FREE FALL

by

Vinay Patel

Characters

Andrea (23), white, large, bank clerk

Roland (47), black, toll booth supervisor

Setting

The Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, Dartford, Kent

Vinay Patel
4 Wedgwood House
Lambeth
London
SE11 6LJ
07870313854
Vinayskpatel@gmail.com

SCENE 1

3.45.A.M. QE2 Bridge. Sound of an engine approaching, car headlights sweep across the scene. The engine stops. ANDREA steps out of the darkness. She's wearing a thin cardigan with bulging pockets.

In her fingers, she twiddles with a tiny hospital wrist strap.

She clambers onto the outermost girder of the bridge and clutches a support beam. She looks down.

Andrea: Wow.

She hops up and down, nervously.

Andrea: Right. Ok. Alright.

She shapes to jump a couple of times and, on the third, it looks as if she will, but she pulls back at the last minute and slaps herself on the forehead, shaking her head.

She reaches inside her cardigan, brings out a note, and looks for somewhere to leave it. She carefully places it beside her, and it flaps a little in the breeze. She puts her foot on top to stop it flying off. Not ideal.

Andrea: Errr....oh!

Lightbulb moment. From one of her pockets, she pulls out a small rock and leans down to place it on top of the note. In between her moving her foot and putting the rock down, the note flutters away into the night.

Andrea: Ah bollocks...

Shuffling footsteps. Andrea turns. ROLAND approaches. Eating nuts.

Andrea: What the fuck do you want?

Roland: Got 20p change for you.

Andrea: What?

Roland: For the toll. You overpaid. I see you were in a hurry.

Roland takes a few steps forward.

Andrea: Oi!

She raises the rock at him.

Andrea: Keep back!

Roland stops. Andrea looks out to the river. Roland starts to inch closer. Andrea notices.

Andrea: We're not playing Grandmother's fucking Footsteps! Stay away, or I'll jump!

Roland: Won't you jump anyway? I mean, why the hell else are you out there?

Andrea: Stay away...or I'll jump *sooner*.

Roland: Into there? The Thames? Shit, lady, you might as well piss into a glass and choke on that.

Andrea: I'd prefer the water if it's all the same with you.

Roland: I'm just trying to help.

Andrea: There's nothing you can say, or do: this is happening, I'm done.

Roland: Oh, I don't mind you killing yourself, love.

Andrea: Good.

Roland: I'd just rather you didn't do it *here*.

Andrea: What?

Roland: It'd just be a waste of everyone's time, after all.

Andrea: I'll try and make it quick, shall I?

Roland: It's not the time - I mean, you look like you'd drop pretty fast, no it's just that it's impossible.

Andrea: Is it? And how'd you figure that, smartarse?

Roland: You'll never clear the nets.

Andrea: (*Aghast*) You have nets here?

Roland: You think you're the first person to think of this? I mean, this bridge...you got Dartford one side, Thurrock on the other...we got people queuing up.

Andrea: Fuck. I can't see anything down there.

Roland: Mmm. Dark tonight...

Andrea: You're having me on. I've never seen any before.

Roland: S'not like you'd be looking out for them before. They're beauties though...

Andrea: I drive over this bridge every day. I would've noticed/...

Roland: ....very fine nets, they are. Truly lovely weaving. The pride of North West Kent.

Andrea looks at Roland. She points at him.

Andrea: You...are talking shit.

She turns back to the river.

Roland: Fine then. If you're gonna do it anyway, then yes, get on with it.

Andrea: What's it to you, anyway?

Roland: It's distracting! Every time I look up from the booth, I think "is that a heron? Is that some chubby heron? Oh no, it's that fat bird still."

Hypothetically...if there were no nets....

Andrea: So there are no nets?

Roland: Hypothetically speaking. Or for just in case you take your nonsense down river somewhere...what's your dive like? Cause if it's half-way decent, you'll go in proper, like a pen, but then you won't die straight away.

Andrea: **(***Looking at what's in her hand)* I got some rocks...

Roland: Oh, my, you haven't done your research, have you? You'll still have to go through the whole hassle of drowning. Could take minutes. Is that what you're looking for? That's not what you're looking for is it?

Andrea: Well...I haven't -

Roland: See, what you want to do is force yourself to flatten out so you hit it - SMASH-

He pounds his fist into the flat of his palm. Andrea flinches.

....so that it's like concrete. Now, that'll be against your natural instinct, but it's what you gotta do.

And all of this is only if you clear the nets.

Which you won't. So come down, get back in your car and I promise I'll find you a nice, long hose to stick in the exhaust.

Andrea considers this information.

Andrea: Right. Okay, so...you're telling me I definitely can't clear these nets?

Roland: Uhuh.

Andrea: Then you're going to have to give us a push.

Roland: Pardon?

Andrea: Yeah...yeah that should just about do it. Nice, swift push from a hefty bloke such as yourself. Send me over with a bit of zip.

Roland: And why the hell would I do that?

Andrea: I thought you said you wanted to help?

Roland: Yeah, but -

Andrea: Fucking well help me then.

Roland scratches the back of his hand.

Roland: Are you cold?

Andrea: ...yeah.

Roland takes a step closer. Andrea starts to back away.

Roland raises one hand to placate her, and throws his jacket with the other.

Andrea catches it and slips it on.

Roland: It's colder down in there, I assure you.

Andrea: Are you gonna push me or not?

Roland: I ain't pushing no one.

Andrea: Fuck you then, I'll stick with Plan A. Take my chances.

Roland: Alright, *you* do that, and *I'll* go call the fire department then if that's fine with you? May as well give 'em a heads up is all. It's a total hassle getting people out of them nets.

Andrea watches him go. He pauses.

Oh, and there's usually some sort of penalty slash admin fee. I don't know if you prefer to pay with cash or card or...I mean, you've got 20p right here, which is a start.

Andrea: D'you reckon I'd be out here if I had any sort of money?

Roland: No, I s'pose not. But it's ok, I think they do instalments.

Andrea: Great. They can bill me from Hell.

Roland: Good luck then.

Andrea, moves to jump, but stops just before she does.

Andrea: You'll probably be wanting the jacket back, I expect.

Roland: No, no, you keep it. You'll be needing it - bobbing about down there for a while, I imagine. Bloody freezing, knocked about by the winds and that.

He climbs out onto the girder and looks out.

Still, you'll get a real nice view of daybreak over the Estuary. All that smog really brings out the colours, y'know? Just watch out for the seagulls. They swoop down and peck at your eyes. Nasty fucks.

He starts climbing back off.

Andrea: Mmm.

Roland: (*Chirpy*) See you in a couple of/ hou...

Andrea jumps, screaming theatrically.

Roland: Fuck!

He peers over the edge.

Roland: That's my best jacket.

SCENE 2

4.30. A.M. Roland's office. Andrea, eyes closed, slumped in a chair in the middle. There is a large bruise on the side of her face and she is still wearing Roland's jacket, as well as several others, over her shoulders.

A large pile of rocks sit on the main table, next to a bottle of whiskey. On a file drawer by the window, there is a stack of dominos. There is a counter with a sink, a sorry looking microwave and a kettle.

A telephone lead is stretched outside, where Roland paces, making a call.

Andrea wakes with a start and checks herself over, panicked.

Outside, Roland puts the receiver down, lifts it and dials again.

Andrea calms as she takes in her surroundings. She spies the whiskey bottle, and moves towards it, immediately recoiling in pain. She winces, pushes her teeth together and tries again, a little slower this time.

As she does, Roland comes back in and puts the phone down.

Roland: (*to himself)* Useless.

He sees Andrea reaching.

Ah, the princess awakes.

Andrea: I'm alive?

He looks around.

Roland: If you're not, this is a fucking poor afterlife.

Roland becomes very aware of the whiskey bottle and casually attempts to stuff it into a drawer, watched closely by Andrea all the while.

Andrea: Who was that then?

Roland: What?

Andrea: On the phone. Police? Ambulance? Red Arrows?

Roland: No.

Andrea: Sure? Would make for a stylish send off that, Red Arrows flyby...

Roland: No, no one. I like having a job, thanks.

Andrea: You *like* your job? This job?

Roland: I said I liked *having* it. Need it. Not much else going around here.

