

PRESS GANG

Series 5 Episode 2

FRIENDLY FIRE

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Episode 39

Episode 2 "FRIENDLY FIRE"

CHARACTER LIST

Principals

Lynda
Sarah
Spike
Julie
Frazz
Colin

Sullivan
Matt Kerr
Doctor (Sc 227-230)

Background

Mike
Pupils
School Staff

SET LIST

INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM
INT. SCHOOL HALL
INT. SCHOOL CORRIDORS
INT. SCHOOL PHOTOCOPY ROOM
INT. LYNDA'S BEDROOM
INT. SPIKE'S FLAT
INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR
INT. HOSPITAL WARD

201 EXT. JUNIOR GAZETTE OFFICES. NIGHT. 201

We fade in close on the "Junior Gazette" sign taped to the window. We crane up so that we are looking through the glass down the length of the darkened corridor.

At the far end light is streaming from the newsroom doors.

202 PHOTOGRAPH. 202

We are panning along a line of grainy teenage faces in a black and white school photograph. We come to a halt on Lynda's face grinning with characteristic confidence into the camera.

203 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT. 203

A shot of Lynda's empty chair. We hold on this for a moment.

The reverse angle on Sarah as she stands staring at the chair. Her face is forlorn, empty. Slowly she shakes her head as if in regret.

204 PHOTOGRAPH. 204

This we are panning in the opposite direction, another set of monochrome teenagers. This time we hold on Sarah smiling back at us with characteristic diffidence.

205 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT. 205

A side-on shot as Sarah stands staring sadly at Lynda's chair. She stays this way for a moment.

Then she turns, walks slowly out of shot.

206 PHOTOGRAPH. 206

Another angle on the same photograph. We now see that Lynda and Sarah are standing next to one another, leaning in together slightly and grinning at the camera. Very definitely schoolgirl chums.

Over this we fade up the episode title:

"Friendly Fire"

207 INT. SPIKE'S FLAT. NIGHT.

207

Close on phone as it rings. A hand reaches awkwardly into shot, lifts the receiver and pulls it down to where Spike is slumped on the sofa vacantly watching television.

SPIKE

Yeh?

208 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT.

208

Intercut with Spike's flat as required.

Sarah is at her desk. She has the phone on the "hands-free" facility so that she doesn't have a receiver to hold. A few sheets of notepaper lie before her, covered in handwriting.

SARAH

I'm going to read you a letter. I want your opinion.

Spike has sat up in surprise at her voice.

SPIKE

Where are you?

SARAH

Newsroom.

SPIKE

I thought - ...

SARAH

I know. Can I read you this?

Spike frowns, plainly puzzled at this turn of events.

SPIKE

Like you need my advice on prose style.

SARAH

Spike, this is important.

Spike is silent for a moment, hesitating.

SPIKE

I thought you were quitting today. Why are you still at the office?

SARAH

(Doesn't want to talk about it)
Look, I just want your opinion on this, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

208 CONTINUED:

Spike considers this, still puzzled, still troubled.

SPIKE

You know my opinion. You don't do this with a letter, you do it face to face.

Sarah looks at the sheets of notepaper on her desk, seems almost to brace herself. She glances for a moment at the school photograph also lying there.

209 PHOTOGRAPH

209

A close shot of Sarah and Lynda grinning at the camera together.

210 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT.

210

She takes the notepaper from the desk, settles back in her chair to read it. As she does so she glances again at Lynda's empty chair facing her across the room. This makes her hesitate - but only for a moment.

SARAH

"Dear Friend - and I hope, after this, you still are my friend."

SPIKE

Of course she will be. You know that.

SARAH

Just listen.

SPIKE

I'm listening!

SARAH

"I made a difficult decision today - one I think you might hate me for."

SPIKE

That's not true!

SARAH

(Impatient)

Spike, please!

SPIKE

(Placatory)

I'm listening, I'm listening!

Sarah looks at the letter in front of her for a moment before she resumes.

(CONTINUED)

210 CONTINUED:

SARAH

"I have my reasons, of course. I think they're good ones. But that's how the story ends, right? And you're always telling everyone around here the best place to start is the beginning.

From here we start a very slow dissolve to...

211 INT. SCHOOL HALL. DAY.

211

... a high shot of the Norbridge High school hall. Desks are laid out in exam formation and an exam is in progress.

SARAH (Cont. during dissolve)

Okay. Since I'm going to be way out of range of your advice from now on maybe I should take it this one last time.

We have started to crane down on the frantically writing students, homing in on one blonde head.

SARAH (V.O.)

Once upon a time, long before there ever was a Junior Gazette, there once was an English exam. And a girl called Sarah.

We have now craned down to a face-on shot of Sarah as we knew her in her final years at school. She is sitting quite near the front of the hall, scribbling diligently away.

SARAH (V.O.)

And a girl called - ...

HOWARD (Off)

(a furious whisper)

Lynda!!

Sarah looks up from her work, startled. A few feet from her Lynda has just come strolling nonchalantly into the exam hall. She is looking with some affront and surprise at Mr Howard - supervising the exam - who is now glaring at her.

LYNDA

(Also in a whisper but loud enough for Sarah to follow the conversation)

Got a problem, sir?

Howard taps his watch, angrily.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED:

HOWARD

This exam started fifteen minutes ago!

LYNDA

(Reassuring)

Well it was supposed to - relax, you're doing fine.

HOWARD

Why weren't you here?

LYNDA

(A little indignant)

Come on, sir, I always finish half an hour early. And you said, no sandwiches.

Shot of Sarah, somewhat intimidated by this news. She goes back to her work.

HOWARD (Wearily)

Go to your seat, Lynda!

LYNDA

(Grumbling as she goes)

I mean I'm top every time. And this is the thanks I get.

As Lynda heads to a vacant desk Sarah glances cautiously up at her - just as Lynda glances in her direction. Sarah looks quickly away, going back to her work.

Lynda looks over at Sarah, frowning. Something is disturbing her. She turns and heads back to Howard who has resumed his place at the supervising desk. He looks up thunderously as Lynda approaches.

LYNDA

(Leaning confidentially across desk)

Who's the blonde, sir?

HOWARD

Will you just get to your seat, please.

Sarah has looked worriedly up again, concerned that she is the subject of this whispered conversation.

LYNDA

New girl? If you're changing the line-up, I'd prefer to know. What's her form? Any weak spots?

HOWARD

This is an exam, Lynda - not a competition!

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED:(2)

LYNDA (Ironic)

Oh, so you won't be giving out marks this time?

Howard stares at her, blazingly angry.

HOWARD (Vengefully)

Her name's Sarah Jackson and she's quite brilliant. Probably better than you are.

Lynda glances over at Sarah, disquieted. Sarah goes quickly back to her work.

HOWARD

(Guiltily registering Sarah's reaction)

She also gets a little nervous during exams. So if you wouldn't mind...

He gestures for Lynda to go to her desk.

LYNDA

(As she goes; winking at him)

Thanks for the tip!

HOWARD

That wasn't a - ...

But she is already heading away. Howard shakes his head, wearily, goes back to his work.

Lynda selects a vacant desk a couple of rows over from Sarah but level with her.

Sarah glances up nervously. Lynda fixes her with an intimidating stare. Sarah flinches away from it.

Lynda sits. With a great show of casualness, she picks up the exam paper, flicks idly through it.

Sarah covertly glances over at her.

Fully aware that she is being observed, Lynda gives a derisory chuckle at the paper she is reading, indicating that she finds it all contemptibly easy. She darts a quick look at Sarah to see how this is going down.

Sarah looks quickly away, back to her work.

From his desk, Howard is watching Lynda darkly.

Lynda produces a biro from her pocket. She puts it on the desk with a loud click. She glances significantly at Sarah, who has glanced up at the noise. Holding her gaze, Lynda reaches back into her pocket, produces another biro. Click! And another. Click! A veritable arsenal of bios is building up on the desk top.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED:(3)

Enraged, Howard springs down to his feet, strides over to Lynda.

HOWARD

(Furious whisper)

What do you think you are doing??

LYNDA

Psyching her out. I think I can take her.

Furious, Howard looks quickly around, locates another vacant desk a few rows behind Sarah.

HOWARD

(Pointing to desk; still raging)

Over there where she can't see you! We're going to have words about this, Lynda!!

Lynda gives him a sulky look - genuinely unaware of what she is supposed to have done wrong - and gathers her stuff together.

As she does so she looks resentfully over at Sarah - to see that Sarah is looking resentfully right back at her. The look holds for the briefest moment - It is a definite challenge.

Lynda walks quickly to her new desk, yanks out the chair, sits down...

Howard shakes his head angrily at her, starts to head back to the supervising desk...

With Howard looking the other way, Sarah takes a quick look round at Lynda now a few desks behind her.

Lynda holds her look, challengingly. She puts her pen to her mouth, bites off the top, spits it to the floor...

Sarah's face sets. She's not taking any more of this! She turns back to her paper, launches back into her work with a new vengeful vigour...

Lynda responds in kind, flipping open her exam paper and flexing her writing hand.

The race is on!

Shot of the hall clock. 1:50

Shot of Sarah, her pen flying across the page! She glances round at Lynda.

Lynda also is writing for dear life. She glances momentarily up at Sarah without missing a pen stroke...

Shot of clock. 2:10

Shot of Sarah working like mad.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED:(4)

Shot of Lynda doing the same.

Shot of Howard. He is now pacing among the desks and has paused to observe the two girls. He frowns, becoming aware that something is going on.

Shot of clock. 2:45.

Lynda closes her exam booklet, lays down her pen, sits triumphantly back. But the smug look is quickly wiped from her face at what she sees. Sarah is looking calmly round at her, smiling, quite evidently already finished.

There is immediate astonishment on Lynda's face. But she is impressed in spite of herself.

Sarah's gaze flicks to something beyond Lynda and she quickly faces the front again. Lynda glances behind to see why.

Howard is now at the back of the hall, leaning against the wall, staring coldly at the two girls. He is plainly not pleased. He shakes his head, grimly reproving.

Lynda quickly faces front. She thinks for a moment, grabs a scrap of paper and starts to write...

Howard gives a bored sigh, checks his watch. He begins a slow, bored walk down the aisle between the desks...

Lynda, glances round at Howard's approach. She pulls the paper clip from her exam papers...

Shot of Sarah sitting boredly at her desk. Howard walks slowly past her and she notices - astonished - that a fold of paper with "Sarah Jackson" written on it has been paper clipped to the tail of his jacket.

She quickly reaches out, deftly takes it. She glances round at Lynda, puzzled.

Lynda nods at her to open the note.

Sarah unfolds the slip of paper.

"I'm Lynda. Want to start a school magazine?"

212 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HALL. DAY.

212

The exam is over, the kids are filing out, chattering excitedly, comparing notes ...

Lynda emerges, sees Sarah leaning against the wall waiting for her. She heads over to her, smiles ruefully ...

(CONTINUED)

212 CONTINUED:

LYNDA
Sorry.

SARAH
Thanks.

Lynda frowns, puzzled at this.

SARAH
You got me so mad I forgot to be nervous. I think I aced it.

Lynda regards her for a moment, thoughtfully.

LYNDA
Damn!

SARAH
(Looks at her curiously)
Magazine?

213 INT. LYNDA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

213

Shot of a rather crudely drawn magazine cover. It is entitled "Damn Magazine".

Sarah and Lynda are regarding it critically.

SARAH
(Doubtfully)
You sure?

LYNDA
Why not? It's what the teachers'll call it anyway.

Sarah looks at her, dubiously.

SARAH
Well maybe, but - ...

LYNDA
(Passionately)
Look, we're not talking about some pappy establishment rag here. This is underground stuff. Real reporting. Exposés, scandals, official cover-ups...

