

The background of the book cover is a vertical gradient from bright yellow at the top to deep red at the bottom. Several pieces of clear, shattered glass are scattered across the surface, with some sharp edges and reflections. The text is centered and overlaid on this background.

MURDER

IN LOCKDOWN

BY JOSH WHITTINGHAM

SYNOPSIS

When Police Constable Sean Cargill returns home from a long shift on the beat, all he wants to do is phone his lover, Bella Hickson. However, Sean soon discovers that something is wrong with Bella and is forced to make the most troubling moral decision of his life. Starring Sean Alton and Zoe Hughes, *Murder in Lockdown* tells a twisted tale of love, abuse and murder against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. Produced for HULL IS THIS.

CAST AND CREW

PC Sean Cargill
Bella Hickson

Sean Alton
Zoe Hughes

Written by
Produced by

Josh Whittingham
Jerome Whittingham

Music

"Two Face" by Causmic
"Spirit of the Dead" by Aakash Gandhi

SCENE 1: INT. PC SEAN CARGILL'S HOUSE

POLICE CONSTABLE SEAN CARGILL HAS
RETURNED FROM A LONG DAY AT WORK.

SEAN: (V.O). My name is Police Constable Sean Cargill. I've just got back from a tiring shift on the beat with my friend Gav - PC Gavin Jenkins. We spent a gruelling twelve-hour shift trying to herd the sheep that were refusing to comply with social-distancing, as well as breaking up a fight in the local supermarket: two young, single mums fighting over toilet roll, hand sanitizer and cans of chicken soup. (laughs) What kind of world are we living in? Madness, pure madness. It wasn't police work: it was babysitting. But someone has to do it. It's my job and I'm proud of it.

Now that I'm back in this dump of a flat, all I want to do is ring Bella. Bella Hickson is my lover. We've been seeing each other for about six months. We met each other before lockdown started. I already know that I love her. She's got a body to die for, and a personality to match. But there's just one problem: Connor Hickson, her husband.

FX: MOBILE DIALLING

SEAN: Hello? Bella? It's me, Sean. Are we safe to talk?

BELLA: (phone) Sean! Thank God you called.

SEAN: (concerned) Babe, what's the matter?

BELLA: (phone) Oh I've had an absolutely dreadful time, Sean, I really have.

SEAN: (angry) What's he done to you?

BELLA: (phone) I don't want to talk about it.

BELLA: (phone, hesitant). He knows.

SEAN: (confused) He knows? Knows what, Babe?

BELLA: (phone) He knows about us, Sean.

SEAN: Shit!

BELLA: (phone) He caught me texting you earlier and went crazy.

SEAN: What happened?

BELLA: (phone, crying) We had a fight. He hit me. Over and over and over again.

SEAN: Bastard! Are you alright, Bella?

BELLA: (phone) He smashed a glass over me. I tried to fight back...

SEAN: I'll kill him if he ever lays a finger on you again, I swear it, Bella. I should have made you leave him. I should never have let you quarantine with that... that monster. I'm a cop. I should know better. I know better than most that there are hundreds of people up and down the country right now stuck inside with abusers like Connor.
(pause) I'm sorry, Bella. I shouldn't have let this happen to you.

BELLA: (phone) He said if I ever tried to talk to you again he'd kill me.

SEAN: Babe, where is he? You're putting yourself in danger talking to me right now. You did the right thing in telling me, but if he catches you...

BELLA: (phone). He won't.

SEAN: (authoritative) Right, I'm coming round there. I'm gonna arrest him. This will all be over soon, Bella.

BELLA: (phone, anxious) No, don't do that, Sean.
(unconvincing) I'm fine, honestly.

SEAN: He assaulted you, Babe! It's abuse. I won't take this any longer. You don't have to worry anymore, Bella.

BELLA: (phone, anxious) Just wait, Babe, please. I've done something stupid. (pause) He's dead.

SEAN: (V.O). "He's dead". Just two words. But they had such a powerful impact. They left an imprint on my brain. They echoed over and over in my mind, sending shockwaves down my spine. I was shocked. Dumbfounded. I felt a deep, curdling sickness rising through my body. I felt like I was going to explode.

BELLA: (phone, frantic). It was an accident, Sean. I swear! He was going to kill me. He said if I ever spoke to you again he'd kill me. He said that, Sean. He said that to me. I couldn't let him. I have to talk to you. (pause) I love you, Sean.

SEAN: How did you kill him, Bella?

BELLA: (phone) I picked up one of the broken fragments of glass and stabbed him. Right through the stomach. (pause) But I didn't mean to kill him. I just wanted him to stop hitting me. (pause) He went all pale and sort of collapsed. Blood oozed out of him. (worried) There's blood everywhere, Sean!

(pause) What am I going to do?

SEAN: (annoyed) What are you going to do? What am I going to do more like! I'm a cop, Bella. You've just confessed to a crime. I should be arresting you.

BELLA: (phone) You know what he was like. He was a monster - you said it yourself. I had to defend myself.

(pause) What are you going to do?

SEAN: (frustrated) I don't know. God. I don't know, Bella. Shit.

(pause) I need to think. I'll ring you later, Bella.

SEAN HANGS UP THE PHONE.

SEAN: (V.O). What am I supposed to do? I'm faced with an impossible situation. Do I follow my duty as a police officer or do I protect my lover? A member of the public has just reported a crime to me. A murder. They've killed their husband. I should act. I have a duty to act. I know the perpetrator's address. I could get around there in minutes and arrest them.

But the perpetrator is Bella. My girlfriend, Bella. The love of my life. Does that make a difference? And the victim, Connor Hickson. He was a monster: an abusive husband. Surely that makes a difference? I can't tell you how many times Bella has called me in distress, telling me of all the things that Connor had done to her. He tormented her. But he never physically hurt her. Not until now.

Is this my fault? I knew what he was doing to Bella all this time. We'd been talking behind his back for months. And I'm a police officer. I should have done something. But I didn't. And now Connor Hickson is dead. Bella has killed him. (pause) She's the sweetest girl. If you knew her, you'd understand. She's not a natural-born killer, whatever one of those is, anyway. I'm partly responsible, aren't I?

So what do I do? If I'm partly responsible for what's happened, I should be handing myself in as well as Bella, shouldn't I? (pause) Can I bring myself to do that?

(pause) I need to make a decision.

SEAN RINGS BELLA AGAIN

FX: MOBILE DIALLING

BELLA: (phone) Hello?

SEAN: Bella. It's me. (confident) This is what we're going to do...

THE END