

‘Another brilliant, twisty mystery from Janice Hallett where the truth
lies somewhere between the lines’

Elly Griffiths, author of *The Locked Room*

‘A brilliant, literary puzzler... Through text threads and emails and
pub quiz results Hallett manages to create a fully formed world,
one with dark twists and reversals, but also one that brims with her
signature wit, along with just the right amount of genuine pathos. Her
best book yet’

Peter Swanson, author of *The Kind Worth Killing*

‘I am in awe of Janice Hallett – so prolific and her books are so clever
and entertaining. *The Killer Question* is no exception... Another
brilliant murder mystery’

Jennie Godfrey, author of *The List of Suspicious Things*

‘Brilliantly twisted, laugh-out-loud hilarious and devilishly addictive.
I loved every line of it’

Louise Candlish, author of *Our House*

‘The modern queen of crime does it again. A wonderful ride through
deception, greed and quizzing’

Ian Moore, author of *Death and Croissants*

‘I found myself devouring a hundred pages at a time... Like with any
good pub quiz I was challenged, energised, baffled, puzzled – and
hooked’

J.M. Hall, author of *A Spoonful of Murder*

‘Twisty, tricky and truly captivating. With its trademark Hallett
characters and communities – quirky but somehow completely
recognisable – and plot twists that just keep coming, *The Killer
Question* kept me turning the pages all night long’

Katy Watson, author of *The Three Dablias*

‘Janice’s books are always such a treat and this one fully lived up to expectations. She has such a brilliant ear for the quirks of her fellow humans. Terrific, and as usual I failed to predict the twist’

Emma Curtis, author of *One Little Mistake*

‘Brimming with heart, humour and human foibles, all wrapped up in a deadly whodunnit. This is Hallett at her very, very best’

Jonathan Whitelaw, author of *The Bingo Hall Detectives*

‘A standout, original thriller... Perfectly combining a dark and sinister mystery with sharp observation of character, Hallett wraps it beautifully with her signature wry sense of humour. I was glued to this book from start to finish’

L.V. Matthews, author of *The Twins*

‘A drop-everything-and-cancel-your-plans book that will have you racing through the pages and guessing until the very end’

Victoria Selman, author of *Truly, Darkly, Deeply*

‘Janice Hallett serves up a roller-coaster of twists in this witty and unusual thriller. Droll, dark and devilish’

Marion Todd, author of *Old Bones Lie*

‘A brilliantly fun frolic in the world of cosy crime, with everything fans of Janice Hallett’s devilishly clever books will adore’

Philippa East, author of *Little White Lies*

‘A deliciously twisted mystery that skewers village life with a sharpened pencil and a quiz sheet. Hilarious, inventive, and quietly savage’

Joanna Wallace, author of *You’d Look Better as a Ghost*

‘Ferociously clever and deeply relatable, the plot is precision-tooled and coated in trademark Hallett ironies and observations’

Oskar Jensen, author of *Helle and Death*

‘Another triumph from Janice Hallett. A brilliantly worked puzzle where the final pieces only click into place in the last few pages.

Thoroughly satisfying, clever and tricky’

Guy Morpuss, author of *A Trial in Three Acts*

‘Sharp, clever, unusual and twisty’

Louise Swanson, author of *End of Story*

‘A fun and fact-filled delight with genuinely brilliant twists and turns’

E.C. Nevin, author of *A Novel Murder*

‘Janice Hallett is a one-of-a-kind genius... Compelling, multilayered, intricately plotted, clever, full of surprises and exceedingly funny, all told with Janice’s usual, brilliant quirks’

Kate Kemp, author of *The Grapevine*

‘Janice’s best book yet! Comedically sinister and definitely worthy of a Netflix production’

Joy Kluver, author of *Last Seen*

‘A cocktail of fun and mystery that will keep readers turning the pages to the end. With twists a-plenty and an eclectic cast of characters, this is one pub quiz you won’t want to miss’

Rachel Louise Driscoll, author of *Nephthys*

‘Gripping, whip-smart and compelling as ever, and made me snort-laugh at least once a page’

Adam Simcox, author of *The Dying Squad*

‘Hallett truly never ceases to amaze, challenge and entertain’

Simon Van Der Velde, author of *The Silent Brother*

Also by Janice Hallett and available from Viper

The Appeal

The Twyford Code

The Mysterious Case of the Alperton Angels

The Christmas Appeal

The Examiner

*THE
KILLER
QUESTION*

Janice Hallett



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For quizzers and quizmasters everywhere

‘Judge a man by his questions, rather than his answers.’

