

# ***Defining Dawn***

*by*

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## Cast:

DAWN HOLMES	Early twenties.
FRANCIS HOLMES	Dawn's father, middle aged.
ALICE HOLMES	Dawn's mother, middle aged.
ROBIN CRAWFORD	Psychiatric social worker, a woman, early 30s.
VARIOUS DELEGATE VOICES. Played by members of the cast.	

Dialogue placed side by side is to be spoken simultaneously or overlap.

- at the end of a sentence indicates words cut off by next speaker.

. . . indicates hesitation.

F/X CHANNEL SURFING, RAPIDLY SWITCHING SNIPPETS  
OF TV PROGRAMMES.

FRANCIS (SIGHS) There's nothing on the telly.

ALICE You can't be looking hard enough.

FRANCIS I've looked.

ALICE Why don't we watch one of those House programmes? I like the House programmes.

FRANCIS We've got twice as many channels as before and still nothing to watch.

F/X DOORBELL RINGS.

FRANCIS Who's that?

ALICE It'll be for Dawn.

FRANCIS Oh.

ALICE That nice social worker, I expect.

FRANCIS (SHOUTING) Dawn!

DAWN (PAUSE) What?

FRANCIS            Door. For you.

DAWN                Who is it?

FRANCIS            Answer the door and find out.

F/X                    RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

DAWN                I dreamed I was dead.

ROBIN                What happened?

DAWN                In the dream?

ROBIN                Yes.

DAWN                I was dead, but I didn't know I was dead and I couldn't understand why everyone was ignoring me. I'd go up to people and say hello and they'd just look through me. As if I wasn't there. I was dead, you see. I could see them but they, they couldn't see me.

ROBIN                Because you were –

DAWN                Dead. Yes, because . . . because . . . that's the only explanation. I'd speak and nobody would hear me, I . . . I could hear my voice but I wasn't making a sound. I couldn't reach them, I couldn't touch them, they would pass right through me.

ROBIN                    Like a, ghost?

DAWN                    Yes. I was so lonely. I tried . . . I kept trying to, communicate, but I couldn't . . . to tell them I was there . . . but no one would listen.

ROBIN                    Then what happened?

DAWN                    I woke up.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN                    The first time Dawn had to be hospitalised, what did you think?

ALICE                    Well . . .

FRANCIS                It was a nasty shock.

ALICE                    You can say that again.

FRANCIS                It was a surprise.

ALICE                    We had no inkling you see.

FRANCIS                None at all.

ALICE                    None.

ROBIN                    You didn't think Dawn had been acting strangely before -

ALICE                    Well, it all depends what you mean by strange.

FRANCIS                You get used to it.

ALICE                    Yes.

FRANCIS                Take it for granted. All kids are strange, if you ask me.

ROBIN                    Yes but -

FRANCIS                They're an ungrateful lot. You do everything for them.

ALICE                    Everything.

FRANCIS                And get no thanks.

ALICE                    No thanks.

FRANCIS                And you keep hoping it's going to get better.

ALICE                    Yes, better.

FRANCIS                Easier.

ALICE                    Certainly easier.

FRANCIS                And it never does.

ALICE No.

FRANCIS It never bloody does. (Pause.) It makes you wonder.

ALICE Yes.

FRANCIS It makes you wonder why you bother. (Pause.) Why have them in the first place. Why not just . . . just, you know.

ALICE Yes.

FRANCIS It's true isn't it?

ALICE Yes.

FRANCIS Everything I say.

ALICE Yes.

FRANCIS It's true. Every bloody word.

ALICE Yes.

ROBIN How are things now?

FRANCIS Better.

ALICE Yes.

FRANCIS I'd say, on the whole, things are better.

ALICE When she came out of hospital we were a bit worried at first, weren't we.

FRANCIS Yes.

ROBIN Worried about?

ALICE Well, we weren't sure if we could cope, or she . . . Dawn, if Dawn could cope.

ROBIN And how is it?

ALICE We're managing, aren't we.

FRANCIS Managing, yes, managing, we always manage, somehow.

ROBIN Any particular, difficulties?

ALICE Not really.

FRANCIS No.

ALICE You know what Dawn's like.

FRANCIS She flies off the handle sometimes.

ALICE We just ignore her, you know, let her get on with it.

ROBIN                   And does that work?

ALICE                   What?

ROBIN                   Ignoring her – does that work?

ALICE                   Yes, I suppose it does. She calms down eventually.

FRANCIS                The more you argue the worse it gets.

ALICE                   It works for us. We just want a quiet life. (To FRANCIS.)  
It's getting better though, isn't it?

FRANCIS                Yes.

ALICE                   She's better now.

FRANCIS                Yes, much better.

ALICE                   (Ingratiatingly to ROBIN.) Thanks to you. (Pause.) I  
must say, you've done wonders with her. She talks now,  
and everything.

ROBIN                   Good.

ALICE                   It gave us such a shock when she wouldn't talk, or eat, or,  
anything. What's it you called it?

ROBIN                   Catatonic withdrawal.

ALICE                    That's it.

ROBIN                    It doesn't usually last long, but it's best to admit people who are in that condition.

FRANCIS                I told you she'd come round.

ALICE                    We couldn't just leave her!

FRANCIS                She'd come round eventually.

ALICE                    She wasn't speaking, she wasn't eating, she was messing the sheets, she'd just do it, where she was lying.

FRANCIS                Make her clean it up.

ALICE                    You couldn't make her do anything. It was like talking to a vegetable, you know, you can't have forgotten, you were just as scared as me, it was as if you weren't there, it was as if she wasn't there. Still, she's better now.

FRANCIS                Much better.

ALICE                    Thanks to you.

F/X                      ALARM CLOCK RINGING, HAND SCRABBLES FOR IT AND SWITCHES IT OFF.

ROBIN                    What's the point? What's the point? I get up. I wash . . . this skin, this . . . skin, which is no longer, comfortable, doesn't seem, right, anymore. I put on my clothes. Go to

work. Eat. Each day I do these things. And all the time I feel, am I entitled to this?

I keep going over it in my mind. The past, the then and now. The present. How much now illuminates then. Casting a different light. Making obvious the hidden.

I feel a fool. I didn't see it coming. Her obsession with . . . but that is just what it seemed.

The truth is, the present changes the past. Then I was just doing a job. Now I'm a fool, a culpable fool.

The police, naturally, wanted to speak to me. I could read their thoughts. Huh, sounds like something Dawn would have said. But it was written on their faces so clearly. It said, why didn't you, the one who is suppose to know, stop this, do something.

They knew it all, could see it clearly, because they hadn't been there.

