

EASTENDERS

EPISODE NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY SIX

By

JAMES PAYNE

SCENE 986/1. SQUARE. EXT. NIGHT. 00.48.

LO

[THE HOUSES OF ALBERT SQUARE ARE STEEPED IN DARKNESS.

THE SQUARE GARDENS LOOK SIMILARLY SLUMBERED. UNTIL...

THE LIGHT FROM A MOBILE PHONE ILLUMINATES AN ANGELIC FACE: BEN'S.

HE SITS ON ARTHUR'S BENCH, LEGS SWINGING BENEATH HIM, SCROLLING THROUGH HIS LIST OF NAMES. THEY ALL SAY 'PHIL'.

BEN LOOKS UP AT THE DARK WINDOWS OF THE VIC, RUBS HIS FACE [THE SAME WAY PHIL DOES], PUTS THE PHONE AWAY. WE SEE IT'S NOT PROPERLY STOWED.

BEHIND HIM HE HEARS THE SOUND OF A DOOR CLOSING. HE DUCKS DOWN BEHIND SOME BUSHES AND SEES PHIL AND GRANT EMERGING FROM THE MOONS HOUSE]

GRANT: What a night, eh?

PHIL: Do you reckon he'll be alright?

GRANT: Good night's kip will do him the power of good.

PHIL: [YAWNS] He ain't the only one.

[GRANT LOBS THE CAR KEYS AT PHIL]

GRANT: Get the motor first. I'll stick the kettle on.

[PHIL TUTS, HEADS DOWN BRIDGE STREET TO RETRIEVE THE RANGE ROVER. GRANT HEADS INTO THE PUB SIDE GATE.]

BEN EMERGES FROM HIS HIDING PLACE AND WATCHES PHIL WALKING DOWN BRIDGE STREET.

HE BITES HIS LIP, ANGRY, WANTING TO SHOUT SOMETHING. NOTHING COMES.

INSTEAD HE TURNS AND MAKES FOR THE OPPOSITE GARDENS EXIT.

HE DARTS FOR COVER AGAIN WHEN A DIM LIGHT GOES ON AT THE BRANNINGS.

A SCARY SILHOUETTE OF DOT [IN WHEELCHAIR] LOOMS UPON THE NET CURTAINS: A HITCHCOCKIAN IRONSIDE]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/2. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT.
NIGHT. 00.49/T.C.

D O A

[THE ROOM IS ILLUMINATED BY A SMALL LAMP. WARY DOT [IN DRESSING GOWN AND HAIRNET] TUGS AT THE CURTAINS, DOUBLE CHECKING JOE FIXED THEM BACK UP PROPERLY.

SHE PEELS THE CURTAIN BACK AND PEERS OUT. WE LINGER ON THE SCENE, DOUSED IN A CARAVAGGIO LIGHT]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/3. SQUARE. EXT. NIGHT.
00.50/T.C.

LO

[BEN REMAINS OUT OF SIGHT. A LIGHT
GOES ON IN THE FOWLERS KITCHEN]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/4. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT.
NIGHT. 00.51/T.C.

D O A

[DOT REGISTERS SURPRISE. SHE LOOKS AT THE CLOCK- 00.51AM.]

[DOT FISHES DOWN THE SIDE OF HER WHEELCHAIR, PULLS OUT HER DICTAPHONE AND HITS RECORD]

DOT: Good Friday: Illumination at midnight fifty one. Observing gate activity... [SHE LOOKS] Ooh, hello... He's coming out and... taking the rubbish back in! What's that all about? What's in the rubbish?

[DOT NIBBLES A BISCUIT, PONDERING DEEPLY]

JIM: What you doing?

DOT: [STARTS] Oh, Jim, don't creep up on me like that!

[JIM STANDS IN THE DOORWAY IN HIS UNDERWEAR, SCRATCHING HIS HEAD]

I might have missed something now!

JIM: At ten to bleeding one? Come away.

[AS DOT RELUCTANTLY GOES TO DRAW THE CURTAIN SOMETHING CATCHES HER EYE]

DOT: There's something in the bushes, Jim! See, what did I say?

[JIM COMES OVER TO THE WINDOW]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/7. IAN'S HOUSE. INT. DAY LIGHT.
09.30.

AGE

[HALLWAY. AS WE LOOK UP THE OMINOUSLY
EMPTY STAIRS WE HEAR THE SOUND OF
MORNING BUSTLE: RADIO, CROCKERY]

IAN: [O/S. CALLS] Come on, Ben, shake a
leg!

[THE STAIRS REMAIN EMPTY.]

GO TO: KITCHEN. BOBBY PLAYS IN HIS
HIGH CHAIR. PETER AND LUCY EAT TOAST]

I'm meeting Auntie Pat in the cafe in a
minute. You two and Ben come over as soon
as you're dressed.

LUCY: What is this obsession with
animals? Wildlife Park on Monday, the city
farm today...

IAN: Bobby likes it there. And so will
Ben.

LUCY: A couple of pigs and a chicken
really isn't going to be a big wow.

PETER: Can't Lucy go on her own? I went
swimming with Ben yesterday.

IAN: What's the matter with you two? Your
Gran used to take me there when I was
little. Pat's given up her day. Show some
gratitude.

[AWKWARD PAUSE. MADE MORE AWKWARD BY
JANE ENTERING]

[SUBSERVIENT] Morning, love.

[JANE SMILES. PAUSE]

Do you want some breakfast?

JANE: [FORCED UPBEAT] No, I'd better get
over to the cafe.

IAN: Actually, I thought you could take
the day off. I've booked you in at that
new treatment place up the high street.

JANE: [TAKEN ABACK] Really?

IAN: [SHRUGS] After yesterday...