Andrea: You'd get blamed for my nonsense, eh? Seems unfair. Maybe you should've called 999 in the first place.

Roland: Some poor copper doesn't need his tea going cold just because you've got a flair for the dramatic...

You calmed down now? Not in any hurry?

She nods her head towards the kettle.

Andrea: Well. Always got time for a brew.

Roland ignores her and pulls out the tiny hospital wrist strap.

Roland: "Tony Maycock". Are you allowed to just call kids "Tony"?

Andrea: That ain't yours.

Roland: I know that much, love, but is he yours?

Roland holds out the strap. Andrea grabs at it, but he yanks it beyond her grasp.

He holds it out again. Andrea dives for it, snatches it away and buries it in her blouse.

Roland: Is that all? You didn't leave a note or anything?

Andrea: Ah, shit, thanks for reminding me. If you could call my work tomorrow, and let 'em know that I won't be coming in...

Roland: Yeah yeah, alright.

Roland heads to the desk and plays with the rocks, He is bemused.

Roland: You were gonna use these? Wouldn't have done much. Little weights.

Andrea: Fuck off.

Roland: Hah. How's the leg?

Andrea: Dunno. Just a sec.

She stands up, thinks about it, then sits down slowly.

Andrea: Yep. That's a bit cunted, I'd say.

The phone rings. Roland stares at it dumbly.

Andrea: Well, it ain't gonna be for me, is it?

Roland slowly moves towards the phone and picks it up, reverently.

Roland: Hello? (*disappointed)* Alright boss? Uhuh...right...yes. Well..no, no it's fine now. No, just stepped out for a smoke. I mean, checking the approach for junk, but smoking while I...

Never again...Yeah, I know what'll...Yes, I mean yes, sir. Goodbye, sir.

(To Andrea) Christ. Sorry.

Andrea: Trouble at the mill?

Roland: Supervisor...

Andrea: Aren't *you* the supervisor?

Roland: Technically, yes.

Andrea: Do you actually supervise anyone?

Roland: Not really, no/

Andrea: So...he's the supervisor for the supervisor...who supervises no one?

Roland: ...yeah, I guess so.

Andrea: The job every child grows up wanting.

Roland: There's just this little alarm, probably had it linked to his brain. Tells him if you've gone away from the booth for too long. Officially it's so they know if you've been kidnapped or beaten up or something, but really it's to make sure you don't disappear. Nobody'd know otherwise. Just me out here with the machines.

Roland fills the kettle and turns it on.

Andrea: Is your name really Roland?

Roland: What?

Andrea: Your badge. It says.

Roland: Oh.

He examines his badge, as if for the first time.

Roland: ...Do you not think I can pull off Roland?

Andrea: You know, you just don't look very much like one. (*She considers what she's just said*) Is that racist? It's a bit racist, isn't it? Blame it on the concussion.

Roland: I won't tell anyone.

Andrea points to herself.

Andrea: Andrea. I don't look like one either.

Roland: Right.

Roland checks a computer terminal. Andrea swings her legs on the chair.

Andrea: Fun this.

Andrea looks around the empty office.

Andrea: Must be a good place for a cheeky tug.

That wasn't an offer. I mean you're alright looking, y'know for an older man and that and it's not I don't like black guys, it's just I'm not really/ in the.

Roland: Nice to talk to someone. Makes a change.

Andrea: Yeah?

Roland: Sure. All you get is the people in the cars. I've been having the same ten second conversation for the last decade.

The kettle boils. Andrea instinctively tries to go to it, but winces in pain.

Roland: Sit down.

She tries again. Roland pushes her back lightly as he goes to the kettle and pours the water.

Roland: You're some crazy bitch, you know.

Andrea: That's not language worthy of the service industry now, is it?

Roland: After what you just did, I reckon the description fits.

Andrea: Who knew scaffolding was so hard? Fuck.

Roland: Forgot about the painters. They ain't been here in weeks, but they just left the scaffolding up and fucked off, the slacking bastards.

Andrea: I thought you said there were nets. Finely woven nets.

Roland: Well/

Andrea: I believed you! I mean I coulda/...

Roland: I didn't think you were gonna do it!

Andrea: Neither did I...

