

FADE IN

1 TITLE SEQUENCE

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *The Overdose Notes...*

CLOSE UP: MACRO

We open on a page of hand-writing. Scribbled on the inside cover of a black leather 'Mollskin' diary/writing pad is the name of our protagonist; *Johnathon Levitt.....* followed by the sentence...*An investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Chris Mills following his release from HMP Bishop Park,*

CUT TO:

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *Meeting with Suzanne - Westhire Criminal Justice Board.*

(Through out this sequence we hear a conversation between JOHN and a female WCJB Representative; SUZANNE.)

2 INT. BENEATH SPAGHETTI JUNCTION - NIGHT

Occasionally lit by the headlights of passing traffic, CHRIS sits with his back to the wall.

SUZANNE - WCJB REPRESENTATIVE (O.S.)

Chris Mill's ASBO was originally imposed by Westshire Court in 2002 for drunkenness and theft...

Then through out a four year period, he would be seen to repeatedly breach the conditions...

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Chris Mills...ASBO...Prisoner.*

CUT TO:

Between his legs, placed on the concrete floor are drugs paraphernalia which he anxiously organizes. This consists of a crudely half cut lager-can, a disposable lighter, cigarette filters, some lemon juice, a syringe and a wrap of heroin.

...'consuming alcohol in the district council area, specifically in 'No Drinking by Law Zones', using threatening behavior, entering licensed premises... off licenses, super markets...so on and so forth...

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...drunk, abusive in public...*

...which saw him serve a string of sentences, roughly two months at a time...

CUT TO:

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Alcoholic....*

Taking a disposable lighter that sparks to illuminate his gaunt face, we see that in CHRIS's mouth is a syringe held length ways.

JOHN (O.S.)

Because of his addiction to alcohol?

SUZANNE (O.S.)

And heroin. Chris had a dual dependency...

JOHN (O.S.)

Yes of course.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

....Though for the most part his crimes were drink related.

Which brings us to his death in Autumn.

CUT TO:

The flame licks the underside of the halved lager can in which brown powder sulfurously bubbles into liquid.

JOHN

From a heroin overdose?

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Overdose...*

CUT TO:

CHRIS takes the needle from his mouth and uses it to draw up the Heroin from the can.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

The post-mortem confirmed that was the cause, yes.

Tragically, Chris died some twenty fours after his release from prison.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...died 24 hrs post release...*

He then flicks the tip of the needle to dispel any trapped air.

A serious issue for us, one we need to understand in greater detail...

JOHN (O.S.)

Have you any initial thoughts as to how it could have happened?

CUT TO:

His tightly clenched jaw pulls at a leather belt, which wrapped around his arm, reveals a tapestry of self made prison tatoos and needle tracks.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

A few but I think at this stage, we need to ask the right questions from those who dealt with him...

CUT TO:

Locating a vein, protruding from beneath the thin, pale skin of his forearm, CHRIS draws into the syringe his own blood before pushing back the needle's contents.

I suggest the arresting officers, prison officers, cell mates,, drugs counsellors, family members...

CUT TO:

CHRIS comfortably sinks back into the shadows.

3

INT. MEETING ROOM / WILTSHIRE CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD - DAY

CLOSE UP: JOHN's handwriting scrawls across the page.

We'll ensure you have complete access to whoever you need to talk to.

CUT TO:

JOHN finishes writing in his pad and looks up. SUZANNE continues her instructions.

Once you've some feedback, we'll meet again and discuss it further with the appropriate agencies...

JOHN

Good, sounds like a plan.

SUZANNE

...our aim is to prevent it from happening again to other people in his situation.

4 INT. BENEATH SPAGHETTI JUNCTION - DAY

JOHN stands at the exact location where Chris's body was discovered, he writes in his notebook.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

Where do you think you'll start?

CUT TO:

PC BARNES looks down at the ground. He is white, in his mid twenties, of medium build.

CUT TO BLACK

JOHN (O.S)

Probably as suggested...

Handwriting scribbles across the page.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Monday...12th October...meet PC Barnes*

His record says his final arrest was made by a PC Barnes.

PC BARNES (O.S)

It doesn't surprise me this, sadly.

JOHN

You hear much about users OD'ing?

PC BARNES

Yeah, a few. Its fairly common though not often in public places like this, bodies are usually discovered in other user's homes, dens and the like...But I suppose this here make's sense because you say he was released homeless?

JOHN

There's some confusion as to where he was going that night, his release application states 'No fixed abode'...

PC Barnes nods.

PC BARNES

Right.

JOHN

What can you remember about him?

5 INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

POV internal from car we pull up on the side of the road to see a drunken CHRIS sat on the steps of the town Hall.

PC BARNES

Well we all knew of him...I'd personally picked him up twice before, once in the summer of last year, and early again this year, some other officers had taken him in too...

JOHN

But you were the last to do so?

PC BARNES (O.S)

Yeah, this July gone....

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *Why hadn't Chris learnt his lesson first time around?*

CUT TO:

6 EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

We exit the car and hand held, slowly approach CHRIS on foot.

He'd been drinking on the steps of the town hall...when the report came in, we instinctively knew it was him because we'd arrested him there before...

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Why was he still drinking in a no drinking by law zone?*

From a distance, CHRIS see's us approach him.

CHRIS

.....Right, yooo've got it in for me, coss I ain't done nothing wrong ere...I'm juss sittin' here...

When we arrive, CHRIS looks up, despondently at the arresting Officer.

Nothin' wrong....

We push back the sound of CHRIS's voice.

JOHN (O.S)

What was he like?

PC BARNES (O.S)

...he was hiding a bottle of
cider...but he reeked of booze
and god know's what else, he was
in a proper state...

PC BARNES helps CHRIS up and into the Police Car.

CHRIS

Getoffamee, I can get myself
up...

PC BARNES

C'mon, you know better than this
don't you?

7

INT. CAR - DAY

CHRIS sits in the back of the car cursing.

PC BARNES (O.S)

We nicked him for breaking his
ASBO and took him to the station
to sober up.

JOHN (O.S)

Was he aggressive?

PC BARNES (O.S)

A little...though I think he was
feeling pretty defeated by the
time we got to the station.

CUT TO:

CHRIS is quiet, looking out of the window defeated.

JOHN (O.S)

Can you remember what you said to
him?

PC BARNES looks at Chris in the rear view mirror.

PC BARNES

Would've thought you'd have
learnt by now Mr Mills?

Clearly prison life suits you?

There's no answer from Chris. PC BARNES mutters to his
colleague.

Bloody waste of time this.

8

EXT. STREET - DAY

JOHN and PC BARNES walk together towards PC BARNES Vehicle

PC BARNES

I do remember thinking what was the point of us taking him back and forth to prison if nothing was going to sort him out in between stints inside...

JOHN

He refused help from alcohol counsellors inbetween stints.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Was sending him to prison doing him any good?*

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Non-obligational alcohol counselling?*

PC BARNES

Right, well It does make you wonder if the prison system is actually making a difference to these people's lives or whether we're just keeping them off the streets for a bit until the next time they screw up...I don't know.

Anyway good luck with it all.

PC BARNES gets into his car.

JOHN

One more thing before you go. Do you think that had Chris survived, he would have breached his ASBO again?

PC BARNES shakes his head.

PC BARNES

Given his record, what do you think?

JOHN writes in his notebook.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Was the ASBO the right thing for Chris?*

CUT TO:

9

INT. CAR - DAY

JOHN drives to his next destination.

JOHN (O.S.)

Thanks for taking the time to speak to me, I appreciate that you're busy...

10 EXT. PRISON - DAY

JOHN walks up to the Prison gates.

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE (O.S)

No bother, I've dug out Mr Mill's file as requested...

CUT TO BLACK

11 INT. PRISON/OFFICE - DAY

Handwriting scribbles across the page.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Tues 13th.....Meeting with Prison Officer Pryce at Bishop Park*

CUT TO:

JOHN sits opposite PRISON OFFICER PRYCE, on the table between them is Chris's open file. PRYCE is in his fifties, grey with glasses.

...though I must say, I don't remember him that well..

We've a lot of prisoners who come through here, especially the short timers, who like Mr Mills are in and out in a matter of months.

JOHN

Sure.

Putting his glasses on, PRISON OFFICER PRYCE reads over the file.

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

...though saying that, if I don't remember him, that's probably a good thing as it means he was no trouble.

PRYCE scans the page.

Right.

(MORE)

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE (cont'd)
 So he was in for alcohol abuse,
 breached his ASBO on one too many
 occasions...

JOHN

That's correct.

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

Well, it's not uncommon...we have
 a lot of dependents through here,
 and truth be known not the staff
 to deal with them individually,
 which obviously isn't preferable.

JOHN

As in allocated personal
 officers?

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

That would be the ideal
 situation, yes.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Allocated Personal officers?*

Protocol is however, that when
 new inmates sign in for
 induction, they're asked some
 questions as to their habitual
 behavior.

CUT TO:

12 INT. INDUCTION ROOM (CHRIS'S CELL) - DAY

At a desk, CHRIS sits opposite PRISON OFFICER # 2, who goes
 through the induction process. He is seen answering
 numerous questions.

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE (O.S) (CONT.)

...and whether they feel they
 would benefit from a detox
 programme through out their
 sentence.

We hear the interview take place between Chris and a PRISON
 OFFICER.

PRISON OFFICER # 2

Are you an alcoholic?

CHRIS

Yes.

CUT TO:

On the induction form, the PRISON OFFICER ticks the 'Yes' box to the question: 'Are you an alcoholic?'

13 INT. PRISON/OFFICE - DAY

OFFICER PRYCE continues.

Then if they do want it, we've AA meetings, Drugs and Harm reduction policies available...

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Non obligatory Detox programmes?*

JOHN

But its not compulsory?

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

No, it isn't.

CUT TO:

14 INT. INDUCTION ROOM - DAY

On the induction form, the PRISON OFFICER ticks the 'NO' box to the question: 'Would you benefit from a detox programme?'

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE (O.S)

...I see, says here, Mr Mills declined help for his alcohol abuse.

15 INT. PRISON/OFFICE - DAY

PRYCE looks up from the page.

Well we, and I'm sure that many of the prisoners would agree, time inside here is enough to help them clean up.

JOHN

Until they're released?

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

What they do when they leave is unfortunately beyond our jurisdiction...

(MORE)

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE (cont'd)

But as I say, even though this is a Category C prison, its still a strong enough deterrent to make them think twice before re-offending.

JOHN

And if they're need for drugs and alcohol outweighs that fear?

OFFICER PRYCE remains silent.

I mean especially when what they're dependent on becomes available to them again...

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

I understand your point, and as I said before in an ideal world we would allocate individual councillors to the users once they leave but like Chris, not everyone agrees to receiving help.

I mean in some cases there is help, but we have limitations that are dictated by budget and resource.

Also, he was a short term prisoner, so there's not much on offer for them.

Beat.

JOHN

What if I said that Chris Mills took a fatal overdose of heroin twenty four hours after he left Bishop Park...

Beat.

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

Right.

Then I's say that's very unfortunate.

And was he a heroin addict prior to his time in prison?

JOHN

He was yes.

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

Well that does surprise me...

16 INT. INDUCTION ROOM - DAY

PRISON OFFICER # 2 writes on his clip board.

...It should have been picked up during his induction.

PRISON OFFICER # 2

Are you a drug user?

CHRIS

No.

CLOSE UP

On the induction form, PRISON OFFICER # 2 ticks the 'NO' box to the question: 'Are you a drug user?'

17 INT. PRISON/OFFICE - DAY

We return to JOHN and PRISON OFFICER PRYCE. JOHN writes in his notebook.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Why wasn't Chris's dual addiction picked up?*

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Could more have been done for Chris?*

CUT TO:

JOHN

If I may I'd like to speak to any other prisoners who would have known Chris whilst he was here?

PRISON OFFICER PRYCE

I'll see what I can arrange for you.

Will probably have to be tomorrow now...

CUT TO BLACK

Handwriting scribbles across the page.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Wednesday 14th October Dean...Chris's Cell Mate...Bishop Park*

DEAN (O.S)

Yeah we talked, and I knew he had a history of using.

CUT TO:

18 INT. PRISON / ALLOTMENT - DAY

JOHN stands listening to DEAN who is tending to the prison vegetable patch, he is white, tall and in his late thirties.