Voltaire

French writer, satirist,
historian and wit.

Born 21 November 1694.
Died 30 May 1778.

Key figure in the
Enlightenment.

Real name

François-Marie Arouet.

Imprisoned in the Bastille
twice: 1717 and 1726.

Wrote more than 20,000
letters and 2,000 books.

On his deathbed, a
priest asked him to
renounce Satan. He
replied, ‘This is no time
to make new enemies.’

Heart and brain embalmed
separately from his body.

Buried in the Panthéon,
Paris.

To: Info@Netflix.com
From: Dominic Eastwood
Date: 16 October 2024
Subject: Documentary idea

Dear Netflix,

My name is Dominic Eastwood and I'm a big fan of your true-crime shows. My family and I have been captivated by *American Nightmare*, *The Puppet Master* and *The Family Next Door*, among many others. Well, as you're based in the US, you may not have heard the story of my aunt and uncle, Sue and Mal Eastwood.

It's a complex and shocking case that unfolds over many years and with multiple layers, some of which are not yet in the public domain. This story has everything: love, passion, intrigue, tension, betrayal, deception and . . . murder. Like *Bad Vegan*, *Bad Surgeon* or *Three Identical Strangers*, it has that bit extra, that final twist you simply can't believe is true, and yet it happened.

Television production is a mystery to me, but the more I think about my aunt and uncle, the more their story feels like it would make a fantastic documentary.

I have all the evidence you'll need and can help with contacting police and civilian witnesses, as I've been in touch with them all to piece together what happened for myself.

So if you're interested, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,
Dominic Eastwood

To: Dominic Eastwood
From: Info@Netflix.com
Date: 16 October 2024
Subject: [Automatic Response] Documentary idea

This response is from an unmanned inbox.

DO NOT REPLY.

Pitching an idea to Netflix

If you have an idea you'd like to pitch to Netflix, you must work through a licensed agent, producer, attorney, manager, or industry executive, as appropriate, who already has a relationship with us. Otherwise, Netflix is unable to accept your unsolicited submissions.

To: Info@reellifeprods.com

From: Dominic Eastwood

Date: 18 October 2024

Subject: Documentary idea

Dear Reel Life Productions Ltd,

My name is Dominic Eastwood and I'm a big fan of your true-crime shows on Channel 5 and the Crime & Investigation Channel. I recently noticed your company name on a brilliant Netflix documentary called *Why They Did It* and hope you don't mind me contacting you out of the blue like this.

You might have heard of my aunt and uncle, Sue and Mal Eastwood, who were involved in a high-profile case a few years ago. I've been conducting research for myself and discovered even more twists and turns to the story. The more I think about it, the more I feel it would make the most compelling true-crime documentary, docudrama or both!

I have lots of information, some of it not in the public domain, so if you'd like me to send a few things through, I'd be more than happy. Alternatively, if you'd like to meet, I can travel to your offices in London.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,
Dominic Eastwood

To: Dominic Eastwood
From: Polly Baker
Date: 25 October 2024
Subject: Re: Documentary idea

Dear Dominic,

Thank you for getting in touch with us here at Reel Life. I'm delighted you enjoyed *Why They Did It*, our first co-production to be screened on Netflix. The Eastwood case has a familiar ring, but I was quite young at the time, so I'm afraid I don't remember the details. I'll look it up online.

Please be aware that for a multi-part documentary we need more than just an intriguing case. We need access to a wide range of people who were involved – police, friends, witnesses – to bring the story to life and animate key events for the viewer.

