

HOAX
by
PENNY GEORGIU
Sample / 2023

pennyscripts@gmail.com

OVER BLACK

A GUN SHOT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FAIRFIELD AVENUE - NIGHT

A lone police car bleeds blue light onto the deserted street. A fallen OFFICER lies motionless under the glare of its headlights. A SHADOWY FIGURE stands over him.

DIAL TONES, then RINGING.

CALL HANDLER (V.O.)
999, Police, fire or ambulance?

A mature female voice with tremors.

DEE (O.S.)
Police. A-sap.

CALL HANDLER #2 (V.O.)
Through to the police, what's
your emergency?

DEE (O.S.)
I... I just saw a cop shoot his
partner. Lane next to the Ferry
Boat bar.

CALL HANDLER #2 (V.O.)
What's the location?

DEE (O.S.)
Flat 6, Fairfield Avenue.
London. I'm 91 years old.

The figure's gaze shifts to a nearby window, where faint light filters through fluttering blue curtains, barely parted.

DEE (O.S.)
He's spotted me. I should have
kept the light off. My bad.

INT. DEE'S HOME.BEDROOM - NIGHT

Soft lamplight fills the room. DEE HANSON (91), in pajamas, stands behind the partially drawn curtains, peering out.

DEE
I was returning from the loo,
and I heard a car engine outside
(MORE)

DEE (CONT'D)
so, I looked out, and I saw the
police car and then I saw him
shoot him...

DEE'S POV: The shadowy figure kneels beside the fallen
officer, administering chest compressions.

A distant WAIL of SIRENS begins to pierce the night.

DEE
He's trying to revive him now.
Will I have to testify?

Police cars swarm in, their blue lights casting fleeting
flashes into the bedroom.

DEE
Can't see now, police
everywhere. Hanging up. Thanks,
dear.

Dee replaces the phone on a night stand, beside a framed
photo of an elderly man.

A sudden BUZZ from the intercom startles her.

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

SUPER: 3 MONTHS - Later

A blue sky bathes the scene in springtime warmth. Laughter
and conversation weave through the air as we track past
tables filled with happy diners.

ANNA (O.S.)
Straight guys can rock dresses.

RICK (O.S.)
True, but he also spoke through
pantomime.

ANNA (O.S.)
You're marrying too many
clichés.

RICK
Maybe it was some sort of gay
convention.

ANNA (O.S.)
None of the Dwarfs came out so
we can't presume.

RICK (O.S.)
Between seven guys, you'd think
at least one would have a
girlfriend.

ANNA (O.S.)
Guess dwarfs don't get the same
opportunities. Now shush!

We settle on Anna (30s), naturally pretty, no makeup, and Rick (30s), clean-shaven and handsome, in a salmon-pink shirt marked by a tomato sauce stain. They linger over the remnants of chocolate cake on their plates.

A WAITER approaches with the bill fax, placing it down.

WAITER
Did you enjoy your meal?

ANNA AND RICK (SIMULTANEOUSLY)
We did. Thank You!

They share a laugh as the waiter departs. Rick reaches for the bill, but Anna beats him to it.

ANNA
My turn to pay.

She slips on her glasses, scanning the bill. Rick leans in, tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear. A folded £50 note materializes in his hand.

RICK
Might as well use the spare
change behind your ear.

Anna raises an eyebrow, unimpressed at the sleight of hand. She removes her glasses.

ANNA
Who even carries cash these
days, let alone a fifty?

RICK
(with a grin)
Apparently, you do.

ANNA
Not happening. I'd be a shitty
feminist if I let you pay again.

RICK
I won't tell if you don't.
Besides we're both gender
neuteal. Which technically means
the rules don't apply.

ANNA
Non-gender-specific? You've
evolved fast.

RICK
Well gender's an invented social
construct. So, I guess I can be
whatever suits me. Right?

Anna snatches the £50 note, stuffing it in the bill
holder.

ANNA
Fine, you're paying for mocking
the whole gender debate.

Rick chuckles.

RICK
You can spank me later.

Anna almost cracks a grin, but instead rolls her eyes.

ANNA
Jesus, I'm actually living with
this.

RICK
Now there's a gender-neutral
male if there ever was one.

Anna looks around at other tables. Then looks back to
Rick.

ANNA
You can't gender reassign
historians. It's anti-feminist.
And it could harm my reputation.

She grows more serious, amusing Rick.

ANNA
Seriously, they're watching with
those little satellite thingies
that can zoom into conversation.

RICK
I forgot about those listening
thingies.

Rick's phone BUZZES. He checks it, apologetic.