[JANE SEES PETER AND LUCY WATCHING
HER, ANXIOUS. SHE GESTURES FOR IAN TO
JOIN HER IN THE HALL]

JANE: You apologised last night.

IAN: What I said was unforgiveable. It's
Phil that's making me like this- the front
he had coming round here...

JANE: [WEARY] Alright, let's not get into
the blame game again.

IAN: The kids are starting to pick up the
atmosphere. I don't want them worrying
about us on top everything else. I just
want to have a nice, fun Easter.

[UNDERSTANDING JANE NODS, SMILES AT HUNCHED IAN]

JANE: It'd better be the works. Not some two bob voucher from the Walford Gazette...

IAN: [SMILES] It's top of the range.
[HANDS JANE A BAG] Have a good time.

[IAN GIVES JANE A KISS AND A HUMBLE SMILE. JANE HEADS OUT.]

RELIEVED IAN TURNS AND SEES PETER AND LUCY WATCHING FROM THE KITCHEN DOORWAY, SMILING, PLEASED AT THE RECONCILIATION]

[BRIGHTLY. CALLS UP STAIRS] Ben! Chop chop! We haven't got all day.

[IAN GOES BACK INTO THE KITCHEN, CLOSES THE DOOR. OUT ON THAT SILENT STAIRCASE. WHEN WILL THEY REALISE?]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/8. BRIDGE STREET. EXT. DAY
LIGHT. 09.33.

LO

[SOUND OF LOCKS. YAWNING PHIL EMERGES FROM THE VIC, TEA IN HAND.]

GO TO: GARRY AND MINTY SAUNTERING OUT OF THE CAFE]

GARRY: Working on an holiday... It's wrong. We ought to be in the pub with everyone else getting slowly sozzled.

MINTY: Shut up moaning, it's only an half day.

[THEY PASS YAWNING PHIL]

Late night?

[PHIL NODS. HE CATCHES SIGHT OF A HAGGARD LOOKING JAKE, CARRYING BIN BAGS]

PHIL: Didn't think I'd see you up and about just yet. You alright?

JAKE: [NODS] Got some cleaning to do.

PHIL: Want an hand? These two are free this afternoon.

GARRY: Oi.
[GARRY AND MINTY SCUTTLE ON]

JAKE: Thanks. I'll be alright.

PHIL: Come and have a pint then when you're finished.

[JAKE NODS APPRECIATIVELY, HEADS OFF.
PHIL SPIES JANE HEADED TOWARD HIM]

How's Ben this morning?

JANE: [SHRUGS] Still in bed.

PHIL: Ian was out of order yesterday.

JANE: [DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR IT] Yeah, alright, Phil-

PHIL: He's the one making the threats he knows ain't going to work. Tell him I'm expecting a call from my solicitor this morning.

JANE: [SHORT] Look, Phil, can we just have one day where Ben isn't the main focus of attention, please.

[JANE CONTINUES ON UP BRIDGE STREET.]

GO TO: BRANNINGS. JIM STANDS WITH JOE AS THE CHURCH MINIBUS [LOADED WITH PENSIONERS] PULLS UP]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/9. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 09.37.

D O A

[DOT IS PEERING OUT OF THE WINDOW.
SHE QUICKLY PRETENDS TO BE READING
HER BIBLE AS JIM ENTERS]

JIM: Minibus is here.

[DOT CASUALLY LOOKS OUT OF THE
WINDOW]

DOT: Look at him... Using the Church as a
mask of respectability.

[JIM ROLLS HIS EYES]

Going down the bins... Awake at one in the
morning... Plotting with his cohort, Bert,
no doubt.

JIM: Tap it on the head, Dorothy- he's
Pauline's husband!

DOT: Marriage doesn't transmute a person.
Charlie proved that to me a long time ago.

JIM: Well, I'm disappointed in you. I
thought you drew lessons from that Bible
of yours but obviously not.

DOT: What do you mean?

JIM: The story of doubting Thomas...?

[DOT LOOKS PUZZLED]

He doubted Jesus had come back to life, didn't he? So Jesus got his finger and stuck it in his ribs. What's that teach us...? Think the best of people.

[DOT PUFFS HER CHEEKS IN IRRITATION]

DOT: No Jim, it teaches us you shouldn't need to see God in order to have faith.

JIM: Oh... Does it? I never did pay much attention at Sunday school. I was always the berk chiming in with an 'Amen' when I should've been giving a 'thanks be to God'.

DOT: As long as you're not giving thanks to the pub and the bookies I'll be happy.

JIM: [SCOFFS] As if. [RUEFUL] There's no racing on Good Friday anyway.

DOT: And what about drinking?

[JIM TACTFULLY IGNORES THE QUESTION AS JOE ENTERS]

JIM: All yours, Joe!

[JOE PUSHES DOT OUT OF THE LIVING ROOM]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/10. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
9.38/T.C.

LO

[JOE CAREFULLY PUSHES DOT DOWN THE RAMP]

JOE: Did you sleep well last night?

DOT: Better than you. Did you find what you were looking for?

JOE: Beg your pardon?

DOT: Look at the innocence! Butter wouldn't melt. I saw you... Going through the bins like a dirty stray.

JOE: Oh, that? I'd chucked a couple of blocks away after fixing the gate. I thought I could use them for sanding today.

[BERT [ON HIS WAY TO SLATER'S] PASSES HOLDING A PASTRY BOX]

BERT: Come on, Joe, you need a more imaginative lie than that.

[JOE SCOWLS AT BERT- SHUT UP. BERT BRINGS THE MINIBUS LIFT DOWN]

JOE: Once you're up the driver will see you're secured in.

[DOT LOOKS SURPRISED TO SEE ANOTHER MAN CLIMB INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT]

DOT: You're not driving?

JOE: No. Adam's going to take you.

DOT: But... You'll be here and I'll be there.