The best true-crime documentaries deliver that first-person testimony, but it's not easy to convince the most relevant people to speak on-camera. Do you have a good relationship with the police and civilians in this case? Are they confident, articulate and willing to tell their stories?

Please feel free to send across any background info you have. If it sounds like something she'll be interested in, I can pass it to my boss when she gets back from LA.

Best,
Polly Baker
Production Assistant
Reel Life Productions Ltd

To: Polly Baker
From: Dominic Eastwood
Date: 25 October 2024
Subject: Re: Documentary idea

Dear Polly,

Your reply arrived in the middle of my visit to the site where so much action took place. That has to be a positive omen! I'm thrilled you want to hear more about it.

Please, may I request that you *don't* look up the case yet? You see, what was reported isn't the whole story and I'd love it if you could witness events as they unfold, so to speak, rather like the viewer would. I'll send through everything I have – in bite-sized chunks – and if, at any time, you don't wish to read any more, just say.

So, I am sitting writing this in what looks like a typical English public house called The Case is Altered. It's situated in the county of Hertfordshire, to the north-west of London. Photos attached. You'll see it's nestled down a narrow lane that leads to a disused boatyard and tumbledown pier on the River Colne. But no one who gets that far down the lane lingers for long, including me. Some places have an aura about them.

Tall trees loom either side, making the area rather gloomy, even on sunny days, but perfect for a montage of atmospheric opening scenes! That said, The Case is Altered itself has all the ingredients of a picture-perfect, chocolate-box country pub: thatched roof, leaded windows and creeping plants snaking around a wooden trellis over the door. But if that conjures up expectations of a cosy bar, deep red carpets, oak panels and a roaring fire, you'd be wrong. Now, anyway.

My aunt and uncle, Sue and Mal Eastwood, were landlords here from December 2017 to October 2019. Since then it's been frozen in time – first by the pandemic, then by red tape and finally, malaise – as a result, its doors remain closed. They only opened today when I applied my shoulder to them.

At one time this place thrived, thanks to constant river traffic on one side and, on the other, the regular footfall of thirsty workers walking home along the main road. But that was long before Sue and Mal arrived, full of plans to revive a failing business – their first pub and the start of a whole new career.

They had no other family and, after a disagreement, sadly fell out with my parents, and by default me, many years ago. But they were not lonely here. During their short tenure, my aunt and uncle were close to a core of regular customers and other publicans in the county, in particular those attached to the same brewery, many of whom are exactly the sort of engaging and articulate 'characters' who would bring a documentary to life!

After many months and several requests from me and my solicitor, the police finally forwarded the case file, and that, along with other information not made available at the time, is what I'll send through for you to read. It paints a picture of Sue and Mal as community-minded people determined to make their new venture a success. From the refreshed decor inside and out, to the weekly quiz nights, they were entirely focused on reviving the fortunes of 'The Case' – and this hard work paid off.

So where did it all go wrong? That's what television viewers will want to know. Yet, as you read the following, you'll see that what you know can be fatal.

Best wishes,
Dominic

How much do you know?

Monday Quiz

8 p.m.

at

The Case is Altered

just off the A416, after St Luke's Church and before the
Morrisons turn-off



Teams of up to six
£1 per person

All welcome

The Case is Altered

Quiz Rules

1. £1 per person. Cash only.
2. Teams of up to six adults – you may have fewer than six, but not more.
3. Mobile phones must be switched off or turned to silent and PUT AWAY!
4. Keep the noise down. You won't hear the next question if you're talking.
5. Music rounds will be played ONCE only.
6. Your answer sheets will be marked by another team. Disputes should be referred to the quizmaster.
7. The winning team will take home the pot, minus £10.
8. The quizmaster's decision is final. It is always final, even if he is subsequently proven to be wrong.

Text received by Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered, 1 September 2019:

Unknown number

What time does it start?

Text messages between Mal and Sue Eastwood, 1 September 2019:

Mal

Text from an unknown number asking what time 'it' starts.

Sue

They mean the quiz. I put a photo of the poster on Facebook.

Mal

Looks dodgy to me. I'll forward it to Arthur.

