

SARAH In fact if a question starts 'do you think', you don't have to answer it. The law is about facts, and they know that so they would have to rephrase the question – Have you seen any evidence that this practice causes harm to the children concerned? What would you answer to that?

CARLY I've got lassagne.

Right here if you come out.

DAVID No. I haven't seen any evidence.

SARAH Good.

ASHLEY We were going to have two.

CARLY *What?*

ASHLEY Jack and Missy.

Beat.

CARLY Ashley come and help me or shut the fuck up.

SARAH Are they close?

DAVID Close?

SARAH The family?

DAVID Yeah. They're okay.

SARAH What's the boy like?

DAVID Well he's a little boy isn't he? Does stupid things. Likes computer games.

SARAH What sort?

DAVID Boys' ones. Fighting.

SARAH What do you make of that?

DAVID Doesn't do any harm.
SARAH You were a soldier. You saw real guns. Fighting. Injuries.
So what do you think?

DAVID It's just a game.

SARAH No.

DAVID What?

SARAH I asked you what you think.

Beat.

DAVID That's not my job.

SARAH Good.

CARLY Liann.

SARAH Why's he hiding in a box?

DAVID He's scared.

SARAH Do you know that?

DAVID It's obvious.

SARAH What's the evidence?

DAVID That he's in there.

SARAH He could just be playing? He could be annoying his mum. He might be loving it. You don't know he's scared do you? So why's he hiding in the box?

DAVID I'm not –

SARAH Are you a psychologist?

DAVID Do you have any clinical evidence?

DAVID No.

SARAH So do you know for sure why's he hiding in the box?

DAVID No

SARAH So why's he hiding in the box?

DAVID I don't know.

SARAH Good.

CARLY tries to lift the box. LIAM makes a noise as he tries to stop her.

ASHLEY Leave him.

She keeps trying.

CARLY There are worse things people do, to live.

ASHLEY He doesn't want to.

She gives up again, furious now.

CARLY Okay he doesn't want to, so we get kicked out, he gets kicked out of his school, we don't have a house we live somewhere shit, like where Mum lives, and he goes to your old school instead, and that was bad then, worse now, what do you think is going to happen to him there as he gets older? You think he's safer there?

ASHLEY I did alright.

CARLY You did not. Fucking. Do alright. Ashley. You didn't.

Suddenly ASHLEY stands up, storms upstairs and rips the box off LIAM.

SARAH Here we go.

LIAM makes a sound, and as the box crashes across the room, we find LIAM, in a hoodie,

with the hood pulled down over his face.

ASHLEY holds LIAM and pulls at his hood.

ASHLEY Take it off.

Fucking...

CARLY Liam...

ASHLEY pulls harder. Struggles with LIAM. It's messy.

ASHLEY pulls LIAM's hood off his face and holds it.

SARAH Could you shoot him yourself?

DAVID If I had to.

SARAH It would be useful if we knew you had no qualms yourself.

If you could get up and state that.

DAVID picks up the gun.

ASHLEY Open your eyes.

Open your eyes.

LIAM stands in the room with his eyes closed.

DAVID shoots. LIAM falls to the ground.

ASHLEY sits on the floor and waits. Out of breath.

A moment.

ASHLEY goes and gets some water. Brings it back.

DAVID It's not normally like this.

LIAM wakes up. ASHLEY goes to give LIAM his water.

He stops. LIAM has moved away and is staring straight at ASHLEY.

SARAH It's... David isn't it?

DAVID Yeah.

SARAH Right.

Scene Eight

LIAM is in his box – which has now moved to a corner of the room. CARLY is with him. Sari next to the box on the floor.

JOHN is in the hide watching, drunk, eating crisps.

This goes on for a long time.

Eventually CARLY dims the light.

We see that LIAM has a torch inside the box.

DAVID enters the hide, not expecting JOHN.

DAVID Oh.

They look at each other.

JOHN I do own it David.

DAVID What?

JOHN I am allowed to be here.

DAVID Course.

JOHN Just. Didn't expect you. It's not –

DAVID It's this family isn't it?

JOHN That...

DAVID That you know so much about.

JOHN They asked if I was concerned about any of them. I answered the questions truthfully. I was under oath.

JOHN Yeah okay, look, I don't mind David. It warmed my cold fucking heart, your story. Really *touching*.

DAVID I just answered the questions.

JOHN Yeah and we just lost one point three million in collective damages.

DAVID I'm on my way home.

LOCKING UP.

JOHN Sit down.

JOHN *is distracted by ASHLEY coming back in the front door, wearing an ill-fitting suit. He kisses CARLY.*

ASHLEY *(Referring to LIAM.)* Has he...

CARLY No.

You're late.

ASHLEY The car stopped working. Called the number. They said that benefit had been withdrawn. Told me to leave the car where it was.

Got the bus back.

JOHN *offers DAVID a drink.*

JOHN Sit down.

DAVID No thanks.

JOHN I'm your boss. Have a fucking drink.

DAVID Right.

JOHN Got some crisps too. Pringles.

ASHLEY *gets a beer and sits down.*

CARLY You don't look well.

ASHLEY You go in and they see you and you do the whole interview then they always eventually say they don't think this is right for you at this stage, and you know what they mean.

JOHN You think I've been nasty. You think I'm a bad person.

DAVID No.

JOHN Giving them a house and a living.

DAVID I didn't say that.

JOHN An income.

DAVID No.

JOHN You think I should feel some kind of responsibility to these people?

DAVID That's what everyone else thinks. Now we're scaling back, shutting down, I'm supposed to get them jobs as well. What do you think about that?

JOHN Well? What do you think?

DAVID I don't know.

ASHLEY Today was better.

JOHN They're adults David.

They're not stupid.

ASHLEY They knew what this was. They milked it for all it was worth. Now I'm supposed to help them.

ASHLEY They said they might have something in a couple of weeks. They'd keep me in mind.

CARLY Doing what?

ASHLEY Data entry.

JOHN Actually. Scratch that. Maybe they are. Maybe they are just really stupid.

CARLY How much?

ASHLEY Seven pounds an hour.

JOHN What's next?

DAVID You mean...

JOHN We shot the men, we shot the women, we shot the kids. We're still not making the money we used to. So what's next?

That's what we need David. The next idea.

ASHLEY It's a start.

CARLY Is it?

ASHLEY It would mean we could think about finding somewhere else -

CARLY Seven pounds an hour. There are three of us.

ASHLEY It's a start.

JOHN I think we should make it hurt.

DAVID I'm sorry?

JOHN Make them actually suffer. Charge more. Punters would love that.

If this was Holland we could do euthanasia.

I should look into that.

What do you think?

Put people out of their misery.

Pop.

There's a market.

People would pay.

It might work.

I...

I don't think it...

I'm joking.

You go out and find something then.

You really don't laugh do you?

Go on.

Smile now.

See if you can do better.

They write me letters.

Say I earn too much.

I'm like fuck off.

What?

You didn't take the risk, find the investment, develop the technology, mortgage your own house in the first place. You didn't have the idea. What have you done? Sit there. Ask for everything on a fucking plate. Now you're writing letters. Well fuck you.

I don't want to say it Ashley, I don't want to say it out loud because really it's so depressing.

JOHN *picks up the gun.*

They've had every opportunity.

They're lucky.

What? What?