JOE: [SMILES] Yes. Expect it'll be nice to have a break from my ugly mug for the day, eh?

DOT: I don't want to go.

JIM: What?

DOT: I think I'm getting one of my heads.

JOE: Dot, you've got to go-

[DOT STARTS TO WHEEL HERSELF BACK TO THE BRANNINGS]

DOT: I'll listen to the service on the radio and keep watch on the flock- [AT JOE] Black sheep and all.

[JOE PUFFS HIS CHEEKS, ROLLS HIS EYES]

JOE: [UNDER HIS BREATH] Great.

[PHIL LEANS OVER THE RAILINGS]

PHIL: Three for two drinks today.

DOT: [TUTS] Drinking... Today's a day to reflect on Jesus' suffering.

PHIL: [TO JIM/ JOE] Spread the word. In a non biblical sense.

DOT: If you had a strand of Christian faith, Phil, you'd close that pub and hold prayers instead.

PHIL: [CHUCKLES] Close the pub? Come on, Dot, that would be blasphemous.

[JIM AND JOE STIFLE CHUCKLES. PHIL SAUNTERS OFF]

DOT: [CALLS] Many didn't believe on this day. They believed well enough when the stone was rolled back and His son was nowhere to be found.

[OUT ON PHIL, THE SMIRK ON HIS FACE FADING AS A CHILL RUNS DOWN HIS SPINE]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/11. IAN'S HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 10.18.

AGE

[LUCY RACES DOWN THE STAIRS]

LUCY: He's gone! Ben's gone!

[IAN AND PETER COME OUT OF THE
KITCHEN]

IAN: What do you mean he's gone?

LUCY: There were two pillows under the
duvet! He's not in his room.

[IAN STANDS THERE FOR A MOMENT, PALE.
HE RACES BACK UPSTAIRS]

IAN: Ben! [OOV] Ben, if you're hiding
come out. This isn't a game.

[PETER AND LUCY STAND AT THE FOOT OF
THE STAIRS.]

IAN COMES BACK DOWNSTAIRS,
OVERWHELMED BY PANIC]

[TO PETER] Did you hear him go?

PETER: No. He was in his bed when I went
to sleep.

IAN: Ben!

[IAN CHECKS LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN,
UNDER THE STAIRS]

SCENE 986/12. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
10.19/T.C.

LO

[WE SEE AN AGITATED IAN APPROACHING
THE SQUARE GARDENS as a SMILING PAT
EMERGES FROM NO.31]

PAT: Do you think I'll need wellies-
because I ain't got any.

IAN: Ben's gone missing.

PAT: What?

IAN: The kids are at home. Can you look
after them?

PAT: Course. How long's he been gone?

IAN: I don't know.

[PAT STRIDES OVER TOWARD THE BEALE'S
PLACE as ian CONTINUES ON TOWARD THE
PLAYGROUND.

OBLIVIOUS DOT COMES TO THE WINDOW,
JUST IN TIME TO MISS ALL THE ACTION]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/13. ARCHES. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
10.22/T.C.

LO

[GARRY'S WORKING OUTSIDE THE ARCHES.
MINTY [CUP OF TEA IN HAND] IS READING
A SIGN OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

GARRY: Funnily enough he doesn't feel the need to explain. Something about Ben though I think.

[IAN PUTS TWO AND TWO TOGETHER AND GETS FIVE. HE HEADS BACK ONTO THE SQUARE TOWARD THE VIC]

Oh no, we'd better warn Phil he's in danger!

[MINTY AND GARRY CHUCKLE AND GO BACK TO WORK]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/14. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 10.23.

D O A

[DOT SITS LISTENING TO HYMNS ON THE RADIO. JIM POKES HIS HEAD ROUND THE DOOR]

JIM: Right, I'm off. Do you want me to bring anything in? Crisps? A paper?

DOT: I've got a piece of fish- I'll have that.

[SOUND OF DOOR CLOSING. BORED DOT SCRATCHES A FLECK OF PAINT OFF THE WINDOW]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/15. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
10.24/T.C.

LO,

[DOT SEES JIM HEADING TOWARD THE PUB,
TUTS TO HERSELF.]

BERT AND MO EXIT THE SLATERS. BERT
GESTURES A 'SHH' TO A GIGGLING MO,
CLIMBS INTO THE BRANNINGS FRONT
GARDEN AND LEAPS UP IN FRONT OF DOT]

BERT: It's the second coming!

[DOT CLUTCHES HER HEART AND YANKS THE
CURTAINS SHUT]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/16. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 10.25/T.C.

D O A

[FURIOUS DOT WHEELS AWAY FROM THE WINDOW AND CLICKS RECORD ON HER DICTAPHONE]

DOT: One wants me out of sight for the day. The other tries to pack my heart up. Wicked heathens! Don't think I'm not logging it all...

[DOT GOES TO THE SIDEBOARD WHERE SHE TAKES OUT A HIDDEN CALENDAR.

ON IT WE SEE THE VARIOUS INCIDENTS BETWEEN HER JOE AND BERT NOTED. E.G.:
'APRIL 4TH: BURGLED AND
HOSPITALISED.' 'MARCH 9TH: DECLINES

SCENE 986/17. VIC DOWNSTAIRS, HALLWAY.
INT. DAY LIGHT. 10.26.

AGE

[PEGGY IS FETCHING SOME CRISPS WHEN
IAN BURSTS THROUGH THE SIDE ENTRANCE
AND CHARGES UP THE STAIRS]

PEGGY: Oi! What the bleeding hell do you
think you're doing?

[GRANT JOINS PEGGY, WITNESSING IAN
DISAPPEARING UP THE STAIRS]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/18. VIC UPSTAIRS. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 10.27/T.C.

AGE

[IAN- CONVINCED HE'S GOING TO FIND
BEN- GOES FROM ROOM TO ROOM
SEARCHING.]

