

EQUITY RELEASE - HORROR THRILLER

by Debbie Croysdale

An estranged couple in mid life crisis give their relationship a boost by arranging equity release on their country mansion only to find their dream holiday takes place in the academy of hell.

Tag line "When innocence is bliss it's folly to be wise."

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EXT. DAY - RURAL Dreamy pastoral landscape interrupted by one tiny village, woods and scattered country estates & farms.

INT. DAY - SHAKER KITCHEN Couple sit apart at dining table.

ROGER 57 Semi retired web designer, perfectionist curmudgeon.

SARAH 53 Headmistress, keen horse woman, sassy, embittered.

SARAH

So why the face?

ROGER

Is pot calling kettle black?

SARAH

Ad lib but you've been looking like a constipated owl all bloody day.

ROGER

Those school kids taught you to swear, be more feminine at home?

SARAH

Look where social graces got me? And I'd family till we got boring.

ROGER

Self pity? You didn't do too badly! Screw you're empty nest syndrome.

SARAH

And sod nice things, I need more.

ROGER

Ruth and Tim won't visit anymore cos of your menopause rages, I can disappear too, so don't tempt me.

EXT. EV - RURAL LANE 2 sit in parked car staring at house.

TOBIN 30 Jolly, hotel D.J & car thief, out for kicks.

BERLINAH 45 Fit, ruthless go getter & trained croupier.

BERLINAH

House, a million at least I reckon.

TOBIN

That's nothing these days though? I mean some of those bigger places are worth three or four times that?

BERLINAH

And heightened security, why talk like a billionaire? Closest you'll ever get to Hotel California is playing music track working in that shit hole. Only two, she's out most days riding and he rarely ventures.

TOBIN

Don't know what's inside yet do we?

BERLINAH

Up close on the bridle way I saw stinking big rocks on her fingers, there's bound to be more of it.

TOBIN

Dunno. Possible or probable list but the land rover's worth coming back for one night. Mint, that is.

BERLINAH

Fancy yourself behind the wheel?

TOBIN

Me a trophy man? As if, I meant strip it down for parts, that there baby can buy us some serious gear.

INT. EV - BEDROOM Roger snores, Sarah puts on loud music.

SARAH

Roger? Roger? Come on, let's dance through the night like we used to? Well happy anniversary to me Sarah.

ROGER

Balls, why wake me? We've six spare rooms to do all your crazy shit in?

SARAH

You remember this Ibiza track?

ROGER

I remember picking up a hot girl, you had a banana phone too then. Pathetic! Why try to re live your Halcyon days? Grow up will you?

SARAH

Into what? We're estranged now.

SARAH CONT.

Your slippers and greenhouses
routine won't fix your depression,
my body doesn't work like it did
and I'm frightened of our future.

Sarah breaks down and throws contents of drawer on floor.

ROGER

Don't cry Saz, I'm an ass. Men have
fears too and guess I've been in
denial, my way of coping is busying
myself and I cut you out, so sorry.

SARAH

We save our marriage? Together?

ROGER

Truce. We can't lose what we had.

INT. EV - SCRUFFY WINDOWLESS BASEMENT Two men, one sat at
makeshift desk on a computer, other paces floor in a circle.

BIFF 32 Brutish skinhead, bald, tatoos, London accent.

MICHAEL 40 Well spoken academic, suit, neat quiffed hair.

MICHAEL

I've perfected my next pitch.

BIFF

Long as it don't go wrong again?
Came out of nowhere they did and I
still got the battle scars.

MICHAEL

Not on me those guard dogs all had
their voice boxes cut so wise up
and never try to screw over other
criminals again? Your own kind?

BIFF

Labelling me now? Everything's up
for grabs and winner takes all. I
only got bitten cos we needed more
manpower on scene. I say we bring
in Charlie Teb for this next one?

MICHAEL

No, keep it tight, keep it simple
and soon we won't need be present
at all but raid remotely by drones,
spyware, or new AL and thankfully
no more passengers like you innits.

BIFF

Don't disrespect old school, still need muscle for hold ups and stuff. And I fought your way out of that pub brawl? And get stuff past noses of Lillywhites while you laze like a king in airline executive lounge?

