

HANGDOG

by
Cat Jones

Characters

Hangdog

Detective

Oscar

Delta

Birdlime

Cohen

SCENE 1. HANGDOG'S POEM PART 1.

HANGDOG:

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there; I do not sleep.

I'm the grit in yer eye,
I'm the stitch in yer side,
I'm the rash yer scratch that drives yer wild,
I'm the hangnail that just won't be filed,
I'm the burn in yer throat,
When yer chokin' bile.

I'm the photo with eyes that shake yer,
The cold sweat in the night that wakes yer,
The bit o' yer own brain that hates yer,
And the dark old place it tries to take yer.

DETECTIVE: You've had more than one then?

OSCAR: Two this year.

DETECTIVE: That's a lot.

OSCAR: It's quite a job keepin' someone alive who don't want to be.

DETECTIVE:

DETECTIVE APPROACHES THE CAR.
WE HEAR THE WINDOW OPEN.

DETECTIVE: What are you doing here Long?

LONG: Same thing you are.

DETECTIVE: I wouldn't have thought there was much news in a prison suicide.

LONG: Don't ever cheat on your wife will you Detective. You're a hopeless liar. We both know this is going to be huge.

DETECTIVE: What do you want?

LONG: An early comment for a story in the morning edition. I'll write you a very flattering part in it.

DETECTIVE: You know I can't do that.

LONG: Well maybe I can get something a bit later then when you've looked into it.

DETECTIVE: Go home Long. Save yourself sitting here all day for nothing.

LONG: Then what about something I can attribute to an unnamed source?

DETECTIVE WALKS BACK TO OSCAR.

Detective!

DETECTIVE:

SCENE 3. INT. PRISON SEARCH AREA.
EVENING.

OSCAR: I won't put yer through the indignity of a search Detective. I'm meant to, but I think we can assume yer've no wraps of heroin in yer tighty whities.

DETECTIVE: Don't break the rules on my account. Just do as you'd normally do.

OSCAR: Suit yerself.

BEAT.

Shoes, jacket and belt on the conveyer. Then sit yerself on that chair.

DETECTIVE: What is it, an X-ray?

OSCAR: That's right. Lookin' for the mobile phone plugged up yer backside. It's a full time job keepin' contraband out of this place. We find SIM cards in their babies' nappies and razor blades in their nanna's jackets. You can get up now.

SCENE 4. INT. PRISON CORRIDOR.
EVENING.

A PRISON GATE IS UNLOCKED AND
OPENED THEN SLAMMED SHUT AND
LOCKED.

OSCAR AND DETECTIVE WALK DOWN
THE CORRIDOR DURING THE
FOLLOWING:

OSCAR: So who was that woman then? Yer stalker?

DETECTIVE: A journalist. She's reporting on the suicide.

OSCAR: I'm surprised anyone cares! He were a smack rat, the lad who topped himself. Blackened old ladies' faces when they struggled him too much for their handbags. Did one so badly that she never woke up.

PAUSE.

Yer don't put rubbish in the bin then cry when it rots do yer?

DETECTIVE: This lad was public property.

OSCAR: How d'yer mean?

DETECTIVE: They used to call him Child C.

OSCAR: Who did?

A

SCENE 5. INT. PRISON WING. EVENING.

THE GATE SLAMS AND OSCAR LOCKS

IT.

Shall we start in the office?

SCENE 6. INT. OFFICE. EVENING.

OSCAR AND DETECTIVE ENTER THE
OFFICE AND CLOSE THE DOOR.

OSCAR: This is Delta 3. She were

DELTA: He also had bruised knuckles on his right hand when we found him.

DETECTIVE: Had he been in a fight?

OSCAR: Maybe. Though he weren't much of a fighter in all honesty. Can't have been 10 stone wet through.

DETECTIVE: An attack then? A defensive injury.

OSCAR: More likely.

DETECTIVE: Was there anyone who might have wanted to hurt him?

OSCAR: It's a prison Detective. The prisoners hurt each other for kicks. And Hangdog weren't what yer might call popular. Yer'd be quicker startin' with the cons who *didn't* want to give him a slap.

DETECTIVE: And what about the staff? Did any of them want to give him a slap?

OSCAR: No doubt a few wanted to. But we show a bit more restraint than that.