THE CRASHING AROUND BRINGS PHIL- ON
THE PHONE- OUT OF THE LIVING ROOM]

PHIL: I'll phone you back, Ritchie.

[PHIL HANGS UP]

IAN: I should've known you'd sink to
these tactics. It's you all over ain't it?
You get slap happy to start off with; then
you do the meek and humble number. And if
that doesn't work you just take what you
want.

[PHIL STANDS]

PHIL: If you don't explain what you're on
about you're going to be bouncing on top
of that fruit and veg stall.

IAN: [ANGRY] I'm talking about Ben, Phil,
and how you've pulled your usual trick.
Good at snatching kids, ain't you?

[PEGGY AND GRANT ARRIVE IN THE ROOM]

GRANT: What's this? Private panto?

IAN: Oh here they are. That's it, act
like you don't know what's going on...

SCENE 986/19. VIC DOWNSTAIRS. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 10.30.

AGE

[BERT COLLECTS DRINKS FOR HIM AND MO.
INA'S STOOD BESIDE THEM]

BERT: And whatever Ina's having.

[MO AND INA EXCHANGE A SMILE. MO
ELBOWS BERT]

I'm spreading the Easter love.

MO: And I'll spread your face if you
don't pack it in.

[GO TO: DAWN HANDS KEVIN TWO PINTS

f 0 G 0 g q 168 0 0 168 0 0 cm BT /R9 12 Tf

KEVIN:

[KEITH- EVEN FURTHER UP THE BAR-
CHIMES IN]

KEITH: Theologically speaking they're
both as important as each other.

KEVIN: Hello, another one's off.

KEITH: And actually, Bert, the
resurrection's on Sunday. Monday's just a
secular holiday.

KEVIN: I come in for a pint and I get an
ecclesiastical debate.

JIM: [SIGHS] Welcome to my world.

[KEVIN TAKES HIS DRINKS AND SITS
BESIDE DEANO]

KEVIN: Do you have a view on the good
book then, Dean?

DEANO: [SHRUGS] I tried reading it when
the films came out but I just couldn't buy
all that hobbit/ middle earth cobbles.

[KEVIN STARES AT DEANO WARMLY AND
CLINKS HIS GLASS]

CUT TO:

IAN: Peter said he was in bed last night... We had a lie in this morning, so I think he must've snuck out then-sevenish maybe.

[PHIL CHECKS HIS WATCH]

PHIL: [HINT OF RELIEF] That's only a few hours.

GRANT: Let's have a drive round. Mum, you stay here- case he comes back.

IAN: [TO PHIL] No. Stay here, talk to the police. Don't go blindly wandering around-

[PHIL SNAPS, Gets in IAN's face]

PHIL: Don't tell me what to do! That's my son out there. You were supposed to be looking after him!

GRANT: Phil. Phil.

[GRANT PULLS PHIL AWAY FROM A BREATHELESS IAN]

PHIL: When I've found him, he's coming here to live-

IAN: You can't do that-

PHIL: I can. Because you'll be dead.

[WITH THAT PHIL AND GRANT PUNCH THROUGH THE BACK DOOR.]

IAN LOOKS HOPELESSLY AT PEGGY AND
HEADS OUT VIA THE BAR]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/21. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
10.35/T.C.

LO

[there's a moment of silence then ben's phone beeps with a new voice message as GRANT AND PHIL EMERGE THROUGH THE SIDE GATE, CLIMB INTO THE WAITING CAR AND START THE ENGINE.

IAN EXITS THE PUB AND WALKS THROUGH THE SQUARE TALKING TO THE POLICE]

IAN: Yeah, he's my little brother. He's ten. I'm not sure how long for. A few hours, maybe longer...

[THE CAR CONTAINING GRANT AND PHIL RACES PAST IAN , STARTLING HIM WITH A BLAST OF THE HORN.

ONCE AGAIN DOT APPEARS AT THE WINDOW A FRACTION TOO LATE TO SEE THE UNFOLDING DRAMA]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/22. VIC. INT. DAY LIGHT.
11.30.

AGE

[KEVIN IS BACK AT THE BAR, HOLDING
COURT WITH BERT, KEITH, MINTY, JOE
AND GARRY. BORED MO WATCHES FURTHER
ALONG]

KEVIN:

KEITH: Then I won't.

KEVIN: Good.

KEITH: Good.

[PAUSE. THE MEN ALL SLURP BEER]

KEVIN: You're a clever man though.

KEITH: Cheers. So are you.

[MO ROLLS HER EYES AT PEGGY WHO
SMILES THROUGH THE WORRY- GLANCING AT
THE CLOCK]

GARRY: So, hold on, this robe the
centurions nicked off him, did we agree
what colour that was?

BERT: I say purple.

[BERT SLAPS A FIVER DOWN. MINTY DOES
LIKEWISE]

MINTY: I'm going for red. Who's got a
bible on them?

[THEY ALL LOOK TO JIM]

JIM: What? Oh no, we shouldn't disturb
Dorothy.

BERT: Come on, Jim, I thought you were

JOE: [CAUTIONS] Bert... She's already got her eye on me. Don't make things worse.

[BERT PINCHES JOE'S CHEEK AND DRINKS UP]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/23. IAN'S HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 12.21.

AGE

[WORRIED PAT WATCHES AS IAN HANGS UP
THE PHONE]

IAN: Where is he, Pat? I can't stand this
waiting.

PAT: You've got to calm down. He'll be
back. It's not been that long.

[KNOCK AT THE DOOR. A GLIMMER OF
HOPE. COULD THAT BE BEN?]

IAN HEADS OUT, RETURNS MOMENTS LATER
WITH TWO POLICEMEN. A GRAVE SILENCE]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/24. GEORGE STREET. EXT. DAY
LIGHT. 13.30.

