

**THREE'S COMPANY'S
ADVENTURE DEPARTMENT**

Episode Four:
Pitch Noir
or
'A Case Of Claret'

TRANSCRIPT

PROLOGUE

NOIR MUSIC.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: It was a day like any other. 24 hours long and ending in a Y. Two months had passed since Murder Manor. The day we'd let Tricky Ricky slip through our fingers. Tricky Ricky. Our consciences were no lighter but our wallets were. Yet when I woke up that morning, something told me change was in the air.

TOM: Wake up Michael! Change is in the air.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Yes, it was Tom. Tom, He had a head for figures – but not the kind of figures that keep you up all night if you know what I mean.

YAZ: Alright Mike.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: And Yaz, Yaz was a no-nonsense fella who let his fists do the talking. With lips drawn either side of the thumb and forefinger and two eyes above, the effect was quite impressive. And then there was me: Michael Grady-Hall: actor, soliloquiser and self-appointed leader of this Adventure Trio, who can't stop asking himself if starting this adventuring business wasn't actually a terrible, deadly, earth-shattering mistake. "Well Michael, what do you think?" "I don't know", "Well, of course you don't you idiot!" As I walked into the office Yaz looked up with a grin. At least he was still pleased to see me.

YAZ NARRATOR: As Michael stepped into the office, I faked a smile. Ricky ran the underworld now – crime everywhere we turned and his ticket-tout louts and jack-boot, boot-leg script-hawkers meant there wasn't even any money left in Fringe theatre and no one even wanted to listen to our podcasts – though we kept recording all our inner streams of consciousness just in case it was ever useful, don't forget to rate and subscribe in your favourite podcast app. I recorded myself saying this and looked over at Tom, stirring a cup of water in our makeshift kitchen.

TOM NARRATOR: I saw Yaz watching me and hoped he hadn't noticed I'd forgotten to put a tea bag in my mug. The toaster popped. There was no toast in it. We couldn't afford toast. We couldn't even afford a toaster, which made me wonder what had popped. We could all feel it. It was the end of the line. No one wanted to employ the boys who couldn't deliver. And I didn't blame them, but I did sometimes stick my tongue out when weren't looking. I was thinking of Tricky Ricky and drinking my hot water when something suddenly rang a bell.

TELEPHONE RING

MICHAEL: Sounds like someone still wants to talk to us.

YAZ: Sounds like the phone's ringing.

TOM: I'll get it.

YAZ: I'll get the extension.

MICHAEL: I told you Yaz, size doesn't matter, and you really shouldn't be taking medical advice from a spam email.

TOM: Hello, Three's Company's Adventure Department?

SHORT: It's me lads.

YAZ: Jimmy Short!

SHORT: That's Detective Police Chief Inspector Constable Commissioner James Short to you laddie. I've come a long way since the night you lost Tricky Ricky.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Short was a fast-talking jay-walking cop, hard-as-fingernails and short as two thick planks. We had history, but not the fun kind like the Romans or Tudors. He was about as honest as they come. He didn't waste time, and he took no prisoners.

SHORT: Enough wasting time. I've taken no prisoners... And that's why I'm calling you. We've not had a successful conviction for months. Tricky Ricky's controlling everyone. I need a result.

YAZ: Two-nil to Arsenal.

TOM: And we didn't lose him. We just don't know where he is.

SHORT: I don't need excuses Tom. I've got enough excuses to last a lifetime. Mrs Rodgers in the excuses department has excelled herself this year. What I need is answers.

YAZ: Papa New Guinea?

SHORT: That's the answer to the wrong question. Listen, I've got the Mayor breathing down my neck now, and -

YAZ: Right now?

SHORT: Yeah.

TOM: Oh put him on will you?

SHORT: Hang on... yeah, what?... he says he hasn't got time to talk to you now... But he'll return the pruning shears on Wednesday.

TOM: Tell him thanks.

SHORT: Listen boys, the police department is riddled with corruption, the investigation is going nowhere - and I'm not supposed to be talking to you at all, after the mess you've caused. You've got 24 hours: after that I can't protect you anymore. My hands are tied and I'm washing them of this whole thing.

YAZ: Sounds tricky.

SHORT: I'm sorry lads. 24 hours.

TOM: But Chief...

SHORT: No buts. Goodbye.

MICHAEL: What did he say?

YAZ: No buts.

MICHAEL: He's not still angry about that is he? It was just high spirits – I didn't know his wife was watching.

TOM: We're all doomed.

MICHAEL: I don't know what you're worried about. We'll find Tricky Ricky, no matter who we have to take down to get to him.

YAZ: We'll prove ourselves where all have doubted us.

TOM: And we can pick up a toaster while we're out.

MUSIC

NARRATOR: In a small town called London, England, there live three men. By day a fair to middling theatre company, by night... a fair to middling theatre company with an Adventure Department. If you have a perilous mission that requires cunning and skill; if it seems no one will answer your cry for help; if you can cover insurance costs and all reasonable expenses – there's one fair-to-middling theatre company you can count on. So strap yourselves in, keep arms and legs inside the carriage and remove all loose items, such as glasses, because it's time for Three's Company's Adventure Department!

Episode Four: Pitch Noir.

SCENE ONE

NOIR MUSIC.

TOM NARRATOR: We sat staring moodily at our frosted glass door – the etched words ADVENTURE DEPARTMENT seeming to mock us with memories of a happier time. When suddenly a silhouette appeared. Even in the fading light, the outline was unmistakable. It was a broad, and something had led her here.

YAZ NARRATOR: We'd been in the theatre company with an Adventure Department business for long enough to know that a broad only meant one thing. It meant 'a woman'. It was a 1940s American slang term. (Well actually a broad means two things; it also means overseas.)

TOM NARRATOR: Raising a hand to the pane, the silhouette knocked gently.

MICHAEL: Come in...

TOM NARRATOR: And the door opened.

YAZ NARRATOR: The figure stepped through the doorway and threw a long shadow across the room.

MUSIC STOPS

CLARET: Sorry, do you mind if I turn a light on? It's very shadowy in here.

LIGHT SWITCH, GASP

TOM: Miss Claret!?

CLARET: Gentlemen.

TOM NARRATOR: Miss Ruby Claret, award winning actor and all-round slippery customer, she could twist any situation to her own gain. In she walked, dressed to kill.

CLARET: Can I hang my bazooka coat here?

TOM: No.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: She'd played us for the fools we weren't at Murder Manor and we weren't going to forget that in a hurry.

YAZ: Yey! Miss Claret.

TOM NARRATOR: Yaz had the hots for her.

CLARET: May I sit?

MICHAEL: Sure.

CLARET: Sorry, busy day. It's hard work maintaining my career as an award winning actress, singer and big cat sanctuary owner whilst keeping up my hobby as a master criminal. But I make it work. I can make anything work. I could make a chocolate fireplace work.

YAZ: Ooh, yum.

MICHAEL: What are you doing here, Claret?

CLARET: I hear you three have been having some trouble.

TOM: I don't know where you heard that.

CLARET: No, I didn't tell you. But I think you can use my help.

YAZ: With what...?

CLARET: I don't know, maybe... *Bringing down Tricky Ricky?*

YAZ: You know, your timing couldn't be better.

TOM: I mean we *were* just about to watch Bargain Hunt.

MICHAEL: Look Claret - we know you were working with him all along. We know you were his lover.

YAZ: And we know he wasn't enough for you and you secretly wanted me as well. It was obvious.

MICHAEL: Why would you help us?

CLARET: I guess... Maybe I missed you three, in a strange way. Adventuring... you three made it look almost fun. Things might have been so different if I'd have had the sense to see what was in front of my eyes all those months ago at Murder Manor.

YAZ: Your glasses.

CLARET: But now, Ricky's planning something terrible, too terrible even for me. He's going to poison the city's water supply with arsenic.

ALL GASP

MICHAEL: They same way he killed Barrington-Smyth at Murder Manor. My god, it's the same plot only with higher stakes!

TOM: Must be a sequel.

CLARET: I mean poisoning a *street* with arsenic, sure. Poisoning all the city with slightly cheesy aftertaste, or poisoning all the chaffinches *maybe*. But this is too far.

YAZ: He must be stopped!

MICHAEL: And ideally, in the next 24 hours.

TOM: Well, Twenty-three actually.

MICHAEL: We probably shouldn't have spent the last 59 minutes staring moodily at the door.

YAZ: I think it helped.

TOM: But how can we stop him?

CLARET: Ricky has a secret vault where he keeps his plans and money and blackmail material, that's the key to stopping him.

MICHAEL: Why do you need us?

CLARET: I mean normally and ask my go to team of ace female thieves and crooks but weirdly the all seem to be away.

MICHAEL: It's a fault with the genre.

CLARET: I've come to your agency because as a woman in a man's world, I don't appear to have any agency of my own.

YAZ: Ok, that seems to check out, let's not question it any further.

MICHAEL: Where do we start?

CLARET: I've dug up some info on the guy who built the vault. This guy goes by the name 'Guy'. Here's a blurred picture, a photocopy of his year 5 school report, and his national insurance number.

NOIR MUSIC.

TOM NARRATOR: It wasn't much to go on. Was she spinning a yarn? We couldn't tell. She didn't seem the seamstress type.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Her loyalty may have been patchier than Yaz's mobile phone reception, but we needed a lead, and this was the only lead we had.

YAZ NARRATOR: And anyway what were the chances of three really clever men like us would mis-underestimate a woman two episodes a row.

CLARET NARRATOR: I watched as the three boys swallowed the bate. You won't catch me revealing my true intentions in an inner monologue like these dupes, I thought to myself. I'm a mystery, a closed book, the opposite of Elgar: an enigma with no variations. The Game had begun.

NOIR MUSIC.

SCENE TWO

MICHAEL NARRATOR: So we set out in search of this “Guy” guy. This city was a cesspool of seething seediness, but we knew how to navigate it.

TOM NARRATOR: We tried the usual tactics to get some leads. A few casual chats...

SWIPE, ECHOEY SOUNDS

GARY THE GOON: Please, I don't know anything!

PUNCH

GARY THE GOON: Ow! Call him off, call him off!

MICHAEL: That's enough Yaz.

SWIPE, NOIR MUSIC.

TOM NARRATOR: ...dropped in on a few old friends...

SWIPE

MICHAEL: We know you've been trading weapons with him, Black Kettlepot aka The Puffin. Where is his safe?

THE PUFFIN: I ain't telling you nuffin'.

YAZ: Today is not a good day to mess us about, Kettlepot.

THE PUFFIN: Do you wanna call back Thursday...?

SWIPE, NOIR MUSIC.

TOM NARRATOR: ...but the underworld was silent. Everyone was either under his thumb or wrapped around his little finger.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: We were even visited by myself from the future – but that didn't help at all.

WEIRD SCI-FI NOISE, SCI-FI MUSIC

FUTURE MIKE: I am you from the future.

TOM: Oh this again?

FUTURE MIKE: No time for saying ‘oh this again’! We have no time. And yet, time is all we have.

YAZ: Er... What?

FUTURE MIKE: I need to borrow your kettle.

MICHAEL: Sorry, when exactly are you from?

FUTURE MIKE: I'm from season 2.

YAZ: Oh my god, there's a season 2?!

FUTURE MIKE: Only if you let me borrow your kettle, right now!

YAZ: I mean, go ahead.

FUTURE MIKE: Thanks. Don't worry, you'll have it back in two seconds of your time.

WEIRD SCI-FI NOISE

FUTURE MIKE: Sorry that took so long – here you go.

TOM: Woah. Why are you soaking wet?

YAZ: And wearing a crown?

FUTURE MIKE: Didn't I say there was no time to explain?!

WEIRD SCI-FI NOISE

YAZ NARRATOR: It was, all a bit confusing to be honest.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: We finally caught a break when we went to see Paul the Prawn.

YAZ NARRATOR: Paul the Prawn ran Paul the Prawn's Porn and Prawn Shop, a dodgy joint in the heart of old Soho. Now he was about as reliable as my mobile phone reception. But if there was somebody to know, The Prawn knew them.

TOM NARRATOR: He told us he knew this guy, Guy, and where he hangs out.

PRAWN: Yeah I know this Guy guy and where he hangs out. What's in it for me?

MICHAEL: How about a few of these nice pieces of paper with the Queen's face on. That's the kinda language you speak isn't it?

PRAWN: It sure is. Hand them over.

MICHAEL: 26 second class stamps. And 5 first class – large envelope size.

PRAWN: Pleasure doing business with you. He's normally seen at the Prohibition Man's Tup. He's a pickpocket but I don't know his real name...

YAZ: If you're pulling our legs, Prawn, we'll be back... With Marie Rose sauce.

PRAWN: I told ya, he hangs out in The Prohibition Man's Tup.

TOM NARRATOR: He told us he hangs out in The Prohibition Man's Tup. So that's where we headed.

SCENE THREE

NOIR MUSIC.

YAZ NARRATOR: The Prohibition Man's Tup was where the dregs of the society, the lowest of the low congregated in a violent, ugly and malodorous rabble. It was, frankly, really hard to get a table.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: As we walked in the stench of liquor and sweat hit me in the face. So did the doorman.

PUNCH

DOORMAN: Ah sorry Mike, I didn't recognise you there.

MICHAEL: No worries Jimmy – sometimes these days I don't recognise myself either.

TOM NARRATOR: The hazy, smoky mist which rose from the chatter of the tables and hung brooding around the ceiling, casting a cloak over the city's undesirables was not present due to the smoking ban.

MICHAEL: Three J2Os barkeep. Straight up.

YAZ: No ice, no slice –

TOM: – and no straws. [*Smug*] We've brought reusable ones thank you.

STELLA: Orange & Passion Fruit, Apple & Mango or Apple & Melon?

MICHAEL: Do we look like we care?

YAZ: Apple and Mango.

NOIR MUSIC.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Stella Fosters, the landlady, was no spring chicken.

YAZ NARRATOR: Nor was she a winter chicken. Nor a summer chicken. Nor the other one. She wasn't a chicken at all. She was a human.

TOM NARRATOR: Though you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

YAZ NARRATOR: Though not by her.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: She was a dame, sure, but she was the sorta dame you normally see in Pantomimes.

STELLA: [*Interrupting*] Tom, Michael... Yaz... long time no see.

YAZ: [*Coy*] Um hi.

STELLA: Why haven't you called Yaz?

YAZ: My phone's been playing up.

STELLA: I hear you've been asking after Tricky Ricky.

MICHAEL: We don't want any trouble, we're just looking for a guy known as Guy.

STELLA: Oh... Do you mean Mr Knock-Hollow-Gist?

TOM: You've heard of him?

STELLA: Why don't you ask around?

YAZ: Excuse me everyone, I need a Guy Knock-Hollow-G... -wait a button-flicking-minute!

STELLA: Har har har!

MICHAEL: Yes that was very witty Stella. I'm sure that paid him back for whatever it is he did to you. But this is important, we're looking for one of Tricky Ricky's men. He's a pickpocket using the codename Guy. Any ideas?

STELLA: You might get some info from Tricky Ricky's Gang. They're in The Pool Hall at the back. There's Freddie "Arm-Breaker" Neilson, Sammy "Nastier-Than-Freddie-And-That's-Saying-Something" Andrews, and Randy "Quiet-Nice-Actually-Might-Buy-You-Some-Chocolates-No-Only-Kidding" Ramsey.

MICHAEL: Thanks.

NOIR MUSIC. POOL BEING PLAYED

TOM NARRATOR: We stepped into the back, and Tricky Ricky's goons glared up at us. They were blue in the face. We'd caught them in the middle of some fun and games with snooker chalk.

MICHAEL: They look pretty tough.

YAZ: Yeah.

MICHAEL: But we're right behind you.

YAZ: What?

TOM: Well, a safe distance behind you.

YAZ: Oh Ok. Well, I'll just have a piece of lucky bubble gum.

CHEWING

YAZ: Oh, courage flavour.

MICHAEL: I'll watch for trouble.

TOM: I'll watch this TV in the corner.

YAZ: Excuse me lads, so to bother you... lads, but we um... heard you guys work for Tricky Ricky.

BOBBY: Who said that?

MICHAEL: Stella told us.

BOBBY: No, I'm very short sighted. Who just said that?

HONKEY TONK MUSIC

SAMMY: Don't worry Blind Bobby Boxcutter, it's those stupid Three's Company lads again.

TOM: Who you calling stupid?

SAMMY: You guys.

TOM: Oh right. I wasn't really listening. The TV's showing a rerun of Gilmore Girls.

FREDDIE: [*Mocking*] Come to give us a show have you boys? Maybe some Pinter or a forgotten gem by Caryl Churchill?

GOONS: Harharhar.

MICHAEL: No, we here in our Adventure capacity right now. We don't want any trouble, we just want to know where Tricky Ricky keeps his secret vault?

FREDDIE: I'm afraid I can't answer that.

TOM: You're not at liberty to say?

FREDDIE: No, I don't know the answer.

YAZ: I don't believe that for a second, let me beat it out of him.

MICHAEL: Woah, woah, we're not looking for a fight.

STELLA: Chicken!

YAZ: Who just called us chicken?

STELLA: No, I've got someone's food here. Chicken! Chicken and Chips! Listen fella's, this hot joint is not for you.

TOM: You're kicking us out? Ah well we tried.

STELLA: No, this spicy pork shoulder with cider gravy.

MICHAEL: Give us the answers we need and we'll let you get back to your game of pool.

GUY: (*Whispered*) The pocket.

MICHAEL: Excuse me?

GUY: (*Whispered*) It's in the pocket.

MICHAEL: What?

GUY: Just... talking about something todo with the er... Game of pool.

YAZ: Oh yeah? Coz the only pool you'll see will be a swimming pool. On the telly. From your hospital bed. Coz you'll be in hospital.

TOM: Yeah.

FREDDIE: Take your best shot. It won't cut it.

YAZ: Imagine the worst pain you've felt, and double it.

TOM: Ohh!

FREDDIE: OK, that's your cue... to die!

YAZ: There won't be any cushions where you're going... coz it's prison!

FREDDIE: You think you can snooker us? Give it a rest.

SAMMY: Come on Randy, smash them up!

MICHAEL: Wait!

SAMMY: But we're stripes, see, and they're bunched too close together. So really that's the best tactic.

MICHAEL: I suppose it is.

TOM: Well, we won't trouble you anymore.

RANDY: Yeah that's right you won't, cause I'm gonna beat you up.

YAZ: You don't have the balls.

TOM: Oh good one Yaz, I hadn't thought of that one yet.

JOHN: Enough of this!

HONKY TONK ENDS

TOM: Who are you?

JOHN: I'm John "Really-reasonable-and-friendly-but-turns-murderously-insane-when-he-sees-used-bubblegum" Thomas. I'm really quite reasonable, and friendly, though I do turn murderously insane when I see used bubblegum. Listen everyone, this doesn't have to turn into a fight. You clearly need something. Stop chewing it over, and spit it out.

MICHAEL: Yaz?

YAZ: Oh, alright.

SPIT

MICHAEL: Yaz! Noooo... *[Slow motion]* Dooonn't...

MICHAEL'S VOICE SLOWS DOWN. FIGHT SOUNDS, SWEEPED UP BY POLICE SIRENS INTO MUFFLED POLICE RADIO

SCENE FOUR

MICHAEL: Thanks Jimmy.

SHORT: I can't keep bailing you boys out you know. What were you doing in a pub, anyway, when you're meant to be solving the case?

YAZ: We were following a lead.

SHORT: You're lucky it was me that found you. Most of the other cops are in Tricky Ricky's pockets.

MICHAEL: Pockets... Pockets... Of course!

TOM: What?

MICHAEL: Hang on... I've just found a note in my pocket! This Guy guy must have slipped it in there before the fight.

YAZ: What does it say?

MICHAEL: "J2O x 3 @ £3.50 TOTAL £10.50 Paid by card"

TOM: Is it a code?

SHORT: Maybe try your other pocket?

MICHAEL: Aha, another note. "It's not safe for me to talk here. Meet me in the old cinema at 9pm".

TOM: That's in ten minutes. We've got to move, now!

SHORT: This is a dangerous game you're playing. Ricky is more powerful than you know. Do you really want to do this?

MICHAEL: Is there still crime in this city?

YAZ: Yes.

TOM: £3.50 for a J2O is daylight robbery for a start.

MICHAEL: And seeing as I'm now £10.50 overdrawn on the company credit card, we really need to restore our reputation. Let's go boys.

SHORT: Good luck. Oh boys why couldn't you have just stayed at home and put on a play.

CAR DRIVES AWAY

SCENE FIVE

MICHAEL NARRATOR: We climbed the threadbare stairs of the once glorious picture house, stopping for neither nachos nor 3d glasses, and took a seat on the 3rd row.

YAZ NARRATOR: An old movie was playing. Something about a guy and a girl in a time we couldn't remember and a place we didn't care about.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: A story of love and betrayal that was as old as time, and also there seemed to be some sort subplot with a badger who learnt chess but we weren't entirely paying attention. We waited.

MOVIE PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND

GUY: I see you got the message.

TOM: Is that you Guy?

GUY: Just keep facing forwards, pretend you're watching the film.

YAZ: I am watching the film. This badger's great.

GUY: My real name is Andy, Andy Dexterous. I'm a pickpocket and lockpick. Ricky hired me, but as soon as I realised what he was really up to I knew I just had to keep working for him for a couple more years until my mortgage was paid off and then come straight to you guys.

TOM: So what can you tell us?

GUY: You know what will happen if Tricky Ricky finds out I'm talking to you...

MICHAEL: He won't. No-one knows you're here, except for us and the Chief Inspector. Just tell us the password for the vault.

GUY: Write this down: Password01.

TOM: That's the password?

GUY: No, you don't understand, the "a" is an @ symbol and the "s"s are dollar signs.

YAZ: Clever!

MICHAEL: Can you tell us where the vault is?

GUY: Sure, but before I do, there's something else you need to know. Ricky told me the name of his mole in the police force. You urgently need to find a man called –

MICHAEL: What?

TOM: Go on?

MICHAEL: What's the doing?

YAZ: He's dead!

MICHAEL: Oh my god!

YAZ: Someone shot him with a silent poison dart!

TOM: Hang on, that fire exit wasn't open before – quick after them!

MICHAEL NARRATOR: We made a fast one, but it was too late. Whoever had killed Andy had pulled fast one, then made a fast one, faster than our fast one. Dammit, I said.

MICHAEL: Dammit.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Our only lead had been shot with a poison dart right before our eyes. Or just behind our eyes. Tricky Ricky was always one step ahead. Just out of reach. A man was dead, and we hadn't stopped it.

BASS GUITAR MUSIC

NARRATOR: Will our heroes find the vault? Will they defeat the evil Tricky Ricky? Will Miss Claret return to do anything other than exposition? Find out after this break.

SOUND OF GLASS SMASHING ON FLOOR

SCENE SIX

SULTRY NOIR MUSIC

CLARET NARRATOR: I slipped down a side street in to some dime a dollar dive and caught my breath. Good, I hadn't been followed. In that moment a familiar sensation started to sink in, I could feel the constraints of the genre baring down on me. Maybe this is a man's world, a man's man's world, with man's voices and man's sizes of hi-vis jackets that never fit women. Maybe there is no place in this genre for a woman like me. No. That's what they think, I thought. That's what I'll let them think I think, I thought. Now that's a thought. I packed away my poison dart gun and waited. Everything was going to plan.

TOM: This is the back of the cinema. The killer must have struck from here.

YAZ: No sign of the silent poison dart gun.

TOM: Oh god it's disgusting. There's just of popcorn, crisp packets, half-full cups of coke... an entire discarded roast dinner.

MICHAEL: You're allowed to take your own food into the cinema you know – they can't stop you.

YAZ: Hang on, look here – a matchbook! It says... "Tricky Ricky's Secret Vault and Warehouse".

TOM: Yes, look at this... there's an address: "12 Industrial Park, Shady Business District, North London."

MICHAEL: Well done Tom!

YAZ: Actually, it was...

TOM: Who gets merchandise printed for their secret lair?

MICHAEL: Someone who can do what he likes, when he likes, using whatever font he likes, without worrying about repercussions.

NOIR MUSIC

YAZ NARRATOR: Michael was right. It was a sobering thought. We were up against an impossible foe. My head started to spin with possibilities, and I could hear a ringing in my ears.

RINGING

It was my phone. Claret. If she was calling it could only mean one thing: that she wanted to talk to us.

YAZ: Miss Claret... always a pleasure.

CLARET: Hello?

YAZ: Hello?

CLARET: Hello?

YAZ: Hello?

CLARET: Hello?

YAZ: Hello?

CLARET: Hello?

YAZ: Hello?

CLARET: Yaz?

YAZ: Bloody mobile reception!

CLARET: Oh hello.

YAZ: We got the password and the location of the safe!

CLARET: Oh you're so clever Yaz.

YAZ: I am aren't I? I've followed like 80% of what's going on this episode.

CLARET: So what's this password then?

YAZ: You might want to write this down. It's P for er... "penis", @ symbol, dollar, dollar, w for... "willy", o for "organ", r for "Really Big Penis" and d for... err I don't know, I always find it really hard to think of these things. Dictaphone?

CLARET: Thanks Yaz. Can you put Michael on?

MICHAEL: Hello?

CLARET: Hello?

MICHAEL: Hello.

CLARET: Hello.

MICHAEL: Hello.

CLARET: Hello.

MICHAEL: Stupid mobile reception.

CLARET: Michael listen. I've found out that there's a corrupt cop at the highest level of the force pulling all the strings

MICHAEL: Who is he?

CLARET: What makes you so sure it's a man?

MICHAEL: Oh... Um...

CLARET: Hahaha. just kidding, have you heard any other female voices in this episode?

MICHAEL: It's a fault with the genre.

CLARET: Whatever. Listen. I've got you a lead.

MICHAEL: What's that?

CLARET: It's a slang term for a clue to guide your progress in an investigation, but that's not important right now. Meet me in Grime Alley, and I'll explain everything there. Quick as you can, Ricky might be watching.

YAZ: I knew she'd want to see us again. I really think it can work between me and her.

TOM: You haven't got a chance Yaz. She thinks you're a moron.

YAZ: What? I would never marry more than one person! Anyway, she said I was sweet.

TOM: She said you were unsavoury.

