



FOR THE RECORD

BY JOSH WHITTINGHAM

TRANSCRIPT

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For The Record tells the story of Detective Chief Inspector Jane Raven, a detective whose last case is hampered by the early onset of dementia. While her memories of the past are strong, Jane is having trouble remembering her last case as a detective before she was forced to take early retirement. However, one name keeps circling around in her mind: Lydiard. But what significance does it have to Jane's final case?

CAST AND CREW

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Produced by Jerome Whittingham

Music "Nostalgia" by Aussens@iter

Additional sounds Zapsplat.com

For The Record was first broadcast at 12pm on 7th January 2021 on West Hull FM (106.9FM) and released digitally as podcast on HULL IS THIS at 9pm the same day.

SCENE 1:

**INT. RETIREMENT HOME, GREATER LONDON -
NIGHT**

FX:

RAIN HITTING THE WINDOW, RUMBLING
THUNDER

RECORDING BEGINNING

JANE:

(to herself) Hello? Is this thing on? How do I tell? Is there a little red light on? Ah yes! We must be good to go.

(pause) To whoever's listening to this, I'm DCI Jane Raven of the Metropolitan Police. (sighs) Sorry, *former* DCI Jane Raven. I suppose I should get used to that, now. (pause) Sorry about the noise. It seems there's a storm brewing.

Memories are funny things, aren't they? For some people they're as clear as a serene pond on an English summer's afternoon. But for others they're like a violent, stormy sea. The conditions are so bleak that nothing can be salvaged. That's what my memories are like, or so I'm told.

Six months ago, I was diagnosed with early-onset dementia. Alzheimer's. Apparently fifty-five is young to get dementia. (sarcastic) Who would have guessed? Things had started going wrong for me at work. I started to forget key details about the cases I was working on - the cases I was in charge of. At first it was little things, like minor, insignificant details. But I was a bloody good detective and I used to pride myself on noticing those little details that no one else picked up on.

(sighs) Now I can barely remember the last case I was working on. I was more or less forced to take early retirement. I could afford to retire on a full pension as I'd spent more than thirty years on the job, so that was something. It helped me afford to live in this place. But I can't afford to sit here, in this beige care home, feeling sorry for myself.

JANE (CONT'D):

The last case I was working on six months ago was never solved. I need to solve it. Not out of any desire for justice, or the truth, or to help a grieving family. None of those. I need to solve it for myself. So I can go out on a high. I want to be remembered as a sort of combination of Scott and Bailey, a bad-ass, fierce female cop, not Miss Marple, sitting in some care home knitting while nurses spoon porridge down my throat. (pause) But I can't remember. (sighs) That's the nature of the beast. I can't remember who the victim was. I don't even remember their gender. Sounds silly, doesn't it? Pathetic.

The only thing I remember about my last case is a name. One name, rattling around in my empty, echoing head. Lydiard. An unusual name, isn't it? For me, it was a name that struck fear into the heart of our community in the late 80s and early 90s. Victor Lydiard. He was a brutal killer. Today he would've been described as a serial killer. It was a name that haunted me for many years. A name I hoped I'd never have to hear again. (laughs) When I was diagnosed with dementia, a part of me was relieved. There are things that I've seen over my career that would be better off forgetting. Lydiard's crimes were one of those.

So why is his name swirling around in my mind, like a vulture circling the skies, looking for prey? It's something to do with the last case I was working on, of that I am sure. But it's useless. I can't remember. (pause) It was only six months ago, but the memories are already beginning to rot. They're slipping away quickly... too quickly... I can't stop them. Try as I might, I can't. It's hopeless. (pause) That's why I'm making this tape. I want to remember. I don't want any other precious memories to tumble into that black chasm and fade forever.

JANE (CONT'D):

People rely on my memories. I rely on my memories. A copper without her mental capacity is like... is like... what are they like? A surgeon without a knife? Or a soldier without a gun? They're useless; helpless, even.

Where do I start with this story? (pause) At the very beginning would be best, wouldn't it? (pause) Yes. It was a quiet, cool summer's night in 1987. (laughs) Ah yes, I can remember it like it was yesterday. Well, better than yesterday because yesterday is... a blank. (relieved) My short term memory might have been beaten within an inch of its life like some poor corpse at a crime scene, but my memories of the past are as vivid as ever. That's something I can cling on to, at least.