LO

[GRANT WAITS BY THE RANGE ROVER.
URGENT PHIL REJOINS HIM, SHAKING HIS
HEAD]

PHIL: I did the library, the fast food
places, most of the shops...

GRANT: Alright, alright... Let's think
this through. Where would he go? What's he
into?

PHIL: Don't know.

GRANT: Alright, has he mentioned any
sights he's wanted to see? Tower of
London? Madam Tussauds?

[PHIL SHRUGS. PAUSE. PHIL FEELS
USELESS]

PHIL: I don't know, Grant, alright? I've
spent about five hours with him since he
came home... I don't know that much about
my own son, okay?

[SILENCE. PHIL'S FEAR IS PALPABLE]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/25. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 13.35.

D O A

[DOT IS AT THE KITCHEN MAKING
ADDITIONS TO HER JOE DOSSIER.]

BEHIND HER WE SEE JIM, BERT, KEITH,
MINTY, GARRY, KEVIN AND DEANO TIP-
TOEING INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

BERT HANGS BACK AND CLOCKS WHAT SHE'S
DOING.

GO TO: LIVING ROOM. JIM LOCATES THE
'GOOD NEWS' BIBLE]

MINTY: Not that one. You want the King
James.

[BERT RETRIEVES THE KING JAMES
VERSION AND THE LADS GATHER ROUND AS
BERT FLICKS THROUGH TO MATTHEW]

BERT: Here we go: Chapter 27. '..and they
bowed the knee before Him'-

[DOT APPEARS AT THE DOORWAY]

DOT: What on earth are you doing?

JIM: Oh, hello, love. We were having a
chat about the bible and that and a few
questions arose.

[DOT NARROWS HER EYES AT THE MEN,
EXTREMELY DUBIOUS]

MINTY: Like, what colour was his robe? Do
you know that off hand?

DOT: [TO JIM] This has better not be one of your silly bets.

[PAUSE. GUILTY LOOKS ALL ROUND]

BERT: I told them not to do it, Dot. Can I use your lav? Ta.

[BERT DUCKS OUT]

DOT: Shame on you all. They cast lots on who was to get Jesus' robe as he hung there in the blazing sun. And you're doing the very same.

JIM: I said I'd get earhole didn't I?

DOT: I'd ask you to leave me to my spiritual contemplations.

[THE LADS ALL HEAD OUT]

KEITH: Sorry to disturb you, Dot.

GARRY: [UP THE STAIRS] Bert, we're off.
[cont]

[THE MEN EXIT. DOT GOES BACK TO THE
KITCHEN TABLE AND DISCOVERS HER
CALENDAR GONE]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/26. TUBE STATION. EXT. DAY
LIGHT. 13.40.

LO

[GRANT AND PHIL survey the crowd]

PHIL: [WOUND UP] This is like a needle in a haystack. He could be anywhere.

GRANT: Calm down. How many times did I run away when I was a kid? Dozens. But I was always home for dinner.

PHIL: Because I dragged you home.

GRANT: He's ten not three. Alright, he ain't the most street wise kid in the world but he ain't stupid either. When the sun starts to go down he'll be back, angling for fish fingers and beans.

[PHIL SHAKES HIS HEAD, UNCONVINCED]

PHIL: But what if he ain't? What if he wanders into the wrong area? Look at him, Grant: Glasses, deaf in one ear, wrong clothes for the season... It's a dream come true for a scumbag.

GRANT: Don't start thinking like that.

PHIL: It's Dennis all over again. My big mouth putting people in danger.

GRANT: That's totally different.

PHIL: It's payback. Divine retribution.

GRANT: Stop it. You don't know why he went-

PHIL: I waded in about Gavin and Kathy when I should've let it lie. It's upset him and he's done a bunk. I swear if he don't come back...

[PHIL PUNCHES AN ADVERT ON A BUS STOP]

GRANT: Look at me. He'll be back, okay? It's still light.

[OUT ON PHIL LOOKING UP AT THE SKY-HOW LONG WILL THE DAYLIGHT LAST?]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/27. IAN'S HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 13.45.

AGE

[IAN SITS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS, STARING AT THE FRONT DOOR. BEHIND HIM, IN THE KITCHEN, WE SEE PETER AND LUCY [WATCHED BY PAT] TALKING TO THE POLICE]

PETER: No, he doesn't really have any friends.

LUCY: He hasn't been here long.

[PAT COMES OUT OF THE KITCHEN AND JOINS IAN. THE MOOD IS SOMBRE]

IAN: The one thing Mum would've wanted was for me to look after him.

PAT: You have been.

IAN: [SHAKES HEAD] He's out there somewhere, Pat. He hasn't got a clue how to handle himself. I sit here and I just keep thinking of people watching him...

PAT: Come on, Ian, you've got to keep it together for them two in there.

[IAN LOOKS ROUND THE CORNER, SEES WORRIED LOOKING PETER AND LUCY TALKING TO THE POLICE]

IAN: I got him an Easter egg with a dinosaur on it... It was going to be a quiet, peaceful weekend...

[IAN FIGHTS THE TEARS. PAT PUTS AN ARM ON HIM- 'STAY STRONG']

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/28. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
13.55.

LO

[THE FOWLERS BACK GATE IS HALF
PAINTED. JOE STANDS WITH BERT LOOKING
AT DOT'S CALENDAR]

JOE: I don't believe it. She's got a
dossier on us!

BERT: It's just a load of events: '8th
April, Joe looks at me funny.' 12th: 'Joe
buys bin bags.' It needs a hell of a lot
of sexing up before it becomes a dossier.

JOE: I can't take it, Bert. Every move I
make she's reading something into it!
She's probably got the binoculars on us
right now.

[JOE AND BERT LOOK OVER TO THE
BRANNINGS. THE CURTAIN FALLS SHUT]

See? What am I going to do?

[BERT ISN'T LISTENING- TOO BUSY
WATCHING INA EXIT THE PUB]

Hello? Are you listening?

[BERT SLAPS JOE ON THE BACK]

BERT: You'll think of something.

[JOE TAKES THE PAINT INTO THE YARD AS
BERT CATCHES UP WITH INA.

COMING THE OTHER WAY IS THE RANGE
ROVER CONTAINING PHIL AND GRANT]

[TO INA] At a loose end?

[INA SHRUGS, SMILES AT BERT. BERT
FOLLOWS INA UP BRIDGE STREET.]

ACROSS THE SQUARE WE SEE IAN SEEING A
POLICEMAN OUT WHEN JANE RACES UP. SHE
LOOKS EXTREMELY WORRIED]

JANE: What's happened? Has Phil done
something?

IAN: Ben's missing.

JANE: Oh no. Why didn't you tell me?

IAN: I tried. I couldn't get through.

JANE: Have you heard anything?

[IAN SHAKES HIS HEAD. JANE LOOKS
FEARFUL. PHIL AND IAN LOCK EYES
ACROSS THE SQUARE AS PHIL HEADS INTO
THE VIC]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/29. VIC. INT. DAY LIGHT.
13.57/T.C.

AGE

[PHIL AND GRANT CUT THEIR WAY THROUGH THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF LOCALS BECOMING MORE AND MORE DRUNK.

PHIL APPROACHES THE BAR WHERE PEGGY is]

PEGGY: Anything?

PHIL: No. You?

[PEGGY SHAKES HER HEAD. PHIL IS SUDDENLY OVERCOME WITH A WAVE OF ANGER AND FRUSTRATION. HE THUMPS THE BAR AND SMASHES AN EMPTY PINT GLASS ON THE FLOOR.

THE PUB FALLS SILENT. THE LAUGHS STOP.

ALL EYES ARE ON HIM. HE LOOKS ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE.

GRANT NUDGES PHIL WHO TURNS TO SEE THE POLICE [WITH IAN AND JANE] ENTERING.

PHIL SHAKES HIS HEAD- A DESPAIR ABOUT HIM- AND HEADS OUT THE BACK TOWARD THE STAIRS.

GRANT FOLLOWS. AS DO THE POLICE, IAN AND JANE]

PEGGY: Listen everyone. Sorry to interrupt your drink but... Ben's gone missing. We don't know how long for- we think he went this morning. If... anyone's seen him can you let us know. Phil and

Grant have been all over but if anyone
wants to look we'd... We'd really
appreciate it. That lit
tle boy means the world to us.

[ALMOST INSTANTLY LOCALS SUP UP AND
HEAD FOR THE DOORS]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/30. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
13.59/T.C.

LO

SCENE 986/31. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.00.

D O A

[DOT OPENS THE DOOR TO JOE. HE HOLDS
HER CALENDAR]

JOE: This has got to stop, Dot.

DOT: Clear off! I'll call the police!

[DOT WHEELS HERSELF BACK TOWARD THE
KITCHEN]

JOE: Dot, don't go doing yourself another
injury, please.

[JOE CATCHES UP WITH DOT IN THE
KITCHEN]

DOT: You can act as nice as you like, Joe
Macer, I know there's something you're
hiding.

JOE: Dot, I'm not hiding anything you
need to know about.

DOT: What's that mean? 'Need to know
about'?

JOE: I'm not hiding anything. I'm just a
humble builder.
[cont]

[DOT NARROWS HER EYES- DOESN'T
BELIEVE A WORD OF IT]

JOE: [cont] I'm no expert on religion but isn't one of the commandments: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness?'

DOT: That's to God, not you.

JOE: Well, if you think it's fair to continue victimizing me go ahead. Your conscience is your own.

[JOE PUTS THE CALENDAR BACK ON THE TABLE AND SADLY HEADS OUT. LINGER ON DOT, GIVEN FOOD FOR THOUGHT]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/32. VIC UPSTAIRS. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.05.

AGE

[IAN, JANE AND GRANT WATCH AS PHIL
TAKES A PICTURE OF BEN DOWN FROM THE
MANTELPIECE, OFFERS IT TO A
POLICEMAN]

PHIL: It's a few years old.

POLICEMAN: Mr Beale's provided us with a
more recent one.

PHIL: [EMBARRASSED] Has he? Right.

POLICEMAN: We understand your

PHIL: What do you mean?

JANE: [HESITANT] Me and Ian had a few words last night. I don't know if Ben heard-

[LOOKS OF SURPRISE FROM PHIL AND GRANT]

PHIL: Hold on, so you two had a ruck after I was round?

IAN: See, here we go. He's going to blame me now. We all know that's all you really care about- yourself. Ben's my main concern.

PHIL: And mine.

IAN: That's why you wait five hours before talking to the police?

PHIL: I was out looking! You only phoned the police so they'd be here to save you having your neck snapped.

IAN: [TO POLICEMAN] See what I mean? See the aggression? He traumatised that poor kid the other day- going on about things he wasn't ready to hear.

PHIL: Think you're the one who ain't ready to hear it.

[SILENCE. IAN STANDS, FURIOUS]

IAN: Why don't you just admit it's not working out between you and Ben.

[JANE STANDS]

JANE: That's enough! You two need to stop bickering, sit down and unite. Because you really don't want to be looking back at this day wishing you'd acted sooner.

[A LONG SILENCE. IAN AND PHIL REGARD EACH OTHER]

-

SCENE 986/33. TURPIN ROAD. EXT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.10.

LO

[KEVIN, garry, minty AND DEANO ARE
SCOUTING FOR BEN ROUND BY THE VIDEO
SHOP]

MINTY: How come you know so much about
the bible?

KEVIN: Well, you know what it's like,
during hard times we all look for meaning
somewhere.

[KEVIN HAS A PRIVATE MOMENT OF
SADNESS.

KEITH HEARS AN UNUSUAL SOUND COMING
FROM THE SCRAP METAL PLACE]

DEANO: I can hear someone.

[MO IS EMERGING FROM THE CHIP SHOP
WITH CHIPS JUST AS KEVIN YANKS THE
DOOR OPEN, DISCLOSING BERT IN AN
EMBRACE WITH INA.

MO DROPS HER CHIPS IN SHOCK. KEITH,
KEVIN AND DEANO DON'T KNOW WHERE TO
LOOK]

KEVIN: [SQUINTING] I don't think that's
Ben.

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/34. VIC UPSTAIRS. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.20.

AGE

[KITCHEN. PHIL SITS OPPOSITE IAN WITH
A PEN AND PAPER]

PHIL: Is there anywhere you and Kathy
used to go to?

IAN: [BRISTLING] What's that got to do
with anything?

PHIL: I was just thinking. She might have
mentioned it to Ben in South Africa.
Places she grew up, places she used to
take you.

[IAN SHRUGS]

What's that supposed to mean? Is there
anywhere or not?

IAN: I'm not doing this.

[IAN GETS UP]

JANE: Ian.

IAN: He just wants to play mind games.

[IAN STORMS OUT. JANE FOLLOWS. PHIL
THROWS THE PEN DOWN, RUBS HIS FACE,
FRUSTRATED AND ANGRY]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/35. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.29.

D O A

[DOT IS LISTENING TO THE RADIO WHEN
SHE HEARS AN ALTERCATION OUTSIDE]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/36. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
14.30.

LO

[BERT IS TAILING AN UPSET MO THROUGH
THE SQUARE GARDENS]

BERT: It was nothing. An holiday
flirtation.

MO: I don't want to talk to you.

BERT: Fine. I don't need a possessive
girlfriend anyway. I'll go back and see if
she's still there.

MO: You do that!

[BERT TURNS AND STOMPS OFF BACK THE
OTHER WAY. MO LOBS A CLUMP OF DIRT AT
HIM]

You're going to regret shafting me, Bert!

BERT: I already do.

[MO HEARS A TAPPING SOUND, TURNS AND
SEES DOT AT HER WINDOW, GESTURING HER
INSIDE]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/37. VIC. INT. DAY LIGHT.
14.45.

AGE

[PEGGY STANDS IN THE EMPTY PUB.
HUNCHED, DRAINED PHIL JOINS HER.]

PEGGY REACHES OUT AND BRINGS HER SON
TO HER SHOULDER.

THEY STAND LIKE THAT FOR A FEW
MOMENTS]

PHIL: Where's Grant?

PEGGY: Gone out for another look.

[SILENCE. PHIL'S PAIN IS TERRIBLE]

PHIL: [VAGUE/ DISORIENTED] I should be
looking and all.

PEGGY: Stay. He'll walk back in that door
before you know it and he'll want to see
his Dad.

[PHIL DOESN'T LOOK CONVINCED. HE
LOOKS AROUND AT THE EMPTY PUB AND
SWITCHES OFF THE TILL. OUT ON THE
EMPTY SILENCE. A SENSE OF LOSS]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/38. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.49.

D O A

[DOT SITS AT THE KITCHEN TABLE WITH
MO]

MO: Toe rag. I don't know what I saw in
him. My old man told me never to trust
Northerners- they eat tripe you know.
Dirty swines.

DOT: I've always believed as children of
the Lord we need to see the best in one
another. But... With some people you get
the feeling they're...

MO: Snide little scumbag worms.

DOT: Your words, Mo, not mine.

[PAUSE. DOT CONSIDERS MO, WEIGHING
HER UP, THINKING OF A WAY TO LEVER
INFORMATION]

Would you like a hanky?

MO: I'm not crying.

DOT: No... So, I expect you got to know
Bert quite well. Talked about his past and
what have you.

MO: A bit.

DOT: And did you discover anything that
gave you cause for alarm?

MO: He used to do a bit of Morris dancing apparently.

DOT: Right... Morris dancing.

[DOT COCKS HER HEAD, NOT QUITE WHAT SHE WAS LOOKING FOR]

MO: I know what you want, Dot. You want to know if him and Joe are old lags, don't you?

DOT: Oh no, I don't indulge in tittle tattle. [BEAT] But just out of curiosity...

MO: They've both been banged up. Bert did a three stretch. Joe did longer.

[DOT IS ECSTATIC TO HEAR THIS INFORMATION BUT MANAGES TO KEEP A LID ON IT]

DOT: Well, there you go... That's a long time to be in prison. They wouldn't be minor offences?

[MO SHAKES HER HEAD GRAVELY. OUT ON DOT, VINDICATED]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/39. IAN'S HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.58.

AGE

[RAVAGED IAN SITS ON THE STAIRS
ALONE, LOOKING AT THE EASTER EGG HE
BROUGHT BEN]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/40. VIC DOWNSTAIRS. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 14.59.

AGE

[PHIL SITS ALONE AT A TABLE WATCHING
DUST DANCING IN THE DWINDLING
AFTERNOON LIGHT]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/41. BRANNINGS' HOUSE. INT. DAY
LIGHT. 15.00.

D O A

[DOT'S BIBLE AND CRUCIFIX RESTS ON
THE TABLE.]

DOT ENTERS THE ROOM, LOOKS UP AT THE
CLOCK. THREE PM. THE HOUR OF THE
CRUCIFIXION.

DOT SITS ON HER CHAIR, HOLDS HER
BIBLE TO HER CHEST. WE SEE A LONE
TEAR ROLLING DOWN HER CHEEK.

AFTER A MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER, DOT
RISES, COLLECTS AN EMPTY MILK BOTTLE
AND HEADS FOR THE FRONT DOOR]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/42. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
15.01/T.C.

LO

[DOT PUTS THE MILK BOTTLE OUT. SHE'S PUZZLED TO SEE THE SQUARE IS VIRTUALLY DESERTED.]

JUST AS DOT IS ABOUT TO SHUT THE DOOR, A POLICE CAR PASSES.

DOT PAUSES AND WATCHES WITH A GROWING SENSE OF FEAR AS IT PARKS OUTSIDE THE FOWLERS [NO ROOM BY THE VIC]

DOT: Oh no... Pauline... [CALLS] Officer, officer! What's happened?

[DOT GINGERLY WHEELS HERSELF DOWN THE RAMP AS KEVIN PASSES BY]

KEVIN: Ain't you heard? A little boy's gone missing.

DOT: Who?

KEVIN: Ben. Everyone's been out looking. No sign so far.

DOT: Take me to Phil.

[OUT ON DOT'S HORROR AND SHOCK THAT SHE'S MISSED EVERYTHING]

CUT TO:

PHIL: [SHRUGS] That's okay.

DOT: Phil. I think I saw something.

[PHIL LOOKS UP, STRIDES OVER TO DOT
AND POLICEMEN]

PHIL: What?

DOT: This morning, in the gardens. I
think I saw him.

PHIL: What time?

DOT: Ten to one.

PHIL: [SHOCKED] Ten to one? No, that
couldn't have been him. [NOT WANTING TO
BELIEVE IT] He weren't on the streets at
that time.

POLICEMAN: Can you show us where you saw
the person, Mrs Branning?

[DOT NODS. THE POLICEMEN HELP DOT
BACK OUT THROUGH THE DOOR. PHIL SWAPS
A WORRIED LOOK WITH PEGGY]

PEGGY: Go with them.

[PHIL TAKES A DEEP BREATH, HEADS OUT
AFTER DOT AND THE POLICEMEN]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/44. SQUARE. EXT. DAY LIGHT.
15.05/T.C.

LO

[THE POLICE WHEEL DOT INTO THE SQUARE
GARDENS. PHIL EXITS THE PUB AND
FOLLOWS THEM]

DOT: He was right there- right by those
bushes.

[THE POLICEMEN SEARCH AROUND THE
BUSHES. PHIL ARRIVES BEHIND DOT,
LOOKING FEARFUL.

THEN SOMETHING FEARFUL.

JOE: I've just heard what's happened.
It's terrible isn't it?

[DOT SCOWLS AT JOE AND STARTS TO
WHEEL HERSELF TOWARD THE BEALES]

Dot? Do you want a hand?

DOT: Take me to Ian's. I want to see if I
can help.

[JOE PUSHES HER]

I know.

JOE: You know what?

DOT:

SCENE 986/46. VIC DOWNSTAIRS. INT. DUSK.
19.45.

AGE

[THERE'S A SOMBRE MOOD IN THE PUB. garry, minty, kevin and MOST OF THE LOCALS WHO SET OUT TO SEARCH HAVE NOW RETURNED- WITHOUT BEN.]

PEGGY QUIETLY SERVES DRINKS.

PHIL SITS AT HIS TABLE, HEAD IN HIS HANDS. WORRIED LOOKING JAKE SITS BESIDE HIM]

JAKE: I just heard. He was out there when we were.

PHIL: I know.

JAKE: Phil, I don't know what to say... If I hadn't been wrapped up in myself-

PHIL: It's okay, it's okay. Don't start doing that.

JAKE: If there's anything I can do.

PHIL: [NODS] I know.

[JAKE PUTS HIS HAND ON PHIL'S shoulder AND SQUEEZES IT- SHOWING HIS SOLIDARITY.]

JAKE MOVES OFF, LEAVING A HUSK LIKE PHIL ALONE.

THEN THE DOOR OPENS. HIS LAST HOPE, GRANT RETURNS. PHIL CAN SEE FROM HIS EXPRESSION HE HASN'T FOUND ANYTHING]

SCENE 986/47. SQUARE. EXT. NIGHT.
19.47/T.C.

LO

[PHIL EMERGES FROM THE PUB. IT IS
DARK. DARK AND EMPTY AND SCARY.]

PHIL SEES A LIGHT ON AT THE BEALES]

CUT TO:

SCENE 986/48. IAN'S HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.
19.48/T.C.

AGE

[HERE WE FIND PAT, LUCY, PETER, IAN AND JANE SITTING AROUND THE KITCHEN QUIETLY SIPPING CUPS OF TEA- FACES ETCHED WITH WORRY AND FEAR.

AFTER A FEW MOMENTS THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE BACK DOOR. HOPEFUL LOOKS.

JANE OPENS IT, DISCLOSING PHIL. IAN AND PHIL STARE AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT THEN IAN GESTURES FOR HIM TO COME INSIDE]

PHIL: Anything?

[IAN SHAKES HIS HEAD]

IAN: You?

PHIL: We've had half the square out looking. No-one's seen anything.

[SILENCE]

You heard about the phone?

IAN: [NODS] Dot told us. She's in the living room.

PHIL: Twenty four missed calls. I think I've phoned him a dozen times.

IAN: Me too.

[PAUSE. TAKE THE WORRIED LOOKS ON EVERYONE'S FACES]

PHIL: I'll just...

[IAN NODS. PHIL HEADS ALONG THE HALLWAY TO THE FRONT DOOR. AS HE PASSES THE LIVING ROOM, HE CATCHES SIGHT OF DOT KNELT AT THE SOFA IN PRAYER.

AS PHIL DECIDES TO LEAVE HER BE, DOT SPIES HIM]

DOT:

