

EXCERPT FROM:

"SOLD"

A Crime Drama

Episode One
pp.22-36

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INT. CASINO - DAY

A tatty interior with sad-bastard customers and bored staff.

Close on a £100 chip being expertly rolled through fingers. It's Barry, nervous. He adds the chip to a pile on a roulette table, eyes on the ball rolling in the spinning wheel.

CROUPIER

Last bets!

Barry steels himself, then slides his pile onto Red.

CROUPIER (CONT'D)

Nine hundred? Not your usual fifty?

Barry shrugs, his nonchalance betrayed by his shaking hand as he sips water. The ball slows for a small eternity. Barry holds his breath. It's red! Thank God!

The croupier doubles his pile and Barry makes to leave.

CROUPIER (CONT'D)

One bet? What's this? New leaf?

BARRY

Short lunch break.

Barry heads off and the croupier signals to a colleague to take over the table. As she dials her mobile, she watches Barry cashing in his chips.

CROUPIER

(into phone)

Barry just showed his face. First time in months.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A room with a desk, a chair and little else. SYD, a man with the battered menace of an ex-boxer, talks on his mobile.

SYD

Still there?

CROUPIER

Just leaving with 1800 cash.

SYD

Follow him.

Syd takes a claw hammer from a drawer and leaves.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Daphne scowls at a NO SMOKING sign. Kenzie appears accompanied by a young lawyer. Daphne gets her attention.

KENZIE

Jesus, Gran! What are you doing here?

DAPHNE

I'm the reason you're out before your court appearance. Didn't occur to Atticus Finch here that he could get you released.

LAWYER

(off Kenzie's look)

I was still looking into it when your grandmother called me and...

DAPHNE

(bulldozing)

You're coming with me. We need to discuss your defence.

KENZIE

I've got a lawyer.

DAPHNE

Your father will hire a real one.

KENZIE

Your posh tongue isn't a license to be rude to us peasants.

DAPHNE

So, dear boy, ready to argue how this little bundle of claws is a vital part of caring for her poor, epileptic mother?

The lawyer tries to speak, but...

KENZIE

That's not true.

DAPHNE

It is now. After what you've done to my daughter, you can play your part in getting her back on track.

KENZIE

What I've done to your daughter?
What I've done?

DAPHNE

And to your father. Making him fund your one-woman revolution.

KENZIE

I never asked for money. I just need them to feed my fucking snake.

DAPHNE

(to the lawyer)

As you can see, we need to smear a lot of lipstick on this little pig to fool the Magistrate she's human.

KENZIE

Okay, that's it.

(to the lawyer)

You can go. I'll represent myself.

DAPHNE

That's ridiculous. You can't.

KENZIE

Watch me.

INT. EMPTY FIXER UPPER - DAY

The gloomy ground floor of a pokey terraced house. Barry tries to dent the obvious disappointment of a young couple.

BARRY

Big plus is you can put your own stamp on things. Renovate.

The couple exchange glances as Barry tries in vain to raise a broken window blind. His phone beeps with an incoming text.

BARRY (CONT'D)

But the biggest plus is the view from upstairs.

He steals a glance at the text: "WHERE'S MY MONEY?"

BARRY (CONT'D)

Go up, I'll give you a minute alone. Very special. A real vista.

They head upstairs as Barry texts... "DRIVING. TALK LATER"

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Close on the front of Barry's car. Off-screen, a mobile beeps. Moments later, a hammer shatters a headlight.

INT. EMPTY FIXER UPPER - CONTINUOUS

Unaffected by distant sounds of glass breaking and metal being struck at regular intervals, Barry heads...

UPSTAIRS where the couple stare down through a window.

BARRY
So, how about that London skyline?
Am I right or am I right?

They wince at a louder crash of breaking glass.

MAN
I think we've seen enough.

BARRY
But you haven't seen the garden.

WOMAN
(making to leave)
We have another viewing to get to.
But thank you.

She heads to the stairs, followed by her partner.

MAN
We have small children. This
neighbourhood's a bit colourful.