MICHAEL

But it's our last game like this.

BIFF

It's the only frigging language they understand and this computer? Don't think I don't know what that shit's all about, I done a windows course once in the big house...

MICHAEL

The Scrubs you mean? Quiet, I'm trying to concentrate on my bitcoin scam where it will vanish into the ether for all eternity.

BIFF

Pie and mash man me. Love feel of hard cash in my hand, smell you can taste and thrill of spending. And how exactly do we know we get this lot back from frigging outer space?

MICHAEL

I'm no astronaut, it's a black box and web 3 not a darn rocket launch.

INT. DAY - PLUSH RIVERSIDE DUPLEX A couple sit on sofa.

RAY 28 Successful Nigerian fitness coach, laid back attitude.

RUTH 24 Bubbly fashion designer, materialistic, fake blonde.

RAY

Why not tell them your going?

RUTH

I want to surprise them.

RAY

You haven't seen them a whole year, so why guilt trip yourself now?

RUTH

To tell them to their face they're going to be grandparents, an embarrassed phone call may give rise to either of us having second thoughts and I won't screw this up.

RAY

So listen to them for once and give them chance to open up first before you assume the worst? It may work.

INT. DAY - SHAKER KITCHEN Sarah and Roger share breakfast.

ROGER

Supposed to be a surprise Saz but spoiler alert ahead, we're taking a dream holiday and then fresh start. I'm researching equity release.

SARAH

And you were so against it before?

ROGER

We're a team again, remember?

SARAH

Found this in my specials trunk and reminded me of our first flush of passion. Heavy metal tee shirt you wore in college, but will it fit over your paunch? Go try it on?

ROGER

Hey ho! If it don't fit I'll make it a bandana in my birthday suit.

INT. DAY - LOUNGE Andertons & man sit, notes on coffee table.

MR GOLDING 60 Slick financial advisor, silver hair, suit.

MR GOLDING

I'll leave these especially tailored plans for you to think over and look forward to your call.

ROGER

Well thanks for spending the time, both our children are financially secure but we still needed to know the ropes regarding inheritances.

SARAH

And we can live here for the rest
of our lives with either option?
Including the whole sixty per cent?

EXT. DAY - ACRE GARDEN FRONTING HOUSE Roger calls out loudly.

ROGER

Binden? Here boy? Binden?

INT. DAY - KITCHEN Sarah stood by dog bowls ready to fill.

SARAH

He's usually got his paws right up
on my work top by now, salivating.

ROGER

We trained him to stop running off,
maybe he's in mid life crisis too.
Supposed to prune my rhubarb later
sod it, now I'll have to drive
around checking the nearby fields.

SARAH

Face a tirade from angry farmers?
Doberman's chase cattle don't they?
Maybe he'll soon show up instead.

ROGER

Ray trained him to pull down a man
remember? After they got engaged?
No, I need to find him now.

SARAH

Ironic, a lovely son in law albeit
our own daughter is an utter bitch.

INT. EV - VAN Tobin drives his van down a rolling hill into a
wooded area through a cyclist park of high and low inclines.

TOBIN

Hold on! Wheeee, heeeee.....

BERLINAH

Asshole, are you even in the right
gear? And why this childish detour?

TOBIN

Relax I was a boy racer, track
leads to left side of house so
we're not seen and less tire marks,
back lane get's sandy further up.

INT. EV - KITCHEN Sarah makes scones, Roger watches her.

ROGER

What if he swam in the reservoir?

SARAH

We mustn't panic, look? These are for the farmer's market tomorrow.

EXT. EV - COPSE, DISTANCE FROM LEFT OF HOUSE Berlinah & Tobin sit in big van, tools on seat. Berlinah looks in binoculars.

BERLINAH

Downstairs lights off, upstairs on, bed at eight, sad or what? Regular occurrence, wonder if their still at it at their age? Maybe he puts something in soil of veg he grows?

TOBIN

They're hardly ancient, my granny is ninety and that is old, anyway who gives a shit what they do? All I care for is one Landie coming up.

