

The Watchful Eye: EPISODE 1
An audio drama told in 6 parts

Written by
Daniel Harding

Version (7.0)
22.09.2019

Scene 1.

<Eager typing on a keyboard>

Raymond Saturday, 10th of August. 2006. *The Watchful Eye* blog post #134. (disappointed) Unfortunately, there's not much to report crime-wise in the greater Lewisham area this week. (pause followed by a frustrated huff) There's not much going on at all.

<Typing stops. Followed by several single return keys. The typing soon restarts>

Raymond (upbeat) It has been a *seemingly* uneventful week to the untrained eye, but as you already know avid listener- (to himself) or is it reader? *Reader* sounds better. Your willing author can-

<Typing stops>

Raymond Your willing investigator can... your willing investigator can... can *what?! (more frustrated huffing)*. Oh, there must be something criminal going on out there? Surely! There has to be *something*. No one is going to be interested in a crime story without a crime!

<Raymond opens his metal blinds>

Raymond I'm going to lose the only subscriber I have if this dry spell goes on much longer! It took me months to get that one. What to do, what to do? (pause) Come on crime, where are you?

<Birds tweet. Children laugh and play in the background. An ice cream truck signals its arrival>

Raymond Oh, this is ridiculous!

<Raymond bangs the table and a cup of tea topples over>

Raymond Ohhh! No, no, no. Please no.

<Raymond scrambles his papers aside to avoid getting them wet>

Scene 2.

<Large delivery trucks come and go, until we hear the sharp toot of a horn, and one stops nearby>

Ed (calling) Max... Max... MAAAX!

Max Yeah? Oh, all right Ed? I didn't see you there.

<A truck door opens and closes>

Ed Blimey, is there something wrong with your ears? I was calling you for like half an hour.

Max You were calling me?

Ed Yeah, for ages.

Max You were calling me *for ages*?

Ed Yes!

Max (pause) When?

Ed Just then!

Max Just *then*?

Ed Forget it. It was only a joke.

Max You were only joking about calling me for half an hour?

Ed (defeated) Yes.

Max So I don't need to go get my ears checked?

Ed No.

Max Cor, that's a result. You got me worried then. My Nan died recently from going deaf.

Ed People don't die from going deaf, do they? So-

Max My Nana did! Walked out into the road and a tricycle hit her. A local teacher and his missus, it was tragic. The bike was lovely too. All bent up it was.

Ed (frustrated) Yeah but, she didn't die from going deaf though, did she?

Max Tell me how she died then smarty-pants?

Ed She died from being run over by a *tricycle*! It's obvious.

Max Well, I'm just glad I ain't gonna die now, that's all I'm saying!

Ed You were *never* going to die! Blimey...(reluctantly)
Also, I'm sorry for your loss, mate. I know you how much you loved your Nan.

Max I got a nice little inheritance coming soon, so it's not all bad. Gonna travel around Scandinavia for a few months. Take some time out for me, you know?

Ed (unsure) I'm sure Fran will love it.

Max No, I'm going alone! Between you and me, it's Fran I want to get away from.

<Max takes a deep puff on a cigarette>

Ed I thought you'd given up.

Max Who told you that?

Ed (suspicious) Um, Fran did.

Max I mean, she *wants* me to quit, but I ain't gonna do it. It's like really, really hard, ain't it? Have you ever tried? It's like when you're hungry, but you're telling yourself you can't eat. It's impossible. I challenge anyone to do it.

Ed People quit smoking all the time.

Max People *lie* all the time too! Anyway, what you doing talking to Fran? I didn't know you two knew each other.

Ed (suspicious) Yeah, course we do. You know. We met last year at that fundraiser for Jeff's dying dog. You remember! To pay for its funeral.

Max Oh, yeah. Beautiful send off, weren't it? Actually, that dead dog had a better funeral than my Nan! A better send off than most nans, I suspect.

Ed Listen, Max. I wanted to talk to you about something. (starts to whisper) Something del-i-cate, you know? That absolutely has to stay secret between you and me.

Max You're gonna have to speak up, Ed. I think there is something wrong with my ears after all.