ANNA
Go. I'll see you at home.

They meet over the table for a parting kiss. Then another.

RICK
Thanks for lunch.

He leans back in for a third kiss, but Anna playfully pushes him away.

RICK
Love you.

ANNA
Ditto.

Rick looks puzzled, Anna shrugs.

INT. LAW OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Rick bursts through the entrance, nearly bowling over a potted plant. He spots GARY (late 30s), flamboyant in a loud floral shirt, emerging from the men's room, tucking his shirt into his trousers.

RICK (CALLING OUT)
Gary!

Gary spins around, startled, then relaxes into a smug grin. He waits up.

GARY
Ketchup.

He gestures to Rick's shirt.

RICK
Fuuuu...doodle

He makes a frantic attempt to dab at the stain, only smearing it further. Gary throws his head back and laughs.

GARY
Don't worry, I've got a spare.

INT. - GARY'S OFFICE - LATER

Gary swivels into his desk chair. Rick stands opposite him, unbuttoning his shirt.

GARY
She said "ditto"?

Gary rummages through his bottom drawer, pulling out a shirt that seems to be a lost twin of the one he's wearing.

RICK
Should I read into it?

He tosses the stained shirt into a nearby bin. Gary's eyes rake appreciatively over Rick's bare torso.

GARY
Blonde, right?

RICK
(smirking)
No blonde jokes. Just the shirt,
please.

Gary throws the shirt, catching Rick by surprise. He pulls it on quickly.

GARY
You used to be king of the blond
jokes. What's that one...Got
it...what do you do if a blond
hands you a pin?

RICK
I'm not going to ruin my
relationship with a blond joke.

Gary mockingly scans the room, checking under the desk.

GARY
Has Anna installed some feminist
spy cameras??

RICK
Not funny, Gary. I 'm destined
to die alone at this rate.

GARY
Hey, come on, she invited you to
move in! Remember?

RICK
I sense she's having regrets.

GARY
You know what kills a
relationship?

RICK
Blond jokes?

GARY
Paranoia! Pure, unadulterated
paranoia. What's not to love?
You're a hotshot lawyer with a
body that could make a glacier
sweat.

Rick manages a chuckle as he buttons up the spare shirt.

RICK
Shallow much, Gary? Don't
forget, Anna's practically the
CEO of global feminism.

GARY
And therein lies the issue. You
picked an incompatible.

RICK
Thanks for the pep talk and the...
clown outfit.

Rick exits to the...

INT. - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

His phone RINGS. He answers as he runs towards the STAIRS.

RICK (INTO PHONE)
I'm ten seconds away.

He sprints up the STAIRS, bursting through a door at the
top.

INT. - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Several office doors leading off, with a waiting area
filled with cozy seats. Dee, holding a cup of tea,
occupies one of them. The receptionist, SAMANTHA (30s),
indulges in an Oreo, a nearly full pack hidden behind the
desk.

Rick knocks on the reception desk as he passes, flashing
Samantha a grin.

RICK
Guten Nachmittag, Sammy.

Samantha sets down the biscuit.

SAMANTHA
She's been waiting a while.

Rick pauses, then retraces his steps, leaning on the
reception desk.

RICK (WHISPERING)
Why's she here?

Samantha shrugs.

RICK (WHISPERING)
Anyone else know she's here?

SAMANTHA
Whoever brought her up. But
that's it, I suppose.

Rick nods.

RICK
Her visit stays between us. And
can you book me a taxi for half
an hour? Bring it round the
back.

SAMANTHA
Sure thing.

Rick pecks Samantha on the cheek. Behind him, Dee
approaches.

RICK
You're the best.

SAMANTHA
Just doing my job. No need to
reward me with a kiss.

RICK
We're not cool with that
anymore?

SAMANTHA
You're going steady.

RICK
Anna's cool with it. She reckons
guys and girls can still be
flirty, just not y'know.

Samantha gives Rick 'O-Really' eyes.

Rick nods, turning around. Grabs his heart at the sight of
Dee.

RICK
Jeez, you frightened me.

Dee chuckles.

DEE
Smack it there.

She taps her cheek with a finger. Rick shakes his head
with a grin.

RICK
I'd like to keep my license so...

He gestures toward his office, opening the door and
waiting patiently as Dee slowly enters.

DEE
Party pooper.

INT. - RICK'S OFFICE - LATER

Rick sits behind his desk, Dee opposite him.

RICK
You shouldn't be here, Ms.
Hanson. It's risky.

Dee cups her ear.

DEE
Come again.