SARAH
(Taking up the theme)
... annoying teachers, selling out friends,
(more)

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:

SARAH (cont'd)
getting ourselves in serious trouble ...

LYNDA
(Enthused)
Exactly! There's no reason it can't be fun too!

Sarah looks worriedly at her friend, appreciating that there is quite a gulf between them.

SARAH
(Hesitating)
Lynda ...

Lynda has gone to her desk and is sorting through some material for the magazine.

LYNDA
(Absently)
Yeh?

SARAH
(Hesitating again)
Look, I don't want you to be angry, okay?

Lynda turns, looks at her.

LYNDA
Well you'd better have a pretty good reason.

SARAH
(Bracing herself to say it)
I'm not sure I want to be involved in this sort of magazine.

Lynda stares at her, simultaneously crestfallen and uncomprehending.

SARAH
Look, I feel really bad about this. You're the first friend I've made around here - and you've made a big difference. But this magazine, it's not turning out the way I expected. And it's just not me. I'm sorry.

LYNDA
And this first-friend thing won't swing it?

SARAH
(A little stung at this)
I do feel guilty, you know.

LYNDA
Well put some effort into it.

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:(2)

SARAH
(Looks at her firmly)
I'm sorry.

Lynda looks resentfully back at her for a moment, drops her gaze disappointedly to the floor.

SARAH
(Worriedly)
Still friends?

LYNDA
(Brightening instantly)
I'm open to negotiation!

Sarah looks at her, reprovngly.

LYNDA
(Rather sulkily)
Yeh, I suppose.

SARAH
Good.

There is a moment of awkward silence between them.

SARAH
Look, ah... maybe it's best if I head off now.
We can talk tomorrow, yeh?

LYNDA
Whatever.

Sarah has grabbed her coat and is now pulling it on.

SARAH
Well ... see you.

LYNDA
I expect so.

A little awkwardly Sarah starts to head for the door.

LYNDA
Sorry if I'm in a funny mood at the moment.
I'll be fine, honestly.

SARAH
I know. It's okay.

LYNDA
I've just been a bit ... you know ... tensed up ...

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:(3)

SARAH

I understand.

LYNDA

(Sitting tragically on the bed)
... since Fluffy my kitten died.

Sarah looks at her, uncertainly.

LYNDA

Of brain cancer.

Sarah looks shrewdly at Lynda.

SARAH

I heard you sold your kitten.

LYNDA

(Defensively)
Well when I found out it was ill...

SARAH

(Pulling the door open)
Nice try, Lynda.

LYNDA

Right, okay! Leave, why don't you?

SARAH

(Going)
Why don't I!

LYNDA

Everybody else does!

Sarah storms out, slamming the door. Lynda doesn't move from the bed.
A second later Sarah comes storming back in.

SARAH

What do you mean, everybody else?

LYNDA

Nothing.

SARAH

(Yanking open the door)
Fine!

LYNDA

My Dad.

Sarah freezes. She looks slowly back at Lynda.

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:(4)

SARAH

Your Dad?

LYNDA

Ever noticed any Dads around here?

She looks away, tearfully.

Slowly, Sarah closes the door again. She goes to Lynda, sits by her.

SARAH

You've never said anything about this.

LYNDA

What am I supposed to say? "Don't count my parents, it's embarrassing"?

Sarah hesitates, awkward.

SARAH

So, ah ... want to talk about it?

LYNDA

It's no big deal.

Sarah looks at her for a moment.

SARAH

I think I know you well enough already to say it's a very big deal. Right?

Lynda looks at her for a moment, smiles sadly.

LYNDA

Maybe.

Sarah returns the smile, seems to consider for a moment.

SARAH

Okay, this is the problem. All I really want to do is keep my head down, pass all my exams, go to university. If we can work out this magazine thing so it doesn't get in the way...

LYNDA

Well of course we can. Look, it's underground, no one will even know it's us doing it!

SARAH

(Smiles, taken by Lynda's enthusiasm)
I'll think about it.

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED:(5)

LYNDA

Brilliant!

From downstairs we hear the front door bang.

MAN'S VOICE (Off; calling)

I'm home dear!

WOMAN'S VOICE (Off; calling)

Hello darling!

Sarah is momentarily bewildered - then enraged! She turns her glare on Lynda.

Lynda thinks frantically for a way out.

LYNDA

(Brightly)

And now Dad's back! What a great day!

Sarah has glared at Lynda for a moment longer - and now flops back on the bed.

She starts to laugh.

Lynda stares at her in incomprehension.

LYNDA

What's funny? Is this funny?

But Sarah's laugh just gets louder. She rolls on to her side, helpless.

LYNDA

Tell me what's funny, I'll laugh too. I've got a sense of humour.

But Sarah just roars louder than ever.

214 INT. SPIKE'S FLAT. NIGHT.

214

Back in the modern day, Spike, still on the phone, is laughing too.

SPIKE

That really happened?

215 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT.

215

Intercut as required.

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED:

SARAH
Something like it.

SPIKE
I'd hate to think the star reporter was pumping
up the facts.

SARAH
I don't need to.

Spike frowns, a little uneasy at this. There is a bitterness in Sarah's tone that disturbs him.

SPIKE
You're really going for the throat, huh?

SARAH
Someone is.

She raises the letter again.

216 INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR. DAY.

216

A shot tracking with Sarah and Lynda as they go marching purposefully along a corridor together. Sarah has a package of papers stuffed under one arm. Lynda is carefully pulling her jacket sleeve down over one fist.

SARAH (V.O.)
The further adventures of Sarah and Lynda.
Pay attention. There's a pattern developing.

With her sleeved fist Lynda casually thumps a glass-fronted fire alarm button as she and Sarah pass it. The fire bell shrills out.

We hold on the button as Sarah and Lynda pass out of shot. From all around we hear doors flying open and the thundering of feet.

217 INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR/SCHOOL OFFICE AREA. DAY.

217

A couple of office staff come hurrying out of one of the doors.

We hold on the door. A moment later Sarah and Lynda stroll calmly into shot, and disappear through the door.

