

Anatomy of a Victim

By Rachel Tookey

Directed by Tim Cook

Part 1: The Post-Mortem

No naturalism.

There are two hosts on stage, labelled A and B here.

A: So.

B: So...

A: What we're talking about today is...

B: *(Sing song voice)* 'The Cadaver of the Cam! Christ, it sounds like a 1940s Hollywood film.

Laughs.

A: Or a Victorian medical specimen...

So the Cadaver is not a medical specimen, but when it was alive - a final year medical student at Cambridge University.

The Victim is last seen with her Friend in Midsummer Common, a park in Cambridge, at 6pm on Friday 12th June 2002. She then leaves to go meet her Boyfriend at the kebab store where he works - a 10 minute walk away - but she never arrives. She disappears into Thin Air...

B: Not the thin air, bitch! Don't go into the thin air!

A: Right! Like have you learnt nothing from true crime, woman?!

So she goes into the Thin Air, and two months later she turns up as a rotting torso floating in the River Cam-

B: Those poor tourists...

A: The Boyfriend has been in prison for the crime ever since, but to this day, still protests his innocence.

B: D' you think he did it?

A: Well here's the thing...all that really convicts him is the fact he works in a kebab shop.

B: Oh...and they think he did like the *(makes a cutting noise)* there...?

A: Dismemberment? Yep.

B: Ew, ew, ew! He looks so sweet as well...I'd love to date someone who works in a kebab shop, I love kebab!

- A: I know, I know...
- B: So what other evidence is there?
- A: That's basically it.
- B: WHAT?!
- A: I mean there's also the testimony of The Friend who says The Victim leaves to park to go meet the Boyfriend...but then there's also the testimony of the Dog Walker-
- B: Why is there always a dog walker in these things?
- A: He comes forward and says he sees two people fighting in the park on the day she dies, which totally contradicts that...so there's no blood, there's no forensics...it's just he said, she said-
- B: You're dying!
- A: Of course, I'm dying. I'm a fucking medical student, we don't just disa-...Disappearing Into Thin Air is not a cause of death.
- B: Except in the Himalayas
- A: So last night, I couldn't sleep, so I start going through the autopsy report one more time-
- B: In your bed?!
- A: And my boyfriend was like...why are there photos of a dead body in our bed?
- B: Some guys are into that...
- A: Gross.
- B: Yeah sorry
- A: Anyway I found something and I thought we could do a little demonstration-
- B: Science time!

The dummy appears on stage, played by Rebecca. Megan holds the dummy still. G cuts (or draws) the incisions onto the dummy as she goes.

- A: Right so, the report tells us The Killer made the following incisions: there was one along the top of her neck here, severing her head - and then here and here, taking off her arms - and then along the edge of her pelvis, removing her legs, which were never found, so

could have been chopped up further, there's an urban rumour they end up in the kebabs but we dunno...

B starts flinching away with each cut.

A: What?

B: Is there like a...point to this?

A: The point is...The point is! See the shoulder marks?! If you went to cut off an arm, you'd probably start hacking it like this (She demonstrates) And you'd make a complete mess! You'd hit solid bone, it would end up looking like a B-list slasher film. But the Killer has managed to do it all with one clean incision: they've cut right around the bone, and (A makes a popping sound) the arm right out of the socket! It's like scooping ice cream!

Beat.

B: So...?

A: So she's not sliced up like a kebab right! With some lettuce and mayonnaise on the side. She's been diced up by a professional, someone who is trained to cut up bodies....And who do we know-

B: Oh...OH. Well the Victim was a medical student but she couldn't cut herself up-

A: Who else?!

B: (You)...The Friend! The Friend is on the same course and specialises in-

A: SURGERY!

B: Oh my god! OH MY GOD!

A: Right?! Right!

B: They made such a big deal about how the Boyfriend works at a kebab shop and could have cut her up there. But like dude, have you been to a kebab shop on a Friday night? Someone is going to notice if you have a body in there.

A: Exactly, exactly.

B: Plus he's so nice - everyone says he's only working in the kebab shop so he can support her as she studies to be doctor, and how he meets her after her exams with a kebab because he knows she'll be hungry... And it's - a bit of a cliché, come on (*using the dummy's mouth*) 'ah my boyfriend did it!', / like try a little harder...not all boyfriends are murderers, my boyfriend has never murdered me-

- A: / Yes yes yes yes! And we only know she leaves the park to go see The Boyfriend because of the Friend, but the Dog Walker sees people fighting in the park- people - not a man and a woman - but people-
- B: And doesn't the Friend also claim that the Boyfriend had super possessive of the Victim or something-
- A: Yeah she says the Victim told her she was planning on breaking up with the Boyfriend that night-
- B: Well that's very convenient that she told you that right before she Disappears into Thin Air-
- A: Exactly!
- B: I mean the friend is super weird, she's like obsessed with true crime and really twitchy in interviews. Major creep points for that one.
- A: At trial, The Boyfriend says how the Friend was obsessed with The Victim.
(*Demonstrating the following actions on the dummy:*) She was always touching her, and cuddling her, and-
- B: Strangling her?!
- A: And- And- The Friend is bisexual...I mean I'm not saying they were having an affair-
- B: Lesbian sex? Is Reddit actually right for once-
- A: I mean, it has to be right once in while! So what if - what if -

As they say the following they continue to grab the dummy, shaking her, and eventually wringing her neck.

A: *(simultaneously with B)*

-The Friend confesses her love to The Victim in the park, she tries to convince her to leave The Boyfriend. But The Victim turns her down. So the Friend gets mad! She's obsessed, she can't take it. So she grabs The Victim, she begs her, but then she gets angry, she gets jealous, she wraps her hands around The Victim's neck and she squeezes and squeezes until—

B: *(simultaneously with A)*

-Or! Or! They're having an affair, The Friend and the Victim. And they're fucking- they're fucking in the park! And the Friend chokes her, because, like, they're into that - and she grabs The Victim's neck and squeezes and squeezes and she gets carried away - or maybe she wants to hurt The Victim, yeah she wants to hurt her - so she squeezes and squeezes until—

A snap. Rebecca falls down dead. Lights down. Rebecca should remain in place for Scene 2, including the marker lines.

Part 2: The Life

Pure naturalism. This scene should take all the time in the world.

Midsummer Common, Cambridge. 6pm on 12th June 2002.

Rebecca remains lying down. She stays deliberately still. Sophie enters, sees her. Approaches. Calls out 'Rebecca' to no response. Looks confused, opens her mouth. Shuts it. Cautiously goes closer. Suddenly Rebecca leaps up screaming, causing Sophie to scream. They both scream together, which breaks down into laughter.

Sophie *(still laughing)*

What are you doing?! What was that?!

Sophie pulls Rebecca into a hug, still laughing. Throughout the scene they remain extremely tactile and familiar with each other.

Rebecca *(still laughing)*

I don't know! I saw you coming and I thought I'd pretend to be dead?!

Sophie *(still laughing)*

Why?!

Rebecca *(still laughing)*

You're going to be a doctor! You should be able to tell dead people from real people-

Sophie *(still laughing)*

Can you imagine? If that was the exam? A bunch of people pretending to be dead, and some dead bodies, and you had to work out which was alive-

Rebecca *(still laughing)*

And if you got it wrong, they'd jump out at you!

Rebecca mimes jumping out at Sophie

Sophie *(still laughing)*

I don't know why I'm still laughing!

Rebecca *(still laughing)*

Me neither!

They calm down

Sophie

I brought beers- Well Crabbies...That's still beer, I think?

Rebecca *(Plonking herself back down on the grass)*

It's perf. Ta very much.

Rebecca takes one and plonks herself back down on the grass. She pats for Sophie to sit next to her. Sophie sits. They open their beers and drink.

Rebecca

Tell me things about your life please.

Sophie

Tell you things? Right...erm...I did my exams, which were okay in the end, but, like, I kept on having freak outs about it and was getting streczema and all that jazz, so APOLOGIES if I didn't reply to your messages.

Rebecca

All is forgiven.

Sophie

Very gracious of you. Anyway, now that's over and I've decided my summer hobby is going to be Tinder....except I'm too scared to meet up with any of my matches, because I watched a load of true crime over exams and now I think all men are murderers...?

Rebecca

Why do you watch those shows.

Sophie

Well, I think I was trying to learn how not to get murdered on these dates, and now that's all I can think about-

Rebecca

-Stop watching them.

Sophie

Wise advise, duly noted.

Rebecca

Watch 'The Good Place' instead. You'll have hope for the afterlife with that.

Sophie *(Laughing)*

I'll try it out...How are you then? What's new? How were exams?

Rebecca *(Slowly)*

Nothing much...exams were fine...same old really...