F/X DOOR SLAMMING.

ALICE                    Hello Dawn. What was it like at the day centre today?

DAWN                    Okay.

ALICE                    Got on all right, did you?

DAWN                    Yeah.

ALICE                    Make friends?

DAWN                    Friends?

ALICE                    Yes, are they friendly?

DAWN                    S'ppose so. (Pause.) They've got a metal workshop!

ALICE                    Really. That's nice.

DAWN                    I'm making a sculpture.

ALICE                    That's nice, dear. What sort of sculpture?

DAWN                    It's sort of half round.

ALICE                    Oh, one of those abstracts, is it.

DAWN                    It's hollow.

ALICE                    That's nice.

DAWN                   It's hard but they're helping me with it.

ALICE                   I'm sure you'll get it right in the end. It's amazing what a little perseverance can do. (Pause.) Dawn?

DAWN                   Yes?

ALICE                   You like Ms. Crawford, don't you.

DAWN                   She's interested in me.

ALICE                   Yes, I'm sure she is.

DAWN                   She likes me.

ALICE                   Yes, yes, lots of people like you.

DAWN                   No they don't.

ALICE                   Yes they do. (Pause.) Anyway, I was wondering, what sort of things do you talk about with Ms. Crawford?

DAWN                   Stuff.

ALICE                   Yes. And?

DAWN                   Just stuff.

ALICE                   I wouldn't want you giving her the wrong idea about us.

DAWN (Silence.)

ALICE People often jump to wrong conclusions, don't they.

DAWN (Silence.)

ALICE Anyway, I'm glad we've had this little chat.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN Dawn, you don't have to talk to me. (Beat.) We can just sit here.

DAWN (Silence.)

ROBIN But if there is anything. (Beat.) Anything on your mind, whatever it is, you can tell me.

DAWN My parents didn't want me.

ROBIN What makes you think that?

DAWN I know. I know.

ROBIN How do you know?

DAWN I heard. When I was in the womb I heard them talking.

ROBIN In the womb?

DAWN                    Yes, yes, I remember, I have memories.

ROBIN                   In the womb?

DAWN                   Yes, yes, I remember them talking, talking about getting rid of, 'it'; talking about an abortion.

ROBIN                   What did they say?

DAWN                   They couldn't decide. They kept talking it over and they couldn't make up their minds. They didn't know what to do, so I'm here. But they didn't want me, they just couldn't decide.

ROBIN                   How does that make you feel?

DAWN                   I feel angry.

ROBIN                   That they didn't want you?

DAWN                   That they couldn't make up their minds. (Beat.) Why couldn't they decide?

ROBIN                   It can't be easy.

DAWN                   S'ppose not.

ROBIN                   And you remember being in the womb.

DAWN                   Yes.

ROBIN (Beat.) What was it like?

DAWN I don't remember.

ROBIN You must have some kind of -

DAWN If I think about it I can't breathe, I feel trapped. I don't want to think about it.

ROBIN That's okay, you don't have to talk about it if you don't want to.

DAWN (Silence.)

ROBIN Let's talk about some other childhood memories.

DAWN (Silence.)

ROBIN Think of something nice.

DAWN Nice?

ROBIN Something pleasant (beat) from your past.

DAWN I can't remember anything.

ROBIN There must be something. Something vivid?

DAWN (Pause.) I suppose I remember Dreamland.

ROBIN                      What's dreamland?

DAWN                      Dreamland is this amusement park in Margate. Every summer we used to go on holiday to Margate. My parents didn't like Dreamland, too noisy, but I did.

ROBIN                      What did you like about it?

DAWN                      They had this man, he guessed your weight, and every year I'd go and have my weight guessed, and he always got it right. He felt you all over, quickly, efficiently, impersonally, he felt your bones through your skin. When he felt my bones I knew, for the first time, I really existed.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN                      What was she like as a child?

FRANCIS                    She was always a good girl.

ALICE                      Good girl.

FRANCIS                    Wasn't she.

ALICE                      Yes, she was a good girl.

FRANCIS                    Never misbehaved much, did she.

ALICE                      No.

FRANCIS            Just the usual.

ALICE              Yes.

FRANCIS            The usual things: nothing special.

ALICE              No.

ROBIN              Did she have many friends?

FRANCIS            Friends?

ROBIN              Friends.

FRANCIS            I suppose so.

ALICE              Yes, yes she had lots of friends.

FRANCIS            Popular.

ALICE              She was popular.

ROBIN              What kind of friends?

ALICE              She knew lots of people at the church, didn't she.

FRANCIS            Yes, lots. She loved to go to church. When she stopped going the vicar said he didn't know how he was going to cope without her.

ALICE                    She helped in the Sunday school – with the little ones.

ROBIN                    I see.

FRANCIS                She had lots of friends. She was normal.

ALICE                    Normal.

FRANCIS                Perfectly normal.

ALICE                    Like us.

FRANCIS                I always thought she took after your mother.

ALICE                    Really?

FRANCIS                Yes.

ALICE                    Do you think so?

FRANCIS                Umm.

ALICE                    I hadn't noticed. I suppose –

FRANCIS                Anyway, she was normal.

ROBIN                    No signs –

FRANCIS                No signs at all.

ALICE                   None.

ROBIN                  I see. Did she often have friends round to the house?

ALICE                   No.

FRANCIS               She could have.

ALICE                   Of course she could have.

FRANCIS               But she didn't

ALICE                   Didn't want to.

ROBIN                  Why do you think that was?

ALICE                   I don't know.

FRANCIS               You'd have to ask her, wouldn't you.

DAWN                   They never liked my friends.

FRANCIS               She had some funny friends.

ALICE                   But we put up with them.

DAWN                   It's a wonder I had any.

ALICE                   For her sake.

DAWN Any at all.

FRANCIS Bloody peculiar friends.

DAWN They were so hostile.

FRANCIS What was the name of that funny boy?

DAWN Couldn't wait to get out.

FRANCIS Never spoke.

ALICE Michael.

DAWN Got so I didn't want to take anyone home.

FRANCIS Michael! That's it. He never spoke.

DAWN In the end.

FRANCIS We had to put up with a lot.

DAWN It was like living in a prison.

FRANCIS They wouldn't even say hello.

ALICE Never spoke, most of them.

DAWN H.M. Prison Priory Gardens.

FRANCIS            Just hear them thundering up the stairs. Always slammed the door.

ALICE                Made me jump.

FRANCIS            Then the music would start up.

DAWN                I just wanted to be left alone.

FRANCIS            Always loud, way too loud. Thumping away. Unnecessary, wasn't it?

DAWN                Be myself.

ALICE                Unnecessary, yes. Gave me a headache.

FRANCIS            I tried to talk to them. I did didn't I?

ALICE                Yes.

FRANCIS            But you couldn't get anywhere.

DAWN                Be left alone.

FRANCIS            They just weren't interested.

DAWN                Be myself.

F/X                            FLASH! SOUND OF OLD FASHIONED CAMERA  
FLASH.

DAWN Dawn aged 5. It is winter. She wears a long overcoat with big buttons all the way down the front, and a woolly hat. She peers up at the camera reluctantly, shy, about to turn away.

F/X FLASH! SOUND OF OLD FASHIONED CAMERA  
FLASH.

DAWN Dawn aged 10. On the beach. She wears a one-piece swimsuit made of material which makes bobbly patterns all over her torso. It is her favourite thing. Waves lap her feet, the water froths around her ankles like little bracelets.

F/X FLASH! SOUND OF OLD FASHIONED CAMERA  
FLASH.

DAWN Dawn aged 8. She squints at the camera. The glare from the sun blinds her. Her mouth forms an involuntary sneer, revealing perfectly formed small white teeth.

F/X FLASH! SOUND OF OLD FASHIONED CAMERA  
FLASH.

DAWN Dawn aged 14. She is wearing make up and the kind of outfit regarded as fashionable at the time. She's on her way to the school dance. She is smiling but her eyes look worried.

F/X FLASH! SOUND OF OLD FASHIONED CAMERA  
FLASH.

DAWN Dawn aged 17. She sits on a bench and glances up at the camera. Her hair is short. Her expression is blank. It says, you can photograph me if you want, but I won't be here, not me, not when you want me.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN I hear you're getting on well at the day centre.

(Pause. Dawn does not respond.)

Do you enjoy it?

DAWN Yeah.

ROBIN Good.

F/X HEAVY PACKAGE BEING PLACED ON TABLE.

DAWN I made you something.

ROBIN Thank you, Dawn. That's very thoughtful of you.

DAWN (Pause.) Aren't you going to open it?

ROBIN Yes. Yes, of course.

F/X WRAPPING PAPER BEING TORN OFF.

ROBIN                    Oh, a nude sculpture.

DAWN                    Do you like it?

ROBIN                    Yes, yes, it's lovely.

DAWN                    I made it specially for you.

ROBIN                    It's nice. (Pause.) Shall we start?

DAWN                    Okay.

ROBIN                    How have you been getting on with your parents?

DAWN                    (Silence.)

ROBIN                    Has anything been bothering you . . . any thoughts.

DAWN                    Yes.

ROBIN                    Go on.

DAWN                    I've been thinking about those wild boys?

ROBIN                    What?

DAWN                    Children who, somehow, you know, have been abandoned in the wild and brought up by animals, or something.

ROBIN                    Hard to believe.

DAWN                    But it's true, it does happen.

ROBIN                    There seem to have been a few cases.

DAWN                    And they find them: and they bring them back and make them . . . make them civilised.

ROBIN                    Yes.

DAWN                    Why can't they leave them? They're happy where they are, aren't they. They have to go and spoil it all by trying to make them like them. That makes them unhappy.

ROBIN                    Hmm.

DAWN                    They were happy before.

F/X                    RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN                    Would you say you were strict parents.

ALICE

FRANCIS

Yes. (Laughs.)

No. (Laughs.)

FRANCIS                Well ...

ALICE                    It all depends what you mean by strict.

FRANCIS                Yes, exactly. If you ask me, we weren't strict enough.

ALICE                    We were just . . . ordinary.

FRANCIS                Normal.

ALICE                    Yes, normal.

FRANCIS                She had her freedom.

ALICE                    Provided she lets us know where she was going.

FRANCIS                And didn't stay out too late.

ALICE                    Naturally.

FRANCIS                We like routine, order. We're orderly people. Without a routine anything can happen, can't it. These so called friends, they had no routine, you could tell just by looking at them.

ROBIN                    Yes, but –

FRANCIS                May I illustrate?

ROBIN                    What?

FRANCIS                My point, I'd just like to illustrate my point.

ROBIN                      Certainly.

FRANCIS                  Every Sunday I wash my car.

ROBIN                      Really.

FRANCIS                  Yes, every Sunday, without fail. That's routine. You should see the state of some people's cars, never get washed from one month to the next. That's my point. If you don't have a routine everything goes to pot.

ROBIN                      About your daughter –

FRANCIS                  She's another example.

ROBIN                      What?

FRANCIS                  Never could get her into a routine, could we?

ALICE                      No.

FRANCIS                  Her school work was all over the place.

ALICE                      Still, she did it.

FRANCIS                  Yes, she did it, eventually, but she had no routine.

F/X                      OUTSIDE, TRAFFIC NOISE, FOOTSTEPS.

DAWN                      (SPEAKING WHILE WALKING. ) Surveillance,

surveillance, you're under surveillance, wherever you go whatever you do, you're under surveillance. As you walk down the street, stand at the corner and look left and right, you're on candid camera, you're caught in the lens, you're a bug on their windshield; watchable, rewindable, admissible in evidence. As you tap in your PIN number there's a little lens, clocking you from an unflattering angle. Surveillance, surveillance, always surveillance, you're under surveillance. And it's all for your own good.

F/X                      TOOTING CAR HORN.

FRANCIS                I blame her friends. She had some peculiar friends.

DAWN                    Sometimes I feel like an advert.

FRANCIS                They probably got her interested in all that stuff.

DAWN                    But I'm always the before and never the after.

ALICE                    She'd never've thought of it on her own.

DAWN                    I'm the girl with split ends.

ALICE                    It was that boyfriend.

DAWN                    I'm the girl with dry hair.

FRANCIS                He put all kinds of ideas into her head.

DAWN I'm the girl with greasy skin.

ALICE I started to get worried when I found all those books, in her room.

DAWN They were always spying on me.

ROBIN What sort of books?

DAWN It was like living in enemy territory.

ALICE History books, I suppose you'd call them.

ROBIN That doesn't sound . . . unusual.

ALICE Well, they were all a certain type of book.

ROBIN Yes – and?

ALICE She was obsessed with revolutionaries, those German terrorists from the 1970s, what were they called? Baader-Meinhof! That's what the books were about.

DAWN Sometimes I feel like a pipe-bomb.

ROBIN I see.

DAWN Full of nails.

ALICE It got me worried.

DAWN                    Just full of nails, waiting to burst out.

ALICE                    It wasn't normal.

DAWN                    It's easy.

ALICE                    She was obsessed.

DAWN                    You can download instructions

ALICE                    It was unhealthy.

DAWN                    On how to make one.

ALICE                    That's what I thought.

DAWN                    From the internet.

ALICE                    You thought so too, didn't you?

DAWN                    But who needs instructions?

FRANCIS                Yes, I thought it was very odd.

DAWN                    When you're a pipe-bomb waiting to go off.

ALICE                    I don't know why she found it so interesting.

DAWN                    I'm Dawn (beat) download me.

ALICE (Pause.) I used to try and draw her out of herself. Get her away from those morbid thoughts.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ALICE Dawn! Why don't you come down the shops with me?

DAWN No thanks.

ALICE Come on, it'll do you good.

DAWN I don't think so.

ALICE Come on, you'll like it.

DAWN I don't want to go shopping!

ALICE Keep me company.

DAWN No.

ALICE You'll like it when we get there. You always used to like going shopping with me. We had some lovely times. I used to look forward to it, our little outings together. (Pause.) Why don't you come?

DAWN Mum, I said no, I meant no.

ALICE I don't know what's got into you. Why don't you confide in

me? Is there something wrong?

DAWN No.

ALICE There must be something. Is it that boy?

ALICE DAWN

Is that what's bothering you? Don't (Rhythmically, without emotion.)  
let it get you down. Plenty more fish  
in the sea. You need taking out of No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.  
yourself. It doesn't do to brood. I  
always find shopping helps.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ALICE (To ROBIN.) She met this boy on holiday. That was the  
start of it. He was most unsuitable, but I didn't like to say  
anything, she was having so much fun. And Francis tends  
to overreact to things. He loses his temper. I keep telling  
him, it doesn't do any good, losing your temper. But he  
takes no notice of me; he thinks if he shouts loud enough  
people are going to take notice of what he says. Well, it  
doesn't work like that, does it? You know that.

FRANCIS I do not lose my temper!

ALICE I didn't mean it critical.

FRANCIS Well it sounded critical!

ROBIN                   What did you think of Dawn's boyfriend?

FRANCIS                I never liked him.

ROBIN                   Any particular reason?

ALICE                   It was him, that boy, he turned her mind. She was never the same after she met him.

FRANCIS                He put all kinds of stupid ideas into her head.

ALICE                   They used to sit up in her room for hours.

FRANCIS                Never knew what they were up to.

ROBIN                   Did she go out with him for long?

FRANCIS                No, I suppose it wasn't that long.

ALICE                   It felt long enough.

ROBIN                   But you think he had a big influence over her.

FRANCIS                Yes, I do. Well, I'm speculating, naturally, I don't know what they spoke about when they were alone together, it wasn't as if we spied on them or anything, but I never trusted him, there was just something about him.

ROBIN                   Anything in particular?

FRANCIS                    Well, as I said before, he never spoke, you couldn't get anything out of him.

F/X                    RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

DAWN                    (To herself.) I'm walking down a long corridor, so long I can't see the end. All the rooms are empty. Nobody there at all. I've arrived too late for the party and there's no one to tell me where to go. I'm never the right girl in the right place. (Pause.) I can't remember why I'm here, but I know there must be a reason. There's always a reason. Isn't there.

F/X                    RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

FRANCIS                    (To himself.) Some bastard's gone and scratched the car. I noticed it when I was polishing her up this morning. Bastard! It makes you wonder if it's worth trying, having standards, nobody else does. (Pause.) I looked at the car, and I felt so sad. That scratch, it really got to me. Then I said to myself, it's just a car, just a car. (Pause.) But it's the only thing in my life that's really mine. (Pause.) I'd do it all differently now. If I had the chance. I'd just do my own thing. I wouldn't get married. I wouldn't have kids. I'd just do things for myself. Carefree. Be carefree. What a thing! What a word! Carefree. (Pause.) I wish things could be all right. Just all right, that's all I ask. It isn't a lot to ask for, is it?

F/X ALARM GOING OFF.

ROBIN                      Sometimes I think, why bother? What difference is it going to make? Is anyone going to come out happier; saner; more . . . complete? Why delve into all this . . . all this . . . mayhem. You can't cure people of life, can you. The more I learn the less I know. Isn't that funny? Big joke. I should laugh, but I don't.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ALICE                      When you get married everyone expects you to have a baby, want a baby, need a baby. But they don't warn you what it's like, they don't tell you anything. And you can't imagine.

F/X SOUND OF METAL-WORK SHOP.

DAWN                      It's my baby. I'm making my baby. I can feel it growing inside, it's waiting for the moment, the right moment. I'm looking after it. Nurturing it. Shaping it. My gift, it's my secret gift.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN                      Hello Dawn. What've you got there?

DAWN                      It's my photographs.

ROBIN                    Can I see them?

DAWN                    No!

ROBIN                    Why not? Are they secret?

DAWN                    No.

ROBIN                    Family photos?

DAWN                    My family. Baader-Meinhof family.

ROBIN                    Let me see them?

DAWN                    You don't want to see them.

ROBIN                    Yes I do. Show them to me.

DAWN                    D'you really want to see them?

ROBIN                    Yes, of course.

DAWN                    All right.

This is Irene Goergens, she's so pretty, I wish I was as pretty as her, she's good at driving getaway cars and rescuing people.

ROBIN                    I see.

DAWN                    They all have their own special skills, see. This is Gudrun Ensslin, she was good at starting fires and blowing things up.

ROBIN                   Really.

DAWN                   And this is Holger Meins. He was good at robbing banks, shooting the police and blowing things up! (Pause.) He starved himself to death in prison.

ROBIN                   Oh dear, such a waste.

DAWN                   He rejected eveything, everything.

ROBIN                   Tell me, Dawn, what is it you find so attractive about them?

DAWN                   They broke the rules.

ROBIN                   Is that good?

DAWN                   Yes. Yes, it's good for me. I always followed the rules, that's where I went wrong.

ROBIN                   What goes wrong, when you follow the rules?

DAWN                   You don't exist, not anymore, when you follow the rules all the time. That's what I did. I had no existence, I had to follow the rules, so that people wouldn't notice, mustn't let people notice you're different, they're easy to fool, they were fooled, they believed I existed, but I knew I didn't,

not really.

ROBIN                    There are lots of rules, aren't there Dawn.

DAWN                    Yes.

ROBIN                    But they're not all the same. The rules the Baader-Meinhof broke, they were different rules. They killed people.

DAWN                    Yes.

ROBIN                    What do you think about that?

DAWN                    (Silence.)

ROBIN                    I think what they did was futile. What do you think?

DAWN                    I like it.

ROBIN                    Why?

DAWN                    They didn't play the game.

ROBIN                    What game?

DAWN                    Everyone plays the game. What's in it for me, what chance have I got, what are the odds?

ROBIN                    You think that's what people do?

DAWN                    Oh, that's what people do.

ROBIN                   But they didn't?

DAWN                   They had impossible odds and did it anyway. They took on the whole country. They didn't care about what the odds were, they just did it.

ROBIN                   Isn't that unrealistic?

DAWN                   Yes!

ROBIN                   And you find this –

DAWN                   I like it, I like it that they didn't care that what they were doing was . . . was destined to fail . . . was, was attempting the impossible.

ROBIN                   But they murdered people . . . terrorised a whole nation.

DAWN                   Yes!

ROBIN                   And you think that is . . . heroic?

DAWN                   Yes! They didn't care if they died. They just did it! Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin liked burning down department stores. All those goodies, all that merchandise, consumer durables, fashion accessories, soft furnishing, lingerie, all those bargains, objects of desire, all gone. Knocked down, cut price, limited offer,

special discount, everything must go, sale, sale, sale!

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

FRANCIS                I nearly didn't answer the door. I thought it was reporters  
again. Then I thought it might be the police.

ROBIN                    Thank you for seeing me. (Awkward pause.) I had to  
come. To see you. Again.

FRANCIS                It seems strange. Seeing you. Now. It was always about  
Dawn.

ROBIN                    Yes.

ALICE                    It's still about Dawn.

ROBIN                    I wanted to see if I could help.

FRANCIS                Help?

ROBIN                    Yes. I know it seems . . . I know it's -

ALICE                    Past help.

ROBIN                    If this is too painful for you, I could always -

FRANCIS                No. Stay. Stay if you like. (Pause.) I don't know what we  
can say now.

ALICE                    There's no point talking about it. It's over.

ROBIN                    Sometimes talking can help.

ALICE                    We've done talking. Talking did no good.

FRANCIS                Don't upset yourself, Alice. (To ROBIN.) We all did our best. We did. You did. It's all that can be expected, isn't it.

ROBIN                    Yes.

ALICE                    You know what it was like. You know what Dawn was like. You know she didn't mean any harm, not really. She was just, she was very confused about things.

ROBIN                    That's right.

ALICE                    You ask yourself. Could I have done anything, done something different, something to make a difference. But you don't know, do you, you never know; that's the problem, you go through life . . . not knowing.

FRANCIS                Don't upset yourself.

ALICE                    I can't stop thinking about it; I don't want to think about it but I just can't –

FRANCIS                There, there –

ALICE                    Stop. I can't, always, I'm always –

FRANCIS                Don't distress yourself.

ALICE                    What am I supposed to do! Don't distress yourself! Don't, don't, oh God, what, then, can I do?

FRANCIS                I didn't mean –

ALICE                    You'd just like me to shut up.

FRANCIS                Now then –

ALICE                    But I don't want to shut up. I don't want to shut up and I don't want to have to say anything, I just wish things were . . . right . . . the way they're supposed to be.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

DAWN                    Everybody's made of glass. But you can't tell them or they think you're mad. They're like those little glass animals in mum's cabinet. I can see right through them. But I mustn't touch them. If I touch them they'll break.

F/X                      DOOR OPENING.

ROBIN                    Your parents are worried about you.

DAWN                    They worry about everything.

ROBIN                    Why do you think they're worried?

DAWN                    It's what they're supposed to do.

ROBIN                    What?

DAWN                    It's what's expected. They always do what's expected.

ROBIN                    Do you think that's all it is?

DAWN                    Parents are supposed to worry. That's what they're there for. If they don't worry they don't care, do they.

ROBIN                    What do you think bothers them most?

DAWN                    I won't do what they want.

ROBIN                    And that's it?

DAWN                    I always have to do what they want. If I don't I'm not Dawn any more.

ROBIN                    What?

DAWN                    If I don't do what they say I'm not Dawn. They say, that's not our Dawn, Dawn isn't like that, our Dawn wouldn't behave like that, our Dawn wouldn't dress like that, our Dawn wouldn't speak like that, our Dawn.

ROBIN                    But you're not their Dawn.

DAWN                    No, I'm not, I'm not their Dawn. (Pause.) I'm not your Dawn either.

ROBIN                    Whose Dawn are you?

DAWN                    I don't know.

ROBIN                    Does it worry you?

DAWN                    I want to find out, I do. I will find out.

ROBIN                    Do you want me to help you?

DAWN                    No. (Pause.) Can I ask you a question?

ROBIN                    Yes, of course you can.

DAWN                    Do you like your job?

ROBIN                    I beg your pardon?

DAWN                    This. Your job. Do you like it?

ROBIN                    Yes. I suppose I do. I find it . . . interesting.

DAWN                    Interesting?

ROBIN                    Yes.

DAWN I don't.

ROBIN What?

DAWN I don't find your job interesting.

ROBIN Well, you're not supposed to –

DAWN I want to stop now.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN Why do you think Dawn is interested in the Baader-Meinhof gang?

ALICE I suppose she thinks it's exciting.

FRANCIS She wants to shock.

ALICE I don't know what she sees in them. I don't think they're very glamorous. They all had spots.

FRANCIS Dawn had spots.

ALICE Yes, maybe that's it. (Pause.) I suppose they were quite exciting.

FRANCIS Murdering people!

ALICE Well, driving around in stolen cars, planting bombs, shooting guns, like Bonnie and Clyde.

FRANCIS They want to grow up, all of them.

ROBIN What are your memories of Dawn, as a little girl?

FRANCIS She was such a lovely child, our Dawn. So many happy memories; playing in the sand, running round the garden, I used to love watching her.

ALICE She was such a lovely child. She used to love playing with her Father.

FRANCIS Yes.

ALICE You always played a lot. She preferred playing with you, I remember feeling jealous, you looked so happy together. Then it suddenly stopped.

FRANCIS Did it?

ALICE Yes, I remember, I remember Dawn coming up to me and saying, Why won't Daddy play with me any more?

FRANCIS Did she? Did she say that?

ALICE Yes, I must have told you.

FRANCIS I don't remember.

ALICE                    She was quite upset, at the time. But she didn't give up, she kept climbing up, wanting to play, but you pushed her away.

FRANCIS                I was probably busy.

ALICE                    She was quite upset. She used to like playing with you so much. (To ROBIN.) Then he suddenly stopped.

FRANCIS                I don't remember this.

ALICE                    I do.

FRANCIS                You can't keep playing forever.

ALICE                    It wasn't that.

FRANCIS                What?

ALICE                    She used to climb all over you. I remember her saying, I'm going to climb on Daddy.

FRANCIS                She thought I was a mountain.

ALICE                    You were a mountain, her mountain.

FRANCIS                Yes, well.

ALICE                    But then you wouldn't let her climb on you any more.

FRANCIS            Well, it's not always easy, is it, being climbed on.

ALICE                Of course, we never saw eye to eye on how to bring up Dawn.

FRANCIS            What?

ALICE                We had different approaches.

FRANCIS            It's news to me.

ALICE                Well, you don't listen do you?

FRANCIS            Not listen?

ALICE                No. I know you don't listen so I've given up trying.

FRANCIS            Of course I listen.

ALICE                No.

FRANCIS            This is ridiculous.

ALICE                Once you've made up your mind.

FRANCIS            I do nothing but listen.

ALICE                An earthquake couldn't shake it.

FRANCIS            Nothing but listen to nonsense.

ALICE                He's so stubborn.

FRANCIS            Listen, listen, listen.

ALICE                You're not listening now!

FRANCIS            If there was something worth listening to I'd listen!

ROBIN                (Nervous cough.)

                          What were things like in the early days, bringing up  
                          Dawn?

ALICE                Oh, all right, no problems really. She was a good baby.

FRANCIS            Yes, she slept a lot, didn't she.

ALICE                Yes, she was quite easy, you could say.

FRANCIS            It was only later.

ALICE                A lot later.

FRANCIS            I often wonder whether that thing you had didn't affect  
                          Dawn more than we realised at the time.

ALICE                What?

FRANCIS            The thing.

ALICE                Oh, I shouldn't think so.

ROBIN                What sort of 'thing' was this?

ALICE                It was nothing, really.

FRANCIS            It was serious at the time.

ALICE                Well, I was very ill, I was laid up, wasn't I, after having Dawn.

FRANCIS            She couldn't cope.

ALICE                I was ill.

FRANCIS            Dawn stayed with Alice's mother for a bit.

ALICE                I was so ill. I couldn't get out of bed; I just lay there.

FRANCIS            I was busy working, of course.

ALICE                It was a nightmare. It couldn't have happened at a worse time.

FRANCIS            I used to go around and visit Dawn every evening, after work.

ALICE                Gradually I got better.



FRANCIS            Sorry.

ALICE              It's no use saying sorry, not now, you've told her now.

FRANCIS            (Faintly.) Sorry.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
                                 TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN              I nearly didn't take on this case.

It came at a time . . . a time when I was . . . it wasn't a good time. . . I'd just split up with my long-term partner, Kay.

God that was a mess. I wasn't, really, myself.

There's something intriguing about Dawn.

At a . . . at a personal level she both attracts and repels. She reminds me of a feral cat, one of those strays that turn up and want food and affection but are too nervous, to untrusting, to get it.

I'm aware, of course, of certain feelings . . . feelings which she

. . . we . . .

Typical examples of transference, in many ways.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

DAWN (Very enthusiastic.) Robin said she'll take me to Margate! We'll walk along the beach. There won't be anyone around. No one at all. Not a soul. We'll have the beach to ourselves. And she'll hold me. She'll touch me, all over, and I'll know it's real. All real. Always. The sun will set. The sea. The sea . . . the sea, it will keep coming and going, and we'll be there, forever, on the beach, just the two of us. And she'll show me everything. And I'll learn everything. It will all be all right. That's how it'll be.

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

FRANCIS We've discussed this and there's something we think we should tell you.

ROBIN Yes?

FRANCIS Well, I know this must sound odd but . . . Dawn is telepathic. (Pause.) She can read people's thoughts.

ROBIN Read thoughts?

FRANCIS Yes, we tested her, didn't we.

DAWN Everybody's watching you.

ALICE                    Yes.

FRANCIS                We did some experiments.

DAWN                    All the time.

ROBIN                    What kind of experiments?

ALICE                    We had to keep an eye on her.

DAWN                    All the time.

FRANCIS                We started to worry what she might do.

ALICE                    You can't be too careful.

FRANCIS

DAWN

It was all for her own good

It was all for my own good.

ROBIN                    What kind of experiments?

FRANCIS                Well, I'd be reading the newspaper, like this, and Dawn would be in the room. But I was only pretending to read, really I'd be directing my thoughts at her. It might be, oh, it might be, say she was biting her nails – she had a habit of biting her nails a lot – and I'd think: Stop that! And Dawn, she'd say: Stop, stop, stop it, stop doing it. (To ALICE.) That's right, isn't it.

ALICE                    Yes.

ROBIN                    I see.

FRANCIS                Other times I really would be reading the newspaper, to myself, in my head, not aloud, and Dawn would say: Same old news, same old things. And that was just the thought that was going through my head at the time. (Pause.) Uncanny, isn't it.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

DAWN                    The Baader-Meinhof group believed in Free Love.

ROBIN                    Did they.

DAWN                    They lived in a commune. One happy family. Doing it.

ROBIN                    Those kind of ideas are rather out of date, these days, aren't they.

DAWN                    They thought the family was just another part of the State apparatus of repression. They chose their family, they didn't just get stuck with it like everyone else. My parents think sex is bad.

ROBIN                    What makes you think that?

DAWN                    It's obvious. The way they talk about it. The way they

look when something comes on the telly.

ROBIN Perhaps it's a subject they find embarrassing.

DAWN Yeah.

ROBIN It embarrasses lots of people.

DAWN But not you.

ROBIN Pardon?

DAWN It doesn't embarrass you.

ROBIN No.

DAWN Because you're a professional. It's your job, isn't it, to delve, to creep and crawl into all those places, all those filthy dirty hidden little places where people don't want to go.

ROBIN I wouldn't put it like that.

DAWN You're a sort of sewer worker, really.

ROBIN No.

DAWN Dirty job but someone's got to do it, eh?

ROBIN There's nothing dirty about sex.

DAWN No? (PAUSE) I don't suppose anything shocks you. I expect you've heard it all, seen it all, all that stuff. What sort of things do your clients, your "customers" get up to?

ROBIN It's confidential.

DAWN Shame. I could do with a good story. Go on, just a quick one.

ROBIN You wouldn't like it if I told other people about our conversations, would you.

DAWN No.

ROBIN That's why they're confidential.

DAWN Nice isn't it. Knowing it's all "confidential". Nice and cosy, you and me.

ROBIN Exactly.

DAWN Do you think I'm attractive?

ROBIN You're a very pretty young woman.

DAWN D'you think so? Really? You're not just saying that.

ROBIN No.

DAWN People say things just because it's what they think you

want to hear.

ROBIN            You're very attractive.

DAWN            You wouldn't lie to me?

ROBIN            No.

DAWN            D'you want to kiss me?

ROBIN            What?

DAWN            Kiss me. You can, if you like.

ROBIN            No.

DAWN            I thought you said I was attractive!

ROBIN            You are attractive.

DAWN            Go on then.

ROBIN            It would not be right.

DAWN            Why not?

ROBIN            It would be . . . it's not something.

DAWN            Bet you want to really.

ROBIN                    Regardless of what I may or may not want, which is beside the point -

DAWN                    Go on.

ROBIN                    It's against the rules.

DAWN                    I won't tell. No one'd know. It'd be "confidential".

ROBIN                    No.

DAWN                    You're not a man.

ROBIN                    What?

DAWN                    You're not a man. No one will suspect.

ROBIN                    I like you Dawn, I do like you, and I want to help you -

DAWN                    Kiss me.

ROBIN                    I can't do that.

DAWN                    Then you can't help me.

ROBIN                    Dawn -

DAWN                    Just a kiss. That's all I want. It's just a little thing.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ALICE                      You like Ms. Crawford, don't you.

DAWN                      Her name's Robin.

ALICE                      I always think of that as a boy's name.

DAWN                      It's both.

ALICE                      Yes, I know it's both, but -

FRANCIS                      On first name terms are we? Very pally, I must say.

DAWN                      It's her name.

ALICE                      Yes, yes, of course it is. I expect they all call one another  
by their first names, don't they.

DAWN                      Robin.

FRANCIS                      She's Ms. bloody Crawford to me; always will be.

DAWN                      Like a bird.

FRANCIS                      She's not bloody bird-like if you ask me. Coming round  
here, snooping, stomping about in her trendy boots.

ALICE                      I thought she was very nice.

FRANCIS            You think everybody's nice.

ALICE              There's no need to -

FRANCIS           Jack the bloody Ripper could come round and you'd say  
he was nice.

ALICE              No need to have an argument.

FRANCIS           I wasn't arguing, I was -

DAWN              She is like a bird.

FRANCIS           What?

DAWN              She's free.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ROBIN              Your parents tell me you've stopped going to the day  
centre.

DAWN              (Silence.)

ROBIN              They miss you, at the day centre. (Pause.) Didn't you like  
it?

DAWN              No.

ROBIN                    I thought you liked it. Your mother said you looked forward to going.

DAWN                    I've changed my mind.

ROBIN                    Has something happened which you'd like to tell me about?

DAWN                    No.

ROBIN                    I thought you liked doing the metal work a lot.

DAWN                    It's too difficult.

ROBIN                    I'd like you to start going again.

DAWN                    I won't.

ROBIN                    If something's bothering you –

DAWN                    There's nothing, nothing 'bothering' me. I'm fine, fine, really. I just don't need it any more. I don't need to go. Why don't we go away?

ROBIN                    What?

DAWN                    I want to leave home. I've had enough.

ROBIN                    I'll see if I can get you a place in a hostel.

DAWN                    I don't want to live in a hostel. I want to move in with you.

ROBIN                   Really, Dawn, be realistic.

DAWN                   But I thought you liked me?

ROBIN                   I do.

DAWN                   Well then.

ROBIN                   I haven't got any room.

DAWN                   You promised.

ROBIN                   I said maybe. (beat.) We'll see.

DAWN                   That's what people always say.

ROBIN                   I can't say -

DAWN                   When they want to get out of something.

ROBIN                   I'm sorry. I'm not ready.

DAWN                   Why do people always lie? Why can't they be honest? I  
thought you were different.

ROBIN                   Dawn, listen -

DAWN                    No. You listen! You're the same as everyone else. You just like to pretend you're different. I hate you!

ROBIN                  Dawn, I -

F/X                    DOOR SLAMMING. RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

F/X                    SOUND OF SEA, BUT DISTORTED, IMAGINED IN DAWN'S HEAD.

DAWN                  We could've lived in Margate.

I would've looked after you.

Dreamland.

Real-land.

Dreamland.

We could've lived in Dreamland. And we'd be so real. I'd be real, you'd be real, *it* would all be real.

Real love, not fake love, not pretend love, but real love.

I'd feel your bones through your skin, and I'd know. I'd guess your weight. The weight of your soul. And it would be sooo heavy, *so heavy*. I'd never, ever, lift it, or leave it, I'd please it, never leave it.

(ANGRY) But now ... but now, now it'll never happen.

F/X SOUND OF VASE BEING SMASHED..

DAWN I'll make you wish you never met me. Bet you do. Bet you do. Bet you do already.

(PLEADING) Don't leave me!

I'm hurting. Don't leave me. Can't you see? Can't you see? Can't you see?

(ANGRY) I'll show you. I'll twist your head off! I'll show you.

You can see what's inside of me, can't you, can't you. I'll show you what's inside of you!

I'll twist your head off. I'll twist your head off. I'll reach in, reach in, reach right in, and I'll pull out your soul see, yeah, I'll pull out your soul and then you'll see, then you'll see, then you'll see *my* injuries, then you'll see *my* injuries!

F/X RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ALICE We had to keep an eye on her.

FRANCIS You never knew what she might do.

ALICE                    It was for her own good.

FRANCIS                For her protection.

ALICE                    Anything can happen, can't it, these days.

FRANCIS                We had to keep a watch on her for her own good.

DAWN                    Spying, they were spying.

FRANCIS                She accused us of spying on her.

DAWN                    Always spying.

FRANCIS                Of course we denied it.

DAWN                    Undercover.

FRANCIS                She was completely paranoid. Accusing us of something like that.

DAWN                    You have to learn to be cunning.

FRANCIS                She wasn't to be trusted, you see, making wild accusations like that.

ROBIN                    Why did you feel you couldn't trust her.

FRANCIS                She was always getting into trouble.

ALICE Well, I don't think it's a question of trust.

FRANCIS Unsuitable people.

ALICE I don't think we didn't trust her.

FRANCIS She used to let boys take advantage of her. She was too trusting.

ALICE Yes, she was very trusting.

FRANCIS Prepared to believe anything people told her.

ALICE I mean it's not all bad, but –

FRANCIS I used to tell her.

ALICE You can be too trusting, can't you.

FRANCIS People are always up to something.

ALICE Take it too far.

FRANCIS You've got to wise up to what they're up to.

ALICE Some people can be too suspicious.

FRANCIS What's that supposed to mean?

ALICE                    You make people nervous.

FRANCIS                Who, me?

ALICE                    Yes, you're so suspicious of other people it makes them nervous.

FRANCIS                No need to be nervous if they haven't got anything to hide.  
(Trying to get ROBIN on his side.)

                              You understand that don't you.

ALICE                    All the same, you can carry it too far, sometimes.

FRANCIS                It always comes down to my fault, doesn't it.

ALICE                    I didn't say that.

FRANCIS                Well it sounded like it.

ALICE                    I didn't mean it that way.

FRANCIS                (To ROBIN.) Don't you think it sounded like that?

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
                              TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

DAWN                    I'm ticking. Can you hear it? The ticking. I can. I can hear it all the time. Sometimes you might think it isn't there. But it is. I know. I can feel it. Inside. The ticking

inside. Like a clock. Weighing time.

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK,  
TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC.

ALICE                      We think she's better now, don't we?

FRANCIS                      Yes, much better.

ALICE                      Thanks to you.

ROBIN                      It's still early days.

ALICE                      She thinks the world of you.

DAWN                      My computer's watching me. It's reporting back. It thinks  
it can get me. But it can't. I'm on to it. I know what it's up  
to. I know.

ALICE                      But things are much easier now. You've calmed her  
down.

ROBIN                      We'll have to see how things go.

FRANCIS                      If only she'd start going to the day centre again.

DAWN                      (To herself.) Men in suits. It's all down to men in suits.  
(Pause.) And women in suits, them too. (Pause.) What's  
under those suits? If you peel away the fabric what's  
underneath? If you peel away the skin, what's beneath  
the skin? I'd like to pluck out their heart and hold it up to



F/X HUBBUB OF CROWDED FOYER.

F/X ECHOEY VOICE OF ANNOUNCERS ON TANNOY.

ANNOUNCERS Will delegates please make their way to seminar room 3 where the seminar on 'The Global Economy, the Internet and You' is about to begin.

In seminar room 2 'Financial Management for a New Century' will begin at 3:30 p.m.

(Recordings of industry speak voices. The speakers at the conference. A mixture of American and British accents. Fade down when DAWN starts speaking so that the audience can hear her.)

Future proofing investment is the only way to maintain market share and increase productivity while at the same time maintaining flexibility in a market which is becoming ever more volatile.

We are not selling, we are building relationships. A self-renewing customer base is essential for constant growth.

Constant growth can only be leveraged by expanding markets and buoyant consumer confidence.

Renewal and resource management will underpin our continued efforts to ensure a cleaner, healthier and more profitable future for all our partners.

F/X MURMURING OF VOICES IN THE BACKGROUND AS DAWN TAKES HER SEAT IN ONE OF THE SEMINARS.

DAWN Excuse me, excuse me, thank you.

It's easy, everyone makes way for a pregnant woman. I'm a career girl, I know what's what. I want everything, and I know I'm entitled.

Excuse me, is this global markets? Oh, good.

I'm inheriting the earth, and it's about time. I want a job and a family, and I want to bring my baby into the world, my gift from me to you. It's a new Dawn!

Is this seat taken?

FEMALE            No.  
DELEGATE

F/X                      RAPID METALLIC TICKING OF A WATCH, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK ETC GRADUALLY GETTING LOUDER AND MORE INSISTENT DURING THE NEXT EXCHANGE.

DAWN              Thank you.

DELEGATE        How many months to go?

DAWN              Not long now.

DELEGATE        Boy or girl?

DAWN              Boy. Definitely a boy. I'm going to call him Dierck, after his father. It's at moments like this you think about

everything. And it's all clear, so clear. Everything you –

F/X                      LOUD EXPLOSION, FOLLOWED BY CRACKLING OF  
FIRE, FOLLOWED BY SCREAMING AND SOUNDS OF  
PANIC AND CONFUSION. FADE DOWN TO  
DISTORTED VERY SLOW TICKING OF CLOCK.

DAWN                      Everything you know, everything you see, everything you  
love, everything you hate, everything.

FRANCIS                      There's always another day, isn't there.

DAWN                      (While the other characters are talking DAWN quietly  
counts to herself, slowly.)

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

ALICE                      One day at a time.

FRANCIS                      That's what they say.

ALICE                      It's all you can do.

ROBIN                      I'm so sorry.

FRANCIS                      How could we know? How could anyone know?

ALICE                      She was very clever.

FRANCIS                      You feel so guilty. All those people dead, because of our

Dawn.

ALICE                    Too clever for her own good.

FRANCIS                How can we face the neighbours?

ALICE                    Everybody knows.

FRANCIS                They all stare.

ALICE                    I get pointed out to people at the supermarket.

FRANCIS                They don't speak any more, just stare.

ALICE                    It's got so I don't like going shopping any more.

FRANCIS                How could she do this to us?

ALICE                    She didn't mean to. She didn't mean any harm, not Dawn, not our Dawn.

DAWN                    When you're with somebody, when you're with somebody, then you know, you know what you are, when you're with somebody.

FRANCIS                She was always good at science, chemistry, things like that.

ALICE                    She liked numbers, didn't she.

FRANCIS            Yes, she liked numbers.

DAWN              You know what you've got with a number.

ROBIN              Well, thank you for seeing me.

FRANCIS            It was good of you to come round.

ROBIN              It was the least I could do. Let me know if you need any help.

FRANCIS            Thanks, yes, we will.

ROBIN              Do you want to talk some more?

FRANCIS            No.

ALICE               It won't bring Dawn back, will it.

ROBIN              No.

FRANCIS            Of course it won't.

ALICE               Nothing will bring her back.

ROBIN              Have you been referred for bereavement counselling?

ALICE               What?

ROBIN                   Counselling, for bereavement.

ALICE                   Yes.

FRANCIS               We don't want it.

ROBIN                   It's there. Whenever you need it. In circumstances like these it can often be . . . very difficult.

ALICE                   Difficult. Yes, difficult.

ROBIN                   I'd better be going.

FRANCIS               Goodbye. (To ALICE.) Alice.

ALICE                   Goodbye.

DAWN                   Don't go.

FRANCIS               I suppose you've got a train to catch...

ROBIN                   I've got the car.

F/X                    FRONT DOOR OPENING.

DAWN                   Why're you leaving? I haven't finished yet.

ROBIN                   If I go now I'll avoid the traffic.



alone.

F/X DOOR CLOSING. FADE UP DISTORTED TICKING,  
SLOWING DOWN THEN STOPPING.

DAWN                    Speak to me. Look at me. Talk to me. Please. Don't go.  
Don't. I'll be good. I promise. Just don't leave me. Don't  
–

(The End.)