BARRY
I've got others I can show you, if
you'll leave your number.

MAN
We'll call you.

And they're gone. Barry sighs. He glances out the window at the continuing noise. His weariness becomes wide-eyed shock.

BARRY
(shouting)
Jesus! Stop!

The sash window won't open. He rushes downstairs.

EXT. STREET - DAY

BARRY (O.S.)
Stop!

Syd ignores this, striking the car again.

Barry arrives but stops short, wary of the hammer.

BARRY (CONT'D)
That's a company car!

SYD
Got money for me?

BARRY
I will have... soon.

SYD
Now.

BARRY
I don't carry cash.

Syd strikes the car again.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Ok, ok! Here!
(handing over a small wad)
Three hundred now. More next week.

Syd pockets the money, then calmly strikes the car again.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Christ! That's all I've got.
(off Syd's stony glare)
Syd, please, I need the rest to
keep my daughter out of jail.

SYD
I can do this all day.
(he strikes again)
Very therapeutic.

BARRY
She's in court tomorrow. Honest.

Syd smashes a side mirror.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Jesus!

Syd sticks out his hand. Barry hands over all the cash.

SYD
We'll call this lot interest. You
still owe me the full five grand.

BARRY
Big commission coming. Any day now.

SYD
If it's any day, I choose tomorrow.

BARRY
Gimme a week. Please.

SYD
Today it's the car. Next time it's
you. So pay tomorrow.

Syd embeds the hammer in the bonnet and saunters off. Barry yanks the hammer out, slicing his hand on jagged metal.

BARRY

Fuck!

He makes to hurl the hammer aside in pain and anger, when he notices the couple, now in their car, staring at him, aghast.

He pastes on a smile and heads towards them, still holding the hammer in his now bloody hand.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Please, take my card.

The man pulls off nervously. Alone, Barry deflates.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

A solemn Mona lights a candle and adds it to a group of five others burning on a votive altar.

She removes a locket from a chain, opens it into a string of family portrait photos and places them before the candles.

She fights tears as she kneels at the altar. The incoherent prayer she mutters through clenched teeth seems more like demonic incantation as anger overwhelms her sorrow.

EXT. ESTATE AGENCY - DAY

Ruan stares at Barry's car.

RUAN

Jeez! Someone doesn't like you.

BARRY

Probably just a junkie needing a fix. Found nothing to steal, took it out on the car.

RUAN

And you didn't hear the noise?

BARRY

I was busy with a viewing. Being hungry.

Ruan glances at Barry's bandaged hand - eyes him sceptically. But Barry maintains his charade.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Look, I feel bad the business is going to take the knock for the insurance excess. I mean, it's not my fault, but still... I feel bad.

RUAN

Bad enough to pay it?

BARRY

How about a win-win?
 (off Ruan's look)
 Don't cancel the sale with the
 Albanian buyer; give me a ten grand
 advance on the commission; in
 return, I pay the insurance excess.

RUAN

Too late. I cancelled the sale.

BARRY

I'll call her, tell her it was all
 a mistake and the sale's back on.

RUAN

(ignoring this)
 Jeez, hang on. I told her about an
 hour before your car was trashed.
 This was her!

BARRY

A woman, doing this? Come on!

RUAN (O.S.)

Then it was the thugs behind her.
 She's just a front.

BARRY

No way. This was some two bit...

RUAN

(overlapping)
 It was her. She's bad news. Psycho!
 I mean... look at this car! Jeez!

BARRY

Please, Ruan. I need this sale.

RUAN

No, you need this job. You want to
 keep it, pay this excess. Cos I'm
 smelling a rat. A big fat one.
 (heading back inside)
 Jeez.

Barry kicks a car tyre in frustration. What the fuck now?
 Decision time. He gets into the car and drives off.

INT/EXT. BRISTOL/HAND CAR WASH - DAY

In the back of an immaculate 1970s Bristol Coupe, Mona counts
 a wad of cash, bundles it and adds it to a briefcase almost
 full of similar wads.

Her car is parked in the forecourt of a hand carwash. Four
 eastern European men wash cars as customers wait.

