"MOTHERLAND"

PILOT EPISODE

SHOOTING SCRIPT @ 01/04/16

by

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EXT. A CAR ON QUIET STREET - DAY 1 MORNING. 08.40

A quiet, suburban street. Birds cheep pleasantly.

Suddenly a car ROARS around the corner, destroying the peace completely. Every time the car gets to a speed bump (there are dozens) she slows down dramatically to gently clear the hump, then slams on the accelerator.

INSIDE THE CAR

At the wheel is JULIA, early-40’s, stylishly dressed, desperately brushing her morning hair with a tangle teaser. Two kids yelling at each other in the back seat.

She overtakes a car at speed. Car honks at her.

JULIA

Baby! Baby on board, arse hole!

On a corner up ahead a WOMAN is about to cross the road with her kids. This is LIZ (red lipstick, unbrushed hair, a bit rock and roll by accident) pushing a toddler in a modern but knackered pram and calmly debating a young boy in a Spiderman outfit with his arm in a cast. He’s taking a piss behind a spindly council-planted tree in the pavement, looking back at her nervously.

LIZ

...Go on, you’re supposed to do it there / That’s what they’re for / That’s why they plant them. No one can see you!

She grabs the boy just before he steps out into the road.

Julia’s car speeds past, just missing them.

BACK INSIDE THE CAR

Julia is frantically trying to unravel her headphones (hands free) to answer her mobile. She sticks the jumbled mess in her ear.

JULIA

Sorry. Sorry. My hands-free isn’t working.

(into her phone)

Marie! At last. Can you let Andrew know that I’m running late, I have to drop my kids at school and then –

(beat)

My kids... Yes. Thank you... a boy and a girl. Look, Marie, I’ll call you back.
The car speeds by a PARK.

EXT. PARK BENCH. - DAY 1 MORNING. 08.40

Inside the park, a man is sitting on a bench with two young children. This is KEVIN, dressed in a North Face jacket and patiently waiting for them to choose something from a tupperware box. The box is full of carrot sticks, cucumber slices and grapes in different compartments.

KEVIN
(see car)
 Someone’s in a hurry, aren’t they?
 Leave the grape for desert, Emily.
 Who wants napkins?

He reaches down and we see that he has a pouch for napkins attached to his belt. He yanks one out (another one reappears at the hole) and dabs it to Emily’s mouth.

INT. JULIA’S CAR. - MORNING DAY 1. 08.42

Back in the car, Julia swerves around a corner, slams on the brakes.

Nightmare traffic jam. Back to back cars.

She switches into the bus lane. Immediately, sees in the mirror a bus right up her arse. The bus honks at her.

Julia, mortified, tries to ignore it. The honking continues.
She opens the door and leans out.

JULIA
I’m sorry! I thought this was a disabled lane. I’m a disabled person!

She slams the door. Immediately realizes she’s caught her scarf in it.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Bollocks.

She has to drive off, bent slightly over, awkwardly tethered to the door.

She grimaces horribly, looking highly stressed.

FREEZE ON THIS: The title comes up--

MOTHERLAND.
EXT. SCHOOL. DAY 1 MORNING  08.50

Julia bustles the kid out of the car and into the building.

JULIA
C’mon, c’mon, c’mon. Bag, coat...

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR – DAY 1.  08.52

Julia checks her iPhone clock in an empty, eerily quiet corridor.

JULIA
How late are we..?

A woman rounds the corner and pulls up short, surprised to see Julia and her kids. This is Janet, the kid’s teacher.

JANET
Hello. Hello, Ivy, hello, James. Ehm, I’m sorry, you’re--

JULIA
Julia. I’m their Mum.

JANET
Yes, yes, of course... did you have an appointment or..?

Julia stares at her, lost. What the hell are you saying?

JULIA
Well, no, I’m just here to -

Julia looks to her left and sees all the chairs up on the tables in one classroom. She looks to her right and sees an empty assembly hall floor being machine polished.

JANET
Did you forget it was half term?

JULIA
(she did)
No.

JANET
Your children are in their uniforms.

JULIA
Yes, they’re going to a... back to school disco/children-themed party.

JANET
Are you here to see Mrs. Lawson?
JULIA
Who?

JANET
The head mistress.

JULIA
I certainly am. That’s why I’m here and that’s what I want to do.

Julia follows Janet towards Mrs Lawson’s office, desperately thinking of an excuse for being there.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HEAD MISTRESS’S OFFICE - DAY 1 09.00

Julia is sitting opposite Mrs. Lawson. Through the door, we can see the kids are sitting on the chairs outside, bored.

MRS. LAWSON
...Ivy didn’t mention anything about being bullied.

JULIA
Well, that’s... classic victim behaviour.

MRS. LAWSON
Who’s doing this?

Julia sees some kid’s drawings behind Mrs. Lawson. One is signed ‘LEO MARTIN’.

JULIA
Leo... Martin.

MRS. LAWSON
Leo Martin? That’s very surprising.

JULIA
Well...

MRS. LAWSON
You know he’s five?

JULIA
Yes, he’s a bit of a evil... child-prodigy type ... that’s my understanding.

MRS. LAWSON
Let me speak to Leo’s teacher.
JULIA
Please do.

MRS. LAWSON
Janet!

Janet sticks her head around the door.

MRS. LAWSON (CONT’D)
Listen to this. Leo Martin.

JANET
Leo? Nothing’s happened to him?

MRS. LAWSON
No, no, he’s been bullying Ivy here.

JANET
No! What kind of bullying?

Julia stares at her. She’s in too deep now to back down.

JULIA
Mind games.
(beat)
You know... Overtly condescending. Tapping into her insecurities. I think he said some things about her online.

Mrs. Lawson stabs out some numbers on the desk phone.

JULIA (CONT’D)
So what’s going on now?

MRS. LAWSON
Calling Leo’s mum. Don’t worry, we’ll get to the bottom of this.

JULIA
Go for it.

They sit there, waiting for Leo’s mum to pick up the phone.

Suddenly Julia leans forward and presses the cradle, cutting off the call.

JULIA (CONT’D)
You know what, let me check the facts with Ivy, because now that I think about it she can be a little untrustworthy and manipulative / full of shit herself sometimes.
(MORE)
JULIA (CONT’D)
So glad we were able to have this, uhmm... I feel much better about the whole thing.

She starts to bustle the kids out.

JULIA (CONT’D)
By the way, are there any half-term kids clubs? Chess or Latin or * something? I don’t like them to switch off. Anything happening today? Like now? Is there anything happening right now?

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MARION’S HOUSE – DAY 1. 09.30
Julia screeches to a stop in front of a small semi-detached house.

JULIA
(to the kids)
Two minutes.

She gets out of the car and storms up to the house.

EXT. MARION’S HOUSE – DAY 1. 09.30
Julia bangs on the front door. No response.

She peers through the letter box. Nothing.
Stepping over to a window, she presses her face against the glass.

She sees a slippered foot sticking out from behind a sofa.

JULIA
Mum? MUM. Oh, my God, M--

The foot pulls up out of sight behind the sofa.

Julia stares for a second, takes a deep breath, and goes back to the front door. She shouts through the letter box.

JULIA (CONT’D)
I know you’re in there. I can see you. You’re behind the sofa.

MARION
(from behind door)
Julia, is that you?

JULIA
Yes, it’s me.
The door opens, revealing MARION. She’s in her seventies, but healthy, and with a scarf tied around her head that gives her a little-old-lady air.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Were you hiding?

MARION
No. No. I was having a lie down.

JULIA
Behind the sofa?

MARION
I... had a fall.

JULIA
Why are you acting like you’re ninety years old? What’s with the scarf?

Marion, reluctantly removes the scarf, revealing CORNROWS. Julia is shocked, then collects herself.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Nice. They suit you. So when did you get back from your “cruise”?

MARION
Yesterday.

JULIA
That’s funny because Paul saw you in Waitrose on Saturday.

MARION
Oh... I suppose I'm still on Caribbean time.

JULIA
Where were you this morning?

MARION
Look, Julia, I wanted...

JULIA
Well, you’re here now and that’s the important thing. I’ll get the kids.

Julia starts walking to the car.

MARION
Julia....
She keeps walking.

MARION (CONT'D)

Julia!

JULIA

WHAT.

Julia stops, finally.

MARION

We talked about this.

Julia stares at Marion.

JULIA

We talked about what?

MARION

I’m not doing it anymore. I can’t. I love them but I can’t look after them anymore.

As if on cue, the kids start honking the horn.

Julia does a little sort of wobble - uses one of the ornate cement acorns to steady herself.

JULIA

I thought that was what the holiday was for. I thought--

MARION

No, no, in fact, the holiday... made me even more certain... After my lung collapsed...

JULIA

Oh, it didn’t collapse.

MARION

It did collapse!

JULIA

Oh, look, I’m not having this argument again. If you’re really serious, how about, starting from say, the new year, we’ll look at how you can have a bit more free time and--

MARION

No, Julia, from now.

The car alarm goes off. Julia absently turns it off with the key fob.
JULIA
Okay, so, starting from say next month -

MARION
No, now, Julia. Starting from now.

Julia stares at her.

JULIA
Okay. Fine.

MARION
I’m sorry -

JULIA
No. I don’t have time for sorrys.
Unless it’s sorry I’ve changed my mind.
(waits)
Is it sorry I’ve changed my mind?

MARION
No.

JULIA
Well, then I don’t have time for them.

Julia gets in the car, slams the door. Her scarf gets caught again. She opens the door and yanks the scarf back in. She pulls away from the curb, does a lap of the small roundabout, does another lap, winds down the window.

JULIA (CONT’D)
YOU KNOW, IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO HAVE GRANDCHILDREN! JUST REMEMBER THAT, MOTHER!

The car roars away.

INT. JULIA’S CAR. DAY 1. 09.45
Julia, driving, (back on her headphone hands free) shouting at her phone in the passenger seat.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION – COSTA COFFEE STAND. DAY 1. 09.45
Cut between the chaos of the car and Julia's husband, Paul, who is calmly queuing at the office Coffee Wagon.
Paul, (good-looking and chilled out) checks out the pastries in the glass display.

PAUL
How about Helinka?

JULIA
She’s a cleaner –

Julia swerves to avoid a human crossing the road.

JULIA (CONT’D)
(shouts back)
SORRY. *
(to Paul)
- not a baby sitter. Anyway I don’t really trust her. I’m almost certain she ate my Easter egg that time / since she’s got her eyebrows *
tattooed she really scares the * children.

PAUL
What? The line is really bad.

JULIA
I can’t get the hands free to work. *

PAUL
Why can’t we get a nanny again?

JULIA
I’ve told you a million times. I want my children brought up like I was. By my mother.

PAUL
Look, I’ve got to go. Let’s talk more later, ok?

JULIA
But what am I going to do the rest of the week? I’ve got work too – it’s the Peter Mandelson thing on Thursday. *

PAUL
I know – and listen. Whatever you decide, I’m right behind you.

JULIA
Yeah, but... Paul!
(beat)
Paul? Paul!
Paul has hung up and now stares up at the coffee menu above the counter. He turns to the office worker behind him.

PAUL
You go ahead, I haven’t decided yet.

INT. LOCAL CAFE. DAY 1. 10.25

A cafe, bustling with mothers and children. There are a few groups in the cafe, including...

-JULIA sitting with her kids at a table.

-A TEAM OF ALPHA MUMS, commanding a huge table. AMANDA, their leader, who we will meet presently, is calling for her kids.

AMANDA
Georgie! Manus! Stop that!

-LIZ AND KEVIN, seated at a small corner table. Kevin stares longingly at the table of alpha mums. Liz deals with her kids.

LIZ
I just know, all right? Santa doesn’t do iPads. The elves don’t have the technology.

KEVIN
(distantly)
I wonder if Amanda knows about the situation up at (xxx cafe name tbc).

LIZ
What situation?

KEVIN
There was another breast-feeding incident. They asked Deirdre to cover up. I tell you, Liz, if it was men doing the feeding, there’d be men all over this cafe with their tits out / bobs out.

LIZ
You should put that on Facebook, Kevin. That would be a brilliant Facebook post / Be prepared to give a quote to Mumsnet.

KEVIN
I’ll just see if Amanda heard about it.
LIZ
Don't.

KEVIN
What?

LIZ
It's not going to happen, Kevin.

KEVIN
What's not?

LIZ
We're not getting on the big table.
They don't want us there. You're going to have to accept it.

KEVIN
I'm just going to have a word.

Kevin crosses over and starts to speak to Amanda. We see this from LIZ'S POV, as she starts to provide her own soundtrack to the conversation.

LIZ
(as Kev)
Oh, hi, Amanda. Just wondering if you heard about the war on tits at (xxx cafe name's)?

(as Amanda)
Oh, eh, sorry, Kevin, my friends and I were hoping to ignore you today?

(as Kevin)
OK, great. I'll send an email around to discuss an appropriate response?

(as Amanda)
Do whatever you like. My computer shits all your emails to a spam folder.

(as Kevin and Amanda)
Ok, then, bye! Bye! Go away forever.

Kevin returns to the table.

Long pause.

KEVIN
I'm going to send round an email.

Over in another corner, a young mum starts to breast feed.
She looks up and sees Kevin staring at her from across the room. He gives her a reassuring wink - like Anne Robinson at the end of Watchdog.

**JULIA’S TABLE**

Julia is on the phone.

**JULIA**

...today is out, Duncan, forget today. I’m minding my kids.

(beat)

My kids? Yeah, one’s five and the other’s nine. Well... she can still do that, can’t she? Duncan. Duncan! I don’t need to be there to watch Elaine print out a press release. Yes, Thursday will be fine. I’m sorting it out right now.

She hangs up, puts her mobile away and looks around.

She sees Kevin and Liz. Liz gives her a nod and a smile.

Julia politely does a half-smile, but then tunes into the conversation of the Alpha Mums.

Certain tantalising lines jump out of the rumble of the Mums conversation:

...you take Jenny on Tuesday...

...I’ll pick up Charlie and Sam on Wednesday after football...

Julia turns to her children.

**JULIA (CONT’D)**

Hey. Play with those kids, will you?

The kids obediently walk away towards some children.

**JULIA (CONT’D)**

No the other ones, the other ones.

They move over to the kids nearer the Alpha mums. Julia goes up to the counter and pours some water from a jug. She turns around with her drink, all faux casual, like Margot from the Good Life with a cocktail, and nods at the kids.

**JULIA (CONT’D)**

They’re getting on, aren’t they?
AMANDA, Queen of the Alpha Mums, looks up. She is the polar opposite to Liz--carefully made-up and stylishly dressed, her kids and her friends under tight control.

AMANDA
Julia, isn’t it?

JULIA
It is. And you’re...

Pause.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Could you say your name?

AMANDA
Amanda.

JULIA
That’s right. How do we know each other?

AMANDA
Our kids are in the same class.

JULIA
Yes. Yes. Of course, Ivy is always talking about, erm, er...

AMANDA
Manus.

JULIA
Manus.

AMANDA
Here, sit down. Budge up, Anne.

Anne does as she’s told.

AMANDA (CONT’D)
So where’s your mum today? Still on her holiday?

JULIA
(bitterly)
Nope, she’s back alright. With cornrows and Saga herpes, probably.

(catches herself)
Ha, I just thought I’d give her a bit of a break. I took the day off.
AMANDA
You work so hard. I really admire
the way you can just slip your
family in a drawer and slam it shut
for the day.

JULIA
Oh -

AMANDA
Because, and I know I’m being
pathetic...
(hand on heart)
I would just hate myself too much.

JULIA
(hand on heart)
Oh, no, I hate myself but -

AMANDA
No, but I think I’d really hate
myself.
(hand on heart again)
I just love my kids too much.

JULIA
(hand on heart again too)
Oh, no, I love my kids too much too-

ANNE
I’d die for my kids.

Amanda looks at Julia.

JULIA
I’d die for my kids. If I really
had to. If I had no choice.

They all look up to see Kevin and Liz walking to their table.
Liz holds a push chair with a toddler slumped all the way to
the bottom. Her mental-looking son Charlie is in full
Spiderman outfit with his arm in a cast. Anne immediately
throws a coat on the only spare chair.

ANNE
Melissa’s sitting there. Sorry.

KEVIN
Oh, absolutely. So Amanda, I’ll pop
a few ideas in an email. What to do
about the (xxx cafe name)
situation.

AMANDA
Sure. Okay, Kevin.
KEVIN
Great. Let me know your thoughts. You all have my phone number, don’t you? I did put that on my last email so everyone should have it. Did everyone get my last email? It had the subject line ‘URGENT’? Maybe--

Liz saves him, pulling him towards the door.

LIZ
Tell Melissa we said hi.

As Kevin and Liz go out the door, SUNITA, another of the mums, leans in to Julie.

SUNITA
(under her breath)
Slut.

JULIA
Kevin?

SUNITA
No, Liz.

JULIA
Really?

SUNITA nods, gravely.

AMANDA
Oh. I don’t believe it.

She’s looking at her phone.

AMANDA (CONT’D)
Sorry, everyone. I have a flat on air b&b and the French twats have locked themselves out. Kids, come on. Anne – is there any chance you could take Manus and Georgie back to yours while I sort it out?

ANNE
I can’t, I’m sorry. Chris is home from work and he’s playing a computer game with swearing in it, so we’re staying out of the house.

Julia’s eyes widen. This is her chance.
JULIA
(blurts)
If it helps - I can take them today.

Amanda looks at her, weighing her up.

AMANDA
What? Oh... if you're sure?

JULIA
Go! Do your thing. I’ll take them. I don’t mind. That’s what we do, isn’t it? Us mums. We scratch each other’s backs. I’ll take them today, you take them... Thursday, for example.

AMANDA
Here’s my address. I’m having some kids and mums around for some spag bol. Maybe bring them back in time for that? Say, six?

Julia looks at a clock on the wall. It’s 10.30am.

JULIA
Six. Ok. Ok. Or four?

AMANDA
No, six.

JULIA
Six it is.

AMANDA
Well, that’s very kind of you Julia. I’ll get you back another time...

JULIA
Yes, Thursday. Thursday?

But Amanda’s out the door.

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EXT. A ROW OF SHOPS - DAY 1. 11.15

Julia, on the phone by a crappy horse coin-operated ride outside a laundrette, now has 4 kids--her own and AMANDA’S.

JULIA
(to the yelling kids)
I don’t have any money.

(into the phone)
I will be there Andrew. I will.

(MORE)
JULIA (CONT'D)
I had some childcare issues
today...yes...yes, a boy and a
girl... god, James and Ivy -who
cares?
(to Manus)
Manus, can I have a crisp? Please.
I haven't had breakfast yet. One
crisp.

One of the other kids starts screaming when the ride stops.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Just sit on it, just sit on it and
rock it.

Liz is walking along the pavement. She sees Julia having
trouble and goes up to her.

LIZ
Stick two pennies together.

JULIA
Sorry?

LIZ
If you stick two one pees together,
it thinks it’s a pound.

Liz takes two pennies out of her pocket and puts it in the
slot. The machine starts. Julia can't believe it.

JULIA
Thank you.

Julia tries to keep it together but she wells up little.

LIZ
You alright?

JULIA
Sorry, I...I just....

Liz looks a bit embarrassed, is this woman crying?

JULIA (CONT'D)
(wobbly voice)
I'm just, not used to being with my
kids like this. And now there's all
these other ones as well. That one
with the plait has been really
horrible to me.

Julia’s face is red and her mascara has run.
LIZ
Look, I live just there. Want to come over and have a cup of tea?

JULIA
Thank you, that’d be great. I’ll just, wait for the horse to finish. Get our money’s worth.

LIZ
Sure.

They stand there, waiting for the ride to finish.

Julia sniffs, trying to pull herself together. Liz pats her back in support.

Eventually the ride clunks to a halt.

LIZ (CONT’D)
Come on, let’s go.

CUT TO:

INT. LIZ’S KITCHEN - LATER DAY 1. 11.25

They walk into the kitchen. It seriously looks like the store room of a charity shop. There is not one clear surface.

LIZ
Here we are. Downton Abbey.

Liz steps over a house made of cardboard and switches the kettle on. The house is a mess, but it’s a friendly mess, one which Liz navigates with ease.

When Liz opens the overstuffed cupboard, a cup falls out of it into her hand.

LIZ (CONT’D)
Tea?

JULIA
Do you have any herbal tea?

LIZ
Fennel, Ginger, Jasmine or mint?

JULIA
Ooh, mint, please.

LIZ
I’m joking I don’t have any herbal tea. Yorkshire. I have tea from Yorkshire. How’s that?
JULIA
That’s... Thanks.

Liz reaches up for a couple of dusty cups.

LIZ
(offscreen)
Give these a wash. Sorry, Mister Spider.

She opens the fridge.

LIZ (CONT’D)
Oh. No milk.

INT. LIZ’S SITTING ROOM - LATER, 12.10

They sit in Liz’s equally disastrous sitting room while the kids are going WILD in the background.

Julia and Liz are drinking wine.

LIZ
So what about you? Do you work?

JULIA
Yeah. I organise corporate events.

LIZ
Wow.

JULIA
Thursday I’ve got Peter Mandelson hosting the Women in Construction awards.

LIZ
Double wow. Did he win I’m A Celebrity?

JULIA
No, I don’t know who you’re thinking of there.

LIZ
I wish I could restart my career by eating worms. Paul Burrell. That’s who it was.

Suddenly, Charlie launches himself off a windowsill, followed by the toddler onto a large mattress.

JULIA
Isn’t that...? Should they be...?
LIZ
Oh, they’re fine, it’s why I put the mattress there.

JULIA
So do you work?

LIZ
I was at Citizens Advice but one of my calls got recorded for training purposes. So... that was that.

Pause.

JULIA
What’s the time now?

LIZ
Just past midday.

JULIA
Fuck-ing hell. Are you going to this spag bol thing?

LIZ
Nah, that lot don’t like me. I’m single so they’re afraid I’ll steal one of their fat husbands away. Amanda had to tolerate me for a while when Charlie was friends with Manus, but then they started showing each other their dicks. So, The End.

A sudden cry from one of the kids offscreen.

LIZ (CONT’D)
I’m going to make a pizza for the kids, Charlie gets a bit punchy if he hasn’t eaten. Can I get yours something?

JULIA
Oh, ehm, yes, that’d be great.

LIZ
Grab your drink.

Liz stands up. As she leaves, one of the kids launches themselves off a chair, missing her by merest of seconds.

INT. LIZ’S KITCHEN, DAY 1.  13.00

Liz has ‘made’ mini pizzas for all the kids, Charlie carries his away.
LIZ
Er, excuse me, we are not animals.
Use a magazine, please!

Charlie puts his pizza on a Closer magazine and moves away.

JULIA
Actually, Liz, I will have something. I missed breakfast and I forgot to eat at the cafe.

LIZ
Oh, shit, sorry, there's no more pizza. Cheese sandwich?

JULIA
If it's not a hassle. I'm starving.

Liz pulls out some frozen stuff from the small freezer that is badly ice-monstered. She hacks the ice away.

JULIA (CONT’D)
You can freeze cheese?

LIZ
You can freeze anything.

Julia looks at the freezer and sees there’s everything in there teabags, ham, rice crispy buns, hummus, eggs.

LIZ (CONT’D)
Aha!

Liz pulls out some bread, it’s got weird black marks on it.

LIZ (CONT’D)
That’s just surface, I can cut that off -

She pulls an enormous knife out of the knife stand. Julia looks at the filthy chopping board.

JULIA
Do you need a hand? Do you want me to wipe any of that stuff off the bread board?

LIZ
No it’s fine. I just need to separate the slices, it’s frozen together so it’s -

The knife jolts as it hits the frozen bread. Liz looks round at Julia.
This knife is amazing, it came with * the flat / I managed to keep it in * the divorce... oh shit - *

Pause.

What?

Pause.

Can you call a cab, I think I need to go to A & E.

What? Why?

I've cut my finger off.

Julia goes to Liz.

You didn’t cut your finger off...

We see Julia glance down and nearly faints.

Ohhh... ohhh....

Don’t. Don’t. Keep it together.

Your finger... your finger is...

She stumbles slightly and has to hold on to the counter.

Julia! I need you!

She tries to click her finger, holds up the wrong hand and we get a quick horrible flash of her finger hanging off.

She holds up the other hand, starts snapping her fingers.

Julia eyelids are fluttering, showing the whites of her eyes, but somehow she manages to resurface.

Focus! Focus, Julia!
JULIA
Yes, yes. Ambulance. You need an ambulance.

LIZ
Just call a cab.

JULIA
Oh God... really? Okay.

She immediately dials a number.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Taxi please....
(Then to Liz)
What’s your address?

LIZ
29 Mernell St.

Liz takes out a dishtowel, wraps it around her hand, takes some sticky tape, winds it around the towel. It’s all done expertly, calmly, like she’s a medic in a war zone.

Julia crosses over, still on the phone.

JULIA
It’s £50 if you bleed on their seat?

LIZ
That’s fine.

EXT. LIZ’S FLAT, CAB IN STREET – DAY 1. 13.15

Liz is in the back of the cab.

The blood has really spread through the dish cloth/field dressing but Liz is still completely calm.

LIZ
Will you be okay?

JULIA
I think so.

It’s like Julia is the one with the severed finger.

LIZ
I’ll try to get back as quick as I can.

JULIA
Great. What time is it now? Any idea how long these things take?
The cab starts to drive off.

JULIA (CONT’D)
LIZ, ANY IDEA HOW LONG THESE THINGS TAKE?

Julia looks around at the group standing behind her.
She is now taking care of six kids.
Charlie hits Manus and a fight breaks out.

CUT TO:

INT. LIZ’S KITCHEN  DAY 1  17.30

While the kids run riot in the background, Julia talks into her phone.

JULIA
(on the phone)
Hey, Liz, erm... just checking you’re okay and you know, wondering what I should do with your kids...
I have to go to the spag bol thing.
I’m so hungry and all your food is frozen so... anyway no pressure but it’s 5.30 now so... just gimme a call...

She walks over to the sitting room window, presses her forehead against it and stares out. The breath from her exasperated sigh starts to steam up the window...

Suddenly, she leans back and wipes the window clean. On the street, Kevin is walking by with his kids!

She starts banging on the window.

EXT. LIZ’S FLAT ON THE STREET.  DAY 1.  17.30

From the street below we see Julia banging on the window. Kevin looks around him and finally looks up. He sees Julia banging on the glass, looking manic and waving.

JULIA
Keith!

He waves back.

KEVIN
It’s Kevin!
JULIA
KEITH!

KEVIN
IT’S KEVIN!

She mouths ‘wait there’. Leaves the window.

CUT TO:

INT. LIZ’S FLAT – STAIRCASE. DAY 1. 17.35

Kevin is walking upstairs with Julia.

KEVIN
...My God, is she all right?

JULIA
It’s fine, she just cut a bit of her finger off. But listen, I’ve now got...just a massive amount of children. You couldn’t help me with all these children?

KEVIN
Yes, yes, of course.

JULIA
I’m so hungry, Kevin.

KEVIN
Amanda’s having a dinner? Are you sure? I haven’t heard anything about it.

JULIA
It’s not a formal dinner. It’s more of an open house. A drop in, spag bol thing.

KEVIN
Well, what are we waiting for?
(to kids)
Hey, everyone, we’re all going to an informal dinner!

The kids stare at him.

KEVIN (CONT’D)
A drop in spag bol thing!
EXT. STREET. DAY 1.  17.45

Julia and Kevin walking down the street with 8 KIDS (2 x Julia, 2 x Amanda, 2 x Liz, 2 x Kevin)
A small army.

EXT. AMANDA'S FRONT DOOR. - DAY 1.  18.00

A door opens, revealing Julia, Kevin and the kids.

JULIA
(somewhat crazed)
Something smells good!

The man who answered the door turns and shouts down the hall. This is Johnny (40s, not handsome, but sexually successful, in-built arrogance), Amanda’s husband.

JOHNY (O.S. MUFFLED)
Can someone else keep an ear out for the door? I’m on a call!
(under breath)
Christ’s sake.
(still on the phone)
... well, all of us could get the financing -

JULIA
Hi, ah, I’m--

He shakes his head, points to the phone, waves them in and walks away.

He turns and walks down the corridor. He disappears into his office and Julia, Kevin and the kids all follow him obediently.

JOHNNY
(into the phone)
That’s not the point, the point is that they’re being picky because they know they can be - WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

After a moment they all emerge into the corridor again.

JOHNNY (CONT’D)
(pointing to the stairs)
DOWN THERE!

JULIA
Sorry! Sorry.
They all head down the basement stairs.

INT. AMANDA’S KITCHEN. DAY 1. 18.01

Julia and company walk into the huge, open-plan kitchen.

It looks like something out of 'Living Etc' with a big central island, massive fridge covered in kid’s pictures.

Some the mums from the cafe are already there - sipping white wine and chatting.

On the hob in the centre of the island is a massive metal pan of Bolognese and a stack of bowls.

Amanda turns and sees Julia. She greets her with a double kiss.

JULIA
(same crazed delivery)
Something smells good!

AMANDA
Oh hey! Thank you so much!

JULIA
They were good as gold.

Julia hugs her. She peers into the pot as she does. She’s so happy.

KEVIN
Hello!

JULIA
Kevin’s also here!

AMANDA
(hiding her annoyance)
Oh! Yes!

Kevin is looking around like he’s made it behind a VIP rope.

KEVIN
A blackboard wall! I've always wanted a blackboard wall. What do you write on it?

AMANDA
Well, what’s written on it... just shopping lists, things like that.
KEVIN
Walnuts! What are you doing with walnuts?

JULIA
I’d love to eat a walnut.

There’s a scream and a cry from offscreen. Charlie at it again.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Liz cut her finger off so Kevin’s helping me with the kids.

AMANDA
Liz cut her finger off?

JULIA
Yeah. Just the top half.

AMANDA
(massive fixed smile)
OK. Well, grab a glass of wine. We'll probably serve up in a bit.

KEVIN
I’ve always wanted a look around your house, Amanda. There’s nothing I like better than going into people’s houses and having a good old poke around.

Amanda gives him a sickly smile.

Julia pours herself a glass of white wine. One eye on the Bolognese pot, cooking away.

INT. AMANDA’S KITCHEN. DAY 1. 18.10

Julia is talking with some of the mums & Kevin. They are all drinking wine. One of them tops up Julia's glass. She looks distinctly uncomfortable.

Johnny, Amanda’s husband, walks to the fridge, grabs a beer and slaps Amanda’s arse as he passes.

ANNE
* Those two seem to have gotten over it.

JULIA
Gotten over what?
SUNITA
*(confidentially)*
Johnny gave Liz a lift home a few nights ago.

JULIA
I don’t understand, what? He gave her a lift... And what...?

ANNE
You don’t know? Liz slept with Melissa’s husband.

Julia looks over at Melissa, who lowers her eyes like Lady Di.

JULIA
Fu-huck? Really?

KEVIN
I did not know that.

JULIA
Are you sure? She doesn’t seem the type who’d be arsed.

No one agrees with this.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Where are the kids? They’ve gone very quiet.

She sees them nearby all gathered in eerie silence around Manus, who is playing with an iPad.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Oh.

CUT TO:

INT. AMANDA’S KITCHEN. DAY 1. 18.30

On the other side of the room, Kevin is boring a group of women about ‘The xxx (was Pistachio) Incident’.

KEVIN
... I tell you, if it was men doing the feeding, they’d be men all over this cafe with their tits out / bobs out.

They stare at him with kind but blank smiles.

Julia is hovering by the cooker, beside Amanda, looking over her shoulder
JULIA
Is there anything I can do to help?

AMANDA
No, all under control.

JULIA
Ok cool.
(beat – more to herself
than anyone else)
That's gotta be ready soon, hasn't it?

Just then a dishevelled looking, slightly drugged Liz walks in. She has her hand wrapped in a huge bandage and sling.

LIZ
Hello. I’m just here to pick up my kids. Hello, hello.

AMANDA
(forced politeness)
No, stay, it’s turned into a bit of a free for all. Julia told us about your finger. How is it?

Liz matter-of-factly holds it up. It’s the middle finger so it looks very like she’s flipping Amanda off.

LIZ
Still works though.

AMANDA
Help yourself to one drink.

Amanda walks off, she rolls her eyes to a few of the other mums. Liz walks over to Julia and holds up her finger, proudly.

LIZ
They put it back on! Thanks for looking after the kids.

JULIA
No problem.

Kevin comes over with a glass of wine for her.

KEVIN
One for the patient?

LIZ
I’m on painkillers, so I’d better not.
She notices some hostile glances from some of the Alphas. She shrugs.

LIZ (CONT’D)
Oh fuck it.

Liz takes the glass. She knocks it back then grabs a bottle and fills the glass.

INT. AMANDA’S KITCHEN. DAY 1. 18.45

Amanda places a huge steaming pot of spag bol on the counter. The kids and Julia run up for a bowl.

AMANDA
No, at the table please!

Amanda starts ladling out the food. Julia watching her like a hawk. All the kids have now got a bowl. Julia waits - will Amanda dole out the adult’s servings? Or do we help ourselves? She wanders over to sniff around the pot. But it's EMPTY! Julia realises for the first time that the adults are NOT getting fed. WTF? She turns to Kevin and Liz.

JULIA
Are we not, I mean, what's going on with the food? Is she not feeding us?

Julia looks at the table of twelve or so kids scoffing their dinner. She staggers slightly, a bit faint.

JULIA (CONT’D)
The children are eating. The children are eating but not the adults. They’re not going to feed the adults. They’re not going to feed the adults, Liz!

INT. AMANDA’S KITCHEN - SOFA AREA. DAY 1. 18.50

On the sofa Julia sits with a slightly drugged Liz and Kevin.

LIZ
(slightly too loud)
None of these bitches like me.
(slightly too loud)
Bitches.

KEVIN
Oooh, I’m sure that’s not true.

LIZ
They hate me!
KEVIN
Yeah, but... you know why that is...

LIZ
What?

KEVIN
You know.

LIZ
I don’t know, Kevin. What?

KEVIN
Well, you, you slept with Melissa’s husband.

LIZ
Is that what they’re saying?

JULIA
Yeah.

LIZ
That’s interesting.

Liz knocks back the last of the wine in her glass then sits there, fuming. Something’s about to pop.

INT. AMANDA’S KITCHEN – COUNTER AREA. DAY 1. 19.00

(*Shot of Kevin dozing on the sofa*)

Julia looks over at the table. She sees the kids have finished eating and that one of them has left some food on their plate. She stares at the plate longingly. Julia knows this is her only chance. A small group of mothers are sitting at the table chatting. Julia sidles up as though she’s there to join the conversation. She slides the plate towards her.