I was a young and ambitious police constable in 1987. That night, I was walking home through Primrose Hill after a long day on the beat. I used to enjoy those walks - gave me a chance to clear my head. Wasn't easy being a young, female police officer in a man's world. I loved the view of the city from up there - it was electric. I used to feel as though I was on top of the world, despite being a northerner so far away from home. But there was something unsettling in the air that night. Every little noise made me jump. The bushes rustling in the wind. Car engines creeping along in the distance. The faint sound of a Belinda Carlisle track blaring out from one of the nearby pubs. I felt as though I was being watched. I could feel eyes burning into my back. I felt naked and exposed. Every inch of my body shivered.

But then I heard a terrible sound. A terrifying, high-pitched scream. I saw a woman in a short skirt, a fur coat and stilettos running towards me. I can picture The smell of her perfume in her mind. Funny, aren't they, the things you remember? She was as pale as a ghost. There was an unsettling fear in her eyes. Like a fool, I ran in the direction that she'd come from. I knew there was something wrong. I was right.

JANE (CONT'D):

That's when I saw it. At first I thought it looked like a pile of clothes - just an innocent pile of clothes - lying on the path. But I knew what it was. I walked over to it and examined it more closely. (pause) It was the body of a young adult male. He couldn't have been any older than twenty, I thought. He was lying in a pool of his own blood. (horrified) The blood was crimson red and sticky. It looked as if it was curdling as it lay splashed out on the stone path. The man's clothes were torn and bloody. I could see several knife wounds in the man's chest. (frantic) I tried to count... five... six... seven... eight? I lost count after a while. I could feel my knees trembling. My palms were sweaty. My hands shook as I stood there speechless. It was as though I was paralysed. I must have looked like a ghost as I stood there staring, transfixed by the lump of flesh, blood and bone that lay huddled in front of me.

I remember reaching for my radio and screaming for backup. Within minutes, the detectives and the Crime Scene Investigators arrived and began to investigate the scene. The body was later identified as Lawrence Blacklock. He was nineteen years old. His life was tragically cut short - cut short by Victor Lydiard. Lydiard preyed on young, vulnerable, homosexual men. (somber) There were plenty of them in the 80s, sadly, just ripe for the picking. Lawrence had been kicked out of his house by his father after coming out as gay. (shudders) Such a wasted life! But Lawrence wasn't the only one. It took me five years to get Lydiard. (frustrated) Nobody else believed there was a connection between the murders of countless gay men. My superiors wouldn't listen to a young, tiresome female officer. But I got that bastard in the end. And it felt good.

Lydiard. So why is that name going round and round in my head now? It's gotta be connected to the last case I investigated somehow, that much I'm sure of. If only I could remember. (frustrated) It's hopeless. All I can see is that huddle lying in the park in a pool of its own blood. Only it's not Lawrence Blacklock. And it's not 1987.

JANE (CONT'D):

(terrified) I can see him, Lydiard, lying there in the park in a bloody mess. There's knife wounds in his chest - so many knife wounds! Blood is spraying out of his lifeless corpse like some kind of grotesque fountain. I'm standing over what's left of his body.

He's dead. Lydiard is dead. (triumphant) That's it! That was the last case I was working on. It must have been. The murder of Victor Lydiard. It's all coming back to me now. Lydiard. He was found dead six months ago on Primrose Hill, in exactly that same spot that I'd found his first victim all those years ago. He'd only been released from prison a month or so before his death. Someone had waited thirty years to get at him. Criminal justice wasn't enough.

(pause) But there's something else. (horrified) I can feel something cold and metallic in my hand. There's a faint tip-tapping sound, so faint I can barely hear it. Blood. Blood is dripping from the jagged weapon in my hand. (shocked) The... the knife. The knife that killed Victor Lydiard. I drop it in a panicked frenzy and try to scream, but no sound comes out of my dry throat. Lydiard is dead. Murdered. (panicking) Oh God! What have I done? (pause) Was it me?

The knife that killed him is in my hand. Is it a memory? Is my mind playing tricks on me? Did I kill Victor Lydiard after so many years of sleepless nights and haunted dreams? (crying, scared) I don't know. I just don't know. It was six months ago. My memories from that time have decomposed beyond all recognition. I can't remember. I wish I did.

THUNDER AND RAIN STOP

JANE (CONT'D):

(pause) Or do I? (pause, calmer) No. I don't want to remember. I *really* don't want to remember. Some memories are best forgotten.

THE END