YAZ: Yeah, same thing.

TOM: Even with Miss Claret, we can't take down Tricky Ricky's warehouse, it'll be too heavily guarded.

MICHAEL: Don't worry, I have a plan.

TOM: What's that?

MICHAEL: We'll need help from Jimmy Short. I'll explain when we get to Grime Alley.

YAZ NARRATOR: We were getting closer. We could feel it. We were going to take on Tricky Ricky once again.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: We wandered in silence through the driving rain. Not that it was driving us anywhere quickly.

YAZ NARRATOR: It was just making us wet.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: But what did Claret mean? What was she trying to tell me? I had no idea. I felt confused. Betrayed. Like that bit in The Little Mermaid where the crab sings the song but when he finishes she's gone away.

YAZ NARRATOR: All we knew was that there was a man out there we couldn't trust.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Thank goodness Claret had our back.

TOM NARRATOR: And still the rain continued to fall, hard and persistent and wet. Like a Woodpecker carving through a Giant Oak... In the rain.

YAZ NARRATOR: Michael phoned Detective Short on the way. He promised us backup at the warehouse.

MICHAEL: And we don't wanna get short changed.

SHORT: Well good, cause I'm not going anywhere.

MICHAEL: We'll see you there. Just be careful you don't get caught, Short.

SHORT: No worries. I've already been to the bathroom twice.

SCENE SEVEN

YAZ NARRATOR: And Mike hung up the phone, we realised we'd finally arrived at Grime Alley.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: We passed a rotting corpse, leaning against the garbage bins.

YAZ NARRATOR: He hadn't even managed to die in the bin.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Partially due to the rising crime, and partially due to the blistering incompetence of insert-name-of-current-Secretary-of-State-for-Health-and-Social-Care, the city's hospitals had gone to the dogs, and though they tried their hardest, the lack of opposable thumbs made it very difficult for dogs to make effective doctors.

YAZ NARRATOR: Grime Alley was dark, and dangerous. Like Antonio Banderas or a knife shop with the lights out.

TOM NARRATOR: We could all feel it.

YAZ NARRATOR: It was too quiet.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Alarm bells started to ring.

RINGING

YAZ: Don't be silly Mike, that's not an alarm, it's this very suspicious payphone,

PHONE PICKED UP

YAZ: Hello?

RICKY: *[On phone]* Hey boys!

MICHAEL: Tricky Ricky? What are you playing at?

RICKY: Oh, just a little game I like to call, "being-an-evil-master-criminal-and-getting-away-with-whatever-I-want, because-not-even-the-famed-Adventure-Department-can-stop-me!" ... Still working on the title.

YAZ: Keep at it.

RICKY: So nice to see you're all still such close friends. Crammed into a single phone box...

TOM: How do you know...?

RICKY: Look closely at that garbage can. *[Not phone voice]* Surprise! Hahaha.

YAZ: It's him!

TOM: Damn his incredible disguise abilities!

RICKY: I wouldn't try anything boys... if you would, Miss Claret.

MICHAEL NARRATOR: I felt the barrel of a gun press into my back.

CLARET: Sorry about this boys.

MICHAEL: Claret! You were working with Tricky Ricky the whole time...?

CLARET: Well it's a bit more complicated than that but... yes.

RICKY: Calm down boys, just take a deep breath...

GAS

TOM: *[Coughing]* We're being gassed!

COUGHING

MICHAEL: How could you, you fiends...

RICKY: Lights out boys! Hahahahahahaha.

THUDS, RAIN TAKES OVER

SCENE EIGHT

DRIPS, SOUNDS OF BLURRY COMING ROUND

TOM: Whuh... Where are we?

MICHAEL: For the life of me I can't remember a god-damn thing...

YAZ: What's going on?

MICHAEL: I don't know. What's the last thing you remember?

YAZ: You asking me what the last I remember is. No, answering you.

MICHAEL: We need to figure out what's going on. What's your first thought?

YAZ: I'm not sure... It was probably... "Why am I being squeezed out of this vagina?"

MICHAEL: Thanks for that. Tom?

TOM: Metal walls, vats of acid, thumping headache, shipping crates... Oh god! Tricky Ricky drugged us, and has taken us to his warehouse!

RICKY: Welcome, boys!

NOIR PIANO MUSIC

MICHAEL NARRATOR: There he was. Alone in the centre of the room, smoking a cigar with one hand and strangling a baby kitten with the other.

KITTEN SOUND

YAZ: Tricky Ricky!

MICHAEL: You'll never get away with this.

RICKY: I already have. The arsenic is ready to be disseminated. And you're trapped, framed, and tied to vats of acid. What could possibly go wrong?

TOM: Why did you do this, Ricky?

RICKY: Oh please, I haven't got time for soliloquising! I've got people to kill. Maybe if you spent less time on it yourself, you'd have been able to stop me...

SOCK: Sir, the plan is on target.

RICKY: I told him to say that, just to taunt you.

YAZ: Hang on? Is that...?

MICHAEL: Sock. Commander Sock the alien with no sense of humour from Episode Two: Attack of the Clutchons?

RICKY LAUGHS

SOCK: That is correct. I have been one of Tricky Ricky's crew all along, together with Claret and approximately half the politicians in the city.

TOM: What is this? Some sort of a Joke?

MICHAEL: You're really asking the wrong person there.

YAZ: Wait, and... Oh my goodness, no, it can't be!