<The trucks and sound of traffic dies down as Ed leads Max away>

Ed Several months ago I was approached by this (pause) *company* who wanted me to do some extra deliveries. But they're not your *packaged-and-parceled-with-cello-tape* type deliveries, if you catch my meaning.

Max (pause) No, I don't.

Ed Right, let me try and simplify it for you. I deliver, with no questions asked, large container shipments of (pause) *women*, all the way from East Asia.

Max That's far, ain't it? And where do they need taking?

Ed (frustrated) For God's sake, Max! They need taking all over the country, don't they? Dropped off in various cities, to their various (sheepish) *owners*. It's not rocket science, is it?

Max Alright, calm down Ed. I didn't know did I? You've only just told me. Otherwise I wouldn't have asked.

Ed The problem is, I'm now busy tomorrow morning, and so I can't pick up the next shipment. Very last minute. I've been rattling my brain trying to figure out who can take my place.

Max Did you find someone?

Ed You! I'm asking *you* to do it, ain't I?

Max Oh right. Nah.

Ed I don't think you understand, mate. These aren't the type of fellas *you and me* can say no to.

Max They ain't the sort of fellas *you* can say no to.

Ed What do you mean?

Max As long as I don't have to deal with 'em, I don't see why I'm involved.

Ed Come on Max! I'm gonna be in deep shit if someone isn't there tomorrow morning at 7am to pick up the next shipment of ladies. Surely you wouldn't do that to a mate?

Max Pringles.

Ed What?

Max I can never say no to another Pringle. Is this situation like the same thing?

Ed There's money in it for you! Enough to guarantee you won't have to pick up extra shifts for at least a year.

Max But I like doing the extra shifts. It keeps me away from Fran, don't it?

Ed Oh yeah, that's true! Yeah, don't give up the extra shifts. You'll be home all the time then, won't you?

Max Yeah, exactly! Can I let you know sometime next week?

Ed I kinda need to know now. The job is *tomorrow* morning!

Max Oh right, yeah.

Ed Just say you'll do it, please mate? I'm desperate.

Scene 3.

<The sound of a key turning in a lock. The door opens and then it closes. Television plays in the background. It grows louder>

Fran (on the phone) Yeah, it's totally out of order. How am *I* meant to feel?... Right! I hate living this way. He won't let me near it... Apparently he's saving it for a rainy-

Max Alright?

Fran (surprised) You're home early!

Max Am I?

Fran (on the phone) I have to go... Yeah, alright. I'll see you tomorrow. 1pm at *The Rooster*? See you then.

Max You going out tomorrow?

Fran It's rude to eaves drop.

Max And how is *Katherine*?

Fran Fine, I suppose. She's still upset that you didn't send a text last week.

Max Was I meant to?

<Max opens a can of beer and takes a deep slurp>

Fran (frustrated) Yes! She went into hospital to get her ingrowing toenail removed.

Max So?

Fran So?! So, she's upset that you didn't even bother to make sure she was okay. It was very insensitive of you. She's not the sort of person to forget that type of thing, I've told you that before.

Max Have you?

Fran Yes! F-fuck sake, Ed! Are you capable at all or should I teach you how to wipe your arse as well?

Max I just didn't think it was all that important, you know? I've lost toenails before.

Fran Only because your feet are so bloody rotten! It's not the same thing.

Max But still, she didn't send me a text did she? I should be a little upset too, shouldn't I? In which case, I'd say we're pretty evens.

Fran (pause) Did you see Ed today?

Max I did actually.

Fran (pause) Did he ask you something?

Max He did, yeah.

Fran (pause) What did he ask you?

Max He asked whether I was deaf.

Fran What?

Max Yeah, apparently he was calling me for like half an hour, but I didn't hear him. So he asked whether I was deaf. But it turns out he was only joking, so actually I think my ears are just fine. It did worry me for a bit though as Nana died from going deaf.

<Max takes another deep slurp from his beer can>

Fran Right. And then what?

Max We just chatted for a minute, and then I went back to work.

Fran Did he ask you about doing some extra work?

Max Yeah, but I told him no.

Fran No?! Why... We need that money Max! You won't use that inheritance on anything practical like bills or giving it to *me*. We need that extra money, Max!

Max Oh yeah, he did mention that you two have been chatting.

Fran I'm gonna phone Ed now and tell him you're doing the job. (fading away) I don't care what you say. We need that money, so you're doing it!

<Max takes yet another gulp of beer>

Max (calling) Is there anything for dinner? I'm starving.

Scene 4.

<Porn is playing from a phone. A car door opens and we briefly hear general traffic noise and two people arguing in the background until the door is closed>

Barry Sorry, mate. They didn't have chai latte, so I just got you a tea with skimmed milk instead. That all right?

Charlie They didn't have chai latte?

Barry No, I did ask. Like you told me to. But yeah, no. No chai latte. Which I thought was odd, considering how popular they are nowadays. We'll have to go somewhere else.

Charlie Barry.

Barry Charlie?

Charlie I know you're lying.

Barry (disappointed) How?

Charlie Your lips moved.

Barry Ah, god damn! I'm so gonna suck at that audition, I know I am. I can feel it. I should just quit right now. If I can't lie convincingly, I'm never gonna be able to act!

Charlie You did get my a chai latte though, right?

Barry No, I didn't want the added pressure of knowing what was in the cup.

Charlie So it is actually tea with skimmed milk?

Barry I'm afraid so.

Charlie Yeah, maybe you should give the audition a miss.

Barry (whines)

Charlie Calm down! I was only kidding. You're gonna do great-

Dispatch 3-0 from control. Can you commit 3-0 from control? We need you for immediate response to-

<There is a click and Dispatch cuts off>

Charlie Let's turn that shit off till we've had breakfast. My brains not switched on yet.

Barry Did you ever have a chupa-chups?

Charlie The lollies?

Barry Yeah!

Charlie Course.

Barry What ever happened to 'em?

Charlie You can still get them.

Barry Really?

Charlie You just need to look in the right places.

Barry What was your favourite flavour?

Charlie I was partial to cheery.

Barry I was a coca-cola man.

Charlie And why doesn't that surprise me?

Barry (offended) What's wrong with coca-cola?

Charlie You're just a bit (pause) *obvious*, aren't ya?

Barry I can't help what I like, can I? Anyway, cherry flavour is a girl's-

<There is a knock on the car window>

Barry Holy shit!

Charlie Fuck! Can't you see we're having breakfast?

Druggie (muffled) Undo the window.

Charlie Not until you tell us what you want.

Druggie (muffled) I'm selling drugs.

Charlie (to Barry) What did he say?

Barry I think he asked whether we want to donate to the needy kids of Zimbabwe.

Charlie I'm not sure that's what he said. (to Druggie) Can you speak a bit clearer? We can't understand you.

Druggie (muffled, but shouting) Do. You. Want. Some. Drugs?

Barry Oh! It now sounds like he's asking whether we want some drugs.

Charlie Undo the window and find out just to be sure.

<Barry undoes the car window>

Charlie (to Druggie) Can you repeat that one more time.

Druggie (frustrated) Do you two want some drugs or not?

Charlie What sort you got?

Druggie (shifty) Anything. Anything, you name it. And I got it.

Charlie *Anything* at all. (pause) Seriously?

Druggie Come on, I ain't got all day.

Charlie (to Barry) I don't know, what do you say Barry? Do we want some drugs?

Barry (to Charlie) I could do with some diazepam actually. I've got a big audition coming up, and I need to ease the nerves, you know?

Charlie (to Druggie) Do you have anything to ease his nerves?

Druggie I got Lorazepam. How much you want?

Barry (to Druggie) I've never heard of Lorazepam, what's that?

Charlie Oh, come on, yes you have! We found bags full of the stuff busting that white beamer a few nights ago. It had a little 'L' on the plastic bag. Remember?

Barry That was Lorazepam?!

Charlie Yes!

Barry Why didn't you say? I could have swiped some before we took it down to the station. Now I'm gonna waste my money buying some!

Druggie (nervous) Are you two... *coppers*?

Charlie Only on weekends.

Barry For our sins.

Druggie Fuck! I mean, shit. I ain't selling drugs. I was just joking, you know? Ha-ha. Anyway. Bye!

<Footsteps running away>

Barry (calling) Hold on! Come back? I *need* the drugs!

Charlie He could do with some of that Lorazepam himself, am I right? Ha-ha. Barry? Did you hear what I said?

Barry (defeated) What am I gonna do now?

Charlie Oh shit, turn the radio back on! It's 11:05 now, we're late.

<We hear a click and the radio switches back on>

Charlie Come in, Dispatch.

Dispatch What happened there?

Charlie Oh, I err- umm. Dropped my radio under the seat and couldn't find it.

Dispatch Whatever. We have a 10-54, do you copy?

Barry (whisper to Charlie) What's that mean?

Charlie (to Barry) Possible stiff.

Barry Oh, my!

Charlie (to Dispatch) Copy that, Dispatch.

Dispatch 10-49 Twenty-three Courtenay Drive. Over.

Charlie Copy that. Over and out. (to Barry) Put the lights on.

Barry Where we going?

Charlie Lewisham.

<We hear a click and police sirens begin to wail>

Scene 5.

<The police siren grows loud until eventually there is a screech of tyres breaking. Two doors open and closed>

<Banging on the door>

Barry What you saying? No answer, is there?

Charlie I got that, cheers.

Barry Do you want to break the door down then?

Charlie Nah, I'm wearing my new shoes.

Barry Oh, right. Yeah, nice.

Charlie Let's just- (pause).

Barry What is it?

Charlie There's a guy over the road looking at us.

Barry It's a small street. I guess they don't get much police action this far outta town.

Charlie Let's go investigate. He could have been the one to call it in.

Cut to:

<Inside Raymond's house we hear BBC radio 4 playing in the background>

<Metal shutters close>

Raymond (to himself) Oh god. Oh god. They're coming over. What am I going to do? What am I going to do?

<A door bell rings followed by insistent knocking>

Raymond (Flustered). Ah! Oh, damn! Err- Oh.

Cut back to:

<A car zooms past>

Barry He's not answering.

Charlie No shit, Samantha.

Barry Who's Samantha?

<Raymond's front door opens>

Raymond (upbeat and friendly) Hi-there, officers! What can I do you for on this beautiful morning? Ha-ha.

Barry (to Charlie) That was odd, wasn't it?

Charlie Sure was. (to Raymond) We're responding to a domestic incident reported across the street and saw you in the window, so-

Raymond No.

Charlie No?

Raymond No, that wasn't me you saw in the window.

Charlie It wasn't?

Raymond No. I mean, I don't think so. I haven't been at that window for at least, oh, I dunno, three days or so.

Charlie Is that right?

Raymond Sure is!

Charlie I see. Sir... Is there something you want to tell us? Something perhaps you can't say right now.

Raymond No. I don't think so (laughs nervously).

Charlie Sir, I'm gonna need you to step aside.

Barry Sir, we're going to need you to step aside.

Raymond (disbelief) What? Why? Have I done something wrong-

Cut to:

<We hear BBC radio 4 playing in the background>

Charlie (calling) It's the police! If there is anyone else in the property, come out with your hands up now. This is not a drill. You have been warned!

Barry (repeating in the background) Come out with your hands up... You have been warned... It's the police.

Raymond There has been some sort of silly misunderstanding. There is no one else here except me, you two and my-

<We hear a cat meow and suddenly Charlie shoots his gun>

Charlie Don't move!

Raymond What are you doing?! That's just *Burtie*!

Barry Did you get it?

Charlie No, I missed.

Raymond Good, heavens! Can you both please lower your weapons? There is absolutely no one else here.

Charlie (calm) Good. That's good. (to Barry) Good job, partner.

Barry (nervous) Yeah good job, *partner*.

Charlie Someone called in a possible *murder* across the street, was that you?

Raymond Err, well. Um, it depends what you mean by-

Barry Just answer the damn question!

Raymond It was me, yes.

Charlie And you were stood by the window, weren't you?

Raymond Yes, of course I was.

Charlie Pah! *Course I was*, he says. Tried to make out we're seeing things, didn't you? Now, why would you lie to police like that?

Barry Pretty suspicious lying to the police, isn't it?

Raymond I don't know. I don't know! I'm just in (pause) shock, that's all. It is not every day that something like this happens on the street you live, does it?

Barry Depends what street you live on.

Charlie Exactly. We could give you a list of places where it does in fact happen every day!

Raymond Well, not around here it doesn't!

Charlie Count yourself lucky.

Barry Yeah, count yourself lucky.

Raymond Are you going to arrest me then?

Charlie (eager) Why? Did you do it?

Barry (eager) Yeah! Did you do some murdering?

Raymond No, I meant for wasting your time?

Barry Nah, you're not- (to Charlie) he's *not is he*?

Charlie Look, we just want to establish whether or not anyone in the current vicinity is in danger. So please, tell us again why did you call the police?

Raymond I, err- I heard something.

Charlie Okay.

Raymond Coming from across the street.

Charlie Makes sense.

Raymond A disturbance. Like you said. And so I thought I'd call it in, you know. Just in case.

Charlie Good. Good work. And your name is?

Raymond Raymond. Raymond M. Etherington.

Barry What does the M stand for?

Raymond Montgomery. My dad's name, people called him Monty though.

Charlie So, Raymond Montgomery Etherington, you hear a disturbance across the street, but did you actually see anything?

Raymond No. But that's not to say that something didn't definitely actually happen. I know what I saw—*heard*, I mean.

Charlie Right. And that was?

Raymond A disturbance.

Charlie (frustrated) Yes, you said that already.

Raymond I saw (pause) a *man*. And he was dragging something. It looked like a body wrapped in plastic.

Charlie And that was this morning?

Raymond Yes! (pause) Do you think a serious crime has been committed?

Charlie It sounds promising. We better go over to the house again and find out.

Scene 6.

<A fruit machine chimes and soon a television is switched on, which beams out horse racing commentary>

<A large wooden door opens>

Rodger (eager) Alright, Nikki?

Nikki You're in early, even by your standards.

Rodger Can't keep me away for long! Pint for me, and a glass of whatever, for yourself.

Nikki Thanks. I'll keep it for later though, when I get off, if that's okay with you?

Rodger Sure, maybe you can join me once you finish?

Nikki I'm here till late.

Rodger Me too, me too. Likely.

Nikki We're not allowed to drink with the punters, you know that.

Rodger Oh sure. I totally get that. But what if I just so happened to be here when you finished? No harm there, I suppose.

Nikki Then I would have to take my drink out back.

Rodger (hinting) Oh?

Nikki Alone.

Rodger Shame.

<We hear the beer pump handle being pulled down, and then a glass is filled. It's place down on the counter. Rodger fondles some change>

Rodger I watched this program last night. It was about serial killers. Do you ever watch stuff like that?

Nikki Stuff about serial killers?

Rodger Yeah.

Nikki Sometimes. Can be pretty disturbing though, can't they? Not exactly the sort of stuff you wanna fall asleep to.

Rodger I dunno. There's something quite life affirming about them.

Nikki (disturbed) About serial killers?

Rodger I mean, we're not the ones being murdered are we? We're safe and sound, watching from home, tucked up, behind a screen. It's a bit like a rollercoaster. You can experience the thrill without any danger of dying.

Nikki And is that the thrill of *being* murdered or?

Rodger Either. Depends what takes your fancy (laughs). Just don't accept a lift home from me, is all I'm saying.

Nikki I won't, don't worry.

Rodger Nah, I wouldn't do that. Kill you I mean. You're too pretty for that sort of thing.

Nikki (sarcastic) Aww, that's the nicest thing anyone has said to me today.

Rodger You're very welcome! And there's plenty more where that came from.

Nikki Anyway, I need to get on with cleaning-

Rodger What do you think it'd take to kill someone? I mean, they make it sound so easy. But I reckon the actual killing, the actual... You know, physical stabbing or choking or whatever, would actually be quite hard.

Nikki Probably, yeah.

Rodger I'd use a paving slab.

Nikki *Paving-*

Rodger Slab. Yeah. I'm quite good at lifting heavy things, and so I just thought, if I were to kill someone, I'd just wack them over the head (makes a clonking noise) with it. And down they'd go. Dead, I suspect. And if not, I could keep wack, wack, wacking them until they were. (pause) How would you do it?

Nikki I don't know. I haven't given it much thought.

<The large wooden door opens again>

Nikki (to herself) Thank god. (Calling) Jude! I'm so glad to see you, come on in, quickly. What can I get for you? Usual, is it?

Jude Yes. A glass of sweet sherry, and a bowl of water for Butch please.

<A bark from a large dog>

Rodger (scared) Whoa! That's a very big dog and you're a very small lady.

Jude (under her breath) Fuck off.

Rodger With a potty mouth.

Nikki Thanks. I'll keep it for later though, when I get off. if that's okay with you?

Rodger (to Max) She's not allowed to drink with punters.

<Several glasses hit the bar counter>

Nikki That'll be fifteen-sixty.

<Bank notes rub together>

Max Here you go.

Rodger Whoa, that's a lot of molla to be carrying around. Did you win big at the races or something?

Max Or *something*. That's what my Nana always used to say. I think it's funny, but she's dead now. Deaf and dead. The deaf bit came before the dead bit though, even though she wouldn't really be able to hear much now either. Maybe in heaven she still can. Do you think people who were deaf in life can hear just fine in heaven?

Rodger That's an interesting question! I haven't given it much thought before.

Nikki I see you two are going to be the best of friends. But you'll have to excuse me, I really need to start cleaning the cellar-

<The pub door opens>

Nikki (to herself) You've got to be kidding me? (to Katherine) Come on, hurry it up. Join the party!

Katherine (put off) Okay, err- Oh, hello Max. What are you doing here? I thought you'd be at work.

Max (chuffed) Nope, not today!

Katherine Where's Fran? I tried phoning her this morning but no one answered. I was meant to be meeting her here for lunch.

Max To tell you the truth, I have absolutely no idea where Fran is, and I don't want to find out either.

Katherine (confused) Did she not tell you about meeting me?

Max Nope. Well, actually, maybe she did, yeah. To be honest, I don't remember.

Nikki Are you gonna order something? I need to-

Katherine (to Nikki) Can I have a large glass of house red and a pint of, um...

Max Cider. Fran likes the dry kind.

Nikki (tired) Right. A glass of red, and a pint of the dry stuff coming right up!

Katherine What are you looking so chuffed about?

Max I can't say.

Rodger He's keeping it secret.

Katherine What's the supposed to mean?

Rodger I'm just saying, whatever has happened, he's keeping it a secret. He's not even told me!

Katherine And you are?

Rodger I'm Rodger, just a regular here, that's all. You know, no one important, obviously.

Katherine I see.

<more glasses hit the bar table>

Nikki That'll be nine-eighty, please.

Katherine Do you take that new chip and pin card?

Nikki We do.

Katherine Great! I've just got a new one and I'm eager to try it.

Nikki Hooray for you.

<We hear the card going into the slot, and Katherine pushes the numbers>

Katherine Has it gone through?

Nikki Sure has! Will there be anything else?

Katherine Nope, that's it.

Nikki (calling) Right okay, listen up everyone! I am disappearing to clean the cellar, so if anyone needs me or wants a drink, you have my permission to tell them to fuck off. Understand?

Everyone Sure. Yeah. No problem. Great.

Nikki Good. Right... Off I go. Going to *clean* the cellar. Yep, here I go. (pause)

Rodger Are you okay, Nikki?

Nikki Yes, I'm just making sure the universe knows that I am actually leaving to clean the cellar.

Rodger I think it knows.

Nikki I'm just being clear! Right (pause), here I go. (long pause) Right, good.

<We hear a big wooden door open>

Nikki F-fuck sake! I knew it. I bloody knew it!

Charlie We are looking for Maxwell Denham. (pause)

Barry Has anyone seen a Mr Denham? First name, Maxwell.

Charlie (shouting) I said, Is there anyone here by the name of Max-

Katherine (calling) That's Max Denham! Sitting at the bar!

Max Hey, yeah, I'm Max Denham. How can I help?

Charlie You're under arrest for the murder of one Miss Francesca Garrett.

Max (confused) Murder?

Nikki (interested) Murder?

Katherine (shocked) Murder?!

Rodger Are you two police officers?