RICK (RAISING VOICE)
You could've been seen. It's
dangerous.

DEE
No need to shout.

RICK
Sorry.

Dee retrieves a folded paper from her handbag.

DEE
This came through my safe-house
letterbox.

Rick wraps his fingers with a tissue, taking the paper. He
uses a blunt pencil to unfold it.

PAPER: Retract or you're dead, bitch!

Rick massages his temples.

DEE
Don't worry I'm still
testifying, but I'm confused.

RICK
About what?

DEE
Why am I testifying for the
defense when I want to put the
police officer away?

RICK
I explained last time.

DEE
My memory could sharpen that
pencil. You gave me five minutes
(MORE)

DEE (CONT'D)
of charming banter about your
dead granny loving pickled
Brussels sprouts.

Rick retrieves a folder, showing Dee a photo of a BLACK
MAN.

RICK
The officer isn't on trial. This
man is.

Dee squints at the photo, puzzled.

DEE
But he wasn't there. There were
only two officers, neither
coloured.

RICK
The gun had his fingerprints.
And he has no believable alibi.
We must convince the jury he's
innocent.

DEE
And the officer?

RICK
He made it look like this guy
did it.

DEE
So, they don't believe me?

RICK
Physical evidence contradicts
your statement.

DEE
But I saw it. I'm not senile.
There's no family history of it.

RICK
I know but it was dark and your...

DEE
Old?

RICK
Cops protect their own. The blue
code and all that.

DEE
And this young man is locked up?

RICK
Yes, but not for long because
the jury will not disregard your
evidence. Hopefully.

DEE
And then?

RICK
Maybe the case gets re-examined,
putting the officer in the
frame. Who knows. But the media
will be all over your testimony.

DEE
It's rather stupid.

RICK
Welcome to the legal system.

DEE
I could do it better myself.

Rick taps the threatening note with the pencil.

RICK
Someone dangerous knows where
you live.

DEE
Which, proves my statement was
true. Only an officer would know
my location. I don't even know
where I live. Took me three
buses before I ended up
somewhere familiar. I don't have
a fancy phone with a talking map
thingy you know.

Rick retrieves a pack of Oreos from his desk drawer.
Offers them.

Dee takes two, tucking them into her pocket, then grabs
one more.

DEE
And one for now.

RICK
Help yourself.

DEE
You're not a cheap lawyer are
you?

Rick takes an Oreo. He holds it out.

RICK
To you. Bringing down the bad
guy.

Dee taps her Oreo against his, sharing a smirk as they
indulge.

INT. HOTEL.DEE'S ROOM - LATER

The luxurious bedroom extends into a lounge area, with a
second door leading to the corridor. Rick sets down two
large bags of food.

Dee watches as he flips the "Do Not Disturb" sign from
inside to outside the door handle.

RICK
Just until next week. I've got a
key card, too.

Rick holds up the key card, then pockets it.

RICK
But save walking in on you, I'll
knock on the door at one-ish
every day.

He knocks twice, pauses, then adds three more knocks.

RICK (CONT'D)
Only open to me. Don't make any
calls except to me. If someone
calls, you're...

DEE
June Walker. I got it. I'm 92
not dumb.

RICK
You've got plenty of food, a
microwave, a kettle, and a TV.

Dee starts to dance.

DEE (SINGING)
I've got my heart, got my brain,
got my soul...

Rick chuckles.

RICK
Alright, I get it. Seeya
tomorrow.

Rick turns to leave, then pauses and returns.

DEE
Yeah. Yeah.

The door SLAMS shut in Rick's face.

INT. ANNA AND RICK'S HOME.BEDROOM - MORNING

The morning sun gently illuminates the bedroom. Rick and Anna are asleep, undisturbed.

DING DONG

Anna stirs.

ANNA
Get it Rick...Rick, wake up!

No response from Rick.

DING DONG

Anna groans, finally getting up. She hurries to the front door.

She peers through the peephole, then opens the door for a DELIVERY GUY holding a brown envelope.

ANNA
What time is it?

DELIVERY GUY
Special delivery for Anna
Macnamara.

Anna quickly signs on the screen and takes the envelope.

DELIVERY GUY
Have a good day, Ms.

ANNA
Mx!

She closes the door firmly.

INT. - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Rick's head lifts suddenly. He checks the clock: 6:17 AM. He notices Anna is gone.

RICK
Anna!

He gets up and heads to the...

INT - KITCHEN & LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The espresso machine hisses as Anna stands over it. The envelope sits on the bar.

RICK
It's not gone ??

ANNA
what-cha know. He's not dead.

Rick sits at the bar, resting his head on the counter.

ANNA
If we have kids, I won't be the
only one doing night feeds.

Rick lifts his head as Anna passes him a shot of coffee.

RICK
You don't want kids.

Rick downs the shot and shakes his head.

ANNA
That's not my point.

Anna prepares another coffee shot.

Rick moves behind Anna, wrapping his arms around her.

RICK
Okay... I promise to share the
night feeds of our imaginary
kids.

Anna smiles.

ANNA
I do like the idea of imaginary
children.

Rick grins.

RICK
Looks like we've just given
birth. You think of names while
I shower.

Rick plants a kiss on Anna's neck before leaving.

RICK
They better have my eyes.

ANNA
Assuming they're yours.

RICK

Ha. Ha.

Rick exits the room. Anna picks up the envelope, taking a seat at the table with her coffee. She tears open the envelope.

INT. - BEDROOM - LATER

The drawer on Rick's bedside table is open and empty. The second clothes' drawer down is also open and empty.

Rick stands in the doorway, wearing a towel around his waist. Confusion clouds his face as he takes in the sight of the room devoid of his belongings.

He walks to the cupboard and opens its door, finding only empty hangers inside. Panic flickers in his eyes.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anna is seated at the table, tears streaming down her cheeks. A packed holdall sits at her feet.

Rick enters.

RICK

Where's my clothes, Anna?

Anna wipes her tears, stands, and throws the bag towards Rick, falling short.

ANNA

Get out!

RICK

What's happened?

ANNA

Man happened. You happened. You know how this is going to make me look.

Rick approaches, concerned.

RICK

Ten minutes ago we gave birth.

Anna tosses photographs from the envelope towards Rick.

Rick picks them up, his expression shifting as he sees images of himself with different women: dining with one, kissing another, and topless with a scantily clad woman seen through a window.

Anna sits back down, wiping away a tear.

Rick sits beside her, reaching out, but Anna pulls away.

RICK
It's not what it looks like. I
promise.

ANNA
Looks a hell of a lot like you
with other women.

RICK
No, trust me. They're fakes.

ANNA
It makes sense. Your always on
call, always running away. Home
late most nights. Different
shirts. What, did she rip it off
you?

RICK
It's always work. You're para-

ANNA
Don't gaslight me. The dates are
on the photos.

Rick throws the photos down.

RICK
It's payback. I work in the
justice system. This shit
happens sometimes.

ANNA
I'm the CEO of Liberty. You know
how this reflects on me? That I
couldn't even see it coming?

RICK
It doesn't because nothing
happened. (passing his phone)
Check my phone, my texts.

Anna doesn't except the offer.

ANNA
I know about burner phones.

She reaches into her night-gown pocket and slaps a
supermarket receipt on the table.

ANNA
Explain that.

Rick sighs.

RICK
It's for a witness.

Anna takes a deep breath.

ANNA
Strawberries, chocolate...

Rick chuckles nervously.

RICK
It's not what it seems. She's
92, her safe-home was
compromised. I put her up in a
hotel. You're my favourite
person in the world right now.
Why would I mess us up?

ANNA
Once a cheat, always a cheat.

RICK
That's not fair. I've never
cheated.

ANNA
Nobody else lives in your gray
areas. So get the fuck out of my
home.

Rick's shoulders sag, a heaviness settling over him as his
eyes glisten with unshed tears.

INT. LAW OFFICE BUILDING. RICK'S OFFICE - LATER

Rick sits at his desk, arms folded, slumped in his chair.
The stuffed holdall sits on the desk beside him. His phone
RINGS on speaker, calling Anna.

ANNA (VOICEMAIL)
This is Anna Macnamara. I'm
unable to-

Rick turns his phone over. He grabs the holdall and shoves
it under the desk, then kicks it in frustration.

He picks up his mobile phone and scrolls through his
contacts, finally selecting Gary's name.

INT. - GARY'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Gary sits at his desk, typing away, with a client across
from him. He glances at the caller ID and picks up the
phone.

GARY
Can it keep?

INTERCUT BETWEEN: GARY'S OFFICE/RICK'S OFFICE

RICK
Want to go for a coffee?

Gary checks the wall clock.

GARY
It's just turned 9.

Rick's eyes well up, and he clears his throat.

RICK
She tossed me out.

GARY
Got a client in, but how about
lunch later? We'll talk.

RICK
Sure.

Rick hangs up, wipes his eyes, stands, and slips his phone into his back pocket. He walks past Samantha, who catches his attention.

SAMANTHA
Going somewhere?

RICK
Just for a coffee. Want
anything?

SAMANTHA
You've got a nine-thirty.

RICK
Noted.

SAMANTHA
Noticed your packed bag. A-okay?

Rick approaches the desk.

RICK
Just some asshole sending photos
to Anna. Looks like I'm cheating
on her.

SAMANTHA
Are you?

RICK
No. They were swipe lefts from
before I met Anna.

SAMANTHA
They overlapped though?

RICK
I only slept with one of them.
And before me and Anna agreed to
be exclusive.

Samantha nods.

RICK
It's not even a gray area.

SAMANTHA
Contact the police. It's
harassment. And it's going to
escalate.

Rick nods, pointing at Samantha.

RICK
Mocha with an extra shot?

SAMANTHA
And a pack of Oreos to replace
the ones you stole.

RICK
That's slander.

SAMANTHA
Sue me, sticky fingers.

Rick smiles and walks off.

SAMANTHA
Rick!

Rick turns back.

SAMANTHA
Tell Anna the truth and it will
work out.

Rick nods, and heads out.

EXT. HYDE PARK - LATER

Rick strolls along the wide path, two take-away cups in
hand. He takes a sip from one, with a pack of Oreos
sticking out of his trouser pocket.

A MAN approaches from behind.

MAN
(casual)
So, where is she?

Rick stops and turns.

RICK
Talking to me?

MAN
Who else?

RICK
I don't know you.

MAN
One question. One answer. Where
is she?

RICK
Who?

MAN
The centurion minus eight.

Rick looks around, noticing a couple of tough-looking guys sitting on a nearby bench and others standing idly on the grasslands on both sides.

MAN
They're all with me.

A FEMALE JOGGER passes by, giving Rick a quick once-over and a smile. The man checks her out as she jogs on. Rick's eyes follow.

MAN
Well, I can only wish she was.

Rick glances around.

RICK
Public park, pal. Cameras
everywhere. What you gonna do?

Man opens his jacket revealing a gun concealed inside his waistband.

Rick pales, losing his balance momentarily before catching himself.

MAN
I'm gonna ask one more time.
Where is—

Rick tosses both cups at the man and bolts, running past the jogger.

The man flicks his hands to rid himself of the wet.

Rick glances back but sees no one chasing him. He exits the park, crossing the road to join the tourist crowds. He

takes his phone from his pocket and dials 999, putting the phone to his ear. Suddenly, the phone is snatched from his hand from behind.

Rick turns to see a BURLY GUY who tears the rear casing off, removes the battery, and pockets the SIM card.

Rick spins back to a BIG FELLA, a NEWSPAPER hanging over his hand.

Big Fella pulls back the newspaper, revealing the gun barrel, before returning the paper to its original position.

Rick looks around and spots a camera, then back at Big Fella.

RICK

Do you know how many cameras are catching your ugly mug right now?

BIG FELLA

Do you know how often this shit goes down in public and nobody notices?

RICK

People will notice a dead man bleeding out on the street. After a bang.

BIG FELLA

Walk.(whispering) Or maybe some unsuspecting tourist will catch a souvenir from this gun. That will be on you.

Rick surveys the passing crowd – elderly, families, students, kids.

BIG FELLA

Be a hero.

A SUITED MAN (50s) with a phone to his ear, speaking in whispers to whoever's on the other side passes by them.

Rick walks, determining the pace as Burley Guy and Big Fella follow.

RICK

Where to?

BIG FELLA

We'll let you know.

Suited Man hangs up, Sliding his phone into his jacket pocket as Rick trips past him.

The man shoots a look at Rick for a split-second.

RICK

Sorry.

Rick walks on.

BIG FELLA

Turn right, Clumsy.

Rick does and they head down a quieter street.

BIG FELLA

Right.

Rick hesitates but is pushed into the ALLEYWAY.

RICK

Got a nine-thirty. I'll be
reported missing within an hour.

BIG FELLA

Or maybe you're just a little
depressed with the break-up and
all that.

RICK

That was you lot?

Burly Guy grabs Rick's collar tightly, and they exit the alley onto an empty street, with a white transit van parked a few feet away.

Rick pushes back on his heels as the DRIVER jumps out and slides the side door open.

Rick quickly pulls the Oreos from his pocket and whacks Big Fella on the head with them. The Driver snatches the pack from Rick and hits him over the head with it.

Rick's feet push against the door frame as he struggles to resist being forced into the van.

RICK

Fuck you.

Big Fella brings the gun butt down on Rick's head and he collapses into the van.