Barry's car pulls into the waiting area. Mona and MILA, (Mona's twenty-something female driver) clock the damage.

MILA
This the guy you chose?
(Off Mona's nod)
Why? Looks like a fucking loser.

MONA
I pay you to drive, not talk.

MILA
Just saying, we're new to this. We need someone who knows what...

MONA
(overlapping)
Shut up! Or you go back to your pimp.

Barry approaches in shit-eating mode. Mona opens her window.

BARRY
Hi, Mona. Thanks for agreeing to see me. Sorry about my boss.

She counts another wad of money.

BARRY (CONT'D)
He speaks before he thinks.

MONA
Like my driver.

Mila scowls. Barry is transfixed by the money.

BARRY
Look, I'm going to find a way to sell you a house. Maybe not that house. But a house.

MONA
What happened to your car?

BARRY
Oh... you know. Some... stupid kid.

MONA
Looks like a warning to me.
(off Barry's silence)
You fuck someone's wife?

Her directness throws him.

BARRY
No! No! Nothing like that.

MONA

Okay - then it's money. No?

BARRY

Nothing I can't handle.

Barry can't help clocking the money again.

BARRY (CONT'D)

But it's been a long day. How about
I buy you a drink and we find a way
to get you on the property ladder?

Jesus, that is a shit-load of money!

INT. PUB - DAY

A Slavic waitress weaves between crowded tables. At one, Barry sits with Mona, his eyes drawn to the now closed briefcase between them. Mona clocks Barry's dice bracelet.

MONA

So, you're a dice man.

BARRY

My daughter gave me this. For luck.

MONA

Family man. Normally family men
play safe. Like your boss.

INT/EXT. CAB/STREET - DAY

Tracy stares out from the back of a cab. The driver frowns.

DRIVER

Your change Ma'am.

TRACY

Keep it.

DRIVER

Ta, but we've been sat here for a
while. I need to move.

TRACY

(fighting fear)
Okay. Okay. Okay...

She gets out and crosses the pavement as if it's thin ice.

DAN (V.O.)

Good to see you out and about.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

DAN, middle-aged, beams from behind the desk of what is clearly the premises of a local newspaper.

DAN
You feeling better these days?

Tracy tries to appear happy and in control.

TRACY
Much better. Might even be back here asking for my old job.

DAN
I'd like to say the job is waiting for you, but we're little more than a website these days. Circulation of hard copy is way down and...

TRACY
(overlapping)
Relax, Dan. I'm here about Kenzie.

DAN
Little Kenzie! Wow, she must have been about twelve when I last saw her.

TRACY
Thirteen. And Mikey was nine.

A sorrow descends between them.

DAN
Sorry.

TRACY
(covering)
It's alright. It's been seven years. I can talk about him now.

DAN
Seven years? Time flies. Kenzie still such a cutie?

TRACY
To me she is. Still my little girl.

DAN
So? What about her?

Out on Tracy - where to begin?

INT. PUB - DAY

Barry sees Daphne's incoming call and switches off his phone.

BARRY

I'm just saying, you and me, no old school tie, no golf buddies, we got to find other ways. Your dream doesn't land in your lap, you chase it, right?

Mona sees the waitress serve a table of leering men.

MONA

That girl, Polish maybe, she dreams of a nice job she will never get. Those men dream of fucking her. They never will. This city is full of shit people dream about. Shit costs money.

(she slaps her briefcase)

No money, no dream.

BARRY

But you have a dream. You want a house here in London. I can help you with that dream. And you're right. It'll take money. Lot of prejudice against immigrant buyers. We got to be creative. Find a flexible lawyer. Who takes cash. So, here's a plan: you advance me a ten grand cash fee today, I get you a house in two weeks.

MONA

Ah. You do have a money problem.

Again, her directness knocks him back.

BARRY

Let's not talk problems. Let's talk solutions. Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative.

MONA

Who?

BARRY

You know, from the song.

(singing)

Accentuate...

MONA

(overlapping)

No, somebody lent you money. Who?