DETECTIVE: Was there anything else significant about the body?

OSCAR: He wrote the word 'shame'.

DETECTIVE: Shame?

OSCAR: It was scratched into his forearm.

SCENE 7. HANGDOG'S POEM PART 2.

HANGDOG:

I'm the ringin' in yer ears,
I'm the cracks in yer lips.
I'm the sty in yer eye,
And the creak in yer hips.
I'm the stench in yer nostril,
The taste in yer mouth,
That swillin' and spittin'
Won't ever get out.

I'm yer achin' gut,
I'm yer paper cut,
I'm a splinter,
I'm a blister,
On the sole of yer foot.
I'm yer every misfortune
And bit o' bad luck,

SCENE 8. INT. BIRDLIME'S CELL.
EVENING.

OSCAR AND DETECTIVE APPROACH
BIRDLIME'S CELL. INSIDE HE BANGS ON
THE DOOR AND SHOUTS:

BIRDLIME: I want me stuff! Give me me stuff!

OSCAR: He's a real treat this one. Yer want to just talk to him through the flap?

DETECTIVE: No. Open the door.

OSCAR UNLOCKS THE DOOR.

OSCAR: Shut yer noise Birdlime!

BIRDLIME: I want me stuff.

OSCAR: It's in evidence. Part of an investigation.

BIRDLIME: What investigation?

OSCAR: Police. They've come to talk to yer.

BIRDLIME: Well tell him I ain't fluent in pig.

OSCAR: Tell him yerself.

BIRDLIME: Yer can't keep my stuff from me. I've got rights.

OSCAR: They know all about their rights this lot.

DETECTIVE: The quicker we close the investigation the quicker you'll get your stuff.

BIRDLIME: Well I'm not talkin' 'til I get it.

DETECTIVE: What is it you need from your things so badly?

BIRDLIME: Burn.

DETECTIVE: Is that it?

BIRDLIME: Obviously you ain't a smoker.

OSCAR: Yer can tell can't yer?

DETECTIVE: Is he allowed to smoke in here?

OSCAR: Well if he had some burn he could.

DETECTIVE: Give him a cigarette.

OSCAR: What? I'm not givin' him one of –

DETECTIVE: I said, give him a cigarette.

OSCAR TAKES OUT A CIGARETTE AND
GIVES IT TO BIRDLIME.

OSCAR: Fine but he's connin' yer. Yer'll get nothin' from him.

BIRDLIME: Don't mind if I do. Been a while since I scored a straight. Look at his face. He's about to pop a vessel in his eye. I'd go twos with yer boss but I dunno where yer lips have been.

OSCAR: Don't push it.

OSCAR LIGHTS THE CIGARETTE.

DETECTIVE: I need to find out what happened to Hangdog.

BIRDLIME: I don't know nothin' about it. I went to sleep and he were alive. Woke up and he were doin' the floorless waltz.

DETECTIVE: A friend of yours was he?

How long had you been sharing a cell?

BIRDLIME: Grand total of one day. So perhaps it was somethin' I said.

DETECTIVE: One day?

BIRDLIME: They bunked him up with me yesterday mornin'. Before that he were with Cohen.

DETECTIVE: Why was Hangdog moved?

BIRDLIME: Don't ask me why screws screw. They got their own logic.

DETECTIVE: I wasn't asking *you*.

BIRDLIME: Ah, I see where yer goin' with that but I got a chance at re-cat comin' up. Yer think I'd be stupid enough to slap *that* little squealer?

DETECTIVE: He had bruised knuckles. You've got a bruised face.

BIRDLIME: Seriously? Yer think if me and Hangdog had beef, it'd be him wearin' marks on his knuckles and me wearin' marks on me face? Tell him, man.

OSCAR: I don't know what went on between you.

BIRDLIME: Unbelievable. Everyone knows that Cohen and Hangdog had strife yesterday and you're still tryin' to pin somethin' on me.

BIRDLIME: He's yer eyes and ears on the wing ain't he Boss?

DETECTIVE: Did Cohen have a fight with Hangdog or not?

OSCAR: I don't think either of 'em threw a punch.

BIRDLIME: Neither of 'em are exactly built for fightin'. There were more huggin' than hittin'. Like a slow dance in a concentration camp.

DETECTIVE: I'm going to need to speak to him.

BIRDLIME: You'll like him. He's a batty little Boy Scout.

OSCAR: Fine. He's just out here.

BIRDLIME: Off so soon? We must do this again!

OSCAR AND DETECTIVE GO TO LEAVE.

So I can have me stuff now?

OSCAR AND DETECTIVE EXIT.

(BEHIND DOOR) What about me stuff?

SCENE 9. INT. WING. EVENING.

OSCAR: That's him there. He's the wing cleaner.

DETECTIVE AND OSCAR APPROACH
COHEN WHO IS MOPPING THE FLOOR.
IN THE BACKGROUND WE CAN HEAR
BIRDLIME FROM BEHIND HIS DOOR.

BIRDLIME: I want me stuff!

OSCAR: The detective wants a word with you Cohen. About Hangdog.

COHEN KEEPS MOPPING.

COHEN: They'll see that too. It's not like I know anythin'.

DETECTIVE: Well you know why you and Hangdog had a fight yesterday morning.

COHEN: I dunno what yer talkin' about.

OSCAR: There's no point lyin' about it lad.

DETECTIVE: I'm going to give you five seconds before I thank you at the top of my voice for your full cooperation.

COHEN: (SIGHS) My pad's over there.

SCENE 10. INT. COHEN'S CELL.
EVENING.

COHEN CLOSSES THE DOOR.

DETECTIVE: This is a very tidy cell.

COHEN: I like to keep me things in order.

OSCAR: Everythin' in its place, int that right Cohen.

DETECTIVE: A pretty impressive display of certificates you've got there.

COHEN: Yeah I've done loads of courses and that. Literacy. IT, Thinking Skills.

OSCAR: Some prisoners make the most of their time in jail and others... well others are more like Hangdog. Look at that there. Little git used to rip the corners off Cohen's certificates to make filters for his rollies.

COHEN: I didn't really mind.

DETECTIVE: Is this your handwriting here, on this letter?

COHEN: Yeah why?

DETECTIVE GETS OUT HANGDOG'S
POEM.

DETECTIVE: It's the same as on this poem that was found in Hangdog's cell.

COHEN: Cos I wrote it out for him. He couldn't write yer see so sometimes I put stuff down on papdown to COHEN:

OSCAR: They're not allowed anythin' else. Blu-tac can be used to stuff up the locks and tape for bindin' and gaggin'.

COHEN: And some of the lads ink themselves with drawin' pins. So we're left with toothpaste. It's funny, cos everytime I smell mint I think of me family.

DETECTIVE: So there was a photo there that you've taken down?

COHEN: No... I don't think so. Maybe it fell down. I don't know.

DETECTIVE: Seems like something you'd remember. Photos being so precious in here.

PAUSE.

DETECTIVE (Cont): You didn't get on with Hangdog then?

COHEN: Nah we did mostly. We were just different that's all. I've got a chance at release comin' up so I'm just trying to keep me nose clean.

COHEN: He came onto this wing from Alpha a couple of months ago. Cos he'd run up some debt.

OSCAR: The lads there were threatenin' to put him in a box.

COHEN:

COHEN: Pretty much.

DETECTIVE: So you told Oscar you wanted him to move cell?

COHEN: Yeah but Hangdog finds out and he starts throwin' his weight about. Says I should move cell not him. But this is one of the best cells and they weren't gonna give it to a prisoner on basic like him.

DETECTIVE: And why did it come to a head yesterday?

COHEN: How d'yer mean?

DETECTIVE: What was it that made you decide yesterday that you didn't want to share with him anymore?

COHEN: I don't know. ow. ow. ow. o ow

COHEN:

Well I suppose we kind of agreed it together.

DETECTIVE: You're not telling me everything.

COHEN: I am.

DETECTIVE: Who was Hangdog's dealer then?

COHEN: If it gets back to him that I told yer.

DETECTIVE: I'm not going to tell anyone.

PAUSE.

COHEN: It were Birdlime.

DETECTIVE: So Hangdog was sharing with a prisoner he owed money to?

OSCAR: I didn't know that. It were the only bed we had spare.

COHEN: It's Birdlime yer should be chargin' with somethin' not me. He's got his fingers in everythin' in this nick. You want to ask him what happened to Hangdog.

DETECTIVE: I intend to.

SCENE 11. INT.

DETECTIVE: You know, sometimes we arrange to have prisoners brought from prison to the police station when we want to interview them for another crime. And when we put them in a police cell overnight we struggle to wake them up in the morning because they've slept so well. Do you know why that is?

BIRDLIME: Maybe yer have really comfy beds at the cop shop? Or maybe it's the cup of drinkin' chocolate yer give 'em when yer tuckin' 'em in.

DETECTIVE: It's because they're in a cell alone. Most people who've been in jail know that you don't sleep in a cell when you're paired up unless you absolutely know you can trust them. So I don't think there are too many deep sleepers in prison. And even if there were, a prisoner who's done as much bird as you certainly wouldn't be one.

BIRDLIME: Fine. You got me. I were awake and I saw him do it. So what?

DETECTIVE: What did you see?

BIRDLIME: I saw him slide off his bunk. I saw his feet scrabblin' about for the floor. We call that the 'oh shit shuffle'. When the panic sets in and yer realise you can switch yerself off but yer can never switch yerself back on again.

DETECTIVE: You watched him kill himself and you didn't raise the alarm.

BIRDLIME: It ain't my job to.

OSCAR: You're a right nasty piece of work aren't yer?

BIRDLIME: Last time I checked it weren't illegal to mind yer own.

OSCAR: It won't play very well with your re-categorisation assessment though will it?

BIRDLIME: I got four years left and I bet they'll make me do every last day of it.

DETECTIVE: You can cope with another four?

BIRDLIME: Some of us don't sweat our bang up.

DETECTIVE: And what about another twenty? For murder.

BIRDLIME: Yer messin' with me right? Yer really reckon that's gonna fly?

DETECTIVE: He owed you drug money. That sounds like motive to me.

BIRDLIME: Suit yerself. He owed me money. So I got outta bed and I double-wrapped that rubber band round his scrawny neck. Then I dressed it all up to seem like he offed himself.

THE SOUND OF HANGDOG IN GREAT
DISTRESS AND THREATENING TO KILL
HIMSELF CAN BE HEARD. THEY LISTEN
FOR A FEW SECONDS.

DETECTIVE: Enough. Turn it off.

BIRDLIME: Goes on like that 'til he gets up the guts. About
twenty minutes.

SILENCE.

DETECTIVE: You stood by while he killed himself? You just let
him do it?

BIRDLIME: Like I said, it ain't *my* job to stop him.

OSCAR: Yer could have hit the call button. It's two feet from
yer bed. No more hassle than gettin' yer phone
out.

BIRDLIME: Less if I'm honest. Had to dig out the SIM card and
the battery. Put it together in the dark.

DETECTIVE: Why?

BIRDLIME: Why not. Hangdog were a miserable waste of skin
and air. His life didn't bring a second of joy to
himself or anyone else. The only little bit of control
he had were that he could check out any time he
liked. Though you lot would've taken that off him
too and you reckon *I'm* the cruel one? We put
dogs down that have better lives than that yappin'
runt.

OSCAR: Why don't you tell that to his mother who's cryin' for him over in the Chapel?

DETECTIVE: I hope you know you're going to face charges over the mobile phone.

BIRDLIME: And I hope you know that he were on a 15 minute suicide watch and I have 20 minutes of film durin' which no one checks on him.

BEAT.

I doubt I'll be the first person to go to the firin' squad.

OSCAR: Detective I –

DETECTIVE: Delta lied. You both lied.

DETECTIVE BOLTS FROM THE ROOM.

BIRDLIME: Look he's right. I don't really need the headache of a phone bust. This never needs to see the light of day if yer get me drift.

OSCAR: Shut up, you idiot!

SCENE 12. OFFICE. EVENING.

DETECTIVE BURSTS IN.

DELTA: Detective, a woman called Long has been on the phone for you. She seems very keen to –

DETECTIVE: (TO DELTA) You lied about the suicide watch. You said you checked on him but you didn't.

OSCAR: Don't say anythin' 'til yer've spoken to the union rep.

DETECTIVE: You'd better start telling me the truth.

OSCAR: Not one word Delta!

PAUSE.

DELTA: I know yer tryin' to help me Oscar, but I don't want to lie. I'm sorry.

DETECTIVE: Tell me what happened.

OSCAR: Yer could go to prison. Do yer realise that? Manslaughter. Yer

DETECTIVE: If that's what the rules told me to do.

THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

CHERYL ENTERS.

DELTA: Yer finished in the Chapel then?

CHERYL: Yeah. There's only so much prayin' I can be doin' with. It's not like it'll bring him back.

DELTA: This is Cheryl. Hangdog's mum.

DETECTIVE: I'm very sorry for your loss.

CHERYL: My loss?

DETECTIVE: Your son.

PAUSE.

CHERYL: He spent more of his life in care than he did with me. So I don't know if I get to say 'my loss' or 'my son'.

DELTA: Course yer do. Yer mum's yer mum whatever happens.

CHERYL: Been lookin' through the stuff they brought out of his cell. Don't feel like I know any of it. He had gym gloves. I didn't even know he went to the gym.

OSCAR: He didn't. He did nick stuff though, so they might not be his.

CHERYL: That sounds more like it. Nicked stuff he didn't even need the stupid boy.

DELTA: The books were his though. He were learnin' to read prop'ly.

OSCAR: Delta were teachin' him.

CHERYL: He did tell me that. He were chuffed.

OSCAR: She used to sit with him every day durin' her break or stay behind when her shift ended.

CHERYL: He said yer were very kind to him. I know he thought world of yer.

DETECTIVE: I'd like to ask you some questions if you don't mind.

CHERYL: You're the police?

DETECTIVE: Yes. I'm investigating why Hangdog killed himself.

CHERYL: He were a teenage drug addict doin' time for manslaughter. Could be some clues in that.

DETECTIVE: But that was true last week and the week before. Something happened to make him do this now. Something changed. I'm trying to find out what it was.

CHERYL: I'm not sure how much help I'll be, but I'll try.

DETECTIVE: (TO OSCAR) While I'm doing that I'd like you to find all the CCTV footage you have of Hangdog on the day of his death.

OSCAR: That's fine. We've got it all here on the computer. It'll mainly be him on the secure corridor. Goin' to his visits an

pretendin' to answer the phone and tap away on the computer.

DELTA: I remember him tellin' me about it.

CHERYL: There were this one time he were watchin' out the window at this woman leavin' work, readin' a book as she walked down the road. Never lookin' up from it, just expectin' other people to get out the way. And he says, 'Why's that woman walkin' and readin' at the same time Mummy?' and I said, 'Cos her time's too precious to waste.'

PAUSE.

I spent the next two hours emptyin' bins while he spun himself dizzy on an office chair. Time were the only thing we ever had too much of.

OSCAR: There we go. I've found some footage. Him comin' back from yer visit.

CHERYL: He looks tall there. Taller than I think of him. I'm so used to seeing him sat down in –

DELTA AND CHERYL GASP, REACTING TO SOMETHING ON THE SCREEN.

DETECTIVE: Switch it off.

OSCAR: I'm sorry love I didn't know he'd do that.

BEAT.

DETECTIVE: I've got a few more questions for you.
That photo that's missing from your wall. I know
what it was of.

COHEN: I don't want to talk about that.

DETECTIVE: Because that's what you were really arguing with
Hangdog over yesterday morning wasn't it?

COHEN: No!

DETECTIVE: What was it? Were you were angry with him
because he couldn't get her to meet with you?

COHEN: I don't know what yer talkin' about.

DETECTIVE: Maybe you asked Oscar to put him in with

SCENE 15. INT. OFFICE. EVENING.

OSCAR: Us old school turnkeys have a name for officers like Delta. Care Bears. We tell 'em the prisoners are here to be punished, so let 'em knock seven bells out of each other, let 'em cry all night if they want to. We make out it's a philosophy. But really it's laziness, and officers like her show us up for what we are.

BEAT.

I'm gonna have a smoke if yer don't mind. They can't sack me twice can they?

OSCAR LIGHTS UP A FAG.

DETECTIVE: You told Cohen to ask for

OSCAR:

Because it's a story people need. One with a culprit. Like last time when them social workers got sacked. Why can't I be the culprit? Leave Delta out of it.

DETECTIVE:

Because if there's one thing I hate more than dishonesty, it's arrogance. Delta might be the best prison officer in the world but in that moment she thought she was above the rules that made her the worst kind. That's the problem with allowing yourself to have real feelings. You can't just choose the ones that suit. They come as a job lot. She brought compassion but she also brought

SCENE 16. BIRDLIME'S CELL. EVENING.

DETECTIVE AND OSCAR ENTER.

BIRDLIME: I'm not answerin' any more questions.

DETECTIVE: That's fine. I don't have any more questions for

photo on my wall. He tells me it's his mum and he can't get to a phone quick enough to ask her about it. When he comes back he's spoutin' all this stuff he shouldn't know. The year I were born, the care home I went into. But I'm still not sold cos info's like burn in bang up. Secrets are just about the only thing that can move through this dump without keys. But he convinces me. Not cos I want it to be true cos I'm not fussed. Which is just as well because it ain't true.

DETECTIVE: How do you know?

BIRDLIME: Told me last night he made it up. That he saw a photo of a woman who looked a little bit like his old girl and he clocked a chance of gettin' some free subbies. Made sense then why his mum didn't want to know me. Cos there never was no adopted son.

DETECTIVE: And why would he tell you that?

BIRDLIME: Because he'd decided to end himself so it didn't matter anymore. He didn't need me and I think that he liked the idea of goin' out on a high. How often d'yer reckon he's ever got one over on someone like me in his life?

BEAT.

I was relieved. Ties in a place like this make yer weak.

DETECTIVE: Why did Hangdog kill himself?

BIRDLIME: Cos the sniffin' little runt was scared of some woman. He got a letter off her a few days ago.

DETECTIVE: What woman?

BIRDLIME: A journalist. The one who got all them social

you'd stand by and let him. You weren't going to go to sleep, not like Cohen would of. So he had to find another way. And the only thing he knew he could rely on you for was hatred and anger.

BIRDLIME:

What are you sayin?

SCENE 17. STAFF TOILET. EVENING.

DETECTIVE, LOCKED IN A CUBICLE IS
VOMITING.

DELTA ENTERS.

DELTA: You okay Detective?

DETECTIVE: (FROM INSIDE THE CUBICLE) I'm fine.

DETECTIVE FLUSHES THE TOILET THEN
EMERGES FROM THE CUBICLE. HE
WASHES HIS HANDS AND FACE.

DELTA: It'll be the adrenaline. It can make yer very sick.

DETECTIVE: I'm a policeman. You think this is the first time
anyone's ever attacked me?

DELTA: No. Sorry.

PAUSE.

It ain't like gettin' bad news on the out, gettin' it in
here. There's nowhere for it to go. It bounces off
the walls at night. Drives 'em to extremes.

PAUSE.

But it ain't your job to look out for 'em is it? It's your
job to find the truth.

DETECTIVE: The truth.

DELTA: That's what matters the most ain't it?

PAUSE.

SCENE 18. EXT. PRISON. NIGHT.

DETECTIVE AND OSCAR EMERGE
FROM THE PRISON.

DETECTIVE: What will happen to you?

OSCAR: They'll put me out to pasture.

DETECTIVE: Will you miss it?

OSCAR: Well the job ain't for everyone, but it were for me
once. A bit like yours in that respect I'm sure. It's a
vocation innit, dealin' with m19 TJETBT1 0 0 1 385.39 696.82 TmBn

DETECTIVE: I'm sorry about that.

OSCAR: It's the cons' loss really.

PAUSE.

Take care Detective.

OSCAR WALKS AWAY.

A SECOND LATER FOOTSTEPS
APPROACH.

LONG: Detective?

DETECTIVE: Yes.

LONG: It isn't too late for me to take a comment from you if you have one.

DETECTIVE: You're like a dog with a bone aren't you?

LONG: I'm sure we're very alike in that respect.

PAUSE.

DETECTIVE: I've got a comment for you. But it's from Hangdog not me.

LONG: From Hangdog?

DETECTIVE: That's right. He left a note for you. I've got it here. It isn't the original I'm afraid, but I'm sure we can get that to you once the investigation is officially closed.

DETECTIVE HANDS LONG THE NOTE.

LONG:

