

John (Male, middle aged)

John Beth-it's not as if I planned it. I don't even know how it happened. It was just an argument-at first. Then it got out of hand. She lost her temper, flew at me, started hitting me across the face, knocking me off balance. I pushed her away but she got worse. Began screaming and threw herself at me again. I only wanted to stop her. I swung out and caught her here. (*He puts his fist on Elizabeth's jaw*) Her head went back and she dropped to the floor. There was an awful crack; she must have hit her head. I thought she was unconscious. She just lay there beside the coffee table. I looked at her for a moment, wondering what had happened, not sure what to do. I was still so angry with her, I turned and left. About twenty minutes later I stopped at a phone box in Wandsworth. She didn't reply and her answer machine was off. I didn't know I'd killed her.

Elizabeth Did you have sex *with* her?

John When?

Elizabeth Christ, John!

John On Friday night? No. Of course I didn't. I was only there five minutes.

Elizabeth Three would have been enough, of course.

John (*after a beat*) You never told me you had any complaints. (*Beat*) Did you?

Elizabeth No, you bastard! I didn't. You just stopped wanting me.

John I didn't. Not ever.

Elizabeth Yes. After I had my scare.

John I moved into David's room to let you be more comfortable.

Elizabeth And never moved back in again.

John You didn't invite me.

Elizabeth Because if anyone had sex *with* her the police may be able to prove it. So if you didn't and he did ...

John But he *didn't* kill her.

Elizabeth Is there any evidence to prove you did either? You said she looked as if she was expecting someone. Maybe he came back. You saw him. You can describe him and match his description to that of the cleaner.

John We don't know what she said.

Elizabeth It doesn't matter. You tell the truth. You tell them exactly what you saw - omitting the part about them kissing. Write this down.

Bus stop. Coat. Number 19. BMW. Ticket. Do you understand?

John Yes.

Elizabeth Now call the police.

John Why are you doing this, Beth?

Elizabeth Because I'm angry. With you for being so stupid. And with myself for not doing anything earlier to prevent this. We need to buy some time to work out the future.

John I was afraid I might not be able to concentrate enough to finish the financial report in time for the AGM. But- there it is.

Alan Good, John. Excellent. Look- there's no easy way for - either of us. *(Pause)* Is there?

John I hope not, or I would have misjudged you.

Alan Bottom line is - Harvey's unhappy with your work.

John You know, I'm inclined to agree with him.

Alan That's why he asked Personnel to drop you a line.

John Break the ice.

Alan Yes. Our shares took another hammering yesterday.

John I saw.

Alan The City is predicting poor results.

John To be honest, they'll see it as a miracle if we don't declare a loss.

Alan That's why Harvey's asked me take over these figures of yours. He's having trouble working out their basis for authenticity.

John It took inspiration to show we made anything at all last year.

Alan Harvey isn't going to appreciate facing the shareholders with the happy news that we won't be paying them a dividend.

John I know. He won't be very popular.

Alan The point is, John, I'm - he's left with no choice but to-replace you.

John Alan, don't struggle to find a polite way of saying I'm sacked. The writing's been more than on the wall.

Alan I've asked someone from Security to clear your desk.

John For God's sake!

Alan It's not me, John. It's procedure nowadays. When it's all verified, you will receive a cheque for six months' compensation, as stipulated when the company was taken over. I'm sorry to ask, but have you got anything here? Documents - you know.

John Have a look, there might be some paperclips with Harvey's signature on.