Sue

DO NOT send that text to the police. Reply '7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.'

Mal

This could be anyone.

Sue

Yes, anyone interested in quizzing. The leaflet is on the internet. Remember our little chat: we need more teams to give our regulars some healthy competition. The Plucky Losers always win. It looks bad.

Mal

Complete strangers? We didn't discuss that.

Sue

REPLY WITH '8 P.M.'

Text messages between Unknown Number and Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered, 1 September 2019:

Unknown number

What time does it start?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

It's off. Cancelled. We're closed.

Unknown number

[BLOCKED]

Ye Olde Goat Brewery Ltd

‘Pubs with panache’

Hertfordshire Region

The Rainbow

The world-famous Rainbow puts the heart in Hertfordshire. The county’s leading LGBTQ+ bar is open to all with its weekly themed events, live music, drag and comedy nights. Sean and Adrian invite you to stay a while, meet new friends, enjoy a range of craft and commercial beers, and browse the Gin Library – before throwing shapes on the dancefloor.

Tom’s Bar

Our renowned gastropub is run by two award-winning chefs, sisters Flo and Mimi, who bring their own quirky take on pub grub to Hertford City Centre. Relax with a pint and a platter of mini jellyfish burgers or nibble on crispy salt-roasted mealworms with your Prosecco. And if you’re wondering who Tom is, look no further than the portrait above the electronic log fire: celebrated Victorian novelist and poet Thomas Hardy, who we think once enjoyed an overnight stay nearby.

The Lusty Lass

There’s been a pub on the site of The Lusty Lass – offering food and accommodation to weary travellers – since the fifteenth century, although Peter has been resident landlord since just 1989. Situated along the motorway north from London, The Lusty Lass is a portal to the past, with what is thought to be an original ceiling beam now preserved in glass and used as a table. The Lusty Lass can be seen in an episode of *Most Haunted* from March 2004, when a team of psychic investigators attempted to contact its many ghosts!

The Brace of Pheasants

Put the craic in St Albans with a nostalgic journey back to the auld country at The Brace. A dynamic Irish bar, this charming venue offers a packed weekly programme of live music, pub games, regional dancing and social events. You're never lonely with landlords Diddy and Con in charge of your diary. And if you fancy a pint of the black stuff, why not soak it up with some delicious home-made soda bread and a packet of Tayto's?

The Case is Altered

At this friendly and welcoming thatched country pub by the river, landlords Sue and Mal are proud of the changes they've made in the two years since taking over. A row of bicycle racks in the avant garde, and a weekly quiz night, means The Case is a sporting and social hub for the local community.

Text messages between Mal and Sue Eastwood, 2 September 2019:

Mal

Sean and Adrian are world-famous. Flo and Mimi are award-winning. Diddy and Con are charming and Peter is haunted. We have a bike rack and a quiz!

Sue

If I'd realised it was going to be printed on the regional flyer I'd have written something better.

Mal

How can a bike rack be avant-garde anyway?

Sue

Autocorrect. It was all glitchy on my phone. I thought they were asking what we'd done to improve the pub in the last year, so I typed 'bicycle racks in the alehouse garden'.

Mal

Where did you type that?

Sue

The brewery's questionnaire for the Fam.

Mal

Fam?

Sue

Annual General Meeting! Autocorrect again! I typed AGM and it changed to 'Fam'.

Mal

At least none of the others mention their quizzes. We should promote it more. It'll be the making of The Case.

Sue

Oh yes, it's our USP. Look at the new people we've met since starting it. All thanks to you and your questions! Where are you, and do you have the pub phone?

Mal

I'm in the avant garde digging out old cans from the flower beds, and yes, I have the pub phone. In fact I can hear WhatsApp dinging now – I'll bring it in.

Tom's Bar

Terry L

wrote a review today

Bedford, United Kingdom

324 contributions, 108 helpful votes

Date visited 29 August 2019

Visit type On a culinary tour of Hertfordshire



Nothing like it looked on TV

I brought my 88-year-old father to this so-called 'gastro' pub with high expectations. We'd seen Ross Kemp and Eddie Izzard eat here on The Trip. The food had looked delicious and the view stunning. Unfortunately, we are not famous enough to get the same treatment!