But whether he did Heroin in here I couldn't say. I never saw him with any personally.

I mean there are drugs here if you want to find them...Sometimes they find you.

JOHN looks inquisitively and writes in his note pad.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Availability of drugs in prison?*

DEAN nods at an officer.

They turn a blind eye.

I think they'd rather us be on it so we don't bother 'em none, easier that way innit?

DEAN laughs.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Prison attitude towards drug use?*

Beat

What there is here, is cut to shit.

That's why all the junkies when they come out OD first time cos there bodies get use to the weak stuff in 'ere...outside its stronger so when they take the same dose...they're in trouble.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Tolerance levels of drug users in prison?*

JOHN

Would that make sense with Chris?

DEAN

Yeah it would.

JOHN

But it's also possible that he was clean through out his sentence and only took heroin when he left prison, on the day he died?

DEAN

...Yeah again its possible, he wasn't in for long. I suppose if he was using, and for what ever reason, couldn't get some then he'd be itching and cold sweating and I never saw anything like that from him?

I don't know, maybe he was hard and could take it...

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...If Chris was going cold turkey, why didn't anyone notice?*

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Was Chris depressed?*

JOHN (O.S)

Would you say Chris was suicidal?

19

INT. CELL - DAY

We see Chris talking through the cell window to DEAN.

DEAN (O.S)

No, from what he told me, he was looking forward to getting out.

He said; he was going to straighten out, make amends with his family if they'd tke him back and try for a fresh start....

We see Dean listening.

CHRIS

It eats me up, the guilt and that for all the grief I put them through... I took everything...TV, hi-fi, jewelry...stuff that's been in the family for years...what a bastard aye?

They've washed their hands of me now anyway.

CUT TO BLACK

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Thursday 15th October...Meet Chris's Mother ; Maureen Mills at Broadwater Park...*

CHRIS (O.S)

When I get out, I'm gonna sort out a place to live, get a job and replace all the things that I stole from em...

CUT TO:

20 EXT. PARK - DAY

CHRIS (O.S) (CONT'D)

It'll be a start anyhow.

Chris's mum MAUREEN walks in the park with JOHN.

JOHN

Is that something that he would have said to you?

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...What was his relationship with Family like?*

MAUREEN

Yes, all the time, on the phone, when he wrote, when we visited him, or when came home each time...

He was very apologetic for what he'd done, and wanted to change...but what you've got to understand is that it was the same old story for years and well after a while...

JOHN

You lost patience...

MAUREEN

At first, me and his dad would give him the benefit of the doubt, but the way he was, he was always battling with the addiction, you know?

21 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

MAUREEN and JOHN sit at the table.

MAUREEN

In the end, his dad said he couldn't see him again until he got help, which was hard for them both cause when Chris was a boy, they were very close...bike rides, football...always together.

(MORE)

MAUREEN (cont'd)
As much as I hated it, I couldn't
desert him.

CUT TO:

FLASH BACK SEQUENCE

CHRIS sits at the Kitchen Table, his MUM leans against the kitchen work surface.

CHRIS

Mum, its like a monkey on my back
telling me to take it, don't take
it...

It's doing my head in...

MAUREEN

(Angry)

How do you think it makes us feel
seeing you like this...

She tosses the paper on the table in front of him.

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Media Attention, what effect does it have?*

'A Notorious Yob' is what they
call you...I got journalists
phoning me up at all hours,
knocking on my door, asking why
my son is the way he is... my 36
year old son...who won't take
responsibility for anything in
his life!!

Chris slams his fist onto the table.

CHRIS

I'm trying!!!

22

EXT. PARK - DAY

JOHN and MAUREEN stand at the front door.

I hated what he'd become. I was
ashamed of him and no matter what
we did to try and help him, he'd
always throw it back in our faces
by stealing from us, threatening
us...

MAUREEN is clearly moved.

The thing is, when we heard he
died, that day, I almost felt
relieved...

23 INT. PRISON - DAY

Chris belongings are reissued from the prison. He gets dressed. Looks at the spare change he has in his wallet.

PRISON OFFICER

Got your accommodation sorted?

CHRIS

Yeah no worries. Either my old man's, or to a hostel. One of the two...

JOHN (O.S)

How did you find out about his death?

24 INT. PRISON - DAY

With a bag slung over his shoulder, he walks through the exit.

MAUREEN (O.S)

Oh a police lady and a family liaison officer came to the house and broke the news...

25 INT. STATION SHOP - DAY

Chris looks around him before pocketing a sandwich.

I thought, what has he done now, you know?

26 EXT. PLATFORM - DAY

Chris stands on the platform, eating the sandwich whilst waiting for the train.

We were devastated.

27 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

He purchases two cans of lager from a Buffet Trolley.

Nothing prepares you for losing a child...

He takes a sip, which he clearly relishes, and looks out of the window at the passing landscape.

CUT TO BLACK

CUE TEXT ON SCREEN: *...Friday 16th October...Meet Hannah Shackman,;
Drugs counsellor at her Office.*

CUT TO

28 INT. DRUGS COUNSELLOR OFFICE - DAY

HANNAH, the drugs counsellor sits opposite JOHN in her office.

HANNAH

Whether its drugs or alcohol, what all addicts have in common is unhappiness and many have a mental health condition which alienates them from a judgemental society.

Most addicts use drugs as self-medication to relieve themselves from the pain of existence.

We have all got to work harder to make sure people like this are supported when they come out of prison.

29 EXT. STATION - DAY

CHRIS walks into to a phone box and makes a call.

CHRIS

Yeah...alright...yeah its Chris...

Yeah mate, I've been inside....again, yeah. Too right I could, can you sort me out?

Is that alright yeah...nice one. I'll be there at four....Usual place yeah.

JOHN (O.S)

Chris didn't take up the offer of help...

30 INT. DRUGS COUNSELLOR OFFICE - DAY

John continues the conversation.

JOHN (CONT'D)

He told some people that he was on drugs and others that he was on alcohol, does this surprise you?

HANNAH

No...sadly. Part of the problem is the individual not coming to terms with their addiction and therefore actually not wanting the help...

31 EXT. STREET - DAY

CHRIS waits at a spot on the side of the road.

JOHN (O.S)

Its true Chris didn't take up the support made available to him, on several occasions...

A car parks up alongside him.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

The car door opens. Chris jumps into the back seat.

CHRIS

Alright.

HANNAH (O.S.)

Its difficult to say how things would have panned out, had he taken this up...but I don't know.

32 INT. DRUGS COUNSELLOR OFFICE - DAY

JOHN and HANNAH continue their discussion.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

It's not the only issue, its not that clear cut. There are just so many variables, all of which we have to take into account.

All of which we have to have a better understanding of if we're going to prevent this from happening again, and again and again...

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Questions for example...such as what made him turn to drugs and drink in the first place?

33 EXT. BENEATH SPAGHETTI JUNCTION - NIGHT

CHRIS crosses the road towards the underneath of the spaghetti junction.

...what support did he get from his family and friends... or were his friends partly responsible for his addiction?

Was the sub culture he became affiliated with, keeping him addicted? Should more have been done to separate him, and how is this done?

34 INT. BENEATH SPAGHETTI JUNCTION - NIGHT

MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

CHRIS walks through various walkways before finding his spot.

...when was the police's first involvement? And how did they handle his first drug and alcohol related crime?

Could they have handled things differently...was he branded a criminal before he received the necessary help? Could the probation service, who tried their best with him in the past to motivate him to take treatment, have offered the court an alternative option to an ASBO? ...or was the ASBO imposed upon him designed to be that help?

Or was it to simply sweep him under the carpet?

CUT TO:

Chris sits down

Should the prison have been more thorough through out his sentence, should they have forced checks, imposed support, made him clean...arranged after-care for him and made links with agencies outside prison..

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Perhaps Chris shouldn't even be in a position to dictate his own wellbeing? But then there is no statutory responsibility for agencies to supervise prisoners who get under 12 months inside - So we are back to what was done to prevent him from going inside in the first place.

CUT TO:

We stay with him whilst he sits and thinks.

Or perhaps there was nothing that could be done, because Chris simply didn't care anymore?

Perhaps because people didn't care about him....

There's a lot to think about...

FADE OUT.

END