

Blackout

Outline

A grieving family are led to a table in front of dozens of journalists and photographers. Gary Austin, the teenage boy, begins a plea for the return of his missing sister describing a pendant she was wearing that he had given her. The superintendent publicly apologises for the fundamental mistakes made during the investigation, as the mother suddenly lashes out at detective inspector Kate Hext standing behind, blaming her for not finding her daughter. A photographer catches Gary's despair.

Five years later on a barren Kent island, Gary is lying unconscious in a dense wood. His body is twisted around a tree half way down a steep embankment. Above him an unknown man with a shoe extension searches the wood with a stick, but fails to notice him.

On another part of the island, Malcolm Gifford stumbles out of a crashed Jeep and returns to his farmhouse to find his daughter Sarah is missing. Worried he calls the police. On the mainland D.I. Kate Hext is cautiously granted permission by her superintendent to investigate.

Gary slowly regains consciousness and disorientated, slips down the embankment discovering Sarah's twisted body at the bottom. She looks like she has been strangled and sexually assaulted. Scared, he runs away. Freezing cold, Gary is forced to steal a coat from a remote local radio station.

Hext arrives on the island at the small local police station informing Sergeant Vasser that another girl has gone missing. He warns her not to jump to conclusions. There is clearly past tension between the two officers. Hext leaves, taking young officer Lewis with her to interview Malcolm and orders a police unit to lock off the island.

Malcolm discovers something alarming on Sarah's laptop and hides it from the police, but Hext discovers Sarah's laptop has been removed from her bedroom and learns that Sarah was friends with Nicola Austin, a girl who went missing on the island five years ago and that their old boss Steve from a nearby holiday park had been looking for Sarah recently.

The unknown man sends a warning text from the woods saying he is unable to find Sarah's body, but is sent a reply telling him to keep looking, that things have got worse.

At the farmhouse Hext asks Lewis to keep an eye on Malcolm and heads to the holiday park to question Steve only to find that he was sacked years ago for selling drugs. She asks the owner to call her if anyone else comes by asking questions.

Gary manages to hail a cab off the island, but soon discovers the police road block and heads to the train station instead only to be chased out of the station by police. He hides in a ladies public toilet to clean himself up and disposes of his bloody clothing. He finds a receipt in his back pocket from last night. The address on it leads him to a pub.

In flashback Gary meets Sarah in the pub. She has a black eye. Gary has bought her a single train ticket, but Sarah still needs to collect her things. The barman and a local, nicknamed Psycho Dave, make sure Gary does not feel welcome. They decide to leave.

The barman recognises Gary and forces him to wait for Steve to arrive. Gary is shocked to discover he is Sarah's drug dealing boyfriend.

Steve is about to leave his bedsit when Hext arrives and interrogates him. He lies about his relationship with Sarah, accusing her father of being too over protective. He tells Hext that Sarah was with some kid last night.

Knowing Steve is on his way to the pub, Gary throws a table at the barman and smashing the glass door, escapes. He heads back to Sarah's body to look for clues and is followed by the unknown man. Meanwhile, back at the farmhouse Malcolm slips from Lewis' view to hide Sarah's laptop more carefully before CID arrive. Hext leaves the police station and heads into the woodland. She has discovered from past police records that Nicola was last seen getting into a taxi and that she was wearing a necklace Sarah had given her.

Gary finds Sarah's body.

In flashback Gary secretly follows Steve to his car, where he locks Sarah inside and heads back into the pub. Gary quickly smashes the passenger window and helps her out.

Gary searches through Sarah's pockets and is shocked to find a picture of Nicola hidden in her purse. Hext appears and orders him to hand himself in, but he runs. Hext chases and twists her ankle, limping back to the body only to discover it has gone. Scared she orders all units to surround the woodland.

The unknown man throws Sarah's body into the boot of his car and manages to slip past the police as they surround the wood. Avoiding the police Gary creeps into the farmhouse and searches through Sarah's room.

In flashback Gary helps Sarah back to the farmhouse to pack her suitcase, but as she goes to retrieve her hidden diary, Malcolm storms in and stopping Sarah from calling the police, drives Gary off the island. On the way a mysterious car causes Malcolm to crash.

Gary finds Sarah's diary, but is caught downstairs by Malcolm who is armed with a gun. Gary manages to overpower him, taking the gun and running away. Lewis handcuffs Malcolm and radios for an armed response unit.

Hext is informed that a speeding taxi was seen leaving the woods and orders a young female officer to find it. She then gets Malcolm to admit to hiding Sarah's laptop. He then confesses that he once raped his daughter when he was drunk and was scared she may have written it down. Hext finds intimate emails on the computer from Gary and Sarah and realises Gary is Nicola's brother.

Gary looks through the diary and is surprised to find a photo of Nicola, Sarah and Steve working at a holiday park together. Gary finds the holiday park and gets Steve's phone number from the owner. He arranges to meet him in an hour, unaware that the owner has called Hext and that an armed response team is surrounding him.

Gary is chased through the park and escapes by crawling through a small underground waste pipe.

In flashback Gary climbs out of Malcolm's crashed Jeep and runs back to the farmhouse only to see torchlight and hear muffled screams in the woods.

Vasser dials 1471 from the phone box Gary was using and soon discovers where he is heading, while Hext, having discovered the identity of the taxi driver, leaves Lewis to take Malcolm to the mainland station and heads towards a remote coastal address.

Gary confronts Steve at a disused breaker's yard and accuses him of driving the car that forced Malcolm off the road. He is convinced he killed Sarah. They fight for the gun. Steve stumbles backwards and impales himself on the blades of an old rusty combine harvester. Shocked, Gary calls for an ambulance.

In flashback Gary finds Sarah gagged and tied to a tree, bleeding heavily. He helps her down as a silhouetted man with the torch returns and chases them. Gary suddenly drops, falling off a steep embankment and knocking himself out. The last thing he hears is the man's jangling keys.

Vasser arrives at the breakers yard, takes the gun off Gary and jangling his keys, shoots Steve in the head. He then forces Gary into his car boot and drives away.

In a windowless room the unknown man bathes Sarah's body, oils her down and smells her hair. A bell rings making him jump. Dumont appears outside a shabby beach hut and invites Hext inside. She notices Dumont's muddy shoe extension and asks what he's been up to today. He is very nervous and soon slips up. He knocks her out before she can call for help.

Malcolm kills himself by slitting his own throat with an Acco clip as Lewis hands him over to the custody Sergeant. Unable to contact Hext or Vasser Lewis informs the superintendent of his fears for Hext's safety. An armada of police are sent to the island.

Vasser arrives at the beach hut with Gary still in the boot. Dumont fears that they are losing control. Vasser calmly shoots him in the head.

Hext wakes up in a windowless room to find a shelf, labelled with trays full of female clothing and personal items. In one she finds Nicola's necklace. Hearing humming she is drawn to a set of freezers at the back. She opens one. To her horror they are filled with frozen female bodies wrapped in plastic. Horrified she panics and tries to open a hatch, but Dumont's body is lying on top of it.

Vasser opens his car boot and tells Gary to run. He watches him head towards the edge of the island before calmly getting back into his car and running him over.

The armed police arrive and surround the beach hut, eventually finding Hext in the concealed basement.

Vasser drags Gary to the shallow waters and tries to drown him, but in a desperate attempt to survive, Gary grabs a rock from the seabed and brutally kills Vasser by

pulverising his skull in a mindless fury. He drops the rock in despair as the armed police surround him.

As Gary is helped into an ambulance, Hext stops him, placing his sister's necklace in his hand. He opens it to find a picture of Sarah and Nicola together happy.