BARRY

Oh, forget that, my business.

MONA

No, houses are your business. Money is my business.

BARRY

Exactly. So you pay me now, I pay a lawyer to do the paperwork, you'll have a house in two weeks - no questions asked.

MONA

Ah.

(indicating the briefcase)

You see this money, you think I'm Mr Big. No. I'm just a woman.

(indicating the waitress)

Like her.

Barry can't help deflating.

BARRY

Right. So, could I talk to Mr Big?

MONA

No.

Barry waits in vain for further explanation.

BARRY

Okay. So how are we going to buy a house with Mr Big's money?

MONA

You're the house man. You tell me.

BARRY

Well... I was telling you.

Her response is inscrutable silence. The wind is out of Barry's sails. Other problems are calling.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I'm actually out of time here. My daughter's facing a court case. She needs me. But you run my offer by Mr Big and get back to me. Yeah?

Barry makes to leave, but Mona is not done.

MONA

So your daughter is a criminal?

BARRY

No, no, no... she just... wants to change the world, I suppose.

MONA

Ah. She has a dream.

BARRY
Sort of. Anyway, really got to go.
(making to leave)
You speak to Mr Big and...

MONA
(overlapping)
Your money man. The one who fucked
your car. He wants his money now?

BARRY
Can't get into that. Got to go.

MONA
(grabbing his arm)
I can speak to your money man.
Organise more time.

BARRY
Really, it's not...

MONA
(overlapping)
How are you going to pay him?
(off his silence)
You say we're friends now. So?
Speak to Mona... your friend.

BARRY
(his mask slipping)
Yeah, I probably do need more time.

MONA
Tell me where he is, I get you more
time. Then we talk houses. My
friend.

Barry sighs - she's not taking no for an answer.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy in a deep sleep. Barry enters, touches her face lovingly. He spots a framed photo of Kenzie in her hands; looks at the image. The weight of the day bows his shoulders.

EXT. COURT BUILDING - DAY

A new day. Kenzie smokes a roll-up on the court steps. A security guard looks on with disapproval. She stares him down with a scowl. She sees Barry and Daphne approaching. Daphne stays a way off as Barry and Kenzie face each other in silence, their close bond obvious as she melts into his hug.

BARRY
Jesus. What do I do with you?

KENZIE

Nothing. I'm a big girl, I got this.

(off his worry)

Whatever fancy lawyer you've hired, I don't need him this time. Really.

BARRY

I haven't told anyone this. Not your Mum, not your Gran, not anyone. But I'm flat broke.

KENZIE

Bad month?

BARRY

More than that. Maxed out everything - credit card, overdraft, mortgage, the lot.

KENZIE

The mortgage? Fuck me! How?

BARRY

Shit happens. Point is I can't pay for a lawyer, a fine, anything.

KENZIE

You don't need to. I've got a plan.

BARRY

Anger is not a plan.

KENZIE

It's a whole lot better than sucking up shit. Right?

INT/EXT. BRISTOL/HAND CAR WASH - DAY

A man, JAKUB, approaches Mila, slouched against the car, smoking. She nods permission, he opens a back door and gets in beside Mona. He takes out a bloody rag and opens it to reveal a man's severed finger. Mona nods in approval and hands him a wad of money, which he pockets.

JAKUB

(referring to the finger)

You do this for monkey. Why?

MONA

I do it for what?

JAKUB

For monkey...

(off her unsettling stare)

...for black man. Why?

She calmly picks up the finger and holds it up to his face.

MONA
Open your mouth.

He freezes in disbelief.

MONA (CONT'D)
Open. Your. Fucking. Mouth.

Fear makes him give in and she puts the finger in.

MONA (CONT'D)
Close your mouth.

He obeys, fighting the urge to gag.

MONA (CONT'D)
Now go wash cars. Monkey.

He heads into the car wash, spitting the finger into the rag.

Mona catches Mila looking at her in horror. Mila averts her eyes, but Mona is already lost in other thoughts.

(This excerpt is from a completed 60-minute pilot script. For more information, email greigcoetzee@gmail.com)