POLICE #3 Sorry

POLICE #4 Milly not Molly

JOE No!

POLICE #3 Sorry

POLICE #5 Molly not Milly

POLICE #3 Sorry

POLICE #4 Molly Molly Molly short for

POLICE #2 Just Molly just Molly

ALL Molly Molly Molly

JOE It's Molly, just Molly

POLICE #2 She's dead I'm afraid Joe, they both are

ALL Dead

POLICE #3 Really

ALL Dead

POLICE #2 And Mr. Smith?

JOE Yes?

POLICE #1 We're very sorry for your loss.

JOE *waits, but the voices are gone.*

JOE There was this other man.

VICTORIA *(off)* Joseph Smith.

JOE There was this other man.

VICTORIA *(off)* Joseph Smith.

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