ANNE
–They think it was a small stroke.

SUNITA
Oh, no!

JULIA
Oh, no!

They glance at her.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Sorry, I heard ‘small stroke’. I don’t know who had one but that’s terrible, whoever it was.
ANNE
My husband.

JULIA
Oh, that’s... God. Yes. That must have been just a terrible... How did it happen?

ANNE
He was watching television and I noticed his arm had just dropped down the side of the sofa...

During this, Julia keeps stealing looks down at the LEFTOVER SPAGHETTI. God, it looks so good.

ANNE (CONT’D)
...and then when I tried to take his hand... it just... it was like...a little dead bird...

Anne can’t go on. The women quickly comfort her.

While they're occupied, Julia seizes her chance and stuffs three forkfuls of food into her mouth.

They turn back to Julia, and appear to be waiting for her to express the necessary sympathy.

JULIA
If juft awful.
   (she puts her hands over her mouth)
   What you muft have gone fru.

She squeezes her eyes shut while her jaw works furiously.

JULIA (CONT’D)
Oh, look! There’s some more there.
I’ll just put it in the bin.

She walks over to the bin and pretends to scrape away the left overs. She’s obviously eating more of it. Suddenly Amanda appears next to her.

AMANDA
Julia, what are you doing?

JULIA
Hmm? Oh! I didn’t realise I was still eating it. I was just picking at leftovers.
AMANDA
If you were hungry you could have just asked. You’re making me feel like a bad hostess.

JULIA
Oh, sorry I –

AMANDA
Do you want me to cook you something? I can’t bear to see you eat from my bin like a homeless person.

JULIA
I wasn’t eating from the bin. I just thought there would be food, for you know, for the adults.

One of the mums does a quick intake of breath.

AMANDA
Well Julia, I’ve been dealing with something. I’m sorry I didn’t have time to lay on a banquet.

JULIA
I didn’t mean it like that –

AMANDA
Do you want me to cook you an omelette?

Liz comes in and sees what’s happening.

JULIA
(mortified)
No, no - I’m fine, honestly--

AMANDA
No, I insist. I can’t have my guests eating out of the rubbish. I’m making you an omelette. (Looks around at everyone) Does anyone else want some food? I’m going to make Julia an omelette.

No one else takes Amanda up on her offer.

AMANDA (CONT’D)
Just for Julia then.

JULIA
Honestly, I’m okay –
AMANDA
No, it's fine.

Liz looks at Julia, who stands waiting for her omelette like a naughty school girl.

Liz steps forward.

LIZ
I’ll have an omelette actually Amanda.

Amanda stares at her. Liz stands beside Julia.

LIZ (CONT’D)
Saves me defrosting some eggs when I get home. And while I have the chance, I should say... Melissa. I feel bad.

Melissa looks up, startled.

LIZ (CONT’D)
I feel bad, I should have cleared the air and apologised for taking your fat husband’s virginity twenty years *before* you met him. That was wrong.

Melissa looks embarrassed.

LIZ (CONT’D)
Maybe I should find all the other men I slept with before they got married and apologise to THEIR wives. One of them was a waiter in Egypt but I could track him and his wife down on Facebook. Won’t be easy, but might be worth doing so I can avoid having to deal with all this bullshit! And while I’m at it, Anne can you RSVP to Charlie’s birthday party because he really wants Darius there and it’ll break his fucking heart if his best friend doesn't make it. THANK YOU.

Kevin comes in.

KEVIN
What’s going on?

LIZ
Amanda’s making us an omelette.
KEVIN
Oooh! Yes, please.

He sits down, oblivious.

EXT. AMANDA’S HOUSE - DAY 1. 19.30

Amanda is showing Liz, Kevin and Julia and their kids to the door.

Julia is the last to leave. She turns to a grim faced Amanda

JULIA
You’ll have to give me the recipe for that omelette.

AMANDA
(death stare)
Eggs.

JULIA
Yes. Keep it simple. So, er, ... shall we firm up Thursday now or -

AMANDA
Thursday’s not going to work for me.

JULIA
Oh, I thought--

AMANDA
Lovely to see you all.

She slams the door pretty much in Julia’s face.

JULIA
Did she just shut the door in my face?

Julia walks down the steps to Liz and Kevin...

JULIA (CONT’D)
That’s a whole network of helpful mums I have no access to anymore.

LIZ
Oh, well. You can’t make an omelette without telling a few skinny bitches to go fuck themselves.

KEVIN
I can have a word with them if you like? That might help?
They walk off down the street.

JULIA
Screw that lot. Right? We don’t need them. We have our own gang right here. What’s everyone doing on Thursday?

LIZ
I’ll take them on Thursday. You can get me back another day, like Friday.

JULIE
Definitely. I’ll get you back another day, some Friday.

LIZ
Friday.

JULIA
Yeah Friday or a day like that.

They walk into the distance, surrounded by the kids.

After a moment, the final kid, Charlie, walks into shot, still looking at the iPad he’s just boosted from Amanda’s house.

THE END