We cut to a closer shot of the door as it closes behind them.

"Photocopy Room".

(CONTINUED)

217 CONTINUED:

218 INT. PHOTOCOPY ROOM. DAY

218

Close shot of an endless series of "Damn Magazine" covers streaming out of the photocopier. The fire bell is still clamouring in the background.

We pan up to a shot of Lynda and Sarah tensely overseeing the operation.

SARAH

(Worriedly)

Every time there's a fire alarm we put out a new edition. Someone's going to make the connection.

Abruptly the fire bell stops ringing. The girls exchange a worried look, grab the papers, turn to make for the door...

Mr Winters is leaning against it, smiling smugly.

For a moment the girls are lost for words. Lynda steps forward earnestly.

LYNDA

Headmaster, thank goodness you're safe!

219 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE. DAY.

219

Shot of the sign on the Headmaster's door . We pan round to where Lynda and Sarah are sitting waiting outside. Lynda is looking ostentatiously relaxed, Sarah is white with fear.

SARAH

(Numbly)

I have never been in trouble for anything in my entire life.

LYNDA

Just stay cool, deny everything, and fake a panic attack with breathing complications.

SARAH

What if my parents find out?

LYNDA

(Looks at her pityingly - this is easy stuff)

They never understand anything and they just don't care. Call yourself an adolescent??

They look round as someone approaches.

A sulky looking Julie comes storming over, throws herself into a chair
(more)

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED:

opposite Sarah and Lynda. She plainly is in trouble too.

LYNDA
What are you here for?

JULIE
(Shrugs)
A week ago I told my domestic science teacher she had the IQ of plankton. But she seemed pleased.

SARAH
(More nervous than ever)
I have never ever been in trouble for anything!

JULIE
Just cry a lot and say the gym teacher's harassing you.

Again they turn as someone else approaches - an embittered looking Frazz. He slumps into a seat.

JULIE
Frazz?

FRAZZ
(Bitterly)
Don't know. I just got sent for.

JULIE
(Frowning, troubled)
Me too.

She looks enquiringly at Sarah and Lynda.

LYNDA
We were the ones doing that magazine.
(Pious indignation)
The only reason we're here is because this school cannot stand the scrutiny of a free press.

SARAH
And we've had the fire brigade called out eight times.

LYNDA
About eight, yeh.

SARAH
I can't believe this is happening. I am never in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED:(2)

FRAZZ

Just limp a bit and say you strained your knee
in the school football finals.

They all look at him. He reconsiders.

FRAZZ

Never mind.

SARAH

(In a daze of misery)

My parents are going to kill me. I'm just
supposed to pass my exams and go to
university - they were so excited when they
explained it. They had graphs!

Julie has been thinking - worriedly.

JULIE

(To Sarah)

You guys did an article about a hit list, didn't
you?

Sarah looks at her worriedly.

JULIE

About how the teachers were saying there
were too many problem cases in the sixth form -
and Sullivan and the Head had a hit list of
trouble makers ready for a big crack-down.

Sarah looks more alarmed than ever as she remembers this.

SARAH

I'd forgotten that.

LYNDA

Relax. I made it up.

Sarah looks at her in surprise.

LYNDA

(Shrugs)

It was a slow news week.

WINTERS (Off)

No.

They all look round. The Headmaster has come around the corner
heading for his office.

WINTERS

It was a good idea.

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED:(3)

He smiles cheerfully at them, crosses to his office. Lynda exchanges a horrified glance with Sarah, gets impulsively to her feet.

LYNDA

What do you mean? What's happening?

Winters looks at her for a moment. His face is stern but there is slight twinkle of mischief in his eye.

WINTERS

There's a man coming to take you away.

Lynda looks at him, troubled.

LYNDA

Sir?

WINTERS

I think it's time we found a better way for you kids to expend your surplus energy.

There is a moment of stunned silence. Before anyone of the others can speak Lynda turns on them.

LYNDA

Okay, let's just lower the temperature!
Whatever he's got in mind it can't be that bad.

SARAH

(Terrified)

How do you know?

LYNDA

Because of us. We might be trouble but no one in this group represents a major problem to the running of the school.

There are a couple of footfalls and Colin is standing at Lynda's shoulder. She looks round at him, looks back to the others.

LYNDA

(Pointing at the floor)

I suggest we start digging the tunnel about here.

The sound of a car roaring up outside. Sarah springs up anxiously to the window.

LYNDA

Sarah?

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED:(4)

SARAH

It's the man to take me away!

Lynda joins her at the window.

A shot from their POV. Matt Kerr is climbing out of his car.

Lynda frowns, puzzled, as he starts towards the building.

LYNDA

(Frowning, puzzled)

For a news hack you don't keep up much on the news. That's the big shot who just took over the local paper.

Sarah stares, lost and terrified, at the approaching figure.

SARAH

I knew it! They've sold my story to the press!

LYNDA

Sarah, you're panicking! That's good!

Sarah rushes forward to Matt who is just coming through the doors.

SARAH

Uh, excuse me - ...

LYNDA

(Stepping in smoothly to avert disaster)

Mr Kerr, isn't it? Pleased to meet you.

Matt looks at her, calmly.

MATT

Pleased to meet you, ah ...

He flicks open the file he is carrying.

MATT

Lynda Day.

Lynda stares, completely floored by this.

MATT

(Flicking over the page)

And Sarah Jackson, I think.

Sarah is lost for words for a moment, her worst fears realized.

SARAH

Am I going to be in the press?

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED:(5)

Matt looks at her a moment, smiles.

MATT

Oh, so you've been told! Yes, we've been planning it for weeks.

Sarah stares at him, horrified.

Shot of Matt puzzled at this reaction. There is an off-screen thump and he looks down concernedly.

A wider shot reveals Sarah flat on the floor between Lynda and Matt. We hold on this a moment.

A shot of Colin watching this, aggrieved.

COLIN

(Indignant)

Hey, I was going to faint!

Winters comes bustling out of his office.