Dad's starter was stone cold and covered in a layer of yellow horse fat so tough it could beat Jason Statham in a fight. There was a very fine green hair in my soup that I think may have come from a parrot. Everything was underdone – the leeks were hard, the green beans were dry and a good vet could have got my steak mooing again.

The waitress had a nose ring. She took a photo of us but when I looked at it the next day, I was horrified. Dad and I have our glasses raised over our desserts – it would've been the best picture of us ever taken, one to treasure – but we're OUT OF FOCUS! The focus is on a couple of total strangers kissing across their table in the background! I felt like calling up Tom's Bar and asking for their names, so in fifty years' time when my kids look at the picture, they at least know who the stars of it are.

On the top of the menu it says: 'A meal you will remember for the rest of your life.' Well Dad's already forgotten it.

Response from Tom's Bar

Responded on 2 September 2019

Dear Terry,

Thank you so much for choosing Tom's Bar to enjoy a special meal

with your father. We're so sorry to hear you were disappointed. It is our mission that everyone who visits us embarks on a thrilling culinary adventure, guided by our menus and our expert table attendants. On this occasion it seems we fell short and we apologise unreservedly. The trust our customers place in us is not something we ever take lightly.

However, we should point out that we have never been featured on television and I wonder if you've confused us with Txoko? This is where Rob Brydon and Steve Coogan ate on The Trip. It's a harbour-side seafood restaurant in Getaria, Spain. I'm afraid we are in the centre of Hertford and could never compete with those views!

Just to clarify, your father would have ordered huîtres en pot. This dish is sealed with a layer of seasoned and melted butter, most certainly not horse fat. It is refrigerated so the beurre sets into a crisp 'lid' that is 'cracked' open to reveal the treasure inside. It is always served cold. We are happy to assure you the 'green hair' in your soup was shredded samphire, not from a parrot. It sounds as if you ordered your steak 'rare'. Perhaps in future a medium or well-done order would be more to your taste.

Your father has already forgotten the meal? But it was only three days ago. We don't wish you to worry unduly, but I wonder if, given his age, you might consider seeking medical advice?

I do apologise for the disappointing photograph. If you would like to return to Tom's Bar with your father, and make yourself known to us as the author of this review, there will be a free drink and starter waiting for you. Our maitre'd will personally ensure you have some wonderful photographs for your family to enjoy in future.

Ye Olde Goat WhatsApp group, 2 September 2019:

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

Happy 'One-Star Monday'!

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

What a corker! Thanks for sharing.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

Offered them a freebie too! You're a pair of saints.

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

Always upsetting when someone doesn't enjoy what they eat. We've done our best to put it right and now we're moving on. So, which quizzes are we all doing this week? We're second edition, number nine.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

Question set 89 from the second edition.

Peter Bond, The Lusty Lass

1st edn, 21.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

First time using the third edition (has anyone dipped in yet?), quiz number 1. Did *The Cheats* show up anywhere last week?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Not with us. They never have. Perhaps they don't know we're here.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

Still setting your own quiz, Sue? Going OK?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Mal enjoys putting the rounds and questions together, bless him.

Peter Bond, The Lusty Lass

More trouble than it's worth.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

Came to ours again Friday. Keep your eyes out, Sue: one chap looks like the council burned his sleeping bag, another looks like the police have his hard drive. There's a girl my age with hair like a banshee. Her man's the loud one, a thin piece in a big orange jacket, he's the ringleader. Beware the orange puffy coat.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

Like a giant satsuma on two skinny stick-legs. What happened, Diddy?

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

Con told them they could drink, fine, but not quiz. Satsuma looked ready for a row and she was muttering under her breath, but we had a lot in, they were outnumbered, so they sloped off.

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

Orange puffy jacket? They were here Wednesday, all loud and obnoxious! Called themselves The Goon Squad. Didn't realise it was The Cheats. THEY WON!

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

Oh no, Flo, how much did they get?

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

It's Mimi. They got top marks in almost every round and won £14.

Peter Bond, The Lusty Lass

First rule. Keep eyes on any team scoring consistent 8+ rounds.

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

Feel so STUPID. Can't believe we didn't put two and two together.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

Feel a *bit* sorry for them. They've got to be desperate to cheat for £14.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

You're too kind, Sean.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

I remember when they came to our karaoke night. Satsuma picked up the mic and everyone groaned, thinking we were in for a drunken piss-take. He sang 'Sweet Gingerbread Man' and it was *beautiful*. Everyone fell silent to listen.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

That song is about being happy, but he made it sound so sad and full of regret. Heartbreaking.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

Seeing someone down on their luck singing about being on top of the world.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

There'll be no sympathy for cheats if they ever show up at The Case.

Text messages between Unknown Number and Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered, 2 September 2019:

Unknown number

The quiz tonight.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Of course, my dear. What would you like to know? I'm Sue. Mal and I are landlords at The Case. That's *The Case is Altered* pub on a road off the A416, just after St Luke's church and before the Morrisons turn-off. If our little car park is full, drive up to Turrington's Wood Yard and park in their driveway, they don't mind (our customers have been parking there for the two years we've been here and no one's complained). The quiz starts at 8 p.m., but I recommend you get here half an hour before to bag a table. Teams of up to six people – you can have fewer, but no more. It's a pound each to enter, and the winning table gets the pot minus £10. Bring your own pens and scrap paper. No phones allowed. The quizmaster's decision is final. It is ALWAYS final – even if subsequent evidence proves him to be wrong. If there's anything else, reply to this number. We look forward to welcoming you.

Unknown number

Where are you, again?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

A little lane off the A416, left after St Luke's church and before the Morrisons turn-off.

Unknown number

Does the road have a name?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

If you put 'The Case is Altered, Fernley' in the satnav, it'll take you straight to us.

Unknown number

But what's the *name* of the road?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

You won't need the name.

Unknown number

It's a simple question. What's the name of the road your pub is on?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Bell End.

Unknown number

THERE'S NO NEED TO BE RUDE I ONLY ASKED HA HA HA HA

Text messages between Sue and Mal Eastwood, 2 September 2019:

Sue

Just had another one.

Mal

Make a note of the number, I'll forward it to Arthur.

Sue

It's 'unknown' again. The police don't want to hear about kids playing pranks. It's simply irritating. I typed out the whole spiel too.

Mal

It's harassment.

Sue

Have you finished tonight's questions, and do I need to set up the overhead projector?

Mal

A. Yes. All ready for printing. 2. No. There are no picture questions this week.

Sue

Mind the pub phone while I'm opening up – but don't forward ANYTHING to Arthur.

THE CASE IS ALTERED PUB QUIZ

2 September 2019

Rounds	Max points
1. Today's News	10
2. On this day in 1949	10
3. Sport	10
4. Art & Literature	10
5. Film & TV: soap operas	10
6. Music: name the artist and song title (Clue: answers include references to Shakespeare's plays)	20
7. History & Geography	10
8. General Knowledge: Bits and Bobs (Clue: answers include 'bit' or 'bob')	10
Marathon round: Political Anagrams	
Find the names of twentieth-century UK prime ministers	20

Quiz teams and where they sat

Linda & Joe & Friends

Linda & Joe

The Plucky Losers

Chris & Lorraine

Jim

Rita & Bailey

Keith

Spokespersons

Erik, Jemma

Ajay, Tam

Dilip

‘The Cheats’

Disqualified

Let’s Get Quizzical

Margaret & Ted

Sid & Nancy

Bunny & George

Ami’s Manic Carrots

Jojo, Evie

Harrison

Rosie, Fliss

Final scores out of 110

The Plucky Losers 89

Spokespersons 87

Let’s Get Quizzical 64

Ami’s Manic Carrots 58

Linda & Joe & Friends 44

‘The Cheats’ Disqualified

Text messages between Mal and Sue Eastwood, 2 September 2019:

Mal

You never should've put the quiz up on Facebook. That's where they saw it.

Sue

Don't blame me! None of this is my fault.

Sue

Have they all gone?

Mal

Sorted.

Sue

Arthur's on his way.

Mal

No! Call him back and say it's all fine – he's not needed.

Sue

There were four of them and one of you. Where are you now?

Mal

Out by the shed, getting my breath back.

Sue

Come back and do the quiz. I've handed out the marathon round, but everyone's waiting for it to begin.

Mal

Give me a minute.

Sue

You OK?

Sue

I'm keeping your question folder safe from prying eyes.

Sue

Come in now before it looks strange.

Mal

In a sec. Just calming down.

**Text messages between Mal Eastwood and PCSO Arthur McCoy,
2 September 2019:**

Mal

Cheers, Arthur.

Arthur

Pleasure, Mal. Happy to have been nearby when we got the call. Lucky they'd all gone.

Mal

I sorted it pronto. Sue needn't have called you.

Arthur

Best to call BEFORE things get out of hand, not after. If it happens again, you do the same.

Mal

They won't show up again.

**Text messages between Thor's Hammer and Sue & Mal, The Case is
Altered, 3 September 2019:**

Thor's Hammer

Top marks, Mal! We thoroughly enjoyed last night's quiz. As ever, it was a well-balanced mix of topics. Meaty questions and a challenging but doable marathon round.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Congratulations on the win, Chris. Apologies for that upset and delay at the start. There's a local team notorious for cheating at pub quizzes in the area. I had to act quickly and make sure they didn't come back.

Thor's Hammer

You leapt into action like a superhero!

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Soon as I saw him, I knew. It was the orange puffy jacket. Only hope it didn't spoil the night for everyone.

Thor's Hammer

Not our night, Mal! I speak for all The Plucky Losers when I say your Monday quiz is the highlight of the week.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

I'm not surprised, Chris. You've won six of the last seven quizzes.

Thor's Hammer

Now and again the Spokespersons pip us to the post, but that's par for the course. Keep up the good work!

Ami's Manic Carrots WhatsApp group, 3 September 2019:**Bianca**

Gutted couldn't make last night's quiz 🤔 how'd it go? Did we come last?

**Fliss**

No.

Bianca

Awesome!

Fliss

We came second-to-last.

Bianca

Oh.

Fliss

Linda & Joe beat us to the bottom.

Harrison

You missed a kick-off, Bee 🤔 a bunch of sketchies turned up – got salty when Mal told them no.

Fliss

Oh yeah, you missed some vagues who tried to get in.

Jojo

V tense for a hot minute.

Bianca

And I missed it all. Classic me. 🤔

Evie

It was horrible, Bee. 🤔 It could've got nasty.

Jojo

Then that Fed we sometimes see on his bike showed up.

Harrison

If it turned really bad, someone would've stepped in to break it up.

Jojo

Who, though? Let's Get Quizzical are all 70 at least. Linda and Joe walk with sticks.

Fliss

The cyclists, or Chris and Lorraine's table?

Rosie

Lucky they'd gone by the time we left. That lane is creepy enough at night – we don't need sketchies lurking in the woods.

Ye Olde Goat WhatsApp group, 3 September 2019:

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

Heard there was trouble at The Case last night. You both OK?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

One of The Cheats will be sporting a shiner this morning, after Mal 'had a word' outside.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

Good for you, Mal! Give them a warning they'll remember in the mirror the next day!

Peter Bond, The Lusty Lass

Beware the vengeful punter.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

That's the trouble with The Case. It's all thatch and roses during the day, but at night . . . 🤔

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

At least we can rely on the door team from Flappers. They've got us out of trouble before now, but The Case . . . I hate thinking of you two stuck out there.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Don't know what you mean.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

We looked at taking on The Case when it was up for grabs, years ago now. But stuck down that dark lane, no lights, no pavements, no thanks!

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

If trouble breaks out, you're on your own.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow

There's always punters who'll get you out of a corner. If you've got a good crowd, you can handle a few Herberts.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

We couldn't see how to make a pub so isolated into a viable business, let alone a safe one.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Well, it takes time, but we're getting there.

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

What tenancy are you on, Sue?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Twenty years.

Sean & Adrian, The Rainbow**Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar**

I'd have negotiated a shorter term until I could be sure the business was there.

Peter Bond, The Lusty Lass

Time is experience.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

We're in this for the long term. And The Case isn't as isolated as it looks. We've got the wood yard next door, Morrisons is only a mile away and the local PCSO is on our side. I think we're safer for being *off* the pub-crawl circuit.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Mal here. You all think The Case is isolated?

Mimi & Flo, Tom's Bar

Are you OK, Mal? Heard there was trouble last night.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Spotted Satsuma Man the second he arrived. Turned him and his mates back round the way they came and, like the cowards they are, they ran off, leaving him to deal with me on his own. Bruised knuckles are a small price to pay for the integrity of our quiz.

Diddy & Con, The Brace of Pheasants

Good for you, Mal.

Peter Bond, The Lusty Lass

Trouble begets trouble.

Text messages between Warwick Roper, General Manager of Ye Olde Goat Brewery Ltd, and Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered, 5 September 2019:

Warwick Roper, GM

The bike racks. An update?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Hello, Mr Roper, thank you for your message. Sue and I hope you're in good health and enjoying the weather. You've read the AGM flyer, and yes, we're happy to confirm the bike racks are complete, which is excellent news.

Warwick Roper, GM

How little did they cost?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Practically nothing. We recycled something from the shed. Each rack is completely different. Here's a pic.

Warwick Roper, GM

Mother of God. What the hell is that?

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Some old farm machinery? Not sure, but it was rusting in the shed and now it's been polished up and reclaimed, so our customers can cycle here and save the planet. Everyone loves the modern design. We have a whole cycling team who drink here all the time. They suggested installing bike racks in the first place, so a large group of satisfied and regular customers there!

Warwick Roper, GM

Bottom line is how much you spent.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Nothing.

Warwick Roper, GM

Good man.

Text messages between Sue and Mal Eastwood, 5 September 2019:**Sue**

We saved money when you laid the concrete base yourself, but I paid Manny and Mark to dig out the foundations, plus we bought all those new rivets. Why did you tell Roper we spent nothing?

Mal

We don't want The Case to attract his attention with repeated claims for money.

Sue

But the brewery are responsible for 'substantial building work'. I thought you'd run it past him at least.

Mal

He's never ventured out here, and I'd like to keep it that way for as long as poss.

Sue

Agreed. But he knows we do all the cleaning and bar-tending. We can claim SOME expenses!

Mal

We'll swallow this cost, to keep him at arm's length. That way, when we need something more expensive done, he can't accuse us of draining brewery resources.

Sue

You're always cowering.

Mal

Am not!

Sue

You've never got over having to admit you couldn't open the till.

Mal

It was our first day! Anyway, wasn't me who shook a negroni AND poured an Old Fashioned into a pint glass for the same customer.

Sue

That was our second day! I'll speak to him next time.

Text messages between Unknown Number and Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered, 9 September 2019:

Unknown number

Hello. I'd like some info about tonight.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Think you're funny?

Unknown number

Oh. Is it a comedy night? It says a quiz on Facebook.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

We're on Bell End, BELL END.

Unknown number

I know. I've looked you up. My quiz team and I are without a Monday fixture and we'd like to come along tonight. We're six friends who enjoy exercising the little grey cells.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

It starts at eight.

Unknown number

Thank you. The street name 'Bell End' could indicate a bell pit was once situated in the area, although we're so far south of traditional mining areas it's not probable. Alternatively, it could be a truncate of Bellows End. A family by the name of Bellows owned most of this land in the sixteenth century, hence Bellows Lane, Upper Bellows, etc. The simplest explanation is that it was originally called 'Belle End', meaning a pretty lane with no through road (a nice way to say 'dead end'), but over time the last 'e' has been dropped.

Sue & Mal, The Case is Altered

Get here by seven-thirty or you'll have to sit on a stool.