Roland: You talk to a strange man for two minutes, he tells you that jumping off a bridge *won't* kill you and you believe him - that definitely makes you certifiable.

Andrea: What can I say? Your disregard for my continued existence was truly convincing. I'm sure they'd be polishing up your Oscar, just as soon as they hauled out my fish-nibbled carcass.

Roland scowls at the image.

Roland: There *should* be nets- it's just not very high on the expenditure list. Cheaper to let you drown. Owe your life to lazy workmen.

Andrea: Yeah, lucky me.

So considering you was the one that hauled me back up, is it you I owe the penalty fee to then?

Roland: First time's free, love. Besides, you're not as heavy as you look at first glance.

Andrea: Charming.

Roland: I mean it, you'd never have sunk.

Roland hands her a cup of tea. As she takes it, he stares at the side of her face.

Roland: Was that bruise there before?

Andrea: Can't you tell?

Roland: It was dark.

He tries to inspect her face. She brushes his hand away.

Andrea: Heh..Roland...Roland...I just thought of something.

Roland: Mmm?

Andrea: (*Singing*) Rolan', Rolan', Rolan'...Rolan', Rolan', Rolan'

Roland: ?

Andrea: (*More purposefully*) Rolan', Rolan', Rolan'...

Roland: ?!

Andrea: (*Almost tipping off her chair*) Rolan', Rolan', Rolan', RAWHIDE!

Roland studies Andrea's beaming face.

Roland: What was that?

Andrea: I know, bit of an embarrassment, really.

Roland: No, the song. What was it? Or rather, what's it *meant* to be?

Andrea: *Rawhide.*

Roland: What's *Rawhide*?

Andrea: Some old American show. Cowboys. Was on all the time in Downview. And that fat guy sings in it in that movie.

Roland looks no better informed.

I dunno, do I?!

You sing something, you're so good. No? Didn't think so. Dickhead.

Roland: Downview?

Andrea: A place they keep the naughty ladies. In fact, you ever seen *Bad Girls*?

Roland: No.

Andrea: Liar.

Roland: I haven't.

Andrea: Do you even own a TV? **(***She scratches a stain on her cup***)** Doesn't matter, was nothing like that anyway.

Roland: If you say so.

Andrea: Aren't you gonna ask me what it *was* like then?

Roland: I'm not that interested.

Andrea: Yeaaah you are. Go on...

He pours himself a cup of coffee.

Andrea: I've got a good line for it. It's the one I use for parties.

Roland: Fine. What was it like?

Andrea: Exactly like a men's prison, just you're allowed to wear a dress.

She waits for a laugh that isn't coming.

Roland: Y'know I got a kid about your age. He thinks he's funny too.

Andrea: You just don't get our humour, old timer.

Roland: Same height, he is..less clever, maybe. Less suicidal, hopefully.

Andrea: ...But you don't know? Worth asking about, that.

Roland: Can't. He's gone.

Andrea: Is he now?

Roland: Doesn't ever pick up his fucking phone....

Andrea: Where's he gone?

Roland: If he picked up, I'd know wouldn't I?

Andrea: Been a while then.

Roland drinks his coffee.

Andrea: I see. (*She sips from her tea)* Have you tried Facebook?

Roland shakes his head.

Bebo maybe. That's still big in Scotland, I hear. He might be there.

Roland: (*Not paying much attention*) Maybe.

Andrea: Worth a pop. Though I'd kill myself pretty sharpish if *I* was in Scotland...

Roland: What were you imprisoned for, crimes against sensitivity?

Andrea: Do you work alone 'cause everyone else thinks you're a cunt?

She stretches out. She picks up a domino.

Dominos?

Roland goes to the phone and starts dialling.

Roland: So being put away really got to you, hey? Is that why a nice, polite young lady like you is doing/ stupid.

Andrea: Young's *nothing* to do with it. Fuckssake., why'd you gotta be old before you're allowed to want to die?

She starts chewing on the domino.

Fucking hell.

Roland: And is swearing your answer to everything? It doesn't have an impact if you use it all the time...

He listens closely to the receiver. Nothing.

Andrea: (*In a Southern American accent*) Sorry, ma, I try to stop, but doc says there's nothin' can be done.

Andrea throws the domino at Roland. He slams the phone down.

Roland: Why don't you throw yourself off a bridge? I hear that's a popular fix.

Andrea picks up the domino that bounced off Roland.

Andrea: I hit someone.

Roland: What?

Andrea: That's why I was in. I hit a person. A few people.

Roland: That gets you a spell now, does it?

Andrea: I hit them pretty hard....so away I went.

Roland: I'm almost impressed.

And something happened in there that's led you up here?

Andrea: That's a theory.

How'd you play this anyway?

Roland: Dunno.

Andrea: Yeaaaah you do. You must do.

Roland: Don't think you can play it by yourself.

Andrea: Then why the fuck'd you have 'em?

Roland: They're just here, ok? Here before I was. Mostly, when I'm bored...I just, y'know, stack 'em up. Keep on building til it falls over, and then I build it again. Heh, although, sometimes, right, sometimes...if I get it really big, I mean like you can get it to up *here* if you're careful, I take the stress ball, stand back by the window and try knocking it down. Boom! Fifty points if they all come down.

Twenty for a partial.

It's fun.

Andrea: Jesus. And I thought working at the bank was bad.

Roland: See? Always something worse. Not worth doing something drastic about.

Andrea: Yeah, well, my job, though lacking the glamour of the rock and roll toll booth lifestyle, isn't why I'm here.

Although I am starting to wonder why you're not topping yourself. I mean, people fight for the right to die before they lose their dignity. Imagine what they'd make of you!

Sorry. Unnecessary, that. Hey - we could go together! Like a synchronised dive team.

Roland: I don't think I have the figure.

Andrea: In this light, you could probably get away with it, so best be getting on with it while we can.

Roland: Stop it now.

Andrea: Stop what?

Roland: It's boring. All this...you don't even want to do it, yeah? Not really.

Andrea: Hah...

Roland: You were shaking. Think I didn't spot that? You were up there waiting, just waiting for some chump like me to notice you.

Andrea: Oh was I?

Roland: That's all you're after, isn't it? Spent a few years out of sight and now you want people to look. Look at you again, pay attention. That's all this is.

How selfish. How fucking selfish you are.

Andrea smiles at him, bemused but there's something vicious in it.

Andrea: I'll tell you something, shall I - that jump just now, I'll admit it, I was scared, of course I was scared, and I think in the end I mostly did it to spite you, strangely enough, but y'know what? It was great. Just what I needed.

Roland: Shut up.

Andrea: I mean it. That thrill, that freedom, brief, it was brief, but it was right. Knowing - *finally!* - this was it, this was the moment I would be done with it. There, in the free fall, was bliss.

How'd you like that, eh? I didn't know just how much I wanted to kill myself 'til I tried killing myself. Always good to be sure, I guess.

She starts to build a domino tower.

Roland: I fucking told you to/ shut.

Andrea: See, nothing happened in Downview, Roland. Least nothing big like you're thinking. I have just calmly accepted, like an adult, that I don't want to teeter along no more, hoping that it's all going to get better. Trapped hoping.

They try to get you to make little changes. Little things to get you by. But they aren't enough, they never stick. It's something big in here, something has gone totally wrong. No, was always wrong, and it's not the kinda thing that feels like you can get fixed.

Roland attempts to speak, but she cuts him off, predicting his response, while delicately placing a domino on the increasingly tall tower.

Yeah, you get good days. Where everything is great. Where you want to live your life for other people, give them everything - stop being some mopey, selfish bitch.

You even get it into your head that maybe there's a chance you can change, be alright, that you can solve everything before bedtime.

But you still wake up broken the next morning and what you come to realise, is that those good days are exactly what you've always suspected they are. Too little paint over too many cracks. Not like something that'd last more than five minutes, even though you wish for nothing else. I mean today...today felt like it'd be a good day.

So. You can cope, or you can die. And Mr. Roland, I am so very, very tired of coping. It's the worst kind of existence. I'd rather take the drop, the thrill, the end.

A pause. Roland in deep thought.

Roland: Can you not just go Alton Towers, like normal people?

Andrea laughs politely. Roland smiles back at her.

Roland: What about your boy, hey? You got responsibilities, he'll need you.

Andrea: Oh, no no, please don't worry about him, he's sorted, he's got mum, his dear old grannie. They wouldn't let me keep him, so she took him in, brung him up. She's a heinous cow, and I hate her, always have, but tell you the truth, she's good with him and I don't think I know how to be a mum anyways.

I tried, I did try. It's all I looked forward to my whole time inside. First thing I'd do when I got out - hug him, squeeze him 'til his little eyes popped out.

He was there when I walked through the gate, in the car, waiting quietly

like an angel, just like the pictures she sent me. He wouldn't get out though, so I had to lean my self over, got my arms half around him, half tangled in the seat belt. I squeezed.

And he bloody hated it. Looked at me like I'd just tucked my hands down his pants or something.

She picks up the stress ball on the side, and starts to pump it.

No worries, I figured that might happen. So I made him his favourite, right....meatballs and mash, the exact recipe his gran makes him, but he didn't like it. Sulked for two hours that I'd done it wrong. Identical. Just cause she didn't make it. Cow. Tried for months and then...well, soon he wouldn't even look at me. Nothing worked. So this morning I try and *make* him look.

Even worse idea than it sounds. He just whacks me in the face and runs off to gran. Hard hands for a five year old, I'll give him that.

Roland: Kids'll be like that sometimes, you...you just gotta..../

Andrea: I wanted to hit him back, yeah? Bash his little face right in. I saw myself doing it in my mind, and that's when I realised...

She wheels the chair back a little towards the window.

But...still...could be worse. I could be working day after shitty day, surviving to work *another* shitty day, hoping to find some justification for my air sucking, while the bills stack up and my parts drop off.

He doesn't need me. He's safe and I know he'll be happy. Very happy. The rest is just noise.

She lobs the stress ball at the tower. It collapses.

Andrea: (*Grimly cheerful*) Fifty points. *(She looks out)* Sky's lightening up - time I got back to it.

Roland: Go home, yeah? Think it over.

Andrea: Couldn't possibly drive in a state like this, could I? There's probably blood seeping out of my brain.

Roland: I'll take you.

Andrea: Aren't you forgetting...

Roland: ...the alarm...

Andrea: The alarm, right. Luckily, my solution sorts both our problems.

Roland: A fucking cab then. Please.

Andrea: I really don't think either of us could afford that.

She starts to get up. Roland pushes her. down She misses the chair and tumbles backwards onto the floor.

Roland: Oh Christ.

Andrea rises - slowly- with a regal dignity. Roland rushes in to help, but she raises her palm to stop him.

Andrea: (*Brushing herself off*) See, in my experience, the trick is to hit 'em so that they don't get up again.

She continues towards the door.

Roland: No.

Andrea: We can do this all night, but you know you won't stop me, right?

Roland grabs her arm.

Roland: I could.

Andrea: I would scream so loud/ you

Roland: To who? The oil depot? The container ships? The eye pecking seagulls? There's no one around here. There's never no-one around here, 'cept for people like me.

Andrea: And people like me.

Roland stares at Andrea. Looking at her properly for the first time. He relaxes his grip.

Roland: Yeah, well, the people like you don't tend to hang around very long.

Andrea doesn't move. Roland slumps into the chair.

Don't even get the chance to talk to them. The jumpers here...usually the police come, push me away, then spend two hours trying to talk them down.

And they jump anyway. Every time. Same thing over and over. I see 'em through the window, little black darts slipping through the lights and vanishing into the river.

You can hear the splash from here.

Andrea: And you thought you could do better?

Roland: Why not?

Andrea: Well, I give you marks for effort though your technique could do with finessing.

If you're itching to switch jobs though, there's about to be an opening at the bank.

He laughs, very weakly but he is out of the moment. Andrea, hobbling starts to collect her things.

Roland: I just...I always hope that it's for the best...

Roland picks up and plays with the rocks.

Roland: You'll be needing these, won't you? Just in case.

He throws a small rock at Andrea.

Andrea: Oh! Yes...don't want another cock up.

She starts pocketing them, one by one. Roland observes her closely.

Roland: Got something heavier around the back if you fancy it.

Andrea: Think I'll be alright.

Roland: Or I can probably still find you that hose...

Andrea: (*Warmly*) It's fine, Roland.

Roland: Just trying to help.

Andrea: Yeah, I know. Flat out, right? Not a pen.

Roland: Right. Just like you're flying.

Andrea, on her way out the door, gives a short wave. Roland is utterly dejected.

Andrea: Best of luck with it all though, yeh? I'm sure your kid's...that he's...well..you'll stop someone who wants stopping someday.

Roland: (*As she walks away)* Will you drink to that? Before you go? Call it a penalty fee.

Andrea considers. She shuffles back and pulls the whiskey bottle from its hiding place.

Andrea: One for the road.

SCENE 3

9. A.M. Roland's flat. Cramped, filled with photos. Roland enters, swaying, whistling the 'Rawhide' theme tune intermittently.

He knocks his thigh into the telephone table.

Roland: Ugh.

Shoving the table out of the way, he wanders to the drinks cabinet, pulls out a bottle of rum, two glasses and sits down. He pours lots into one glass, and a little into the other.

He clinks them together, downs one and starts to sip the other. He begins to pour again, when the phone rings. Roland reaches back on his chair, stretching, and just about gets it without falling.

Roland: Heeey there. Howsit going? No...No I...Yes, the alarm, I'm not there, boss. Walked home, no state to drive...wouldn't want to kill anyone. Uhuh. Uhuh. No...no...I...Fuck off. Sorry, fuck off *sir.*

He puts the phone down satisfied. He takes stock of himself.

He reaches back to the phone grabs the handset and dials a number. No answer, the barely audible rabbiting of an answer phone followed by a beep. Roland spies a photo in the corner and stumbles towards it, dragging the handset behind him.

Roland: If you ain't ever gonna pick up, I'm telling you anyways now, you selfish bastard. You don't get away from me that easily!

He grab the photo frame and clears his throat.

Roland: Sorry....sorry.

So I met a girl today. On the bridge. You'd like her. About your age, I reckon. Maybe a bit older. You'd get on well...suicidal urges aside.

We had a nice drink together. I laughed, she laughed. All going well. I beg her to stay a bit longer. But nothing doing. She goes out there again, and I'm thinking that's that, which is a real shame, but not a minute later she's yelling, yelling my name! Or so she tells me after that she was. I didn't hear it first time, I think I was trying to call you again, so she sings it out, like before. Like that song. Rolan', Rolan', Rolan'...I don't know if you know it, but I rush out thinking she's finally found her senses. "I can't do it", she says. "I just can't jump." Thank God I tell her. "No", she says, she can't get the leverage, the distance. It's the leg.

"Still cunted", as she'd put it.

And so, I don't know why, I think I've gone a bit crazy, or maybe the drink got to me quick, but I go and sit with her. Right next to her, strung out on that girder. I bet you reckon I'd try make a move, but your old man ain't that kinda dog. Your age, boy, your age.

But she did tell me I had nice eyebrows, which is exactly what your mum used to say to me when we were going out...

Anyways, she hugged me, and I hugged her, and as she pulled away I feel my hand sitting on the curve of her shoulder and she's looking at my eyebrows now, and my hand it slides down the middle of her back and, well...I pushed her.

Hard shove, clear off the edge.

She was light too. Lighter than you'd expect, must not have been eating much the last few days. And no scream when I did it - no sound at all, she just looked pleased, grateful, maybe, having someone there with her at the end, like...like...a witness at a wedding, 'cause most of us don't get that, won't get that.

I imagine if you were here now you'd be telling me: "Now Dad...*that* was a fucking stupid thing to do" and I couldn't tell you why I done it really, just felt right to me. In the moment. Felt like the best thing I'd ever done for anyone.

He walks to the window and peers down the street.

I'm not certain, but, just as she disappeared, I think she was waving.

Could've been the tumbling and that, but it looked like waving. I waved back, and then, well, then she was gone.

I kept watching the water 'til the Sun came up. Took a while, but it's worth it. You get some wonderful sunrises climbing out of that water, all just for you.

Boy - I don't know where you are. Don't know what you're doing....don't know what you've done. But I hope you least got someone there with you, seeing you through.

He tosses the handset and receiver back towards the table. They crash on the ground.

Y'know, I didn't hear a splash.

Lights down