

ELEVENTH HOUR:
THE SENTINEL CASE

Original, unbroadcast UK version

Created and Written
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EXT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

Establisher. A big warehouse on a trading estate bearing the name ACE COLD STORAGE.

INT. FREEZER PLANT OFFICE CORRIDOR. DAY.

A place with a ratty 70s look, built quickly and going to seed. A young Chinese guy runs down the corridor toward the office at its end.

INT. FREEZER PLANT OFFICE. DAY.

Close on a computer screen -- someone's playing online poker, and losing.

The someone is Ellis Gibson. He's around 30, vaguely sleepy-looking in that way of easygoing young men who'll never look right in a collar, a tie, or behind a desk.

He looks up as the Chinese guy skids into sight in the doorway.

DANNY
(local accent)
Bit of a problem.

INT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT SIDE-SECTION. DAY.

We're looking down vertically on the 'bit of a problem' -- a fallen man lying twisted on the ground, face-up, with an outspread fan of frozen blood on the floor surrounding his head.

INT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

We're in a huge refrigerated warehouse with wide aisles stacked high with pallets of perishable goods, mostly fish and seafoods.

Ellis Gibson strides down the aisle with Danny close behind him. Past a stopped forklift truck, past a couple of nonplussed-looking Chinese workers who don't quite know what to do with themselves, through a plastic barrier into a section with a temporary 'man at work' warning on which we linger.

INT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT SIDE-SECTION. DAY.

Gibson looks down on the sprawling man and then hesitates, glancing over the scene. Some kind of high-up maintenance work, some kind of gantry or ladder collapse.

Danny and the other workers are behind him, watching to see what he'll do.

He crouches, and gingerly checks the man's neck for a pulse.

DANNY
Call an ambulance?

Gibson sits back on his haunches, looking regretful.

ELLIS GIBSON
No rush.

EXT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

At a side door, two morticians transfer the bagged body to their unmarked van.

INT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT SIDE-SECTION. DAY.

Angle down on the accident spot, only now the body's been moved and the frozen fan of blood remains.

The area's been isolated with perimeter tape. There are uniformed coppers stepping and stumbling all over the place.

Ellis Gibson is talking to a CID man. Out of all of them, he's the only one not visibly bothered by the cold.

CID MAN
You need to close all this up
'til Health and Safety have seen
it.

ELLIS GIBSON
I've got stock spoiling while
we're standing here. And I just
lost my maintenance engineer.

CID MAN
(points to the work area
and the impact zone)
Leave this, leave that, and the
rest you can shift.

With a pained nod to his suffering fellow-coppers, he leads the move out.

DANNY
Boss!

Danny's starting to clear up the mess. As Gibson comes over...

DANNY
This stuff's had it.

ELLIS GIBSON
What is it?

Danny scrubs at the frost on the label of a damaged crate about the size of an orange box.

DANNY
Dunno. It's had a fall.

Gibson lifts the lid.

In the middle of the crate is a tin box with a gaffer tape label reading VARIOLA MAJOR and a string of numbers with a September 1978 date. The box has been braced into place but the packing has moved, so it's rattling around loose.

Gibson re-seats it and then replaces the lid.

ELLIS GIBSON
Just refreeze it.

DANNY
That's a sacking offence.

ELLIS GIBSON
So?

DANNY
I'm not touching it.

With a pissed-off look at Danny, Gibson picks up the crate to carry across to a trolley.

ELLIS GIBSON
It's been in cold storage for thirty years.

He sets it on the trolley.

ELLIS GIBSON
Whoever stuck it here's forgotten all about it.

We move into a position where we're looking straight down on the crate lid, hold it there for a moment, and then...

Dive straight down. The crate lid dissolves before us as we approach it.

Then on through the labelled lid of the box.

Now we're seeing the contents of the box, two racks of offset glass tubes one above the other.

And we keep right on until we're looking closely at a displaced vial at the end of the lower level, and keep on moving in until our field of vision is filled by...

A single huge drop of pink fluid, which forms and falls.

And still we keep hurtling in, right down to a view of the living virus.

INT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

Gibson pushing the trolley down one of the aisles.

And in one corner we super an onscreen graphic -- a little block of data with his name, age, job, and a zeroed clock marked TIME SINCE INFECTION and, under that and pulsing slightly, the words FIRST PHASE: INCUBATION.

The clock starts to count.

OPENING CREDITS

EXT. GRAND HOTEL. DAY.

Establisher of a large Victorian hotel in a regional town.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR. DAY.

Professor Alan Hood strides down a spacious and ornate corridor, late for something. By his side is Rachel Young, his Special Branch protection officer.

Hood is about sixty, and a powerful presence. Physically imposing, loud, determined... like a bull in a rumpled overcoat, he's impossible to overlook or ignore.

Rachel is 20s, trim, dark and businesslike. She's immaculately groomed in basic black. So contained, she's almost scary.

HOOD

If there's any one thing I hate more than conference calls, it's breakfast meetings.

RACHEL

You'll survive it.

HOOD

Turtle piss tea and the Great British excuse for a croissant. Who am I seeing?

RACHEL

Eunice Carter from the DTI.

HOOD

Eunice? I can smell the lavender. (Gets out his phone) Do me a big favour. Give it ten minutes then get me out of there.

He hands her the phone.

RACHEL

What do I say?

HOOD
Urgent call. End of the world.
Whatever you like.

They've reached the door to one of the conference rooms.
Hood pauses before entering.

HOOD
Eunice.

RACHEL
Ten minutes.

HOOD
Make it five.

Hood bites the bullet and goes in alone.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Hood steps in.

HOOD
Eunice Carter?

Eunice Carter looks up from her briefing notes, then rises.

EUNICE CARTER
Professor Hood!

She's about 40, and if Hood has a type, she matches it.
Hood's been taken completely off-guard.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR. DAY.

Rachel's on a straight-backed chair by the door, keeping guard.

There's a beep. She looks at Hood's phone.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

Hood and Eunice in conversation.

EUNICE CARTER
...the question arose as to why
you need a full-time bodyguard.

HOOD
You'd have to ask the Joint
Sciences Committee. They're the
ones who insist on it.

EUNICE CARTER
Are all their science advisors as
hands-on as you?

HOOD

If I can get a problem sorted
before it turns political,
everybody wins.

EUNICE CARTER

What if you can't?

HOOD

Then they won't have far to look
for someone to blame. Are you
staying in town or do you have to
go straight back?

Hood's distracted as Rachel pops her head through. She holds up his phone.

He tries to signal with his eyes for her to go away.

But it's too late... Eunice is aware now, and turns to look at her.

Rachel comes fully into the room.

RACHEL

Sorry. Hood, you got a text.

HOOD

I think it can probably wait.

She places his phone before him.

HOOD

(preparing to dismiss)
Don't tell me. It's the end of
the world.

He looks.

A beat. Then his mood changes in an instant.

The table jumps as he leaps to his feet.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR. DAY.

Hood and Rachel heading through the hotel in the direction of its car park. Hood's just ending a call.

HOOD

(into phone)
Keep it going, Martin. I'll be
there within the hour.

Ends the call.

RACHEL

Who's that?

HOOD

Martin Callan. Monday to Friday he's the local Science in Education Officer. Any sign of a serious outbreak, he steps up and becomes disease control leader for the region.

RACHEL

A bloke from the council!

HOOD

A proper scientist. Fifteen years in viral genetics until they kicked him out for a younger man.

RACHEL

A has-been from the council.
Great.

EXT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

We're in a quiet square, looking up at a city church that would give bad dreams to Nicholas Hawksmoor.

Barriers and warning signs surround it. Various emergency vehicles and unmarked vans wait close by the entrance.

INT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Martin Callan, 50s, leads Hood and Rachel to where a CCTV monitor has been set up. Lots of police and emergency workers, some with one eye the screen, others standing around in deep discussion.

MARTIN CALLAN

I don't need any help. I'm getting everything I need from the blue-light services. It's just my so-called team of local volunteers. Half of them haven't even switched their phones on yet.

HOOD

Well, can't I do something there? I'm not too proud to get my hands dirty.

MARTIN CALLAN

I know what you're really here for, Hood.

HOOD

What would that be?

MARTIN CALLAN
To spy on me for the Joint
Sciences Committee.

HOOD
I'm here to observe and support.
If you want to call that spying,
that's up to you.

Rachel's looking at the monitor.

RACHEL
Who's the victim?

Callan turns to look at the monitor as well and...

INT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Now we're in the crypt. Callan's voice continues over as we
track around, observing the procedure as...

A team of four men and women in biohazard spacesuits are
working on and around the pit under bright lights and
cameras. They've set up drips and stands and are assembling
a lightweight stretcher around a stricken man.

MARTIN CALLAN (V.O.)
His name's Christopher Fisher.
A professional mortician. The
church has to be cleared of human
remains before a developer can
build on the ground. Fisher was
supposed to be last out on
Friday. They think he's been
lying there all weekend.

INT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Back with them at the monitor.

HOOD
I don't much care for the look of
him.

MARTIN CALLAN
I've never seen anything quite
like it. It looks like a pox but
it's behaving like a
haemorrhagic.

RACHEL
Is a haemorrhagic as bad as it
sounds?