NARRATOR: I'm afraid so boys. It's me, your humble Narrator. I could tell you didn't appreciate me so I joined Tricky Ricky's gang.

GENTLE NOIR MUSIC

MICHAEL NARRATOR: Scared? I wasn't scared. But I could tell Yaz and Tom were jittery with nerves.

TOM: Hey, I'm not nervous, I'm just... cold.

MICHAEL: We had one more trick up our sleeve.

TOM: Tricky Ricky still didn't know we'd phoned Short beforehand.

YAZ: If I could keep playing it cool 'til he got here, we had a chance.

TOM: You the cool one, are you kidding me.

RICKY: At that point, the tiresome threesome realised, The Inimitable Tricky Ricky was still there, and **COULD HEAR EVERYTHING THEY SAID...!**

NOIR MUSIC CUTS OUT

TOM: We had blown it.

RICKY: Ooooh, are you waiting for your pint-sized police friend to come save you? Well, wake up and smell the kidney beans... Here he is!

SOUND OF SHUTTER OPENING, SAD PIANO MUSIC

MICHAEL: Short... No, not you. Not you, Jimmy.

SHORT: Sorry lads. I have to think of my family. And also yachts. I have to think of yachts.

RICKY: Cuff 'em, Shortcake. And make sure they're tight...

YAZ: You won't get away with this.

RICKY: You already said that and yet here I am in the process of getting away with it.

TOM: And Ruby Claret, she was part of your plan all along? You sent her to tell us about Guy? You arranged to get us thrown off the scent with the vault password...?

RICKY: Password...? Wait, she told you about the vault?

MICHAEL: Enough games, Ricky.

RICKY: That means... Oh bollocks.

SOCK: Excuse me sir? I am sorry to inform you that your vault has been breached.

RICKY: What?

SOCK: All the money has gone,

RICKY: No!

SOCK: And your evil scheme box has been destroyed...

RICKY: No!.. She's been playing us both all along! Oh... Well... That won't stop me taking exquisite pleasure in killing you three!

YAZ: No, but this might.

PUNCH

TOM: Good punch Yaz!

MICHAEL: Good explanation-of-the-action-for-radio Tom!

YAZ: Good self-referential-humour Michael!

RICKY: Ah? How did you get free?

MICHAEL: Short didn't put these cuffs on properly.

SHORT: I was always a good cop really!

TOM: Looks like the tables have turned, Tricky Ricky.

SHORT: (Just now I'm a good cop with a yaught).

SOCK: Sir.

PUNCH

SOCK: Ouch.

SCENE NINE

MICHAEL: Cuff him, Short-cake! I mean short-arse. I mean Short.

RICKY: We're not so very different you and I. We're both characters in the same script. And we both have noses!

YAZ: You're going to jail for a very long time.

RICKY: I'll be out on bail in a week. I own this city!

SHORT: He's right. It won't stick. What I need is a confession.

TOM: Ok! I dropped Yaz's mobile in the bath! It was me, I'm sorry.

RICKY: You can't stop me and you won't kill me. I'm unstoppable. Hahaha!

YAZ: Why you -

MICHAEL: Yaz, no. We don't kill people. For the purposes of this episode anyway.

RICKY: See! There's nothing you can do! I'm invincible!

CLARET: Not so fast.

GUNSHOT, SOARING HERO MUSIC

CLARET: You were saying?

RICKY: Ow...

CLARET: No-one hassles those boys except me, Tricky Ricky. And the antagonists of the subsequent episodes, I guess.

RICKY: What, no --

GUNSHOT AND THUD

CLARET: Not so Tricky anymore are we, honey boy.

SHORT: He's dead! You killed him.

TOM: We did it.

ALL3: Hooray!

SHORT: I don't want to be a shrivelled haggis or what not, but it seems like you didn't really do anything, apart from what Claret had planned for you.

CLARET: Always get a woman to do a man's job, and seeing as I'm the only woman around.

MICHAEL: (*Whiny*) It's a fault with the genre.

CLARET: You keep telling yourselves that. I'm off to have a conversation with another woman that's not about a man.

CLATTER OF A GUN

YAZ NARRATOR: And with that, she was gone. Just the way she'd first arrived. By foot.

SCENE TEN

UPBEAT NOIR MUSIC

MICHAEL NARRATOR: The city was so happy, they spontaneously threw a parade.

YAZ: Woohoo! What a great parade that was.

TOM: Um... Does that chair look a bit familiar to you?

MICHAEL: You're seeing things.

RICKY: hahahahahahaa....

YAZ NARRATOR: We were heroes wherever we went, as the men who brought down Tricky Ricky And restored order tithe streets, lucky this was absolutely the first time ever that man had taken credit for something a woman had achieved.

TOM NARRATOR: After a day like that, we knew exactly what was needed.

MICHAEL: Have you got the new toaster with the reward money?

TOM: Here.

MICHAEL: And the tea-bags.

YAZ: Here.

TOM: And we're just in time for Pointless.

YAZ: Let's go home.

NOIR MUSIC CHANGES TO A LIGHTER NOIR MUSIC

CLARET NARRATOR: As I watched the boys plod back to their ramshackle office, I felt sorry for them. As that old song goes - It's a man's world. But then as that other old song goes - Supercalerfragerlisticexpealidocious, so what do old songs know. Farewell listeners, maybe we'll meet again. But in the meantime, I have my own adventures to be getting on with.