BERLINAH

Well get on with it? I want a take away, Netflix show and a champagne toast once it's in our garage. Wait a sec! A car's slowed to the drive, seems two guests in an Alpha Romeo, some crud seventies style vehicle.

Tobin rips the binoculars off her.

TOBIN

Be a collector's item, rich are having a phase for antique cars. A man's got out with a leather brief case? Pratt, who carries them now?

INT. EV - BEDROOM Roger and Sarah lie in each others arms.

ROGER

Guess what your nickname was in college all those years ago?

SARAH

I'd a nickname? So why tell me now?

ROGER

You might have punched me then.

SARAH

So tell me on our second honeymoon?
So I can push you over board on
that fancy cruise ship we booked.

ROGER

Do your titanic pose on the helm?
Remember? Fishing boat in Greece?

SARAH

You went to hit the man who pinched
my bum but got covered in squid, in
this woke society he'd be arrested.

ROGER

Life can change by the turn of one
card. Take me, only council estate
contender yet I won you and now we
live in this perfect sanctuary.

SARAH

And surrounded by lovely people.

EXT. EV - COPSE Tobin and Berlinah are still talking in van.

TOBIN

We postpone. Sitting ducks who
never have guests you said?

BERLINAH

It's true bastard Andertons don't
do all nighters since their spoiled
brats left so bet those men won't
be staying so we roll when they go?

TOBIN

I won't hang fire, needed them to
be asleep now. No, we're outa here.

Van zooms away.

INT. EV - BEDROOM Roger and Sarah turn off bedside light.

SARAH

We're coming through a bad patch
but it's still a wonderful world.

INT. EV - BEDROOM Andertons are almost sleep, doorbell rings.

ROGER

I'll go and get that.

SARAH

No, stay in bed, we invited no one.

ROGER

Er did, my fault. Forgot to say I put out an online reward for any information leading to us finding Binden. Posters are up too with our address for any local's searching.

SARAH

Oh you did right I suppose, police have been utterly useless so far. Do you think somebody found him?

FLASHBACK EXT. DAY - WOODS Biff bashes large hessian burlap with spade, dog whimpers inside then silence. Digging two holes big enough for a shallow grave, narrow tunnel between he shoves burlap into one space, pours petrol and set's fire.

BIFF

(to himself)

One Dakota hot dog. "Innit" indeed! Governor don't even know how to make a fire with no frigging smoke.

PRESENT INT. EV - HALL Roger peers into video intercom seeing a smartly dressed man outside front door and lifts the latch.

MICHAEL

Good news Mr Anderton, I have your dog but he was too excited to put in my back seat so you'll need to come and pick him up yourself, I don't think he trusts strangers.

ROGER

You went to all this trouble? Should have saved yourself a journey and called us instead?

MICHAEL

Just moved in a cottage to renovate so no broadband, teething problems too on my cellular network, seems a bit of a non spot area around here?

ROGER

Some hikers say so, well thank God for good samaritans, people like you restore my faith in humanity. Come on in, please call me Roger.

EXT. EV - OUTSIDE Biff disables wi fi satellite dish & cuts external wiring around house and inside the double garage.

INT. EV - LOUNGE Roger, Michael and Sarah sit drinking wine.

SARAH

You're sure he's okay Mr Shaw?

MICHAEL

Only tired and excited, a farmer had blown up a badger's run near to where I saw him, he must have heard the blast so got disorientated but lucky there's no marks on his body.

SARAH

We can't thank you enough Mr Shaw. Three nights since he went missing, poor thing, he must have starved.

MICHAEL

Well he made up for it since, I've four dogs so plenty of tins ready. Maybe romance is brewing in this pleasant land and he strayed cos he's on heat? But don't you worry, I left him in pretty good shape.

ROGER

Send me the photos you took?

Roger gets his mobile phone.

ROGER

Says no signal, blast but still got photo stream. Saz call our provider on the land line? Number in bureau.

MICHAEL

Here he is, see?

Michael holds out his phone with a good photo of Binden.

SARAH

More red or White Mr Shaw or would you prefer a cold beer perhaps?

MICHAEL

No more alcohol for me thank you.