WINTERS

Ah, Matt, you're - ...

He breaks off in astonishment, seeing Sarah's prone form. Lynda can't resist seizing the opportunity.

LYNDA

(Pointing to her fallen friend)

She's dead. I hope you're satisfied!

220 EXT. JUNIOR GAZETTE OFFICES. DAY.

220

Close shot of a glass panel in one of the double doors as a paper sign is taped to it.

"Junior Gazette. Trespassers will be exterminated". See Episode 1 for reference.

221 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. DAY.

221

A shot - taken from Episode 1 - craning down into the original newsroom, still half-formed and unpainted. As we home in on Lynda moving through the throng we dissolve to:

A close shot tracking in on a noticeboard on the wall by the door. It reads "DAYS TO FIRST EDITION" with "8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1" written below. The "8" and the "7" are scored out. See Episode 1 for reference.

(CONTINUED)

221 CONTINUED:

LYNDA (Off; calling)
Sarah?

222 INT. NEWSROOM CORRIDOR. DAY.

222

Close on Sarah's thoughtful, troubled face, slowly pulling out. She is slumped in the yellow chair she will in fact occupy for the rest of her time at the paper. The corridor around her is the cream coloured original.

LYNDA (Calling; off)
Sarah?

Lynda pokes her head through the doors, sees Sarah slumped there.

LYNDA
Any ideas for an interview yet, we need to move!

Sarah looks solemnly up at Lynda, says nothing. The look on her face, though, is enough to give Lynda pause. Lynda frowns worriedly.

SARAH
I don't want you to be angry, okay?

Lynda picks up the warning sign immediately. She groans, despairing, leaning against the wall opposite.

LYNDA
We're two days from the first edition - even by your standards it's a hell of a time to quit!

Sarah says nothing, looks at the floor. Lynda looks bleakly at her, crosses to the doors, opens them to call through.

LYNDA (Calling)
Mike, could you bring me the file? You know the one.

She lets the doors swing shut again, looks down at Sarah who is still steadfastly avoiding her gaze.

SARAH
(After a moment)
At home I've got a chart covering three walls of my bedroom - my studying schedule for the A-levels.

LYNDA
(Ironic)
Nice for you.

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED:

SARAH
(Offended)
It was a Christmas present from my parents!

LYNDA
This is not going to get in the way of studying.
Sullivan explained.

Mike pops through from the newsroom, handing Lynda a folder.

MIKE
Here. Look, we do need to, ah - ...

LYNDA
I know.
(Looks pointedly at Sarah)
I'm dealing with it.

MIKE
Right, sure.

Mike withdraws. Sarah looks warily at Lynda, puzzled at the above exchange which seemed to be about her.

Lynda looks at her for a moment, drops the folder into her lap.

After a moment Sarah tries to hand it back.

SARAH
I don't want to do a story.

LYNDA
It's not a story. It's your school file.

Sarah looks in horror and astonishment at the folder in her hand.

LYNDA
Mike managed to pull it from the office.

SARAH
What for?

LYNDA
Editing - it's what I do. You've been going on about how I'm responsible for the one blot on your school record. I thought personally removing it might be a way of saying sorry. It doesn't really make any difference, of course - but I know you think it does.

Sarah looks at the folder in her hand as if it might be about to explode.

SARAH
They'll notice.

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED:(2)

LYNDA

They won't.

SARAH

(Thrusting it at Lynda)
You've got to put it back!

LYNDA

(Flicking though the folder)
Funny thing. Doesn't mention a serious
inability for any form of gratitude anywhere
here.

Sarah is silent for a moment.

SARAH

This interview thing: since this all started as a
discipline problem I thought I could find one
of the school's real trouble makers and get
their side of the story. What do you think?

LYNDA

Nice angle. Get on it.

Sarah grins, starts to head through to the newsroom. She hesitates, looks
back at Lynda.

SARAH

Maybe you could update my file on gratitude
too.

Lynda grins in reply. As Sarah heads into the newsroom again she bumps
into Mike coming back out into the corridor. She looks at him very
seriously.

SARAH

Thanks, Mike.

She goes off into the newsroom. Lynda holds the folder open for Mike,
points to a couple of items in it.

LYNDA

I like your idea for blue walls and red curtains.
I think we'll go with that one.

MIKE

Great, that's my favourite too! Why was Sarah
thanking me?

LYNDA

She's a big fan of blue and red. She persuaded
me.

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED:(3)

MIKE

Brilliant!

Sarah comes bustling back out, bag over her shoulder.

SARAH

I'm off out - see what I can find.

MIKE

(Enthused)

Sarah, you are helping this place to look terrific!

He goes back into the newsroom. Sarah looks delightedly at Lynda.

SARAH

Hey, he must really like me!

LYNDA

(Winks at her)

Why do you think I'm persuading you to stick around, kid!

Sarah grins, heads off down the corridor. Lynda watches her go for a moment.

LYNDA

(To herself; as she re-enters newsroom)

Better have a rule against office romance.

As Sarah reaches the doors at the far end someone is coming in - Spike, making his original episode 1 entrance.

SARAH

(Recognizing him)

You're Spike Thomson, aren't you?

SPIKE

I don't know. I can't see a thing in these glasses.

Freeze frame on this...

SPIKE (V.O.)

Okay - she's a cow.

223 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT.

223

SARAH

You're telling me.

224 INT. SPIKE'S FLAT. NIGHT

224

Intercut as required.

SPIKE
No. You're telling her. Why?

Sarah is silent.

SPIKE
We've all got our favourite Lynda story. But you guys have been close. And it hasn't all been bad. You want to end it on a letter like this?

SARAH
I don't have a choice.

SPIKE
Huh?

SARAH
There's something you don't understand.

Spike frowns, puzzled and faintly alarmed at this.

SARAH
Sitting comfortably?

She looks to the letter again...

225 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. DAY.

225

Stock shot of the bustling newsroom in its series 1 form.

SARAH (V.O.)
Sarah and Lynda. Are we getting the picture?
Have we worked out who's the bad guy, who's the angel?

During the following we dissolve through a sequence of shots, from various moments of Press Gang series 1 and 2 ...

Sarah and Lynda arguing on their way in to interview Amanda Swanson in Ep 2 "Photo Finish"...

Sarah and Lynda discussing Teacher Features from Ep 3 "One Easy Lesson"...

Lynda dumping yet more work on an exhausted and reluctant Sarah in Ep 9 "Both Sides Of The Paper"...

(CONTINUED)

225 CONTINUED:

Sarah and Lynda in conference about the Wellside closure in Ep 1 Series 2
"Breakfast At Czar's"...

Lynda calling after Sarah after Sarah has stormed out of her house in
Series 2 Ep 9 "Friends Like These"...

SARAH (V.O.)

Good. Now you're always on about building to a proper climax. Well how about this. The time comes when nice little Sarah has left school and is all set to go to university. Only bad old Lynda is setting up the Junior Gazette as a commercial operation. And she's looking for a good writer who isn't frittering away her time in higher education...

We have now dissolved to a partially repainted newsroom...

226 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. DAY.

226

We are panning round. The blue has almost gone, the new colour scheme is taking over..

We come to Lynda, in paint splattered overalls, brush in hand, critically surveying her work ...

SARAH (Off)

Hi.

Lynda turns. Sarah is standing just inside the door, looking somewhat nervously at her.

LYNDA

(Gesturing round her handiwork)

What do you think?

SARAH

You doing this on your own?

LYNDA

(Shrugs)

Now everyone's being paid, no one else thinks it's their job.

SARAH

(Laughs)

Figures.

LYNDA

You just can't get the staff these days.

(CONTINUED)

226 CONTINUED:

She looks pointedly at Sarah. Sarah gets the hint and bridles somewhat.

SARAH

You always knew I was going to university.
It's always been the plan.

LYNDA

Did your parents get some kind of grant to
raise students?

SARAH

Can we leave my parents out of it please?

LYNDA

I can. Can you?

Sarah looks at her resentfully for a moment, says nothing.

In the silence, Lynda resumes her painting.

SARAH

(Awkward attempt at conversation)
So. Spike's back in America then.

LYNDA

That's what they tell me.

SARAH

You should've kept hold of that one. He's a
good guy.

LYNDA

I try not to lose good people.

Sarah despairs. Does this girl never give up?

SARAH

(Bringing up a difficult subject)
I'm heading out of town today, actually. I'm,
ah, looking for digs.

No response from Lynda who carries solemnly on with her painting.

SARAH

You know, for university. A place to stay.

LYNDA

Check on your birth certificate. It's probably
been arranged.

Sarah lets it pass.

(CONTINUED)

226 CONTINUED:(2)

SARAH

Thing is, I've got a lot reading to do and stuff.
So I'm not going to be around as much.

LYNDA

I'll struggle by without your unstinting
support. Again.

Sarah lets this pass too, but with more difficulty.

SARAH

Parting gift.

Sarah has pulled a folder from her bag. She tosses it on to Lynda's desk.

SARAH

Just a few general interest pieces - things might
be slow when you start up again.

Lynda has looked round at this. But she says nothing.

SARAH

They're good.

(Smiles, trying to be friends)

And you're going to need good stuff in this
paper now it's your living.

Lynda regards her coolly for a moment, returns to her painting.

LYNDA

Do anything with the feature I suggested?

Sarah looks bleakly at her.

SARAH

Frankly, I didn't think the student suicide rate
warranted an eleven part series.

LYNDA

(Darkly)

All the figures aren't in yet.

SARAH

A year ago this sort of stuff might've had an
effect. I'm not so easy now. Know whose fault
that is?

Lynda looks at her, curious to know. Then realizes she herself is the
culprit.

LYNDA

Damn!

(CONTINUED)

226 CONTINUED:(3)

SARAH
(Smiles)
Magazine.

Lynda doesn't smile in reply. She goes back to her painting.

SARAH
(Very serious)
I just came round to, ah ... say goodbye.

Lynda looks resentfully at her for a moment. Then, abruptly - and perhaps a little theatrically - she clutches her head.

LYNDA
(Reeling slightly)
Oh, wow!

SARAH
What's wrong?

LYNDA
(Bravely)
Oh, nothing, nothing.

She clutches at a chair back, eases herself on to the seat.

LYNDA
Just feeling a bit ... kind of ... dizzy or something. I get this way sometimes. It passes.

SARAH
Want a glass of water?

LYNDA
No, no, you've got to go and look for digs - I'll try and fit in a drink later.

Sarah looks at her shrewdly, starting to suspect.

LYNDA
It's probably just some kind of total exhaustion thing because of all this work I'm doing. On my own.

Sarah looks grimly down at her, shakes her head in utter disbelief.

SARAH
You are sick, Lynda!

LYNDA
Oh, I'm fine. Stop worrying.

(CONTINUED)

226 CONTINUED:(4)

SARAH

This is not going to work. I am leaving now!!

LYNDA

Well, look, have a great time at university and take good care. I think I'm about to pass out so could you pin a note on me for the cleaners?

SARAH

Goodbye, Lynda! Forever!

LYNDA

Oh, I'm sure it's not that bad.

SARAH

We can only hope!

Sarah goes storming for the doors. We track with her. From behind her there is a thump. She looks round.

Lynda has slipped off the seat and now lies prone on the floor, apparently dead to the world.

SARAH

Oh good! She's dead!

Not a twitch from the girl on the floor.

SARAH

(Heading back to her)

Finally I get to have a conversation with her where I say something.

She pulls up a chair, sits next to the supine editor.

SARAH

And you know what I'm going to say? I'm going to explain, in blistering, non-stop detail, what a lousy editor, what a faithless friend, what a complete and utter selfish cow she is. And she's just going to have to lie there and take it. Because the poor dear's unconscious! Right?

With a smile of malevolent satisfaction she settles back in her chair

SARAH

Well here goes!

227 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. DAY.

227

Sarah sags in a chair, hands covering her face, a picture of bitter shame. A
(more)

(CONTINUED)

227 CONTINUED:

white-coated doctor is quizzing her, puzzled.

DOCTOR

And it was a full hour before you called an ambulance?

SARAH

(Helplessly)

I was talking to her.

DOCTOR

She was unconscious!

SARAH

It seemed like a good moment.

Sarah looks up at him, miserably.

SARAH

Can I see her now?

228 INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. DAY.

228

A shot through an open door of Lynda pale and asleep on a hospital bed. We pull out to see Sarah and the doctor either side of the door.

DOCTOR

Basically, it's acute nervous exhaustion. I've explained to her mother that she's going to need complete rest for quite a while.

SARAH

(Glances through)

That I've got to see.

DOCTOR

(Frowns)

Actually, do you have any idea the last time she had any sleep at all?

SARAH

Wednesday probably.

DOCTOR

(Stares at her)

Wednesday??

SARAH

I'll ask around. But it's usually Wednesdays.

(CONTINUED)

228 CONTINUED:

She heads into the ward, leaving the doctor to think this one over.

Dissolve to:

229 INT. HOSPITAL WARD. DAY.

229

Close on Lynda as her eyes flicker weakly open. She looks blearily round, sees Sarah sitting at her bedside.

Sarah anxiously takes Lynda's hand.

LYNDA
Sarah ...

SARAH
(Leaning closer)
Yeh?

Lynda starts to climb weakly out of the bed.

LYNDA
Distract the guard.

Sarah pushes her gently back down on to the bed.

SARAH
They're not guards, Lynda, they're doctors. Just lie back, you're not well.

LYNDA
Remind me. Is this a trick to make you stay?

SARAH
Not this time. You've got to sleep.

LYNDA
Don't want to sleep.

SARAH
Yes, you do.

Lynda looks woozily at Sarah with a troubled frown

LYNDA
I had this weird dream...

SARAH
Well never mind about that.

LYNDA
It was some kind of story - all about a cow who
(more)

(CONTINUED)

229 CONTINUED:

LYNDA (cont'd)
was really evil and did lots of terrible things.

SARAH
(Guiltily)
Oh.

LYNDA
And it just seemed to go on and on...

SARAH
(A little sickly)
Well not to worry...

LYNDA
On and on ...

SARAH
You've really got to sleep now.

LYNDA
And it was just so full of hate, Sarah.

SARAH
Well you know what dreams are like.

LYNDA
(Anxiously)
The paper! We've only got weeks ... !

SARAH
I've phoned Kenny. He can handle it.

LYNDA
Sarah, he's a guy. He's got another decade in
puberty!

The effort of saying this seems momentarily too much for her and she passes out again.

Sarah, looks at her worriedly for a moment.

SARAH
(Leans over her)
Want me to stay with you for a while?

Lynda's eyes flicker open again.

LYNDA
Hm?

SARAH
I don't have to be home for a bit. Want me to
(more)

(CONTINUED)

229 CONTINUED:(2)

SARAH (cont'd)

stay?

LYNDA

You sure?

SARAH

It's no problem.

LYNDA

Great. Thanks.

She starts to drift off to sleep again.

LYNDA

(Mumbling as she goes)

You probably wouldn't have liked university anyway.

She is asleep. Sarah looks at her in horror.

SARAH

No! No, I didn't mean - ... I just meant stay in the hospital a bit, that's all.

But Lynda is fast asleep with a new look of tranquillity on her face.

SARAH

Lynda?

She sags, despairing. And then she notices something. Earlier she took Lynda's hand. Now Lynda's hand is gripping fiercely on to hers.

Experimentally she tries to pull her hand away.

Nope.

She tries to pry one of Lynda's fingers loose.

Nope.

She tries again, really determined. With a tremendous effort she pulls back Lynda's fingers and yanks her own hand free ...

... only to discover her other hand is now trapped in Lynda's grip!

She stares at the sleeping girl in utter frustration ...

She looks up as she hears the doctor re-enter the room.

(CONTINUED)

229 CONTINUED:(3)

DOCTOR
 (Registering the thunderous
 expression on Sarah's face)
 Problem?

SARAH
 Got a scalpel?

The doctor stares at her.

SARAH
 (Looks resignedly over at Lynda)
 Or a phone?

230 INT. HOSPITAL WARD. DAY.

230

A short while later.

Sarah is on the phone while the doctor is carefully examining her and Lynda's locked hands.

SARAH
 Mum, you're getting hysterical. Could you just
 stop screaming for a moment? ... I've just got
 some things I need to do here, that's all ... I'm
not cancelling university!

She looks uneasily over at Lynda.

SARAH
 I'm just, you know ... postponing it a bit.

231 INT. SPIKE'S FLAT. NIGHT.

231

SPIKE
 (Gently ironic)
 A bit, huh?

232 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT.

232

Intercut as required.

SARAH
 It's not so easy finding the right moment.

SPIKE
 Till now?

(CONTINUED)

232 CONTINUED:

233 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. DAY.

233

We are now in the current version of the newsroom set.

Shot of the newsroom doors as Lynda comes storming through them, furious. Spike is right behind her.

LYNDA

How can you say that? Unapproachable??

SPIKE

Well you are!

LYNDA

Someone would've told me!

She goes storming off to her desk. Spike hesitates, glances over at something.

A shot from his POV. Sarah has been watching this exchange from her desk and is now looking worriedly at Spike. Plainly some understanding passes between them. Sarah gives a very slight shake of her head - she doesn't want him to do this.

Undeterred Spike heads after Lynda.

Worriedly Sarah watches him go.

SPIKE

Could you for once just listen to me??

LYNDA

(Now at her desk)

Oh, go away.

SPIKE

I'm just saying tone down the act a little - so everyone in this newsroom isn't too scared to talk to you!

He glances briefly at Sarah who looks quickly away.

LYNDA

Be absent, Thomson! Get out of my life! Make a hole in my peer group!

Spike looks despairingly at her, not knowing how to broach this subject.