MARTIN CALLAN
You bleed under your skin. Then
your skin comes off and then you
die.

On Hood... in no doubt that he's watching the sad spectacle of a man in the last hours of his life.

EXT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

A couple of paramedics wait by a ready ambulance, killing time by chatting to two motorcycle traffic police. There are health service incident vans, a private estate car with a green doctor-on-call roof light, a mobile clinic.

Hood and Martin Callan threading their way through. Rachel close behind.

HOOD

Keep a lid on it until we know what we're dealing with. We don't want a panic about some ancient virus coming out of a plague pit.

MARTIN CALLAN

This isn't a plague pit, and that's just an urban myth. Without a live host or a deep freeze a virus dies.

HOOD

So where has it come from?

MARTIN CALLAN

By the day's end, I should be able to tell you.

HOOD

Well, for now why don't you just say the square's closed because of an incident? We're all used to that.

Callan suddenly spots someone.

A fit, studious-looking young man of about 28/30 has turned up and is talking to police at the barrier. Glasses, tie, small rucksack over one shoulder.

MARTIN CALLAN

Good God. One of my people turned up. Let him through! Luc!

He hurries over. As they watch him go...

RACHEL

Do you think he can hack it?

HOOD

He's got the experience. And nobody works quite as hard as a disappointed man with a late shot at glory. But he'll need all the help he can get.

RACHEL

Hood, you know nothing about disease control.

HOOD

I don't plan to get involved in the medical side.

RACHEL

You can't get involved in any side. What do you think I'm here for?

HOOD

I expect you'll remind me.

RACHEL

My job is to keep you out of harm's way.

HOOD

That doesn't mean you can tell me what to do.

RACHEL

You've always listened when I've had to.

The disease control nurse looks out of the mobile clinic.

NURSE

Who's first?

RACHEL

He is.

EXT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Christopher Fisher is being brought out on a stretcher that's entirely enclosed. Four spacesuited members of the disease team carry him with extreme care.

The clock graphic appears, counting off the time since his exposure.

Paramedics and police outriders stand well back as he's loaded into the waiting ambulance.

INT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Another member of the team is spraying down the grave site where Fisher was discovered.

INT. MOBILE CLINIC. DAY.

Rachel comes in as the disease control nurse unwraps a sterile scraper.

NURSE

I need your upper arm.

Rachel sits as the disease control nurse dips a bifurcated needle in vaccinia.

RACHEL

What are you giving me?

NURSE

It's vaccinia. It'll build up your resistance to a whole range of poxes, but it won't guarantee you protection.

RACHEL

Oh God.

NURSE

Don't be a baby. It isn't even a needle.

RACHEL

I'll look the other way. Just tell me when it's over.

Rachel looks away as the nurse carries out the scratch procedure.

NURSE

Don't let anyone sneeze or bleed on you. Don't touch any bedding or soiled clothing. Keep your unwashed hands away from your mouth and eyes. And don't have sex with anyone who's infected.

RACHEL

Trust me on that one.

She looks at the scratch site and then quickly looks away as she pulls her sleeve to cover it.

NURSE

I don't usually have this trouble with women. It's the big hairy men who take it the worst.

EXT. SINISTER CHURCH YARD. DAY.

Hood's now with Martin Callan. Standing by are Lucien and another newly-arrived lieutenant, Janine, and three or four others. Each is handed a new file.

MARTIN CALLAN

The key to disease control is speed, speed, and more speed. Get it wrong and within six weeks we'll be looking at a national epidemic. Only this time it won't be heaps of burning cattle on the ten o'clock news. It'll be human casualties piling up faster than we can deal with.

HOOD

From a single case?

MARTIN CALLAN

A sentinel case. First of many. How many depends on how well we do our job today. We need to know what infected him. We need to know who he might have infected in his turn. We need to vaccinate all his workmates, move them into quarantine, and put their families on fever watch. That said, I'm expecting five to fifteen of them to die. Okay. Let's trace and chase.

They start to disperse.

Rachel arrives to join them, rolling down her sleeve.

RACHEL

Any word on what it is yet?

HOOD

Not until the lab's done a full PCR sequence on the virus. That's a six-hour job.

MARTIN CALLAN

It's a hybrid pox, I'll bet you the farm. I wrote the book on them.

RACHEL

I need to say something.

HOOD

Rachel...

She raises a hand against interruption.

RACHEL

I'm responsible for Professor Hood's security. I can't let him go into any situation where he'll be in direct personal danger.

MARTIN CALLAN

Fine by me.

He walks away.

HOOD

Well, it's not fine by me. You may not think much of him...

RACHEL

Does it show?

HOOD

But that's all the more reason for me to stay on his case. You want that scene in there repeated on every street in the country? For God's sake, Rachel, get flexible.

EXT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

The outriders fire up their motorcycles and move out, leading the way as...

The ambulance, lights flashing but with no siren, slowly rolls after.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN. DAY.

A police roadblock, sealing off one of the streets leading to the square.

It's opened up to let the convoy through.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN/INT. CAR. DAY.

Looking through the windscreen of some anonymous waiting car, we see the convoy cross our path and hear the car radio:

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

...and Paternoster Square has been closed off by police following an incident...

INT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Shouting and yelling echoes throughout the church nave.

Free-standing sections of wire partition, the kind that you see around building work, have been put together to pen the workforce into the nave. Four very unhappy-looking uniformed police officers in their black biohazard Urban Warrior gear stand well back on guard.

Hood's before the fence, Rachel at his shoulder. She's edgy and unhappy at the simmering sense of threat. All the exhumation workers are in a bunch up against the wire making their protests heard.

Hood's been trying to listen and engage, but now loses his patience.

HOOD

Shut up! Shut up for a minute!

The noise barely abates.

ROCCO

Where does it say you can treat people like this?

HOOD

You're not here because we think some old disease came out of the ground. It's because you've spent the last week cooped up with a man who's about as sick as a human being can get.

JOOLS

They took our phones. What's my mother going to think?

HOOD

This is the start of an outbreak and we need to find the source. Can anybody tell me anything about what might have infected Christopher Fisher?

MAN

What's going to happen to us?

HOOD

Quarantine! What do you think?

More noise.

Rachel registers Ned, not joining in, cruising pensively around the back of the crowd. Keeps an eye on him as Hood speaks.

HOOD

Look. The treatment's voluntary, the quarantine's voluntary.

(MORE)

HOOD (cont'd)
And nobody's going anywhere until
you bloody well volunteer!

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN. DAY.

The outriders and ambulance seen in real traffic in the middle of town, everything crammed in together by a long lens.

As the vehicles turn a corner, we see a hospital sign.

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. NIGHT.

Rooms being cleared. Signs being fixed onto doors.

INT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

One of the police opens a section of the barrier to let the workers emerge.

Sullen but now subdued, the workers file toward the exit doors, armed police standing to either side to make a defined route.

AT THE BACK OF THE NAVE -- with all that happening in the distance, we crane to find Ned hiding in one of the open graves.

INT. HOOD'S CAR/EXT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Hood slides into the car beside Rachel.

HOOD
Once the sentinel case is
confirmed then the national plan
kicks in.

RACHEL
Does that mean the professionals
take over?

HOOD
That so-called 'has-been from the
council' can still make a
difference. A disease outbreak is
like a genie flying out of a
bottle. We get one chance to
catch it by the neck and if we
miss that, we'll spend a long
time being sorry.

Rachel isn't listening. Following her gaze we see --

The workforce in a line, beginning to board a couple of waiting vehicles right outside the church under the close guard of police in their biohazard gear.

HOOD
What's the matter?

RACHEL
I was keeping an eye on one of
them. I don't see him now.

They start getting out of the car to go over.

EXT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

The perimeter, with a couple of armed coppers -- not biosuited, more like the ones you see patrolling airports. They're facing outwards, watching for intruders rather than escapees.

They're unaware of Ned as he flits across the square in the deep background.

EXT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Hood approaches the side of the bus. One of the scary faceless gun-toting coppers starts to warn him back but he raises a reassuring hand.

He only wants to scan the faces at the windows. He moves along, searching. All in the bus look depressed and scared. Meanwhile...

INT. SINISTER CHURCH. DAY.

Rachel at the CCTV monitor, fast-rewinding the tape.

She hunts, finds the spot...

Where, on the monitor, Ned can be seen clambering out of the grave inside the empty church and making a furtive getaway.

RACHEL
Hood!

EXT. PUBLIC PHONE. DAY.

The phone stands in a busy place, people passing all around. Ned's making a call.

NED
Have you seen anything on the news? It doesn't matter, there isn't time to explain. Pack a bag. We've got to take the kids out of school. Because we have to get them away! No, today! I can't tell you! Please! I can't go into it now. I'll explain when I get there.

He hangs up. Takes a moment to cope with whatever threatens to overwhelm him.

Then gathers himself and moves out of shot.

Immediately, a woman moves in and picks up the receiver to put to her ear.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN. DAY.

Long lens shot of Ned passing through a real crowd, open overcoat flapping over his workwear. He's starting to move a bit erratically. He bumps someone as he goes.

He glances back anxiously, hurrying, while the rest of the world mills around him unaware.

And in the corner of the screen appears the counting-clock graphic with his name, job, number of days since infection...

FIRST COMMERCIAL BREAK

EXT. TOWER BLOCK. DAY.

Establisher.

INT. TOWER BLOCK LIFT. DAY.

The lift's ascending. Ned is propped in the corner, eyes shut, conserving his dwindling energies. He's paler and sweatier than when last we saw him.

At the ping when he reaches his floor, he opens his eyes and straightens up. Searches for his keys like a drunk.

INT. TOWER BLOCK LANDING. DAY.

Ned steps out of the lift, fumbling out his keys. But then he looks up to find...

Hood, on the other side of the glass door separating the lifts from the apartments.

Ned takes a quick step to open the door; Hood quickly jams it with his foot.

Their eyes meet through the glass.

HOOD

Ned. It is Ned, isn't it?

NED

You can't stop me. I've done nothing wrong.

HOOD

Listen to what I have to say and then I swear to you that I won't stand in your way.

Ned tries to force the door, but Hood holds it firm.

Ned finds he runs out of strength with surprising speed.

HOOD

Your mate's picked up some kind of a pox virus. It incubates in your body for anything up to a couple of weeks and then you turn infectious. You get ill and you start giving it to other people. You might have it. Don't you see why you can't go home?

NED

I'm fine.

HOOD

You don't look it. What are you trying to do, Ned? Kill them?

NED

No!

HOOD

I know what's driving you. Believe me. I do know. You want to put them first. You want to get them away from the danger. Ned, listen to me. You are the danger.

Ned looks past Hood to see --

On the far side of the landing, Rachel ushering a woman and two small children out of one of the apartments. Rachel's carrying one of their bags for them.

Ned pushes at the door again, Hood holds it firm.

One of the children can be heard saying, "Is dad coming? Why isn't dad coming? There's dad. He's there."

The woman sees Ned, and stops. Rachel urges her on.

HOOD

Ned. I've got to tell you this. Your friend died on his way to the hospital.

Ned looks at Hood, taking this in.

As Rachel's shepherding his family across to the stairwell, one of the children breaks away and runs to the door.

CHILD

Dad!

Slowly, Ned sinks to a crouch. Puts on a brave face for the distressed child on the other side of the glass.

NED

It's all right. Don't you worry.

He looks up at Hood.

Hood releases his hold on the door. The choice is Ned's.

Ned returns his attention to the child.

NED

You go with mummy. I'll be there later.

Rachel arrives and gently prises the child away.

Rising to his feet again, Ned watches his family as they go into the stairwell and are lost to view.

HOOD

I once met one of the volunteers who eradicated smallpox in Africa. She tracked one man through three villages and every one of those villages fell to the disease. Do you know what that man was doing, Ned? He was like you. He was trying to get home.

Behind Ned there's the PING of a returning lift.

The lift doors open, and two faceless biosuited figures step out. One stays by the lift and holds the doors.

It's like two emissaries from the underworld have come to take him down.

Ned looks back. Looks at Hood.

Then turns his face away and complies without resisting. He walks unsteadily to the lift and gets in.

He's looking back at Hood as the doors close on him.

EXT. TOWER BLOCK. DAY.

Angle down into the parking lot, where the woman and children are being helped into a white health services van.

INT. MORTUARY. DAY.

A glimpse of the deceased Christopher Fisher as he's zipped into a body bag by a fully-protected pathologist in thick gloves and a perspex visor.

A wire seal is added.

A biohazard warning sticker put on.

We see his clothing being shovelled into medical waste bags.

INT. FISHER'S FLAT. DAY.

Slowly pulling back from a door, from the other side of which we hear:

HOOD (O.S.)
Why aren't you inside?

LUCIEN (O.S.)
I'm waiting for some coppers with
a lockbusting thingy.

HOOD (O.S.)
I've got one of those.

The door bursts open, kicked by Rachel.

She steps first into the flat. Bare walls, thin curtains, general untidiness. Hood and Lucien follow her in, pulling on non-sterile latex gloves.

HOOD
Are we okay in here?

LUCIEN
Just watch out for blood, scabs
or flakes of skin.

He moves off. As Rachel gloves up, Hood stoops and picks the post from the mat.

HOOD
(glancing at the names)
He lives on his own.

RACHEL
Good job he wasn't home for his
kid's weekend visit.

HOOD
His mate says Fisher had an
evening job to help with the
child support. We need to know
where.

RACHEL

I knew a mortician once. He moonlighted as a masseur.

INT. FISHER'S FLAT. DAY. (INTERCUT)

With Lucien as Hood and Rachel come into the room. Lucien is by Fisher's PC. He's laying out a notebook and uncapping his pen as the machine boots up.

HOOD

Are you going online?

LUCIEN

Not right away.

HOOD

I need to use the phone. (to Rachel) If I was juggling two jobs I'd keep the numbers on the dialler.

RACHEL

Try button four.

HOOD

Why four?

Rachel points at the buttons. One, two, three, four.

RACHEL

Work. Ex-wife. Kid's mobile. Second job. Just a guess.

Hood starts to lift the receiver, but Rachel stops him with a hand on his arm. She takes the receiver from him.

RACHEL

Use the speaker.

She hangs it up, turns on the speakerphone, hits button four.

We hear the other phone being picked up.

INT. FUNERAL HOME. DAY. (INTERCUT)

Intercut with Hood. Few clues as to where Francis Jackson is or what he does.

FRANCIS JACKSON

Francis Jackson.

HOOD

(leaning over the phone)
Mister Jackson. My name's Alan Hood. I'm a scientist. What are you?

FRANCIS JACKSON
I beg your pardon?

HOOD
I'm calling you on Christopher
Fisher's phone. Have you been
employing him?

FRANCIS JACKSON
(guardedly)
Is he saying I have?

HOOD
He died this morning. I need to
see you urgently. Where are you?

INT. HOOD'S CAR. DAY.

Rachel at the wheel, looking out for their destination
while Hood goes through the bills and papers.

HOOD
Not much to show for a life. One
rented flat, one failed marriage,
and the only thing in his diary
is the boy's weekend visits.

RACHEL
This entire other set of people
he was mixing with.

HOOD
Mmm.

RACHEL
They were dead people.

Hood looks up as...

EXT. FUNERAL HOME. DAY.

The car draws up outside.

INT. FUNERAL HOME, CLIENT AREA. DAY.

The tasteful room where people would sit on sofas and look
at coffin catalogues. Francis Jackson, the sober-suited
funeral director, is on the defensive.

FRANCIS JACKSON
All right, I employed him a few
times. He was a qualified
embalmer. Find me one of those in
a hurry.

HOOD

I need details on everyone he worked with and every body he worked on.

FRANCIS JACKSON

I can't give you the records.

HOOD

Do I have to go out and come back in again?

FRANCIS JACKSON

I can't do it! There are rules about that kind of thing.

RACHEL

There are rules about paying tax and National Insurance but you didn't have much trouble with those.

HOOD

Did he handle any corpse that might have been carrying an infectious disease?

FRANCIS JACKSON

What do you think this is?

HOOD

Did he?

FRANCIS JACKSON

No! If you suspect an infection, you don't embalm. Disease can survive in a body for a couple of weeks.

HOOD

Exactly! And you're taking out blood clots, liquid blood, stomach contents... don't try telling me you've got full Level Four containment back there.

Jackson's beginning to worry.

FRANCIS JACKSON

What disease are we talking about?

HOOD

We don't know yet. It's looking like haemorrhagic smallpox.

FRANCIS JACKSON

Shit.

HOOD

A Bargain Bucketload of that for all of us, if this goes nationwide. How've you been feeling?

That does it. Something in Jackson gives way.

There's a repro desk in the corner, all part of the funereal set dressing. He goes around behind it and opens a drawer. As he moves...

FRANCIS JACKSON

My regular embalmer's on maternity leave. I can't afford to pay her and replace her.

HOOD

(moving to the desk)
I'm not the taxman.

FRANCIS JACKSON

(rummaging)
If the Americans don't buy you out, they just wait for the chance to drive you out of business.

Having sorted out some files, he slaps them on the desk.

FRANCIS JACKSON

There's nothing in here to suggest infection. I swear to you we did nothing wrong.

Hood gathers the files and heads out. Rachel hangs on long enough to say...

RACHEL

Close the shop. There's a health team on its way.

She follows Hood out.

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. DAY.

Ned sits on a gurney in an examination cubicle, shoes off, shirt unbuttoned.

Martin Callan stoops slightly to examine him, checking the lymph nodes in his neck.

MARTIN CALLAN

Open your mouth.

Ned complies. Callan tilts his Ned's head for a better view.

MARTIN CALLAN
Are those patches sore?

NED
A bit.

Callan's done.

NED
What's happening with my family?

MARTIN CALLAN
Vaccination first, quarantine if they're high risk.

NED
What do you count as high risk?

MARTIN CALLAN
Close exposure to the infectious stage of the disease. Otherwise it's vaccination and monitoring at home. Don't worry about them.

NED
It's not that easy.

MARTIN CALLAN
It's not the ones we know about that worry me.

He moves away.

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. DAY.

Callan steps out of the cubicle, taking off the gloves. The Disease Control Nurse is waiting with a medical waste bag, into which he drops them and the mask.

MARTIN CALLAN
Skip quarantine. Put him straight into isolation.

A glance back in Ned's direction and then...

A grim shake of his head at the nurse before moving off.

INT. MORTUARY. DAY.

Buzz of conversation. Fisher's body bag on the table at one end. Lucien, Janine and the other disease control volunteers clustered down at the other.

We find Hood and Rachel standing slightly apart, conversing in lowered voices.

HOOD

Did we pay for breakfast or did she?

RACHEL

I never got a chance to check.

Callan comes striding in. He speaks on the move, shrugging out of his coat and picking up a surgical gown.

MARTIN CALLAN

Okay, The good news is that MI5 don't think this is a terror attack. The bad news is that the HSE don't think we can cope at local level and they plan to send an incident control team.

LUCIEN

That's bad news?

MARTIN CALLAN

We need to show them they're wrong. I'm sick of seeing good work ignored while The London School of Tropical Medicine scoops up the glory.

Rachel puts his head close to Hood's and murmurs...

RACHEL

(low)

What's he got against them?

MARTIN CALLAN

Professor Hood.

HOOD

(guilty start)

Doctor Callan.

MARTIN CALLAN

Tell us about the files.

Hood moves to one of the empty mortuary tables and the others gather round. He has the files given to him at the funeral home. Each now has a Polaroid headshot of a dead person clipped to the front.

HOOD

These people were embalmed by Christopher Fisher over the past four weeks.

He deals each file out along the length of the dissection table, like big playing cards.

HOOD

One doctor. One retired civil servant. A maintenance engineer. A postman. Retired nurse. All died without symptoms but any one of them could have been incubating the disease without knowing it.

RACHEL

Are we going to dig them up?

HOOD

There wouldn't be much point. Embalming sterilises a body.

MARTIN CALLAN

Okay. We're looking for the source of this disease. Look for these alarm signals.

He counts them off on his fingers.

MARTIN CALLAN

One. Working with animals. Is this some brand-new hybrid that's been brewed up in a non-human host? Transfer's rare, but it happens. Two, recent foreign travel. Three, contact with anyone who's come into this country from a place you can't pronounce.

He starts handing out the files.

MARTIN CALLAN

Hood, can you take the doctor? He's top of my list.

HOOD

Fine.

Rachel's surprised to find him holding a file out to her.

RACHEL

I stay with H--

Callan's looking at her steadily over the file. A challenge.

MARTIN CALLAN

The maintenance man.

Will she give him an argument? No.

She takes the proffered file.

Callan moves toward the body bag.

MARTIN CALLAN

Now I need to get some biopsy material from the late Mister Fisher. So if you don't plan to scrub up, don't stay.

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. DAY.

Helped by the masked and gowned nurse, Ned is being transferred onto a trolley to be moved from the cubicle. She lowers him back onto the pillow. His strength's going.

He rests there for a moment, but then sees clear plastic being zipped up around him.

Wider -- we see that he's on a scary-looking containment unit with its own air supply.

INT. MOBILE CLINIC. DAY.

Or it could be a corner grabbed from any of our other locations. Just somewhere for Lucien to be seen on the phone, tapping his pen on his file as he waits for someone to pick up at the other end.

LUCIEN

Hello? My name is Doctor Lucien Fournier, I'm sorry to be calling you but I need to speak to someone about the late Mister Philip Levene...

EXT. EDWARDIAN HOUSE. DAY.

There's something faintly spooky about the tall and gloomy house. Basically, it's a vicarage. Hood rings the doorbell and waits.

EXT. FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

Establisher. A big warehouse on a trading estate bearing the name ACE COLD STORAGE.

INT. FREEZER PLANT OFFICE. DAY.

Close on a computer screen -- someone's playing online poker.

Once again, the someone is Ellis Gibson.

He loses the hand. Shows little or no emotion.

RACHEL

Do you ever win?

He's startled by the sound of her voice right behind him. Swings around in his swivel chair. Belatedly remembers to minimise the screen.

ELLIS GIBSON

I have my moments. Who let you in?

She holds up ID.

RACHEL

It's about your maintenance man.

INT. FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

We're in a huge refrigerated warehouse with wide aisles stacked high with pallets of perishable goods, mostly fish and seafoods.

Ellis Gibson leads the way down the aisle with Rachel following. Both have donned bulky subzero work jackets over their regular clothing. Rachel's almost lost in hers.

ELLIS GIBSON

We keep it a constant twenty-five below. You rent space by the pallet and we'll store anything for you. See that stack over there?

Rachel looks.

ELLIS GIBSON

That's ice from the south pole.

RACHEL

You're winding me up.

ELLIS GIBSON

Drill samples. For the University Antarctic Survey. Ice cores and ice cream. We do it all.

INT. FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

We see empty shelves with a ladder, a gantry, some disassembled machinery, plastic tape cordoning the whole area off.

Rachel's looking up and giving the area a close inspection.

ELLIS GIBSON

Jack was fixing the refrigeration unit when he fell. It was his third time up there this month and I think he must have got a bit blase. Should have worn the safety harness, but he didn't.

(MORE)

ELLIS GIBSON (cont'd)
 Broke his neck, died on the spot.
 Very sad.

As Gibson's speaking, a teenaged Chinese worker appears around a corner carrying a box. She stops in her tracks and looks uncertain.

RACHEL
 Did he ever travel abroad?

When Gibson doesn't reply, she glances at him...

Just in time to see him signal to the Chinese worker to make herself scarce. As the worker dodges back, Gibson returns his attention to Rachel...

Who's pretending she saw nothing.

ELLIS GIBSON
 Abroad as in foreign holidays?
 Jack thought Mablethorpe was a
 bit racy.

EXT. FREEZER PLANT. DAY. (INTERCUT)

There's a truck backed into the loading bay.

We find Rachel alone in the car, across from the plant and watching. She's on her phone.

RACHEL
 I think I might have something.
 What have you got?

EXT. EDWARDIAN HOUSE. DAY. (INTERCUT)

Hood is leaving the house.

HOOD
 My doctor was a doctor of
 divinity. Nothing to ring any
 alarm bells.

EXT. FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

As Rachel speaks, she's observing activity around the loading bays. More of the Chinese workforce. Very Chinese, very young.

RACHEL
 How do you like the sound of
 migrant workers? Straight off the
 boat?

EXT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

Led by a couple of police cars with their roof bars flashing, a ragtag convoy of vehicles rolls up in front of the cold storage plant. Vans, trucks, a busload of people, the mobile vaccination unit.

INT. FREEZER PLANT OFFICE CORRIDOR. DAY.

Martin Callan strides down the corridor towards Ellis Gibson's office.

Behind him, efficient-looking police and medical people peel off into each of the rooms along the way and there's a growing buzz from each.

Ellis Gibson steps out into the corridor.

MARTIN CALLAN

Are you the owner?

ELLIS GIBSON

Assistant manager. I've got a business to run, here. What's going on?

MARTIN CALLAN

Get your staff together, son. Work's over for today.

INT. FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

Down in the warehouse section, the mostly Chinese workers in their subzero gear are loading stuff and pushing trolleys when they hear...

MEGAPHONE COPPER

Ladies and gentlemen, please...
Stop whatever you're doing and
come this way.

It's a special-unit uniformed man at the end of the aisle, one held in the air to get their attention, the other holding a megaphone.

They look around uncertainly.

Special Unit coppers have them covered from all directions. Those workers who don't understand the words are getting the message as the coppers move in, ushering them forward.

We focus on one of them, Danny, mid-20s, as everything starts to move around him. He's looking apprehensive and trying not to show it too much.

EXT. FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

The Chinese labour force have been herded together and clearly haven't a clue what's going on. They're docile and compliant.

Lucien is in amongst them with a clipboard, trying to communicate.

Rachel watches from a distance, staying out of it but paying close attention to what's going on.

It's noticeable that when Lucien speaks to the girl she saw before, she glances to one particular individual -- Danny -- and asks him something. He shrugs and looks away.

Closer on Rachel. Looking right at Danny now.

EXT. PROCESSING TENT. DAY.

Another part of the area. Ordered chaos. Folding tables set out for form-filling.

Ellis Gibson is studying some papers that the Disease Control Nurse just gave him.

NURSE

On the top page list all your immediate family, friends, contacts, places you regularly spend time. Then sign the consent for vaccination.

ELLIS GIBSON

I hate needles.

NURSE

It's not strictly a needle. It's a scratch.

ELLIS GIBSON

What if I still say no?

NURSE

Then you'll have to spend some time in our quarantine unit.

She moves on to the next.

EXT. FREEZER PLANT, BY PROCESSING TENT. DAY.

Hood and Callan cross paths and stop.

HOOD

Martin, they've been looking for you. The lab result came through.

MARTIN CALLAN

And?

HOOD

You were right. It's a hybrid form of Variola Major.

INT. PROCESSING TENT. DAY.

On Gibson at his table. He looks up sharply. He can hear everything that's being said on the other side of the canvas.

EXT. FREEZER PLANT, BY PROCESSING TENT. DAY.

The conversation continuing as before.

MARTIN CALLAN

Yes! The smallpox virus! What have I been saying?

HOOD

We're supposed to have eradicated smallpox.

MARTIN CALLAN

If it's a natural hybrid then maybe it's been human to animal and back again.

HOOD

Like bird flu?

MARTIN CALLAN

I don't know. What's the other component? Did they say?

HOOD

The genome includes sequences from the Tanapox virus. But it's like junk DNA. It's not coding for anything.

MARTIN CALLAN

Tanapox.

Something changes in this moment. But nothing that causes immediate suspicion.

HOOD

Mean something?

MARTIN CALLAN

Interesting.

HOOD

Could it make it do that human-to-animal thing?

MARTIN CALLAN

Who knows?

He moves on. Pensiveness.

INT. PROCESSING TENT. DAY.

On Gibson at his table. He's been able to hear everything said on the other side of the canvas.

NURSE

Finished?

She's moved in to stand over him. The sound of her voice snaps him back to reality.

As he hurriedly scribbles the last few lines, something's clearly playing on Gibson's mind.

EXT. COMMERCIAL FREEZER PLANT. DAY.

With Lucien and the work gang. He's singled out one young woman and is trying to get her to understand that he needs names and residential details.

LUCIEN

(struggling)

Your address. Where you live.
Where you're living. Where you
all sleep. Where do you go?

Rachel moves in beside him.

RACHEL

Can I have a go?

LUCIEN

(finally giving up)

Be my guest. I'm calling for a
translator.

He shoves his way out through the crowd.

RACHEL

Come on, no-one's in trouble.
Somebody speak to me. You. What's
your name?

One of the workers casts the merest flicker of the eyes in the direction of Danny.

Danny makes the most fractional negative gesture. Rachel isn't meant to see it.

But she does. She doesn't let on.

RACHEL

OK, so nobody speaks English. I don't believe it, but if that's the way you want to play it, fine. There's bird muck on your coat.

This last remark is thrown away in Danny's direction.

Before he realises what he's doing, he's looking down at himself to check.

When he raises his head, Rachel's looking at him.

RACHEL

Are you the gangmaster?

DANNY

(local accent)

No, I'm not.

RACHEL

What, then?

DANNY

I just speak the language.

She indicates the activity around them.

RACHEL

Do you understand what all this activity's for?

DANNY

Something to do with Jack's accident?

RACHEL

Your maintenance man had an infection when he died. It was a very serious infection.

DANNY

I'm Chinese. I'm not twelve.

RACHEL

All right, smartarse, we think it was some kind of an airborne pox. We need to get everyone here protected and work out who it came from. What's your name?

DANNY

Danny.

RACHEL

Come on, Danny, ask them for me.
Who knows anything? I am serious,
it's life or death.

She scans their faces as Danny does a digest version in Cantonese.

A young girl speaks up.

Rachel looks to Danny for a translation.

DANNY

Her brother stayed at the hostel
today because he was too ill to
work.

Uh-oh.

SECOND COMMERCIAL BREAK

EXT. HOSTEL. DAY.

Hood's car pulls up outside.

This place calls itself a hotel but it's basically dirt-cheap private accommodation.

Hood, Rachel and Danny leave the car on the street and head in.

INT. HOSTEL. DAY.

Danny leads the way through, checking from room to room. The ones we glimpse have bunk beds and sleep at least six people each, with more mattresses on the floor.

HOOD

Don't flap if it looks nasty. I
can have a team here in two
minutes.

DANNY

Why not now?

RACHEL

It's called discreet handling,
Danny. We don't want to see the
lid blown off without a very good
reason.

The move to another part.

INT. HOSTEL. DAY.

Another part, somewhere upstairs.

Danny calling out in Cantonese. Then --

DANNY

I'm expecting some credit for this.

HOOD

You waited long enough to grow a conscience.

DANNY

I never said I was pure.

Hood turns his head at a sound, and sees...

A young Chinese man scampering for the stairs.

Rachel instantly shoves past the others and is on his trail.

HOOD

Did you tell him to run?

Danny holds up his hands. He genuinely didn't.

INT/EXT. HOSTEL. DAY.

With Rachel, heading down the stairs.

Sees someone struggling with bags or shopping in the front doorway and so turns and heads for the back of the building.

Through the empty kitchens and out into the yard.

Where to go?

Then she hears a braking car and the sound of a horn, and heads in that direction.

INT. HOSTEL. DAY.

Hood descending the same stairs, phone in hand as he calls in the troops.

HOOD

He's running and she's on him.

EXT. BACK STREETS. DAY.

The young Chinese man running. He's in sweatpants, trainers, and an unbuttoned shirt thrown over a vest. Vest and hair are sweaty. He may be fast, but he does look as if he's leapt from a sickbed and is burning pure terror.

Rachel in hot pursuit, scattering people from the pavement.

This is a run-down part of town. Any building that isn't shuttered is a discount shop.

The young man disappears around a corner.

EXT. BACK STREETS. DAY.

In another part of the area, a police car with lights and siren pushes through the traffic with an unmarked truck that's a bit like a Green Goddess following right behind.

EXT. BACK STREETS. DAY.

The young man reacts to the sirens as he runs.

Dodges through people who just stand there like pillocks, and who are still standing there when Rachel comes through just moments after.

The young man hops over a wall or a stairway, some shortcut that increases his lead by a few seconds.

Without stopping, he looks back to see that Rachel's having to take the longer way. Looks like he might just get away with this...

But as he turns forward again...

BANG! He's hit by the light-coloured car that he failed to see coming.

He rolls over the bonnet and hits the ground.

Rachel's on the final stretch to reach him now.

He's down but not yet out. He rolls over and struggles to his feet, tries to run on.

But he's bleeding and his legs are like rubber. He manages to keep going, but he's running into the ground.

Rachel's gaining on him. In a few strides she's reached him.

She doesn't tackle him, but matches his pace and reaches out to catch him by the shoulders.

He hardly knows what's happening as she guides his staggering and stops him from crashing out completely.

In a few increasingly wild and erratic strides, he's brought safely to the ground without further damage.

Plonk. He subsides in a heap.

As he lies there, gasping and delirious, Rachel keeps her hold on him and looks around.

We see a trail of blood tracing his progress on the ground.

We see a smeared bloody handprint on the light-coloured car.

We see Rachel, grasping the serious import of this. She looks down, and sees that his blood's on her as well.

A few people are hovering anxiously, maybe wanting to help, probably just wanting to see.

RACHEL

Move back! Don't try to help!
Move right back! Don't come any
closer!

The police car and the unmarked truck swing into sight around a corner.

On Rachel as she stays there in place, her controlling grip on the panting young man now an equally firm touch of reassurance... We're aware of the emergency vehicles pulling in on either side, boxing her in.

RACHEL

It's okay. You're going to be all
right.

She looks up and around -- people are appearing at windows, staring, pointing, discussing.

The police from the patrol car are marshalling the passersby, one to each side of the street, herding them together and warning them not to leave the area.

The paramedics who arrive to help her and the fallen man are in the cool-looking biohazard gear. It's a shocking sight on a public street.

Another person in biohazard gear, wearing a backpack tank and carrying a sprayer, begins spraying along the blood trail back in the direction of the accident.

Now Hood arrives. Sees Rachel and starts toward her...

But one of the policemen blocks his way.

The young man's on the stretcher now. The paramedics move him away.

And now we see that Rachel, shocked, blood-spattered and unsteady, is being turned and marshalled away by two of the emergency team. She's holding her hands out as if she daren't touch anything.

She looks back, and meets Hood's eyes. She looks helpless and scared.

Hood has to watch her go. There's nothing he can do.

More approaching sirens can be heard.

The police are hastily running plastic tape across the street.

INT. DECONTAMINATION SHOWER. DAY.

Rachel under a pounding shower, wincing at the powerful smell of the antiseptic soap she's having to lather up with.

Her movements are tentative, halting. At the moment she seems unusually vulnerable and childlike.

EXT. BACK STREETS. DAY.

The cleanup going on in the background. Hood keeping up with Callan as Callan goes about stuff.

MARTIN CALLAN

I'm sorry, Hood. It's got to be quarantine.

HOOD

After what she just did for you?

MARTIN CALLAN

It's not for punishment, it's prevention. His blood was all over everywhere. How hot do you think that makes her? I'm sorry.

HOOD

She'll be in with all the high-risk people.

Callan stops, looks him in the eye. Speaks bluntly.

MARTIN CALLAN

Hood. She's one of them now.

That stops Hood in his tracks. Callan leaves it to sink in and moves to a waiting car.

INT. DECONTAMINATION SHOWER. DAY.

Rachel's out of the shower now, drying off.

She catches sight of herself in the mirror looking pale, scared, and a bit distorted by the imperfect glass.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. NIGHT.

We're inside Ned's isolation tent, looking down on him. He's deteriorated noticeably.

Sallow, sweating, the beginnings of a rash. Various monitors display his life signs.

Our disease clock graphic appears onscreen, rattling through the seconds.

Close on his eyes as he looks down the tent.

A nurse is carrying out some procedure -- replacing a drip or a dressing -- her outline a blur through the plastic, her arms thrust into gloves fixed in the sidewall of the tent.

He tries to focus on her.

His hand starts moving toward hers.

And now, seen through the plastic, his wife has taken the place of the nurse. She becomes aware of his attention. Looks down at him. Smiles warmly.

His hand reaches the nurse's... and grips it through the glove.

The nurse -- the real nurse, again -- freezes in terror.

Then carefully uses her other gloved hand to disengage Ned's from her own.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDORS. NIGHT.

We see Martin Callan alone, entering the building, briefcase/laptop in one hand and phone in the other.

MARTIN CALLAN

(into phone)

I'm coming through the door now.
I'll be there in a couple of
minutes.

He ends the call.

We stay on him, watching him moving through people, flashing a momentary smile of recognition at someone, but mostly alone.

Something's troubling him. Something's troubling him a lot. And it's something he's keeping to himself.

As he reaches the restricted signs and security guard on the area set aside for isolation...

ELLIS GIBSON

Mister Callan?

Gibson's been waiting, in some spot tucked out of sight. Callan looks at him blankly.

ELLIS GIBSON
I'm Ellis Gibson from the freezer
plant. We've something to
discuss.

EXT. HOSTEL. NIGHT.

The car stands where last we saw it, before the chase. But it's dark now, the streets electric.

There's a parking ticket on the windscreen. Hood unpeels it, and is uncertain what to do with it for a moment.

Then he just chucks it into the car and gets in after.

INT. HOOD'S CAR. NIGHT.

Hood behind the wheel, orienting himself and feeling uncomfortable.

His first action switches on the windscreen wipers, which he doesn't want. His attempt to turn them off triggers something else altogether.

Then there's a tap at his window. He looks, and is surprised to see Lucien looking in.

Hood finds the electric window control, and lowers it.

LUCIEN
Professor Hood. Can I talk to
you? I have a problem.

HOOD
You'd better take it to Doctor
Callan.

LUCIEN
My problem's with Doctor Callan.

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. NIGHT.

We're looking through an observation window into the unit where...

The young Chinese man, in a hospital gown and with his wounds stitched and dressed, is arguing vigorously with a medical team. He looks a bit damaged, but hardly ill.

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. NIGHT.

Another part of the unit. An empty office that's been turned over for their use. It's in darkness apart from a single desk lamp and what spills in from the doorway.

Hood enters, followed by Lucien.

Callan's behind the desk, in the far corner. He's leaning back in the chair, his face in shadow. He's been working some figures on a piece of paper. Now he's just tapping the paper with the pencil. There's a palpable tension in his attitude.

Hood stands before him.

HOOD

Martin. Lucien says that boy isn't showing a single pox symptom.

MARTIN CALLAN

Does he.

HOOD

You already know this. Doesn't it worry you?

MARTIN CALLAN

No.

HOOD

If he doesn't have the disease and he's never had the disease, how can you go on saying he's the source who gave it to the others?

Callan sits upright. Tosses his pencil onto the desk.

MARTIN CALLAN

Symptoms aren't everything. Who's the virologist here?

HOOD

Martin...

MARTIN CALLAN

Don't interfere, Hood. I know what I'm doing.

HOOD

Martin, get this wrong and today's entire scenario will keep on repeating itself until it runs out of control.

MARTIN CALLAN

And if it doesn't? If it stops right here tonight? Won't that be proof enough for you? So how about you just shut up and let me do what I do?

Hood senses the undercurrents to his touchiness.

HOOD
What's going on?

Callan gets to his feet.

MARTIN CALLAN
I'm tired, I'm going home...
here's what's going to happen.
The Chinese kid gets his shots,
he goes into quarantine. The
disease stops, end of story, no
need for further questions. All
right?

As he moves around the desk he scoops up the sheet of calculations and crumples it into a ball which he stuffs in his pocket.

HOOD
And if you're sending him in with
all the high-risk people when he
doesn't need to be there?

MARTIN CALLAN
We all take our chances.

HOOD
Some more than most.

MARTIN CALLAN
This wouldn't have anything to do
with keeping your protection
officer out of quarantine, would
it?

Ouch. A hit.

Callan brushes past them both and heads out.

Hood turns to Lucien.

HOOD
How long for the blood tests?

LUCIEN
Couple of hours. The strain's
already been identified. New
cases just need visual
confirmation.

HOOD
Any way we can do that quicker?

EXT. QUARANTINE BUILDING. NIGHT.

Looks like a disused hospital or asylum. It has a big porticoed entrance with bright lights under it.

The quarantine bus with police escort is by the entrance and all the Chinese kids are disembarking.

In amongst them, in a borrowed tracksuit, is Rachel. She has a few permitted possessions in a carrier bag.

Janine in a SARS-style paper mask is talking to Danny.

JANINE

Tell them that once they've been processed I'll take them through into the quarantine area.

As Danny begins to translate, we see Rachel looking withdrawn and scared.

THIRD COMMERCIAL BREAK

EXT. CITY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. NIGHT.

The buildings are dark hulking shapes. What we mainly see is the floodlit sign.

INT. CITY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS FOYER. NIGHT.

Lucien lets them into the building with a key, ushering Hood ahead of him.

LUCIEN

In real life I do two days a week here on my PhD.

They pass the sign reading MICROBIOLOGY.

INT. MICROSCOPY SUITE. NIGHT.

Close on Lucien's hand holding a medical phial of dark blood.

LUCIEN

I'm stuffed if Callan finds I took a level four pathogen into an unlicensed lab.

HOOD

If that's what we're doing.

INT. MICROSCOPY SUITE. NIGHT.

And now we're swimming through an alien sea of weird shapes and strange life forms... The human bloodstream, magnified a zillion times in pin-sharp three-dimensional detail.

Hood and Lucien watching in the subdued lighting, their faces mostly lit by the screen.

LUCIEN

Variola Major's a big virus.
Shape like a brick, surface like
a ball of wool. Once seen, never
forgotten.

HOOD

Ever seen one?

LUCIEN

Nope.

Hood gives him a narrow sideways look. Both know it's a
wind-up.

LUCIEN

Back in Callan's day they used to
mix their own pox hybrids in the
lab.

HOOD

How do you make a hybrid without
genetic engineering?

LUCIEN

Infect one cell with two
different strains and then
culture the offspring. That's how
they did things in the old
building. A real stick-and-bucket
job.

HOOD

I'm not seeing anything.

LUCIEN

There's nothing there to see. The
boy doesn't have it.

HOOD

He was too ill to work.

LUCIEN

Chinese people have low levels of
dehydrogenase. They don't process
alcohol well. From the way his
red cells stick together I'd say
that's a hangover.

INT. HOSPITAL ISOLATION UNIT. NIGHT.

Back with the stitched-up Chinese youth, his energy still
undiminished -- we're seeing him through the glass and it's
like he's a panther in his enclosure, striding up and down
and complaining at the top of his voice while the two staff
wait for him to burn out.

He sits heavily on the examination couch and puts his head in his hands.

Then jumps up and is off again.

INT. QUARANTINE BUILDING. NIGHT.

An old dining hall with lots of cheap tables set out. The Chinese kids are seated and Janine moves among them, collecting the forms they've been filling in. She speaks loudly as if they can all understand her but Danny translates for her as she goes, one sentence at a time.

JANINE

When you've all been photographed you will pass through into the quarantine area. You will be safe there and you will be looked after. Your embassy will be contacted and so will your families.

Rachel sits at a table on her own.

JANINE

We ask you not to leave the quarantine floor until authorised by a senior member of our team. Anyone who falls ill will be removed to isolation. This is a measure for public safety as well as your own.

All heads turn at a disturbance.

Hood's coming in despite the protests of a security person on his heels.

JANINE

Professor Hood, you shouldn't be here.

HOOD

Who's that?

Janine hooks her mask down for a moment.

JANINE

It's me. Janine.

HOOD

I need Rachel.

JANINE

She can't leave.

HOOD

She's had no more exposure than I have. The Chinese boy doesn't have the disease.

Danny immediately relays this to the others and they start to buzz.

On Rachel -- absorbing the news.

Hood realises his mistake as the buzz increases in volume.

HOOD

Wait, wait, wait. He's all right but we still don't have a fix on where it came from.

He waits for Danny to translate, then goes on.

HOOD

It's very serious, it's called Variola Major and it's the virus that causes smallpox.

Danny stops translating and looks at Hood.

DANNY

Is that what Variola means?

INT. GIBSON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

A small, ordinary kitchen with the units around the walls and a table in the middle. With loud All Right Now-style rock music on the radio, Ellis Gibson is uncapping a tin of Jeyes fluid.

On the table before him, a black bin liner has been slit down the sides and opened out.

In the middle of it sits a biscuit tin with a magic marker/gaffer tape label on its lid and wording that includes VARIOLA MAJOR.

Into the music and moving along in time with it, even joining in for the odd line, Gibson liberally sprinkles the disinfectant over and around the tin and then wraps the plastic over it.

Rrrrrrip! He pulls out a long strip of the parcel tape.

Starts wrapping it around the bundled-up plastic to make an odd-looking bondage parcel.

We super his disease clock.

EXT. FREEZER PLANT. NIGHT.

The entrances are sealed with crisscrossed warning tape and affixed with official-looking closure notices and biohazard stickers.

The car stands outside in the floodlit yard.

INT. FREEZER PLANT. NIGHT.

The main freezer warehouse has a dead and deserted feel. Some of the lighting's been shut down.

Danny leads Hood and Rachel. Overcoats. Gloves. All have flashlights.

DANNY

I notice all the workers got quarantine while the management only got fever watch.

HOOD

That was when we thought it came from the shop floor. What did you think Variola was, anyway?

DANNY

Going by the sound of it, something you'd spread on a butty or get a tune out of. It was one of these.

They've stopped at shelving that runs right up to the ceiling, with pallets full of crates and boxes at every level. Danny moves away from them as he shines his light from one label to another, searching.

HOOD

To answer your question, they refused him a fellowship.

RACHEL

(blank)
What?

HOOD

The London School of Tropical Medicine. Refused Martin Callan a fellowship. (Looks at her)
Welcome back.

RACHEL

I have never been so scared of anything in my entire life.

Hood's noticed something.

He moves forward to a crate on a lower pallet.

RACHEL

I've seen those. They're ice cores. From the pole.

Hood shines his flashlight along the lower edge where...

Icicles hang.

HOOD

The point of an ice core is to show climate change through differences in the layers. It's no use to anyone if it's been melted and refrozen.

Hood looks toward Danny for explanation.

HOOD

Danny --

DANNY

I've found it.

Danny's got his beam trained on a crate, with a label reading VARIOLA MAJOR and a string of numbers with a September 1978 date. Hood and Rachel move to join him.

DANNY

I'm not touching it.

HOOD

Please don't. Where did all these crates come from?

RACHEL

The University.

DANNY

Overspill storage. It's been knocking around the warehouse for twenty years or more.

Hood weighs up the crate. The lid looks loose.

He moves it aside, leans forward to shine his flashlight in.

RACHEL

If anything leaps up and wraps itself around your face, you're on your own.

HOOD

This is empty. Apart from something else that's leaked.

Hood's beam reflects off some frozen pinkish crystals pooled in the corner of the crate.

HOOD
As long as the virus stayed
frozen, it was safe.

He turns to Danny.

HOOD
Are you in the habit of thawing
out and refreezing the goods you
store?

DANNY
That's a sacking offence.

Hood waits.

HOOD
Ellis Gibson did it.

EXT. GIBSON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

A modest place on a decent council estate. The door is
opened by Sheila, Gibson's partner.

She's in her work clothes. Something that involves an
overall with her name on a badge, like Marks and Spencers.

SHEILA
Yes?

Hood's on the doorstep. Rachel stands by the car, watching
for anyone approaching.

HOOD
I'm looking for the Ellis Gibson
who works at the cold storage
plant. Is he home?

SHEILA
No. But you want to see the mess
he's left me.

HOOD
Actually, I do.

She doesn't understand.

HOOD
Want to see it.

INT. GIBSON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Hood comes into the kitchen. There on the table --
scissors, the remains of cut-up bin liners, the roll of
parcel tape, the emptied tin of Jeyes fluid. Like a weird
Blue Peter project.

SHEILA

I just got in from work. Can you tell me what's going on?

HOOD

Don't touch anything.

She senses his seriousness.

HOOD

Did Ellis call you today?

SHEILA

No.

HOOD

I'll have to bring in disease control. I don't want to panic you, but this is a hot zone and you're a contact. You'll need to be vaccinated and monitored.

SHEILA

Disease control? Who's he been screwing now?

HOOD

Not that kind of pox.

SHEILA

(ignoring that)
The bastard!

The phone rings.

HOOD

If that's him, don't tell him we're here. Try to find out where he is.

As she goes to answer it, Rachel joins Hood.

RACHEL

What's been going on?

HOOD

At a rough guess... a spot of Do-it-Yourself virus containment. Bin liners, parcel tape and disinfectant. Ye gods.

Sheila reappears in the doorway. Phone in hand. Covering the mouthpiece.

SHEILA

It's somebody called Martin Callan. Asking for Ellis. What should I say?

Hood takes the phone.

Makes an interrogative sound that could be anyone.

HOOD

Mmm?

MARTIN CALLAN

I can't get you the money
tonight. You have to give me more
time than this.

HOOD

(calmly)

Where are you, Martin?

EXT. TRADING ESTATE CAR PARK. NIGHT.

The car park's lit, but the stores are closed and it's
almost empty of cars.

Martin Callan's car stands with its door open and interior
light on. Callan sits on a low wall beside it.

Hood's car draws in and Hood gets out.

He looks down at the despondent Callan.

HOOD

Tigger's lost his bounce.

Callan looks up.

MARTIN CALLAN

He wants fifteen thousand pounds.

HOOD

Why from you?

MARTIN CALLAN

Because it's my name on the lid
of the biscuit tin.

HOOD

How come one of your old home-
made hybrids turns up in a
commercial freezer plant?

MARTIN CALLAN

It must have got swept in with
everything else when they closed
the old department.

HOOD

It shouldn't even be in
existence! How long is it since
smallpox was driven off the face
of the planet?

MARTIN CALLAN
Twenty-five years.

HOOD
And since that time the only places allowed to keep samples have been the two secure vaults in Atlanta and Novosibirsk. Why didn't you destroy yours like you were ordered to?

MARTIN CALLAN
I believed that I had.

HOOD
You believed.

MARTIN CALLAN
Don't get all holier-than-thou with me, Hood. You know what it's like in a working lab. I was destroying stuff as we turned it up.

HOOD
But you signed off to say that you'd destroyed it all.

MARTIN CALLAN
I assumed I had!

HOOD
Well, assuming wasn't good enough!

MARTIN CALLAN
And you'd have me believe that you've always treated every piece of hazardous material like the bones of Christ. If you're that uptight about it, you can't do the job.

HOOD
We've all cut the odd corner but for crying out loud, Martin!

MARTIN CALLAN
Well I never planned for it to end up getting out, did I?

HOOD
That was your mistake then. The way you've tried to cover it up today is going to be a lot harder to forgive.

Callan looks down at the mobile in his hand.

MARTIN CALLAN

He was going to call me at nine.
I don't know what's happened to
him.

INT. TRAM. NIGHT.

We're looking at the odd package, wound tight with
crisscrossed parcel tape.

It's on Ellis Gibson's knees.

Gibson's passed out in his seat.

TRAM PERSON

Hey. Pal.

He prods Gibson's shoulder, and Gibson abruptly stirs.

TRAM PERSON

Are you ill? Do you need an
ambulance?

Gibson takes in his surroundings. The tram's stopped and
everyone's cleared a space around him. All the other
passengers are staring. The tram person's being pretty
brusque.

TRAM PERSON

Come on. You have to get off.

Gibson looks around some more.

TRAM PERSON

Come on. Sir.

He isn't about to be argued with. Ellis is sallow,
sweating. He's looking like a drunk or a junkie.

The tram person moves back as Gibson lurches to his feet.

He makes his way down the tram and out of the doors.

We linger on one of the watching tram passengers, a
complete stranger, and...

We super a disease clock for this person, starting right
now from zero.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN. NIGHT. (INTERCUT)

Gibson hits the pavement and the doors close behind him.
The package is under his arm. Moments later, the tram moves
on.

He looks around him. Night life, bars, people. One of the
busiest parts of town at this time in the evening.

Somewhere a clock chimes the half-hour.

ELLIS GIBSON

Shit.

Looks at his watch, fumbles out his phone.

EXT. TRADING ESTATE CAR PARK. NIGHT. (INTERCUT)

Hood and Rachel standing slightly apart from Callan, who sits there looking dismally at the phone in his hand.

HOOD

Fifteen thousand's a strange amount.

RACHEL

I'll bet you it's a gambling debt.

HOOD

Any particular reason for thinking so?

RACHEL

I stood at the back of his office and watched him lose fifty quid in fifteen seconds.

Both look as Callan's phone rings.

Callan rises, Hood moves in to eavesdrop.

ELLIS GIBSON

Have you got my finder's fee yet?

Hood nods, and Callan picks up the cue.

MARTIN CALLAN

I've got it. What do I do with it?

ELLIS GIBSON

Bring it to me, you moron! What do you think?

MARTIN CALLAN

There's no call for that. Where will you be?

ELLIS GIBSON

The bus station. Where an accident would be a very bad thing. So don't even think of messing me about.

MARTIN CALLAN
 (real pain)
 For God's sake. You have no idea.

ELLIS GIBSON
 I'll leave the ideas to you
 brainy types. Just get here with
 the money.

Callan's about to argue further but Hood nods emphatically.

MARTIN CALLAN
 I'll do my best.

ELLIS GIBSON
 You do.

EXT. STREETS OF TOWN. NIGHT.

Gibson ends the call...

And heads unsteadily across the street toward the National
 Express-style bus station.

FOURTH COMMERCIAL BREAK

EXT. BUS STATION. NIGHT.

Establisher.

INT. BUS STATION CONCOURSE. NIGHT.

Gibson is sitting in the waiting area.

He's taking a drink as Hood sits across from him.

HOOD
 Steadying your nerves?

ELLIS GIBSON
 I don't get nerves. Who are you?

HOOD
 I was at the freezer plant today.
 Don't you remember me?

ELLIS GIBSON
 Where's Callan?

HOOD
 I wanted to get a closer look at
 you.

ELLIS GIBSON
 Well, here I am.

HOOD

Forget about the money, Ellis.
Forget about your gambling debts.
They're not your biggest worry.

Gibson moves the package to his lap and wraps his arms across it.

ELLIS GIBSON

Go on, then. Make a grab for it.

Neither moves.

ELLIS GIBSON

I didn't think so.

Behind Gibson, unseen by him, Rachel is manoeuvring herself quietly into position.

HOOD

Too right, Ellis. You're infected and you're contagious, and I don't want to get near you.

ELLIS GIBSON

Uh-uh. I'm protected. Read your own fact sheet.

HOOD

The one that goes, "Most people experience normal, typically mild reactions to the vaccine, which indicate that it is beginning to work"?

ELLIS GIBSON

That's the one.

HOOD

Not in your case. Vaccine only knocks down the disease in the first couple of days. You're way out of time. That's not a vaccine reaction you're getting, Ellis. It's the real deal. Did you move the crate back after Jack died?

Rachel's getting closer. Gibson casts a frustrated look to the side and she freezes. But he doesn't see her.

ELLIS GIBSON

If you don't pay me the money I can line up someone else who will.

HOOD

There's no market for what you've got to offer.

ELLIS GIBSON

That's not what it says on the internet.

HOOD

What will you do? Put it on eBay? Ellis, I'm more worried about you. If you infect ten people. And those ten people vanish into the crowd and go on to infect ten more. And so on. And so on. What does that make you? Ellis? Are you hearing any of this?

Gibson is distracted by something from outside the glass of the concourse... a flash from a camera.

He peers at the sight beyond the glass.

There's a crowd of people out there being held back by bus station security guards. All are watching. At least one person's filming with a phone.

ELLIS GIBSON

What's going on?

Now he spots Rachel and abruptly rises to his feet.

HOOD

Rachel, forget it, stay back!

ELLIS GIBSON

Is this what you want? Eh?

Gibson thrusts the package toward her and she reacts like it's nuclear, scrambling and falling back over chairs and tables...

Then he throws it in Hood's direction and Hood is forced to catch it.

Gibson seizes Rachel's collar as she's rising. She's cut.

ELLIS GIBSON

You're bleeding.

He broken glass lies on the floor. He slams his hand down onto it.

ELLIS GIBSON

So am I. Now play nice or you'll get some of this.

She freezes. She knows what a touch can mean.

Hood's now set the package down safely and is coming for Gibson.

ELLIS GIBSON

Back off!

Hood stops in his tracks, holds up a hand to stop the guard who's right behind him.

ELLIS GIBSON

(nodding to package)

You've got what you want. I'm going now.

We can hear approaching sirens.

Leaving the package, he backs toward the doors leading to the buses. He's pulling Rachel backwards by her collar, keeping her off-balance.

HOOD

You don't need her.

ELLIS GIBSON

I think I do.

He swings her out, through the exit gate onto the vehicle apron.

Hood wants to follow but first beckons in a security guard, pointing to the abandoned package as he moves toward the exit.

HOOD

Can you section that off?

He races out after them.

EXT. VEHICLE APRON. NIGHT.

Hood comes out of the building and looks around. Buses by the dozen lined up along the apron, but no public.

HOOD

Rachel!

He runs along the rows, looking between the vehicles. These are long-distance, National Express-style buses.

After looking down a couple of gaps he abandons this strategy and edges down the narrow space between two vehicles.

Halfway along, he gets down on the ground and looks under.

Hood's POV -- inches above the floor, looking all the way across the concrete apron at ground level. Nothing.

He switches sides.

Hood's POV -- under one chassis after another, a glimpse of moving feet about three or four vehicles away. They're there, then they're gone behind the wheels.

Was it them? Not enough of a glimpse to be sure.

Hood gets to his feet and heads off to intercept.

INT. BUS STATION CONCOURSE. NIGHT.

There's a nonplussed crowd of the usual stand-there-like-pillocks watching the package as a couple of eleven-year-olds in hoodies dare each other to get close enough to touch it.

BUS STATION GUARD

Oi!

The guard's been somewhere and is returning with something to make a barrier.

BUS STATION GUARD

Get off it!

EXT. VEHICLE APRON. NIGHT.

Hood appears at the far end of the space between two buses, looks down the empty gap, dodges along to the next...

We move across the end of the bus and see him again...

Where this time he comes all the way down the gap toward us, stopping when he reaches us, looking all around and calling again...

HOOD

(calling)

Rachel!

He turns and looks around, scanning across the apron of the bus station.

Over on the far side, in the lighted interior of one of the long-distance buses, we can see Gibson and Rachel with a uniformed driver having a Do this/I can't/Do what he says exchange. As the driver gets behind the wheel under protest and fires up the engine...

Hood glances around, weighs up the layout, and moves toward a place of concealment that the bus will have to pass.

INT. BUS. NIGHT.

The bus starts moving, swinging out and around.

The driver is seriously unhappy. Gibson's pushing Rachel into the seat right by him. Hand still raised and bloody, but not so much in her face right now.

ELLIS GIBSON

It's your fault. You should have just given me the money.

RACHEL

You think you can solve your own problems at everyone else's expense?

ELLIS GIBSON

Sounds good to me. I'm not that noble. Nobody is.

RACHEL

Ellis, that's the lamest excuse I've ever heard for mass murder.

ELLIS GIBSON

Don't give me that. And don't keep using my name. I know what you're doing.

EXT. VEHICLE APRON. NIGHT.

The front of the bus is now passing Hood. He tucks back out of sight.

INT. BUS. NIGHT.

With Rachel and Gibson, as before.

RACHEL

We had one chance to stop this thing getting out. You're wrecking it.

ELLIS GIBSON

He's got his parcel back. What does he want me for?

RACHEL

Ellis, you're infected! What do you think?

EXT. VEHICLE APRON. NIGHT.

The side of the bus is a moving wall passing only inches from Hood.

When the engine shutoff button comes into sight, he hits it.

INT. BUS. NIGHT.

The engine shudders and dies.

ELLIS GIBSON

Get it going.

DRIVER
I'll have to get out.

ELLIS GIBSON
No!

DRIVER
I can't do it from here. It's got
to be reset.

Gibson looks around, lost for ideas.

RACHEL
What are you going to do now,
Ellis?

ELLIS GIBSON
(to driver)
Open the door.

The driver complies, only too keen to be rid of him.

ELLIS GIBSON
(to Rachel)
You. Come on.

He grips her collar again and hustles her toward the steps.

EXT. VEHICLE APRON. NIGHT.

Rachel emerges from the bus first.

Gibson follows, still gripping her collar, moving awkwardly
with his other hand held out from his body -- still
bleeding, still some glass in it.

As Gibson emerges...

Hood's hand clamps onto Gibson's arm.

WHAM! He swings the unsteady Gibson back against the side
of the bus and knocks all the breath out of him.

Rachel turns, his grip on her broken, and gets back out of
his reach.

Gibson slides to the ground. There's no more fight in him.

ELLIS GIBSON
Just let me go. Please.

HOOD
Can't do it. Sorry.

Blue lights as the first emergency vehicle arrives.

Hood looks toward the concourse and sees...

Some glimpse of Martin Callan inside, making his way across.

INT. BUS STATION CONCOURSE. NIGHT.

Martin Callan crosses the concourse, passing by the bus station guard who breaks off giving his details to a health worker to say...

BUS STATION GUARD
(warning)
'Scuse me...

Callan doesn't even slow.

BUS STATION GUARD
(louder)
'Scuse me!

Callan looks back.

MARTIN CALLAN
I'm here for this.

He says it with enough authority to fend off the challenge.

Angle on the package, exactly where Hood laid it. It's coming apart, the tape all unsticking.

Callan moves the makeshift barrier aside and steps through.

Crouches before the package and lifts the loose part, uncovering the label with his name on it.

From inside his coat he produces a yellow medical waste bag. Thrusts his arm inside it, uses it to pick up the package, and then in one neat move pulls the bag inside-out so that everything is completely contained without any direct contact.

As he's sealing it in, Hood appears behind his shoulder.

Callan looks up at him.

MARTIN CALLAN
If I'd been able to stump up the money, no-one need never have known.

HOOD
Yes, Martin. Dream on.

Hood steps back as a couple of coppers appear from behind him and move in on Martin, saying, Step away from the bag, please, sir, etc.

EXT. BUS STATION. NIGHT.

Standing outside the bus station, with flashing blue lights coming from two or three angles.

Hood and Rachel stand apart as the emergency services people do their stuff.

RACHEL

Do you have extra immunity if you've had chickenpox?

HOOD

Chickenpox isn't actually a pox.

RACHEL

No?

HOOD

It's a form of herpes.

RACHEL

Herpes?

Hood shrugs apologetically.

They fall silent for a moment as they watch...

Martin Callan under arrest, being put into a police vehicle.

RACHEL

Not the day he was hoping for.

HOOD

He's right. We've all bent the rules.

She looks at him.

HOOD

At some time.

Somewhere across town, a clock chimes.

Hood looks up.

It's eleven.

INT. BLOCK OF FLATS. NIGHT.

The infected tram passenger unlocks the door to one of the flats. Goes in.

The disease clock is superimposed and counting.

It continues to count for a moment over the closed door and then we fade.

End credits.