Beat

I'm thinking of moving onto a boat, drinking whiskey, and playing the ukulele at sunset.

Sophie

Ooo! Ditch the medical degree? Sail off into the sunrise? Sunset?

Rebecca

I'm serious. It's actually cheaper to pay for mooring costs than rent around here.

Sophie

Oh I didn't know that! You gonna invite Chris onto your LOVE BOAT?

Rebecca

Eurgh no. No Chris. Only ukes and good vibes.

Sophie

Why 'eurgh'? 'Eurgh' Chris? Is Chris 'eurgh' now?

Pause, Rebecca carefully considering her next words.

Rebecca

We had this...sort of thing last night.

Pause

Rebecca

We were super drunk and Chris was doing his insecure thing of being like: 'I'm so scared you're gonna leave me when you become a doctor', 'you'll be embarrassed to be seen with me'. And, like, normally I get him to chill the fuck out about it - like I don't care that he works in a kebab shop - but this time I was so sick of having to do that, I- ...and maybe I was being a little dramatic, but I was just like: 'I'm gonna leave if you don't stop going on about this', and he kept going on about it, so I go to leave...and he like- like-...grabbed my arm - like this - and then stood in front of me, and sort of like...stopped me leaving...

Sophie

Oh.

Rebecca

Like, it wasn't super hard, and I'm not bruised or anything, and I- I shoved him off me. Hard. But I don't know, it was all a bit gross...

Sophie

Yeah, that's super gross.

Beat

How do you feel about him...it...now?

Rebecca

We spoke about it this morning, and I was like: 'that can never happen again', and he agreed so...

Pause

What do you think...?

Sophie

I guess I think like...obviously that's not okay. And like...you've always been the more confident one of the two of you. And he sort of clings to you-

Rebecca

Oh my god yes!

Sophie

Right! And you've got so much going with your life! And he's- all he has is you, and the kebab shop. And I have nothing against working in a kebab shop- I mean kebabs, god love 'em-

Rebecca (*solemnly*)

All praise.

They make the sign of the cross together.

Sophie

But he's clearly unhappy working there, and not really doing anything about it. I dunno...I'll level with you, I don't like him. I think ditch him. Like you're you! You're all of you! (*She gestures to all of Rebecca's body*) You are all of this! You're funny, you're basically a doctor, and not just a doctor, a surgeon - which is the best type, let's be honest!

Rebecca laughs

And he like- he doesn't have anything on this. And he knows it! That's why he's trying to hold on to you so bad. (*Getting angry*) And like, how dare he? How dare he grab you? That is your arm. That is not his arm. You can't just grab people without their permission-

Rebecca

I mean, I shoved him back. It wasn't like he beat me, like, I wouldn't say I was a- a- 'victim'... erm...

Sophie

You're not a 'victim'. You're you. You're my super flamboyant llama!

Rebecca

The llama is my spirit animal!

Beat

Rebecca

He was also kindof weird about me seeing you today. He was like: 'isn't she obsessed with you?'

Sophie

What?! I'm not obsessed with you! Am I obsessed with you? You can tell me if I'm obsessed with you-

Rebecca

Our obsession is a mutual and beautiful love.

Sophie

Thank you. Good. Right, I'm just gonna lie on you like this then. In our mutual and beautiful love.

Sophie lies on her and Rebecca strokes her hair. Silence for a while.

Rebecca

Eurgh, I actually have to go see him now-

Sophie

What?!

Rebecca starts getting up to go.

Rebecca

Yeah, promised him we'd have date night in the kebab shop again-

Sophie

Oh blow him off. Stay here with me - we've got the park, and the river, and the beers. Come on, teach him a lesson about being clingy!

Rebecca

I don't know...

Sophie

Fuck him off! FUCK HIM OFF! FUCK HIM OFF! FUCK HIM OFF! FUCK HIM OFF!

Sophie tackles Rebecca and holds her there.

Rebecca

You're making a scene! There is a weird man and his cocker spaniel staring at us right now-

Sophie

Ew...he looks like a pervert. He's probably gonna go whack off in a bush.

Beat.

So, you gonna stay? You can come over to mine tonight, we can watch Netflix.

Rebecca

Fine...but no more dead women shows.

They lay there.

Sophie

When you live on a boat, can I live on a little dinghy behind you and you tow me along?

Rebecca

Yes please. I'll throw you bread and seeds to eat.

They lie there in silence as the lights fade to black.