SPIKE

Look, someone here might, you know, have something to say to you, something you ought (more)

(CONTINUED)

233 CONTINUED:

SPIKE (cont'd)

to know - but no one is going to say a word if they think they're likely to get their head torn off and spat in your out tray.

Lynda looks at him with sudden and venomous suspicion.

LYNDA

I want to know what you've done and her name!

Spike groans in despair.

LYNDA

That's it, we're finished! Julie, cancel all scheduled dates!

Julie looks wearily up from her work, gets up, crosses to a planning chart on the wall. She starts to peel some stickers off it.

JULIE

(Grumbling)

This is the fourth time this week - these things aren't even sticky any more.

LYNDA

Just get on with it please!

JULIE

They keep slipping down - he's had to date Frazz twice.

SPIKE

Lynda, please...

LYNDA

I'll tell you when to start begging!

Spike stares at her bleakly for a moment, shakes his head, gives up. He turns, starts striding for the exit. Lynda watches him go, darkly.

234 INT. NEWSROOM CORRIDOR. DAY.

234

Spike is striding away down the corridor.

SARAH (Off)

Spike ...

Spike turns. Sarah is standing at the doors to the newsroom.

(CONTINUED)

234 CONTINUED:

SARAH

Trying to soften her up for me?

SPIKE

Great job I did.

SARAH

Nice thought. Hopeless but nice.

Spike hesitates, starts to walk back towards her.

SPIKE

Anyone else know this is your last day?

SARAH

Not unless you've told them.

Spike looks at her a moment, almost imploring.

SPIKE

Don't do it like this.

SARAH

You want me to give her a month's notice so she can find a way to stop me? I want to go to university, Spike. And I'm going.

SPIKE

Out the back door, not a word to anyone?

SARAH

I've tried every other way.

Spike is silent for a moment. One last try...

SPIKE

Tell her.

SARAH

(Grimly determined)
I'll leave a note.

Spike sighs, smiles defeatedly. He shrugs, turns, and heads away. Sarah watches him go for a moment, re-enters the newsroom...

235 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. DAY.

235

... As she comes back through the doors she freezes, seeing something.

A shot from Sarah's POV. Lynda is standing staring suspiciously at her. Plainly she has been observing Sarah and Spike's confab in the corridor...

(CONTINUED)

235 CONTINUED:

A shot of Sarah staring back at Lynda, slowly tracking in on her ...

SARAH (V.O.)

Nice little story, don't you think? But like every story, there comes a time you know it's over.

A shot slowly tracking in on Lynda in the same manner.

SARAH (V.O.)

Because suddenly it isn't fun any more. And suddenly you're wondering if it ever was.

Close on Sarah.

SARAH (V.O.)

Sorry and all that. But this time I think it has to be goodbye.

236 INT. SPIKE'S FLAT. NIGHT.

236

SPIKE

Not like this, Sarah. Not a letter.

237 INT. JUNIOR GAZETTE NEWSROOM. NIGHT.

237

Intercut as required.

SARAH

Let me finish, okay?

Spike sits back, resignedly, to listen.

SARAH

(Reading)

"It's been fun, I don't regret a day of it, and I've learned a lot from you. But I think you'd have to agree things have become a little sour and more than a little unhealthy. There has simply been too much that is unforgivable."

SPIKE

Look, phone her up, talk to her! Would it kill you?

SARAH

Just let me finish.

(Reading)

"So I decided - me, not you - that it was time to (more)

(CONTINUED)

237 CONTINUED:

SARAH (cont'd)
end it. And this is my parting gift. Dear friend, in the friendliest possible way, you're fired."

SPIKE
(Puzzled)
Huh?

SARAH
"Best wishes and all my love,
(Hesitates)
... Lynda."

Spike is astonished into silence for a moment.

SPIKE
I ... I thought ...

SARAH
I know.
(Looks at the letter)
I bottled out of leaving, Spike. I came back here to put my stuff back in my desk ... and I found this.

SPIKE
She guessed you were leaving.

SARAH
And knew I never would.

Spike digests this for a moment.

SPIKE
Some girl.

Sarah glances over at Lynda's empty chair.

SARAH
Yeh.

SPIKE
(Frowns, puzzled)
So why are you phoning me?

Sarah smiles to herself.

SARAH
For a good reason. You may hear about it. Got to go now.

She reaches over, flicks off the speaker phone.

(CONTINUED)

237 CONTINUED:(2)

Spike hears the connection break.

SPIKE
(Puzzled)
Sarah?

In the newsroom Sarah looks over at Lynda's chair. She smiles.

SARAH
(Calling out)
Damn.

There is a noise from beneath Lynda's desk. Lynda's head pokes cautiously up, her eyes peeping over the desktop.

LYNDA
(Sheepishly)
Magazine.

SARAH
(Nods towards speaker phone)
You were being kind of unfair to him today,
don't you think? He's a good guy - I thought it
was time you knew that.

LYNDA
(Standing up)
Parting gift?

Sarah smiles, nods.

LYNDA
(Awkwardly)
I, uh, was just finishing the letter when I heard
you come in. I thought I'd better ... well ...

SARAH
Hide. I know.

LYNDA
Then why - ...

SARAH
I was psyching you out. I think I can take you.

LYNDA
(Looks at her a moment)
Or leave me.

SARAH
(Nods soberly)
Or leave.

(CONTINUED)

237 CONTINUED:(3)

Sarah gets to her feet.

SARAH

Look - ...

LYNDA

(Cutting her off; fondly)

Get the hell out of my newsroom. I may wise up any second.

Sarah smiles. She heads to the doors, turns at them.

SARAH

Sorry.

LYNDA

Thanks.

Sarah looks back at her, momentarily puzzled.

LYNDA

You definitely aced it.

Sarah grins. She turns, goes. The doors swing behind her.

We hold on Lynda staring sadly after her for a moment. She heads over to her desk. As she goes we pan down to a shot of Sarah's now empty chair facing her desk. Freeze frame.

END CREDITS