

# The Death of Margaret Thatcher

---

By Tom Green

This play is free to download but permission must be sought for any copying, readings or performance. In other words, all rights are retained by the author.

Contact Tom Green  
[tom.green2@gmail.com](mailto:tom.green2@gmail.com)

# The Death Of Margaret Thatcher

By Tom Green

## Scene 1

*Normal lighting.*

*A news studio. Jonelle Adams is sitting behind the desk, sipping a mug of tea.*

*The Floor Manager, with headphones and a walkie-talkie, is counting down to broadcast.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Thirty seconds!

*Jonelle checks her hair in her compact mirror.*

## Scene 2

*The consulting room of Karen Fricker, a psychotherapist.*

*Karen sits on one side, Hoagy on the other.*

*There is a lengthy silence.*

**HOAGY**

It's embarrassing.

## Scene 3

*The news room, as before. Jonelle is composing herself.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Twenty seconds.

*Jonelle takes a final sip of tea and then puts the mug beneath the desk.*

## Scene 4

*The consulting room, as before.*

*A lengthy silence.*

**HOAGY**

I feel stupid.

**Scene 5**

*The news room, as before.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Ten seconds.

**JONELLE**

Do I look sad enough?

**Scene 6**

*The chapel of rest at a funeral home. Dudley, wearing suit trousers and a crisp white shirt, is sipping a cup of tea.*

**Scene 7**

*The news room, as before.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Five, four, three, two, one.  
Run titles.

Blackout.

SFX: News bulletin music.

Spotlight on Jonelle.

**JONELLE**

Baroness Thatcher, who, as  
Margaret Thatcher was  
Britain's first woman prime  
minister, has died.

SFX: A single person cheers.

**Scene 8**

*The consulting room, as before. A lengthy silence between Karen and Hoagy.*

**Scene 9**

*The chapel of rest, as before. Dudley is eating a ginger nut biscuit.*

**Scene 10**

*The newsroom, as before.*

**JONELLE**

The news was announced in a written statement issued by a private hospital in central London. "This evening, shortly after 7pm, Baroness Thatcher passed away. She had been admitted overnight complaining of chest pains and her condition worsened this morning."

*SFX: Several people cheering.*

**JONELLE**

"Her family were with her at the end and they have asked for their privacy to be respected. Rather than cards or floral tributes they have asked that donations be sent to the Alzheimer's Trust."

In a statement just released, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, said "This is a tragic day for our nation."

*SFX: Canned laughter.*

**JONELLE**

"Baroness Thatcher was a political giant and personal friend. She was a woman of vision and compassion who cared deeply about the country she loved."

*SFX: Canned laughter gets louder and continues.*

**JONELLE**

"Our thoughts and prayers are with her family. But, as they struggle to come to terms with their loss, they can console themselves, as we can, with the knowledge that we have been blessed by the existence of a truly great woman."

Blackout. SFX ends.

**Scene 11**

*The consulting room, as before.*

*A lengthy silence.*

**HOAGY**

I was driving back from seeing my Dad. I had the radio on.

"We interrupt this programme to bring you some breaking news."

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

News used to come in flashes. Now it breaks. Have you noticed that? A flash is here and gone. Breaking news keeps you hooked.

"We interrupt this programme to bring you some breaking news." A very flat, serious voice. Not a normal newsreader. Something terrible must have happened.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

A bomb? A war?

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

"Baroness Thatcher,  
Britain's first female prime  
minister, has died."

How long have we had?

*Karen doesn't respond.*

**HOAGY**

How long have we had?

**KAREN**

About 20 minutes.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

I find all this silence very  
unnerving, by the way. I'd  
be much happier if we could  
do it like a conversation.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

I had an interview for  
Oxford that was like this.  
When I was still at school.  
They'd ask me a question and  
then sit with completely  
blank faces while I talked.  
It was horrible.

You haven't even commented  
on my name. Even they did  
that. The dons.

"Hoagy?"

"Yes."

"As in Carmichael?"

"Yes."

"Is it short for anything?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Hoagland."

"Hoagland?"

"Yes."

"Hoagland?!"  
"Yes."  
"Unusual."  
"Yes."  
"You must get tired of  
people asking you about it!"

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

"We interrupt this programme  
to bring you some breaking  
news. Baroness  
Thatcher, Britain's first  
female prime minister, has  
died."

Where were you? How did you  
hear?

*Karen doesn't respond.*

**HOAGY**

I was just approaching  
Junction 32. I saw the sign  
at the same moment the news  
broke. Where were you?

I don't listen to news  
programmes. Not in the car.  
I can't stand all that  
talking. But here was this  
voice, this old fashioned  
voice, and...I started to cry.

That's what's embarrassing.  
I started crying. That's why  
I feel stupid.

"Baroness Thatcher,  
Britain's first female prime  
minister, has died."

Because it's not normal, is  
it? To cry about someone you  
don't know. Someone you  
don't even care about. It's  
not normal.

The radio man kept on  
talking. He kept on breaking

the news. But I can't remember what he said because I was in very real danger of crashing my car.

That's why I'm here.

I had to pull up on the hard shoulder. I switched off the radio but couldn't stop crying. Sobbing. Like I haven't done since I was a child. That's why I decided I had to see someone. Because, number one, I'm not an emotional person. Number two, I'm not a political person, and certainly not a Tory. And number three...

Number three, it scared me.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

Has it happened since? Is that what you'd like to know? Do I have to ask the questions as well as answer them?

*Karen doesn't respond.*

**HOAGY**

Yes it has happened since. I've got my guard up when I watch the news but then, five minutes in, there'll be a detail that will get me. A woman, a stupid old woman, had been to deliver flowers to Thatcher's old constituency HQ and she started crying when they interviewed her. That set me off! That was all it took.

That's why I'm here.



**Scene 12**

*The news studio.*

*Spotlight on Jonelle.*

**JONELLE**

You can follow the breaking news of Baroness Thatcher's death through the night on our 24-hour station. But from all of us here on the Ten O'clock News, goodnight.

*SFX: News music.*

*Spotlight fades while Jonelle puts the lid on her pen etc.*

*Normal lighting.*

*Jonelle pulls out her earpiece.*

**JONELLE**

You bastard!

*She stands up and, in her fury, sweeps the glass of water off the desk.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

It was quite funny.

**JONELLE**

It was not funny! It was stupid and juvenile and he was trying to wreck my career.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

*(listens to something in headphones)*

He says he'll explain.

**JONELLE**

How can he explain?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

He says hear him out.

*Jonelle shakes her head and then walks back to her desk and puts in her earpiece.*

SFX: A gale of canned laughter.

*Jonelle pulls out the earpiece.*

**JONELLE**

I'm going to tell someone.  
I'm going to go to Media  
Guardian or Private Eye or  
both. Or Popbitch. Popbitch  
would love this. 'Guess  
which top news producer  
played canned laughter into  
the ear of newsreader  
Jonelle Adams as she  
announced the death of  
Margaret Thatcher?'

*The (male) Producer's voice plays through the speakers.*

**PRODUCER (OFF-STAGE)**

You'd be tarred by  
association.

**JONELLE**

I'll fucking tar you!  
*(to floor manager)*  
Can you turn him off?

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

We were all killing  
ourselves.

**JONELLE**

What have you got against  
me?

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

I thought it gave you a  
certain edge.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Enoch Powell used to say it  
was better to speak in  
public with a full bladder.

**JONELLE**

What?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

External pressure, a distraction, helps focus the mind.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Exactly.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

You were great, anyway.

**JONELLE**

This was the biggest bulletin of my career.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

They don't get much bigger.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

And you did a great job.

**JONELLE**

No thanks to you.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Relax. It's over. You need to learn to be able to laugh at yourself.

**JONELLE**

Cunt.

**Scene 13**

*The chapel of rest, as before.*

**DUDLEY**

I had to get away for a moment. Even in a place like this there are times when there's just too much noise. Too much chatter.

Sometimes I wish humans had a word-limiter fitted in their brains. Like a speed-limiter on a car. Imagine if you only had 300 words a day. Or fewer. You should

try it. Try using only 100.  
Count them as you go.

*He sips his tea.*

**DUDLEY**

We're waiting for the call. Everyone is expecting it to come but no one knows for certain. We've got the family connections but Neville thinks it's strange that nothing has been planned. Surely, he says, even though it was sudden in the end, they would have had something planned.

I've been trying to reassure him. No one makes plans. We, of all people, should know that. Almost no one. Not for themselves, and very rarely for a loved one. They think that ignoring death will keep it at bay.

*Dudley picks up a ginger snap from a plate on the table beside him and dunks it in his tea.*

**DUDLEY**

You get a few exceptions. There was a story in the papers about a man who had organised his own wake. Neville pinned it up on the noticeboard in the kitchen. Told me he thought it was an interesting development. A business opportunity, perhaps. This chap had terminal cancer. Three months to live. He'd been away, living in Spain, so he decided to come back and hold a wake while he was still alive. How sensible is that? A proper chance to say thank you and goodbye. Brilliant. He recognised that to be given an accurate

forecast of your own mortality is a blessing. Neville said that it could be a chance for us to get into the process at an earlier stage. "Living wakes", he called them. All very tasteful and with the emphasis on celebration. He's convinced that it could catch on. I'm more sceptical. Everyone thinks they're going to live forever. Even when their lungs are riddled with cancer they still won't look death in the eye.

Of course, it could be that she gets a state funeral. To be honest, I'm not sure who organises those. Someone must do the job for the royal family but I don't know who it is. Neville will know.

Short of a top royal a Prime Minister must be the biggest job there is. The most prestigious. We've done some celebrities but this is a whole different order. One of those occasions when the whole country will stand still.

#### **Scene 14**

*Karen's consulting room.*

*Karen and Hoagy are sat as before. Karen is wearing only her underwear, but behaving as if nothing is unusual.*

*Several times Hoagy starts to speak and stops. He eyes her.*

**HOAGY**

Something's not quite right.

Don't you think? I can't put my finger on it but there's something...odd. Something different from last time.

*He suddenly realises that she is in her underwear.*

**HOAGY**

You're...

Oh my God! Is this part of your method as well? You don't say anything and you don't wear any clothes either? That's not fair! And you expect me to carry on as normal? You expect me just to carry on?

What if I, you know... What if I get a hard-on? Have you thought about that? Suppose the sight of you sitting there like that gives me an erection? Is that part of the plan as well? Is it? Because that's what's happening.

Don't look at me. Look away.

And don't move. Don't do anything.

Don't look at me!

Blackout

News footage: On a big screen we see archive footage from Thatcher's life (not including any of the images Hoagy mentions in the next scene).

**Scene 15**

*TV news journalists Dana Farraday and Bobby Jackson are in the office considering their clothing. Bobby has a selection of ties.*

**BOBBY**

Do you think I could get  
away with charcoal?

**DANA**

I was thinking of flint.

**BOBBY**

I saw Brad Pitt wearing one  
at the Golden Globes.

**DANA**

There's a jacket I've been  
saving.

**BOBBY**

*(still looking at the tie)*  
It almost looks black...

**DANA**

With that necklace I wore  
that time for Princess Anne.

**BOBBY**

But it's a bit more George  
Clooney.

**DANA**

I hope I've got time to get  
my hair done.

**BOBBY**

Where are they sending you?

**DANA**

Somewhere north.

*Bobby smirks.*

**DANA**

What?

**BOBBY**

Nothing.

**DANA**

I bet it rains.

**BOBBY**

It will be snow where you're  
going.

DANA

I'll need a new coat.

BOBBY

You won't even be able to  
get proper coffee.

DANA

Do you think I should pack  
long-jonhs?

### **Scene 16**

*Karen's consulting room, the next day.*

*Both Karen and Hoagy are fully dressed, and sat as  
before.*

**HOAGY**

I've been thinking about  
Thatcher. Wondering what it  
was about her that sparked  
this all off. I know you're  
thinking that it's something  
about me - my mother or  
father or what happened to  
me in the showers at school  
- but I thought there might  
have been something about  
her. Some memory, maybe.

So I wrote down the memories  
I had of her - I've been  
avoiding the retrospectives  
on telly so they were just  
what came to mind.

The first thing was that  
time she picked up the  
litter in Hyde Park. That  
was the first memory I  
thought of. It was a photo  
opportunity - I can't  
remember the story. She was  
she was there with all these  
officials and she was  
supposed to pick up some  
litter that had been



specially scatted on the grass, using one of those sticks. She threw the stick away. Rushed forward, picking the litter up with her bare hands and stuffing it in the bin liner.

Second thing: her in a tank. Remember that? Thatcher riding in a tank, a Chieftan probably, looking like a movie star. Looking like Jean Harlow, an old Jean Harlow. It might have been overseas. Somewhere hot.

My third memory is her coming down the steps and almost knocking over that BBC reporter. It was during the leadership election when they were getting rid of her. She wouldn't accept it. "I fight on and I fight to win."

The fourth...

*He breaks off.*

#### **HOAGY**

Are you interested in dreams? Would you like me to tell you about my dreams?

All the time I was talking just then, ever since I got here, I've been wondering if I would tell you and now I've decided that I will.

I had a dream that we were here. Just like this. Except you didn't have any clothes on.

Anyway, my fourth memory of Thatcher, is when she first got into Number 10. It's not a memory of her but of some

man they interviewed on the street - they asked him how he felt about there being a woman prime minister and he said: "Better an iron lady than a plasticine man." I was only a kid but I knew who was who. And Callaghan did look like he might have been made out of plasticine.

*A silence.*

**KAREN**

What's the feeling of those memories?

**HOAGY**

She speaks!

**KAREN**

Are there any feelings associated with them?

**HOAGY**

Don't you want to know more about the dream?

My feeling in the dream was confusion at first. I knew something wasn't quite right but couldn't say what. And then I noticed you were in your underwear.

You probably get that quite a lot, don't you? It's probably very common. Patients dreaming about their therapists. And fantasising about them. Not that I was fantasising. Not necessarily. That implies something willed, doesn't it? And this was a dream. And they're not willed - are they?

After the confusion had passed the other feeling I experienced was arousal. I

didn't do anything. There wasn't anything happening. Between us. It was just me.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

Why did I cry when I heard that Thatcher had died? Why did I cry?

**KAREN**

What do you think?

**HOAGY**

They're not really memories of her, are they? It's not as if I knew her. She was someone on the telly. Someone in the papers.

That first one, picking up the litter, makes me smile. I think it's the men around her. The men in suits. Left reeling by this manic woman. It's like that other time. When British Airways changed the design of their tailfin. Thatcher was at some trade show and the boss or whoever showed her a model of the new design - African art instead of the Union Jack - and she covered it up. She put her hanky over it.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

I'm not sure about the tank one. I suppose there is something erotic about it. Not for me. But I can imagine other people, men, getting a kick out of it. Thatcher driving a tank. Only her top half visible. Who knows what's going on downstairs.

The third one, the leadership election, makes me feel excited. That was the one time I really got into politics. Heseltine and then, what was his name, Geoffrey Howe, making that speech. It was like Julius Caesar. Et tu, Geoffrey? Like a Greek tragedy. And even when the knife was in-between her shoulder blades, no one could quite believe that she was finished.

The fourth memory, that makes me think of plasticine. That's all. The feeling of it. Sticky yet not sticky. That smell. The way that those immaculate cold strips of colour would turn into a dull brown ball.

Blackout.

News footage: On the big screen we see archive footage of all the events Hoagy has mentioned.

## **Scene 17**

*News studio.*

*Jonelle is preparing for the news bulletin.*

### **FLOOR MANAGER**

Sixty seconds.

### **PRODUCER (O.S.)**

I like that jacket.

Jonelle.

Don't ignore me. I thought we'd made up.

I thought you'd forgiven me.

**JONELLE**

*(to Floor Manager)*

Do I look OK?

*Floor Manager nods.*

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

You look great.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Thirty seconds.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

You look good enough to eat.

**JONELLE**

Can someone tell him to shut up?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Twenty seconds.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

I love it when you're angry.

**JONELLE**

Please?

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

It brings a wonderful flush to your cheeks.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Ten...

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Remember...

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Nine...

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

...the nation's watching...

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Eight...

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

...So no fuck ups.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Seven, six, five...

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Christ, you do look sexy  
though. Doesn't she?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Four, three, two one. Run  
titles.

SFX: News music

Spotlight on Jonelle.

**JONELLE**

A political row has broken out tonight after the government announced that Baroness Thatcher would not be granted a state funeral. Following 36 hours of increasingly frenzied speculation, Number 10 today issued a statement saying that it has been agreed with Baroness Thatcher's family that she would have a private funeral, followed by a service of remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

In the last hundred years the only Prime Minister to have had a state funeral is Winston Churchill and Downing Street sources said that, while Baroness Thatcher's achievements had been considerable, she was too divisive a figure to warrant a full scale state burial.

Several Conservative backbenchers, however, have already voiced their dissent and are calling for the public to demand that the government changes its mind.

Our Westminster  
correspondent, Bobby  
Jackson, reports.

Normal lighting.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

VT running.

*Jonelle relaxes.*

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Chuck her body in a skip.

**JONELLE**

"Top news producer says  
'Chuck Maggie's body in a  
skip.'

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Or, better still, stick it  
on top of a bonfire. So we  
can all watch her burn.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Twenty seconds.

**JONELLE**

I'll do it. I'll start an  
anonymous blog dedicated to  
recording all your stupid  
little comments.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

You're giving me the horn.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Ten seconds.

**JONELLE**

Fuck off.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Five, four, three, two, one.

Spotlight on Jonelle.

**JONELLE**

Bobby Jackson joins me now,  
live from Downing Street.

Spotlight on Bobby Jackson.

**JONELLE**

Bobby, this decision not to grant Baroness Thatcher a state funeral has clearly upset a lot of people - is there any chance that the government might change its mind?

**BOBBY**

Jonelle, I don't think so. A state funeral takes a huge amount of planning and the police are telling me that arrangements would have needed to be in place some time ago.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Ask him where he got his tie.

**JONELLE**

So what plans are in place?

**BOBBY**

Jonelle, we're still not entirely sure. On the one hand the family, understandably, want to be able to pay their respects and be allowed to grieve in private.

On the other hand, Baroness Thatcher was one of the titanic figures of world affairs in the twentieth century, and all sorts of people, from Presidents to monarchs, would expect to attend her burial.

And on the third hand-

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

The third hand?!



**BOBBY**

- the authorities are admitting concern about public order. Mrs Thatcher was a hugely polarising figure and the police are keen to avoid demonstrations that might upset the family.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Tell him he's a cretin.

**JONELLE**

Bobby Jackson, thanks very much.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

You're too polite.

**JONELLE**

It's been another day of bloodshed in Saudi Arabia....

**Scene 18**

*Karen's consulting room, as before.*

**HOAGY**

I find myself wanting to provoke you.

**KAREN**

In what way?

**HOAGY**

I want to ruffle your feathers.

**KAREN**

You feel hostile towards me?

**HOAGY**

In a way.

I mean, I wouldn't put up with it in normal conversation. The way you are.

**KAREN**

What's normal conversation like?

**HOAGY**

Have you forgotten?

It's two-sided, for one thing. It's two-way.

**KAREN**

But you understand why this is different. Don't you? You understand what we're-

**HOAGY**

*(interrupting)*

I've been reading more about Mrs Thatcher. Did you know that she had a coat of arms? A very jolly sailor on one side - like Captain Birds Eye - and Sir Isaac Newton on the other. A very strange combination. And it's all topped off by Arthur Scargill's head on a spike.

Not really. The Scargill thing - I made that up.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

I've been thinking about sex. I'm sure it's coming here that does it. I've been thinking about Maggie and Denis having sex. Which they must have done. And we assume, don't we, that they did it very conventionally. We think that of people in the past. That they did it quick and clean. But who's to say Maggie didn't like it any which way? I started to picture Denis and her doing all sorts of things.

I won't go into details. The images become quite hard to shift.

Do you think I've got a thing about her? A sexual thing?

**KAREN**

What do you think?

*Hoagy doesn't reply.*

**KAREN**

You were coming back from seeing your father.

**HOAGY**

When?

**KAREN**

The day you heard the news. About Mrs Thatcher. You said you had been to see your father.

**HOAGY**

I visit him every couple of months.

**KAREN**

Does he live on his own?

*Hoagy nods.*

**KAREN**

What about your mother?

**HOAGY**

She's dead.

*A silence.*

**KAREN**

When did she die?

**HOAGY**

Her name was Claire. Claire, meet Karen. Karen, Claire.

**KAREN**

What was she like?

**HOAGY**

She was my mother.

Try and guess some things about her. Based on what you know of me. Guess what she did for a living.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

She was a nurse.

She was a teacher.

She was an accountant. A car mechanic. She played netball for England. She won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress. She fucked tramps for money. She had an organic farming business. She stayed at home and baked cakes. She ran away to New Zealand when I was three months old.

Multiple choice. Which one do you think?

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

You're not much fun, are you? This relationship is getting very one sided. Do you know that? That's how it feels. I'm doing all the work. Putting in all the effort. The revelations. The humour. The insight. But I'm getting nothing back. You're not giving me anything for my money, Karen.

*A silence.*

**KAREN**

It seems that it might be difficult for you to talk about your mother.

**HOAGY**

Is it important - to my cure?

**KAREN**

Your cure?

**HOAGY**

That's why I'm here. To be cured. Made better.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

Christ, Karen, these silences are really starting to annoy me.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

Stop patronising me.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

Stop treating me like a child!

**KAREN**

You feel like a child?

*Hoagy shows her his watch.*

**HOAGY**

Time's up.

### **Scene 19**

*The chapel of rest, as before.*

*Dudley checks his watch.*

**DUDLEY**

I should be getting back.  
It's all hands on deck.

Ever since the phone call came we've been on the go non-stop. The police arrived almost straight away. Told us there'd be an armed guard night and day - we've never had that before.

*Dudley relights his cigarette, which had gone out.*

**DUDLEY**

She's with Gaynor. Our embalmer.

There's a lot of confusion about embalming. It's not about trying to make the body last for years. We're not mummifying them. It's just to stop short-term decay. It makes a difference if the body is going to be viewed.

Gaynor is terrific. Came late to the work as many of us do. She was a hairdresser. Divorced. Kids had left home. Wanted something different. We had a vacancy in the office and Neville met her and was impressed. Trained her up. And when Brendan retired last year she took over his responsibilities.

Extraordinary, really. Five years ago she was working in Curl Up And Dye, today she's injecting formaldehyde into the veins of one of our nations greatest ever leaders. She's very calm about it.

Neville says it's a shame we don't get more women here. Working, I mean. There are plenty of female corpses. At least as many as male. More,

it seems, sometimes. But you still don't get many women in the business. I'm not sure how people would react to women front of house, though. We seem to like men to deal with the business of death. Funeral directors. Butchers. Executioners.

But she's made an impact, Gaynor has. The embalming room is much brighter now. More cheerful. Brendan was good at his job but that place always had the feel of a medieval torture chamber. The dungeon, we used to call it. As a joke, really, but it wasn't a place you wanted to be. Gaynor's changed that.

I haven't been able to get to sleep. Excited, I suppose. I've not seen the body yet, but soon I will.

*A silence.*

**DUDLEY**

Gaynor's brilliant with the cosmetics, as well. Especially the hair. When you lay a body out the hair can make or break it.

**Scene 20**

*Karen's consulting room, as before. Karen is sitting in her seat. Hoagy is standing in the middle of the room in his underpants and socks.*

**HOAGY**

Something's different. I'm not sure what it is but I feel happier. More comfortable.

I feel great.

I feel terrific!

Maybe I'm cured. Am I better  
Karen? Have you cured me?

*He suddenly realises he is in his pants.*

**HOAGY**

Oh shit. Oh no! Why didn't  
you say something?!

*He puts his hands over his groin.*

**HOAGY**

Don't look at me like that.  
Don't look at me. Karen.  
Please. Karen. Karen!

**Scene 21**

*News studio, as before.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Three, two, one.

SFX: News music.

Spotlight on Jonelle.

**JONELLE**

Good evening. Police were  
called to a pub in  
Nottingham this evening  
after clashes between  
supporters of the late  
Baroness Thatcher and those  
who have seen her death as a  
cause for celebration.

The trouble began after a  
party upstairs at the  
Mandrake pub in the city  
centre was interrupted by  
local Conservatives angry at  
posters advertising the  
party with the slogan  
"Maggie, Maggie, Maggie -  
Dead, Dead, Dead!".

Elaine Sidoli reports.



Normal lighting.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Run VT.

*Jonelle takes a mug of tea out from beneath the desk and has a sip.*

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Will you come out for dinner  
with me tonight?

I'll take you somewhere  
nice.

Please.

I've been feeling bad about  
giving you a hard time.

Let me make it up to you.

Go on.

You know you want to.

*Jonelle takes her earpiece from inside her collar where  
it had been tucked.*

**JONELLE**

I thought it seemed quiet.  
Sorry, have I missed  
anything?

**Scene 22**

*Karen's consulting room, as before.*

*Karen is sitting alone. She checks her watch.*

*After a short time she checks her watch again and then  
gets up. She paces about and then sits down in the  
client's seat and looks across to where she always sits.*

**Scene 23**

*The news studio.*

*The Floor Manager is sitting in Jonelle's chair with his feet up.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

You're kidding!

**JONELLE**

Ssh! I don't want everyone to know.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

But he's such a bastard. To you more than anyone.

**JONELLE**

I know.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

So why did you go out to dinner with him?

**JONELLE**

I didn't think it would do any harm.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

He's so fucking arrogant.

**JONELLE**

And we do have to work together.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

It must have been awful. Two hours of listening to his stupid opinions about every subject under the sun. I bet you hardly got a word in.

What?

**JONELLE**

Nothing.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Why are you putting on that coy face?

**JONELLE**

Shh! I'm not.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Oh God. No. Please no. He's fucking won you over hasn't he? He's worked his Burt Reynolds charm on you.

**JONELLE**

We had a very nice time.  
That's all.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Pass me the bin, I'm going to be sick.

**JONELLE**

Is my hair all right?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Fifteen seconds! Why do women always go for the most unpleasant men?

**JONELLE**

We don't! Not always.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Ten seconds. You do.

**JONELLE**

*(whispering)*

Are you jealous? Is that what this is about? Are you jealous of him? Did you think I might...with you?!

*Jonelle bits back a laugh.*

*SFX News music*

## **Scene 24**

*Spotlight on Jonelle, in the middle of reading a news bulletin.*

**JONELLE**

As the death of Baroness Thatcher continues to

polarise opinion across the country, an extraordinary walk by a former steelworker now living in a village near Hartlepool is attracting a growing amount of attention. Michael Connolly, 49, set off from his home three days ago after hearing the news of the ex-Prime Minister's death. Friends and family say he went without warning, taking only a small ruck-sack of clothes and provisions. He left a note saying that he was going to London "to spit on Maggie's grave". Following an interview with a local radio station, Mr Connolly has refused to comment further, yet his arrival at each new town has seen the gathering of ever larger crowds. Dana Farraday reports.

*Jonelle relaxes. Checks her make-up in her mirror.*

*A pause.*

**JONELLE**

Okay?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Perfect.

**JONELLE**

Thanks, I was asking...

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Thirty seconds.

**JONELLE**

He's gone all silent on me.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Twenty seconds.

Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven.  
Six. Five. Four. Three. Two.  
One.

**JONELLE**

Dana joins us now from the latest stop-off on Mr Connolly's walk. Dana, how is he being received?

*Spotlight on Dana.*

**DANA**

Jonelle, I think it would be fair to say that up here 'the North' supporters of the late Baroness Thatcher are pretty thin on the ground. Some people I spoke to saw it as a bit of a joke, a few said that it was disrespectful but most seem to be right behind him.

**JONELLE**

And I understand he's no longer alone.

**DANA**

That's right. As the momentum and media interest has grown, so Mr Connolly has collected an ever-larger brigade of fellow walkers. He doesn't invite them to join him and he doesn't speak to them or the media but there must be at least a hundred by now.

**JONELLE**

And he's planning to walk all the way to London?

**DANA**

Jonelle, he is. With the funeral delayed until next week the reports I'm getting are that he intends to be there on the day. Whether police will let him and his fellow marchers anywhere near the site, however, remains to be seen.

**JONELLE**

Thanks Dana.

Later in the programme,  
'Dead by their own hands' -  
how a teenage suicide pact  
ruined a family holiday.  
And, 'You grin again' - why  
the Bee Gees are grateful to  
a pioneering new dental  
procedure.

**Scene 25**

*Dudley is in the chapel of rest, as before.*

*There is a coffin behind him, containing a body beneath a sheet. Dudley is standing over it.*

*He moves away from the coffin.*

**DUDLEY**

I wrote to her once. Years  
ago. In the early eighties.  
When I was still messing  
about with my life. Before I  
settled down.

Peter Sutcliffe was on trial  
and I wrote to the Prime  
Minister telling her to  
bring back the death  
penalty. I'd put the noose  
round the Ripper's neck  
myself.

I never got a reply. But I  
heard later - years later,  
someone told me - that  
Number 10 got dozens of  
letters like that every  
week. There were hundreds of  
people eager to be hangmen.  
Most of them putting it very  
politely, I'm sure. Like I  
did. "If necessary I'd be  
prepared to..." "If no one  
else is willing I'll  
volunteer my own services..."

"My only interest is to see justice done."

All hangmen say that. If you read about them it's always the same. "I was a civil servant." "I just did my job." "I felt nothing."

But that can't be true, can it? You can't kill someone without feeling something, can you?

Imagine having to lead someone to the gallows. Holding them up when their legs give way. Putting the hood over their head. The noose around their neck. While they scream or jibber or cry. And then you pull the lever. And then you have to get down and check that they're dead - because it's not an exact science. So you need to make sure. In the dark. The smell of shit. As you check for a pulse.

I was 22 in 1981 and I really did think that hanging would come back. It seemed to matter a great deal at the time and if anyone would do it, then surely it would be her, for this. For him.

If I'm honest, I still regret that it didn't happen. With my head I think that it solves nothing, the death penalty, but deeper down the truth is that I wish I'd had the chance. I wish I could have hanged him. And others like him. The others who've come since. It's an awful thing to say but it's true.

*He moves back to the coffin.*

**DUDLEY**

I try to picture them alive.  
I imagine colour starting to  
bring life to their skin.  
Their eyes twitch and then  
open.

I look down at her, an old  
woman, a dead woman, and I  
see her alive, looking back  
at me. She, all that she is.  
Was. Looking at me. Who is  
only me.

*Dudley looks up from the coffin and addresses the  
audience directly.*

**DUDLEY**

I'll leave you alone with  
her for a moment now.

If you need me, I'll be just  
outside.

*He leaves.*

**Scene 26**

*Late night in the TV studio. Lights come on to reveal  
Jonelle sat at the desk.*

**JONELLE**

Good evening.

*She starts unbuttoning her shirt.*

*SFX: a wolf-whistle.*

**JONELLE**

In a change from the  
scheduled programme tonight  
there will be no news.

*She takes off her shirt and unfastens her bra. There is  
cheering.*



**JONELLE**

Instead, I shall be  
undressing.

SFX: Wild cheering and applause.

*Jonelle takes a glass of champagne from beneath the desk.*

**JONELLE**

Cheers!

## **Scene 27**

*Hoagy and Karen in her consulting room, as before.*

**HOAGY**

I'm sorry I didn't turn up  
last time.

**KAREN**

I'd appreciate it if you  
could let me know.

**HOAGY**

Sorry.

**KAREN**

Was there a reason why you  
didn't come?

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

I think I'm getting worse.  
It's for you to judge, I  
suppose, but my feeling is  
that I'm deteriorating.

Does it have to get worse  
before it can get better? Is  
that part of the process?

**KAREN**

Therapy can bring things to  
the surface that-

**HOAGY**

*(interrupting)*

I had another dream. This time I was in my pants. I just wish I could be more inventive. Less text-book. Make you work a little harder.

**KAREN**

Tell me about the dream.

**HOAGY**

I felt humiliated.

**KAREN**

Do you ever feel like that here?

*Hoagy doesn't respond.*

**KAREN**

Or at other times?

*Hoagy still doesn't respond.*

**KAREN**

Is it a dream you've had before?

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

I've made myself watch all the coverage. The build-up. I've forced myself to sit in front of the TV and watch it. There's so much media bullshit. So much political bullshit. The whole thing is so far from anything in my experience, from anything to do with me, that I thought I'd be fine.

**KAREN**

And have you been?

**HOAGY**

The slightest thing sets me off. Crying. Or shouting at the TV.

I've had to take the week off work. They asked me why and I had to make something up about a family illness. Imagine if I'd told the truth: "I can't come into work because I'm too upset by the death of Mrs-fucking-Thatcher. Other people are having celebratory parties but I'm in pieces."

**KAREN**

Perhaps it's not her death that you're upset about.

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

It's strange seeing all the old faces popping up again. The men of the eighties. Seeing who's still alive. Who's put on weight. Who looks like they've got cancer. I can't put names to all the faces but as soon as the caption comes up I remember. And you think of all those decisions and events that must have seemed so significant at the time but now are just short clips on TV.

When I see those old boys on TV I think how awful it must be to be in your seventies. Counting down the years. Your life overshadowed by your imminent death.

**KAREN**

How old were you when your mother died?

**HOAGY**

Thirteen.

Do you think I'll grieve for her? For Thatcher?

**KAREN**

You might do. Or, it might feel like you are. But perhaps it's more to do with-

**HOAGY**

*(interrupting)*

But I didn't even know the woman. I don't give a shit about her.

**KAREN**

Did you cry when your mother died?

*A silence.*

**KAREN**

Did your father cry?

**HOAGY**

Yes.

**KAREN**

What was that like?

*A silence.*

**KAREN**

Did you feel that you weren't allowed to cry?

**HOAGY**

I didn't want to cry.

**KAREN**

Why not?

**HOAGY**

I just didn't feel that I wanted to.

**KAREN**

How do you feel when you do  
cry; when you cry now?

**HOAGY**

Like I've lost control.

**Scene 28**

*The news studio, midway through a news bulletin, while a  
VT report is running.*

*Jonelle is checking her make up.*

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Twenty seconds.

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

You're looking hot tonight,  
by the way.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Thanks. Fifteen.

*Jonelle laughs.*

**JONELLE**

Do you like my new lipstick?

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Very much.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Ten, nine, eight, seven,  
six, five, four, three, two,  
one.

*Spotlight on Jonelle.*

**JONELLE**

Dana joins us now from  
outside Birmingham.

Dana, this thing just keeps  
growing and growing!

*Spotlight on Dana.*

**DANA**

Jonelle, when Michael Connolly left his house last Saturday he could never have foreseen in his wildest imaginings that he would reach Birmingham with a group of more than four thousand fellow walkers. As you saw in my report, the scenes as we entered the city were like a cross between Mardi Gras and an old fashioned village fete. People thronging the streets. Banners of support. Brass bands, jazz bands, gospel choirs. No one here has ever seen anything quite like it.

**JONELLE**

But not everyone's been happy to see Mr Connolly, have they?

**DANA**

Jonelle, that's right. As the momentum of Mr Connolly's march has grown so the opposition has got louder and more organised. Pressure has been put on civic leaders to refuse him entry to towns and I understand that the police have been facing a rising chorus of influential opinion telling them to put a stop to it on public order grounds. One very senior government source told me that the nation was in danger of being turned into an international laughing stock.

**JONELLE**

And what has Mr Connolly's response been to all this mayhem?

**DANA**

Jonelle, he is saying  
nothing.

**JONELLE**

Nothing?

**DANA**

Nothing.

## **Scene 29**

*Karen's consulting room. She is in her seat in her underwear. Hoagy is naked in the middle of the room. Mrs Thatcher is sitting in the client's seat.*

**HOAGY**

Have I got the wrong day? Am  
I not meant to be here?

Anyway, I thought you were  
dead. Aren't you supposed to  
be dead? It is you, isn't  
it? It is...who I think it  
is.

*He turns to Karen and notices for the first time that she  
is in her underwear.*

**HOAGY**

Argh! You've done it again.  
I told you not to do that. I  
told you. How I am supposed  
to think straight when  
you're dressed like that?  
Undressed like that.

*(to Thatcher)*

At least you're fully  
clothed. That really would  
have made things difficult.

Because I want to get things  
straight. I really do. I  
know I can be a difficult  
bastard sometimes but I do  
want help. I wouldn't be  
here otherwise, would I?

*He notices for the first time that he has no clothes on.*

**HOAGY**

Argh! Fucking hell! Why didn't you say something? Why didn't someone say something?! Where's the door? How do I get out of here? I'm not supposed to be here.

*He catches Karen's eye.*

**HOAGY**

No. Don't look at me.  
Not now. With her here.  
Please.  
Karen.  
No.  
Oh, God.

**Scene 30**

*Separate spotlights on Dana and Bobby Jackson, in separate locations.*

*They speak into their microphones but are not yet on camera.*

**DANA**

Have you seen it?

**BOBBY**

I almost pissed myself.

**DANA**

Can you email it to me?

**BOBBY**

I'll send you the link.

**DANA**

Is she completely naked?



*Spotlight on Jonelle at the newsdesk. She is putting in her earpiece.*

**BOBBY**

She's topless.

**JONELLE**

*(joining in)*

Who's topless?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Thirty seconds.

**DANA**

Hi Jonelle.

**JONELLE**

Hi Dana. Sounds like I missed out on some juicy gossip.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Twenty seconds.

**JONELLE**

It's all gone quiet.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.

*Lights down on Dana and Bobby.*

*SFX: News music*

**JONELLE**

Baroness Thatcher was buried today, but remained as controversial in death as she had been in life.

A large crowd of mourners gathered outside the Royal Chelsea Hospital where the private ceremony took place this afternoon, but they were outnumbered by what police estimate to be more

than 100,000 people who had gathered in a silent protest.

Dana Faraday reports.

Spotlight down on Jonelle.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

VT running.

**JONELLE**

Is there something I don't know about?

Hello? Can anyone hear me?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Your mic has been turned off.

**JONELLE**

What? Hey! I can't hear anything now, either.

**FLOOR MANAGER**

He's telling you to calm down.

**JONELLE**

What the fuck?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

He'll talk to you after the show.

Twenty seconds.

**JONELLE**

Is it something about me?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

Why did you do it?

**JONELLE**

Why did I do what?

**FLOOR MANAGER**

I'm sorry Jonelle.

Ten seconds. Put your  
earpiece in.

Five, four, three, two, one.

*Jonelle puts her earpiece in.*

*Spotlight on Jonelle*

**JONELLE**

Dana joins me now from the  
Michael Connolly protest and  
Bobby Jackson is outside the  
chapel.

*Spotlights on Dana and Bobby.*

**JONELLE**

Were you talking about me  
before we came on air?

*Dana and Bobby are struck dumb.*

**PRODUCER (O.S.)**

Don't Jonelle.

**JONELLE**

Bobby, were you talking  
about me?

**BOBBY**

I, er...

**PRODUCER**

Don't!

**JONELLE**

Dana, were you talking about  
me?!

**DANA**

I, er...

**PRODUCER**

Carry on, Dana. Carry on!

*Spotlight down on Jonelle.*

**DANA**

Jonelle, it really is an incredible scene here. The crowds seem unwilling to disperse and Michael Connolly, the reluctant leader of this rag-tag rebellion is still refusing to talk to the press or anyone at all. Some believe that he is simply going to wait here until for as long as it takes until he can access the cemetery.

**BOBBY**

Jonelle, here at the chapel there remains a very real sense of unease. Baroness Thatcher's children simply wanted to bury their mother in peace. Her many friends and former colleagues wanted to be able to pay their final respects. And yet, despite public insistence from the family that they had no concerns about anyone else's view, there can be little doubt that the whole event has been overshadowed by Michael Connolly's extraordinary march.

Back to the studio.

Lights down on Dana and Bobby.

Spotlight on Jonelle staring straight ahead.

Lights down on Jonelle.

On a big screen an internet video comes up. A film starts to play. It is handheld camera footage of Jonelle stripping on the newsdesk.

### **Scene 31**

*The chapel of rest, as before but with no coffin. Dudley is in his smartest funeral suit, with his collar unbuttoned. He is drinking a glass of whiskey.*

*The following is what he has said through the day, so he might, at least partly, act it out.*

#### **DUDLEY**

"Good morning."

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Yes, everything's ready."

"Just through there."

"You'll be in with me and the others will follow on behind. "

"The police have promised us that it will be fine."

"Ok?"

"Yes."

"If you'd like to follow me."

"Thank you."

"Thank you."

"Thank you."

Forty-seven words. That's all I used.

You don't need to say much on the day of a funeral. Any talking there is to do I leave to Neville.

It's part of what makes it a special day, I think.

Words are weighed more  
carefully.

We feel the spaces between  
ourselves and other people.

*He raises his glass.*

**DUDLEY**

Cheers.

### **Scene 32**

*Hoagy and Karen are in her consulting room, as before.*

*A silence.*

**HOAGY**

This is going to be my last  
session.

**KAREN**

Right...

**HOAGY**

I've run out of money. And  
I'm going away.

**KAREN**

Where to?

**HOAGY**

I thought it might be useful  
if you'd sum up. About me.  
What you've learned. What  
you think.

I think I've got unresolved  
emotional issues. Possible  
depression. Fear of  
intimacy. Would you agree?

It's the talking that I've  
found most difficult. If  
you'd like some feedback.  
Are other people OK with it?  
An hour talking about  
yourself. Christ. After ten  
minutes I feel light-headed.  
Those sessions when we

mostly just sat in silence  
seem like halcyon days.

I'm scared of going any  
deeper. That's what I've  
learned.

I had another Thatcher  
memory yesterday. Do you  
remember the milk we used to  
have at school? Are you old  
enough to remember that? The  
little milk bottles. Always  
warm. Thick cream at the  
top. And the teachers would  
make sure we drank it all.  
They said it was Thatcher  
who stopped it. Did you know  
that? When she was in charge  
of Education. I remember it  
not being there one year.

Something reminded me of  
that yesterday - a milk  
float, I saw a milk float;  
first time in years.

I didn't know it at the  
time, but she was in my life  
even then.

If you're going to ask me  
how that makes me feel, then  
don't. Let me sit here in  
silence.

Please.

Let's just have silence now.  
And then I'll go.

*They sit in silence.*

END.

The Death Of Margaret Thatcher was first performed at The Courtyard Theatre in London in February 2008.

Director: June Abbott

Cast:

- Floor Manager - Russell Anthony
- Dana - Leanne Elms
- Dudley - John Elnaugh
- Hoagy - Alane Frestone
- Karen - Pamela Hall
- Producer - Ian Mairs
- Bobby - Craig Murray
- Jonelle - Alex Topham Tyerman