SARAH

Surely one more wouldn't harm? You said that's your driver outside?

ROGER

Saz, number in bureau remember?

MICHAEL

But Mrs Anderton? I'd love a hot chocolate? If not too much trouble?

SARAH

Not at all, excuse me five minutes.

She leaves the room.

ROGER

What are the names of your dogs?

MICHAEL

Sooty and Sweep.

ROGER

But you've four you said?

MICHAEL

Others died but I keep their ashes.

ROGER

Ask your driver to come in again?
While I get customer services now.

Roger gets up & walks toward land telephone on chintz table.

MICHAEL

Can you do me a quick favour? Call my chauffeur in from your window? You'd save me a short walk on my painful arthritic knee? Thank you.

Roger turns to walk to bay window, his back to Michael who secretly extends syringe tipped air rifle from his briefcase.

ROGER

Where did you say your cottage is?

MICHAEL

I didn't but you'll soon see it.

ROGER

Is it the one painted pastel pink?
Left of Gil wood or derelict one?

MICHAEL

Pink, to live like the fae.

FLASHBACK Roger sees builders demolish friends pink cottage.

PRESENT Roger becomes anxious, he pretends to look up at sky.

ROGER

Can't see your man but weather's
fine. Red sky at night? Know the
saying? Is a sailor's delight!
Think I'll bring my vet Ray along
with us, he's only ten minutes....

Roger crashes to floor hit by a loaded syringe dart.

INT. EV - KITCHEN Sarah hears ruffled noise from the lounge.

SARAH

Everything all right in there?

Biff grabs her from behind, chloroform rag over her mouth.

BIFF

Down like a limp daddy long legs.

EXT. EV - COUNTRYSIDE Sports car bypasses tiny village.

INT. EV - DRIVER'S SEAT Ruth talks in hands free set.

RUTH

Ray you'll have to get spag bol out
of the freezer, sorry, back Monday,
thinking of Mum today

Suddenly car rapidly jolts and spins over to land on roof.
Hanging upside down she unlocks seat belt, eases out of door,
crawls up field, collapses away from vehicle. Mobile as torch
she looks back at wreck stroking her small pregnancy bump.

RUTH

Hey you in there, I don't know what
happened to us but mummy will make
sure we are all okay, I promise.

EXT. EV - BACK ROAD Rope & spike trap laid across ground.

INT. EV - DINING ROOM Sarah sat up right, conscious, hands &
feet bound, duct tape on mouth. Roger tied slumped in chair.

BIFF

This could have been over hours ago
but he's just coming round now.

MICHAEL

I over estimated his weight but no
biggie, it's only turned one.

BIFF

So why use that thing?

MICHAEL

Bound to have a panic button but I don't no where it is, he may have had chance to use it in a struggle.

ROGER

I need water? Please? What did you do to me? I feel so darn wretched.

MICHAEL

Needs must, treat I gave is meant for horses giving birth and stuff you really don't want to know.

BIFF

Tell your Mrs here, no hysterics if she stays quiet nobody gets hurt?

SARAH

Please be calm and do as they say?

Sarah nods her head. Biff rips off duct tape.

SARAH

Please don't hurt us, all our cards are in my handbag and the pin codes are 1256,9980 and

BIFF

(cuts in)

Do we look like boy anglers to you?

ROGER

So what do you want? Our bone china's not Ming dynasty but we've Swiss watches and jewels in the safe, just take everything and go?

MICHAEL

Naughty, naughty your nose is growing long Pinocchio. Squirreled away a substantial nest didn't you?

ROGER

Whatever do you mean?

MICHAEL

Off shore?

ROGER

I'll pull up our online accounts on my lap top to show nothing abroad?

BIFF
I can ask the Mrs?

Biff moves behind her and traces his fingers along her neck.

ROGER
Animal, keep your hands off her.

SARAH
I've already told you everything.
(to Roger)
What on earth do these men want?

MICHAEL
Your husband's a man with secrets
and not just funds but a

ROGER
(cuts in)
Okay yes but don't say anymore?

MICHAEL
The wise one has finally spoken.

SARAH
Roger? What is going on here?

BIFF
Be quiet like you promised or?

ROGER
Saz? Forgive me. All I ever wanted
was for us to grow old together and
I will make this right, I promise.
(to Micahel)
Mr Shaw keep my wife comfortable?
She doesn't deserve this and I
promise you my full cooperation?

EXT. EV - Ruth limps across empty fields toward a dark house.

SARAH
Black out? Trust Dad's solar panel.

INT. EV - DINING ROOM Roger has been freed and is stood up.

ROGER
I'm taking Mr Shaw up to the loft
and then everything will be fine.

SARAH
No, don't leave, you don't know
what he'll do to you when alone.

ROGER
Up there is what they're here for.

SARAH
Spiders and old family albums?

BIFF
Frigging doorbell? Cobler's awls.

EXT. EV - OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR Ruth shots through letter box.

RUTH
Mum? Dad? Hurry up? I'm freezing
and covered in cow dung. I know
your in there, your cars are here.

INT. EV - DINING ROOM Sarah tries to scream and desperately
free herself, Michael tapes her mouth. Biff picks up syringe
and waves it with free hand as he holds Roger in an arm lock.

BIFF
No noise from you or the hypodermic
goes straight into both her eyes?

ROGER
(pleadingly to Sarah)
Can't possibly let her in can we?

Sarah shakes head, he bites Biff's arm & stamps on his feet.

ROGER
(screaming top of voice)
Ruth run and call the police.

Roger is fast overpowered but manages to grab the needle so
it sticks in his own hand. Biff head butts knocking Roger out.

INT. EV - DINING ROOM Ruth sits tied up by Sarah, Roger out
cold on floor, Biff paces in circle, Michael swigs champagne.

MICHAEL
Nice but I prefer Krug. Now where
were we? Pinnochio was about to
spill but now we need to improvise.

SARAH
Please check his vital signs again?

MICHAEL
He'll live, question is will you?

RUTH
(crying)
Mum what's this all about?

SARAH
(screaming)
I don't know, I don't know.

Biff walks to Sarah and raises one of her fingers in the air.

BIFF
I ask, you answer and each time you fail to give answer we want I break one, not clean like, all crooked so you can never use your hands again.

RUTH
Get away from her pig, people know I'm here and they'll come looking so get out while you've got chance.

BIFF
Be long gone before any cavalry.

MICHAEL
Think so you fool? Look outside? Dawn's broken. Why disable him when he was about to give us the codes?

BIFF
Is it my fault she showed?

SARAH
But I gave the numbers to our safe?

RUTH
Why torture us? We're just ordinary middle England people and please take that thing out of my Dad's hand, he is not your pin cushion?

MICHAEL
I'll give your mother a full fatal dose if you don't get her to talk?

RUTH
Talk about what? What? What?

SARAH
It's a case of mistaken identity.

MICHAEL
Anthony Roger Anderton born 1967, grew up Essex, caught tuberculosis in Thailand, graduated engineer 1986, married 1990. Entered a poxy prize marrow in last annual fair?

SARAH
Christ I don't understand?

MICHAEL
Oh I think you do Mrs Anderton.

RUTH
She doesn't cos I don't know too,
you can't take it out on us cos my
Dad's a shit social media profile.

BIFF
(to Ruth)
Fancy some fun mealy mouth? I do.

MICHAEL
He's not had class, only martinis.

BIFF
She's dark roots though? Maybe she
is an anytime, any place, anywhere,
anyhow, let's see how dirty she is?

SARAH
No, I beg you, take me instead?

MICHAEL
A cougar might teach you something,
but we're not in the bicycle shed.
(to Ruth)
We're... where did you say we are?
Middle England, how nice but we men
want out of shit creek and fast.

RUTH
Call yourself men? Tying up a
harmless woman and pregnant mother?

SARAH
Pardon? You're having a baby Ruth?

RUTH
No, not just a baby Mum but twins,
Yes, I came especially to tell you
you're going to be a Grandmother.

Low budget, 3 locations, 10 cast, (Optional crowd scene.)
90 mins screen time or longer version 120 mins screen time.

EXECS/PRODUCERS Please request further read.