CREDITS

CREDITS MUSIC

NARRATOR: Next time on Three's Company's Adventure Department...

SINGLE PIANO NOTE

YAZ NARRATION: How did we get here?

TOM NARRATION: Our whole lives were ahead of us.

MICHAEL NARRATION: If only we knew then, what we know now.

BIRDSONG

MICHAEL: Wales is so lovely.

TOM: Just us and the countryside.

MICHAEL: Cut off from the rest of the world, what could possibly go wrong?

TOM: I wish this retreat would never end.

YAZ: I'll pack the car.

QUIET ZOMBIE SOUND

TOM: The roads are abandoned.

MICHAEL: Hang on, what?

YAZ: Ah, don't worry about it.

MICHAEL: Trick of the light.

YAZ: That's probably it.

MICHAEL: Hang on, what's that noise?

DISTANT ZOMBIE ROAR

TOM: Look what's coming towards us.

YAZ: Why are they moving so fast?

MICHAEL: We gotta get outta here.

MUSICAL STING, ZOMBIE NOISES BUILD UNDER

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: Do any of you happen to have a deft hand with weapons.

YAZ: Ha, that's funny.

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: A joint PhD in microbiology and nano-computing.

TOM: It's not funny Yaz.

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: Or an unquenchable desire to help people in need.

YAZ: Check.

TOM: Check.

MICHAEL: And Check.

DEEP AMERICAN MAN: But can we trust them?

NERVOUS LONDON WOMAN: I've a bad feeling about this.

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: What could possibly go wrong.

TOM AND YAZ FIGHTING

TOM: Alright. Give that here.

TOUGH LONDON WOMAN: Hey. Would you guys stop arguing like fucking school kids.

TOM/MICHAEL/YAZ: Sorry.

FIGHTING UNDER

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: Take that.

SAMURAI SWORD SLASH

TOUGH LONDON WOMAN: And that.

MALE VOICE: Woof, Woof!

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: Who's a zombie now?!

MICHAEL: They're everywhere!

TOM: What do we do?

MICHAEL: We might still have a chance.

MALE VOICE: Woof, Woof.

TOUGH LONDON WOMAN: You can save human kind.

TOUGH LONDON WOMAN: Really?

TOM: Really.

YAZ: Really?

TOM: Yes, Yaz, really.

ZOMBIE: Brains!

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: we can't have people going off on their own.

MICHAEL: You're right George the last thing we want now is anyone getting lonely.

GRUFF NORTHER MAN: I'm sorry?

MICHAEL: Look out behind you.

MUSICAL DRUM STING

TOM: Oh my god!

MICHAEL: It's you!

TOUGH LONDON WOMAN: I can't believe you've done this.

EVIL WOMAN: Oh don't try and make me feel guilty.

EVIL LAUGH AND SCREAM MUSIC AND FIGHTING BUILDS

MICHAEL: Yaz, watch out for that girl!

MALE VOICE: Bark, Bark.

TOM: For goodness sake, no one likes your stew Yaz.

NERVOUS LONDON WOMAN: Pick up the hair dryer.

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: You'll get your self killed.

TOUGH LONDON WOMAN: You're all coming with me and that's final.

SWORD SLASH, MUSIC CLEARS, QUIET

YAZ: Wow!

MICHAEL: Would you look at that.

TOM: That's just gobsmacking.

GRUFF NORTHERN MAN: What are you three doing just standing around in the middle of a
Zombie Apocalypse?!

TOM/MICHAEL/YAZ: Zombie Apocalypse!?

CHOIR STING

NARRATOR: Episode Five. Night of the Mortally Challenged.

TOUGH LONDON WOMAN: Just a minute, have you three been in a coma for the last month, like
that last guy?

MALE VOICE: Woof.

TOM: You have been listening to Three's Company's Adventure Department Episode Four: 'Pitch
Noir' or 'A Case of Claret'.

Visit [AdventureDepartment.uk](https://www.adventuredepartment.uk) for more info and subscribe to the podcast to make sure you don't
miss the final episode of this series, Night of the Mortally Challenged.

Adventure Department was written, performed and created by Three's Company.

Guests this episode were Paul Dodds, Ashlea Kaye, Daniel Miller and Greg Snowden

With Youssef Kerkour as Tricky Ricky.

Artwork, Edit and sound design was by Yaz and it was mixed by Adrian Townsend.

Special thanks this episode to Hamish Nicholls, and Mariam Bell for one of the jokes.

Full credits, music listings, transcripts and more can be found at [AdventureDepartment.uk](https://www.adventuredepartment.uk)

And if you enjoyed the podcast it would help us immensely if you could rate it and tell people you know, by email, by social media or in person, providing you don't tell more than six people from more than two households that you enjoyed it at the same time.

Our Twitter is @ThreesCompany or Instagram is ThreesCompanyUK our Facbooke is ThreesCo and our website is [AdventureDepartment.uk](https://www.adventuredepartment.uk)

Three's Company are Yaz Al-Shaater, Michael Grady-Hall and me, Tom Crawshaw... Right, I think we need to have a little chat, don't we Mr Narrator.

MICHAEL: Yes.

NARRATOR: I'm sorry boys, Ricky made me do it, let me come back and work for you please! I'll do anything!

YAZ: Will you narrate the inner thoughts of the ducks in the park for me, so it sounds like they're a family having a conversation?

NARRATOR: Er... sure?

YAZ: Then welcome back to the team friend. Let's go to the park.