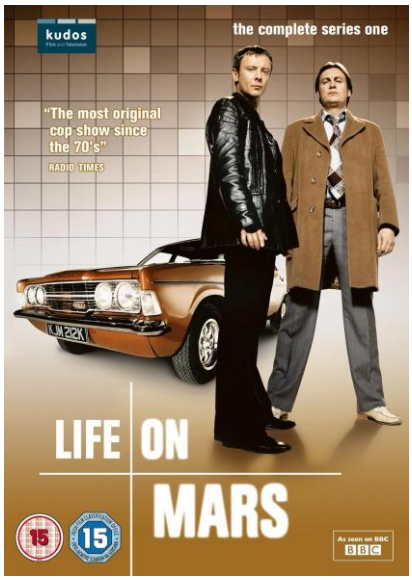
John Simm *Life on Mars* DVD Commentary Transcripts



These are transcripts that were transcribed manually (i.e. without speech recognition or AI) from the DVD commentaries on the *Life on Mars* UK Blu-rays. There are some instances where the cast and crew were hard to understand that I couldn't quite catch. These are marked in in square brackets with question marks. If you think you know what is said in those instances or if you notice any errors, please reach out to me.

Life on Mars – Episode 1x04 DVD Commentary

ASHLEY: Welcome to episode 4 of Life on Mars. My name's Ashley Pharoah, I'm the co-creator and writer of this episode.

CLAIRE: I'm Claire Parker, the producer.

JOHN M: I'm John McKay who directed this episode.

PHIL: Philip Glenister, reading DCI Hunt.

JOHN S: John Simm – Sam.

ASHLEY: My first cat was called Ivanhoe.

JOHN S: So that's the reason it was Ivanhoe.

PHIL: I thought it was to do with Roger Moore.

CLAIRE: I think that cat was the most difficult performer that we had on here.

PHIL: Such a difficult cat in the history of cat actors.

JOHN M: In the end we had to just shoot a lot of cat and then cut it together later.

JOHN S: He didn't mean shoot cats, just to make that clear.

ASHLEY: We'd cut them together later.

JOHN S: It just seemed to be, every time we filmed in this street or anything with red brick, it was absolutely boiling, wasn't it?

JOHN M: It was really hot...

JOHN S: Roasting.

JOHN M: ...a lot of the time we were here, wasn't it?

JOHN S: Which is strange for Manchester.

JOHN M: I remember in one of the scenes later on, John, saying to you, you know, in a sort of ‘director to actor about to turn over’ way, John, where are you looking when you look up there? What are you looking at cause I was sort of checking your eyeline for the camera. And you were saying to me, to tell you the truth, I don't know where I'm looking. I've got the sun right in my eyes here. I've got three massive lamps. I can't see a thing, I’m blind. And it was a lot like that on this street.

JOHN S: It was, it was blinding.

JOHN M: Somehow it turned tropical every time we went down that little back-to-back.

JOHN S: For some reason.

PHIL: This is us out in the country.

JOHN M: Yeah.

ASHLEY: Only field in Manchester.

JOHN M: When we recced this field, it was tall, waving grass like waste grounds I remember from the 70s, and of course we turned up in the morning for filming and they’d just cut it. So it went a bit stubbly. And the actor who plays that baddie got the most terrible face rash from having his face rammed in that freshly cut grass.

JOHN S: Yeah. Yeah, he did, didn’t he? Come out in hives. (Title sequence starts rolling) What's the thing that I keep reading on these strange internet sites about there's loads of clues in the title sequence?

CLAIRE: Oh, there are, yeah.

JOHN S: Are there?

ASHLEY: Have you not noticed them?

JOHN S: Where are they?

ASHLEY: Little sublims. [presumably short for ‘subliminals’]

CLAIRE: Couldn’t possibly give it away.

JOHN S: Okay.

PHIL: There’s one.

JOHN S: Who’s that, stood outside the door, dressed exactly the same as me?

PHIL: Your double. Your stand-in.

JOHN S: Must be, mustn’t it?

CLAIRE: Is it?

JOHN S: I think it is, you know.

ASHLEY: Danny.

JOHN S: Yeah, is it Danny?

JOHN M: We would be covering up a modern car which would have pulled up and parked outside in between takes, and the owner walked away and us not be able to find him. If you look very carefully you often see—

CLAIRE: That happens a lot.

JOHN M: —a 1970s car parked very inappropriately in the middle of the road to cover up a modern car. Or cars have a lot of tarpaulin thrown over them.

JOHN S: Yeah, there's a lot of them.

JOHN M: I love this scene. I love the fact they don't know about Red Rum.

PHIL: Yeah, for those actually this is a pointed clue as Francis Lee who is the Man City footballer… when he retired from football he ended up making his fortune, his millions in toilet paper.

CLAIRE: Ashley knew that, obviously.

ASHLEY: A bit of clever writing, that.

PHIL: Superb writing. I got it immediately.

ASHLEY: So we're in the business called exposition.

JOHN S: I don't get it.

JOHN M: It's great, that set, for having this long corridor that runs around the outside of it too. That whenever you need to do a bit of chat, you can always go for a two-minute walk around the outside.

JOHN S: We had a lot of two-minute walks, didn't we?

PHIL: Yeah.

CLAIRE: So this was a very pleasant location.

PHIL: Rochdale.

CLAIRE: Rochdale.

JOHN M: This was still a functioning club, wasn't it?

ASHLEY: Yeah.

PHIL: Yeah.

ASHLEY: Yeah, when I went on location, I had to leave my shoes there, they were stuck to the ground.

JOHN S: It's true.

JOHN M: And the neon sign over the door there was comped on with a computer later on.

ASHLEY: Some appalling dancing goes on in this sequence, doesn't it?

CLAIRE: Fantastic.

ASHLEY: Always that bloke with his thumbs in his pockets that gets me.

CLAIRE: That one.

ASHLEY: That one, yeah.

ASHLEY: Him.

JOHN M: I don't remember doing that dance. Not that one on the pole.

CLAIRE: So this is all done pretty much to silence or with a little bit of intro music played to get people in the mood, but all the sounds are laid on afterwards. It looks very silly when you're filming it.

JOHN S: Annie in a red dress.

CLAIRE: Aha, bit of a clue there.

JOHN S: There she is.

JOHN S: Oh, I thought that was very—

ASHLEY: He's a cruel man.

JOHN M: He's a little harsh.

PHIL: It was a little harsh.

JOHN S: Even when we were doing that, we were wincing.

PHIL: It was a bit, yeah. That's cause it was to Liz.

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN M: Much debate about the wigging here. About were the haircuts enough, like the footballers, for us to recognise the footballer? I remember, we shot some more of Marc Bolan, didn't we? But we decided the less we actually showed him, the more like Marc Bolan he became.

PHIL: Less like Brian May from Queen.

JOHN M: Quite a different musician.

JOHN S: The thing is, he wasn't driving the mini, was he?

ASHLEY: No. I did write a version where he starts to explain, especially when you're driving the mini, there's a woman driving…

JOHN S: Yeah, just look out for minis.

ASHLEY: He's only 5'2, did you know that?

JOHN S: Marc Bolan? Really?

ASHLEY: Yeah, that's why he was in a mini.

PHIL: He used to also own the house where I used to live on Botham Street.

ASHLEY: Oh really? With small doors.

PHIL: King's Road.

JOHN M: Here's Tom Mannion.

ASHLEY: He's terrific, isn't he? Scared me at the read-through.

JOHN M: He's very good at being sinister.

JOHN S: Wendy Warren?

ASHLEY: Yeah.

JOHN S: This set was fantastic. I didn't think this would work when we walked in there, cause it's actually a massive room, isn't it? With a desk in the middle of the room.

CLAIRE: Yeah, John, you had always talked about wanting to see Warren for the first time at a great distance and to have that intimidation that they would feel, having to walk all the way up to him.

JOHN M: I think it's about him being a powerful man in his own world and to represent that on camera. If you put a bit of space around them, then they seem a bit more king-like. They will have to take a long walk up this carpet to get to him. Where we could have shot it in some tiny backroom. Perhaps would be a bit more realistic, but it wouldn't have felt the same. Here comes the famous dancing.

CLAIRE: *The* dancing.

PHIL: No idea what I was doing in this scene, dance-wise.

ASHLEY: Did you always know that this would be slo-mo, John?

JOHN M: Yeah, we designed it to do what's called ramping where you spend time at normal speed, and then during the same shot you suddenly go slow. Bit trendy.

CLAIRE: Yeah, all these canal shots are so beautifully lit by Tim Palmer.

JOHN M: And we would have made this at almost the same time as we made the canal scene for later on, wouldn't we?

JOHN S: Yeah, same night.

CLAIR: Yeah, same night.

JOHN S: We were awfully tired, I think, when we did this one. It was the last one, wasn't it?

JOHN M: Yeah, it was about last.

PHIL: Tired and emotional. On the first take of this, the door didn't open, did it?

JOHN M: Is that right, yeah?

PHIL: And I dislocated my shoulder.

CLAIRE: I think the second time it just sort of opened before you even got near it.

PHIL: That's right. I fell over.

JOHN M: If you... I'm not saying we were low budget or anything, but if you examine the structure of this flat carefully, you will see that it is in actual fact Sam's flat.

ASHLEY: Sam's flat with a bit of a hanging.

PHIL: That hurt, I remember it.

ASHLEY: He was a bit enthusiastic, wasn't he?

PHIL: He was very enthusiastic.

JOHN M: I think he got his just-deserved, though, because I believe he banged his head on the little side table when he went down that time.

CLAIRE: That's alright, then.

JOHN S: Ah well, that's karma.

PHIL: Well, that's okay, then.

JOHN S: I love that.

PHIL: We had a few takes of that, didn't we?

JOHN M: He made that up, didn't he? I said, Marshall, you're gonna have a joke with him.

ASHLEY: The size of those [pile of?] notes. We had big arguments, Claire, do you remember in development.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

ASHLEY: Some of the BBC executives weren't happy that he was tempted by corruption, we had to really, really argue our case on that.

CLAIRE: Yeah, we just felt that was what was interesting to see, someone who we've only seen so whiter-than-white to go on that dark journey.

ASHLEY: It's that when you take one mistake and step, you're on that journey, aren't you?

CLAIRE: Yeah.

JOHN M: I think it's true that a character can become more interesting when they are faulty and when they make a mistake that you can later make right again, but if you stay whiter-than-white all the time, then it gets a bit dumb.

ASHLEY: And also what had helped, we always wanted to tell a story of him meeting his mother in this episode, but we didn't want to stop the police narrative to go and see his mum, so in the end the money became the bridge between the two levels of narrative.

CLAIRE: Yeah, that actually came quite—

ASHLEY: Quite late.

CLAIRE: Quite late on, yeah.

ASHLEY: And the fact that she was *in* one of Warren's houses came last draft, I think.

CLAIRE: That's right, yeah.

ASHLEY: Draft 87.

CLAIRE: And you might spot a little cameo there from our director.

ASHLEY: It was scripted as Basil Brush, but we couldn't quite go there, could we?

CLAIRE: No. So we created our own.

ASHLEY: So John McKay took his sock off.

PHIL: Instead of Mr. Derek it was Mr. McKay. Straight out of *Porridge*.

JOHN M: What you can't see is that my early 1970s rugby shirt I'm wearing is kind of yellow and green and orange and red. It's like something off...

CLAIRE: And worn underneath a pair of dungarees, if my memory serves me correct.

JOHN M: Off of *Playaway*. All of which goes to disguise a fantastic emotional scene, I think. And one of my favourite scenes. You did this brilliantly, John.

JOHN S: It was hard crying to a glove puppet.

ASHLEY: You think, 'My career is now over.'

PHIL: If anybody could do it, you could.

JOHN M: I remember actually you scripted that originally we could see above the rooftops old floodlights, was it like…

ASHLEY: Oh, the Old Trafford floodlights.

JOHN M: Yeah, the Old Trafford floodlights. We kinda worked out that there'd be a lot of CGI to put them into the shot, so I tried to make something the same out of those telegraph poles which you don't see in many areas now, but I remember from the 70s they were everywhere. That was the way the phones got to houses.

CLAIRE: A really lovely score in this episode as well from Ed. The mum's themes. Very nice.

ASHLEY: I think these are some of my favourite scenes from the whole series. The internal progress of producing, just…

PHIL: The casting of [??] and Lee Ingleby.

JOHN S: A friend texted me when she [Joanne Froggatt] came on to [??], she looks exactly like you. Said she looks quite similar, she could be a sister.

PHIL: You've got similar noses.

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN M: One of the things I like about these scenes is that it feels like you sort of fancy each other. Which adds a very interesting undercurrent.

JOHN S: Yeah, there's a glance at her bum, isn't there? In a minute.

(collective laughing when Sam glances at Ruth's bum)

JOHN M: Atta boy.

ASHLEY: Freud for beginners, isn't it? I had one of those. [re. action figure on screen]

JOHN S: I had one of those.

JOHN M: Did you try and put it underwater?

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN M: We would take it in the bath.

JOHN S: He had, like, iron bits on the bottom of his boots, didn't he? So he stood on the bottom of the bath.

ASHLEY: Was that the expensive one with the proper hair?

JOHN S: Yeah.

ASHLEY: I had the plastic one, we had it rough. This is my homage to *The Third Man*. Do you remember Harry Lime, and the cat that only likes Harry?

JOHN S: Oh yeah.

ASHLEY: Homage, steal, call it what you will.

JOHN M: Where'd the name Mr. Carraway come from? That's a curious name to give someone.

ASHLEY: I can't remember, John. I probably put my finger in a phone book. You ever run out of brown paint on this set?

JOHN M: It was a request from the cameraman, Tim Palmer. Because we walked in, and this would be a kind of a terrace house in Manchester somewhere and like all terrace houses available for hire or soon to be sold, it was painted kind of beige. And if you shoot a scene with actors in a beige room, you can't see them because we're sort of beige. So I think that a cameraman is always looking for is a nice dark colour on the wall in order to show up the skin tone. It's actually a little bit trendy for 1973. I remember a lot of terrible 50s and 60s wallpaper at that point.

PHIL: Browns were very in in the 70s, though, weren't they? Hessians...

JOHN S: They would have been quite trendy, though, wouldn't they? A young couple…

PHIL: Tan sofas, crown trainers, all that stuff.

JOHN M: I love the playing in this scene. Lovely, intimate play.

JOHN S: I think they had a piano. The guy in the corner playing the piano.

JOHN M: I'll tell you, there was no room in the corner. I was in the corner. I remember being squished in on the floor. There wasn't even room for me to look at my little telly, I just had to watch kind of craning under the camera—such a small room.

ASHLEY: I always remember those stories that you heard about the Kray twins in London, you know, how the streets were safer if you were a law-abiding citizen, where they were completely corrupt and violent at a different level, and how in the 60s and 70s the police often did deals with those sort of criminals to make their lives easier. I thought that was a really interesting moral and ethical area to explore, one that a copper like John wouldn't be comfortable with.

JOHN M: And he's a very reasonable guy. You know, quite a comfy arrangement, really.

ASHLEY: Yeah, and you could argue, I've heard it argued that, you know, the cities *were* safer there for ordinary people.

JOHN M: Because crime was a kind of private industry between the police and the criminals.

ASHLEY: Exactly.

JOHN M: We had a big debate there about how bad Kelly Wenham should appear in this glimpse of her here.

PHIL: Morally bad, you mean?

JOHN M: Yeah, how calculating…

CLAIRE: The storytelling, how much just to try and hide the reveal that she's actually his honeytrap. There was originally a look after Sam had left the room that she gave Warren and we decided to cut before that moment because we thought it was hinting at something more sinister. I love Annie's innocence and kind of quiet charm.

ASHLEY: What she's actually telling you is, yes, I am slightly corrupt so can we change the subject?

JOHN M: Yeah, she's avoiding.

CLAIRE: Which again actually was something we brought in quite late on. We wanted to keep that for threat and the jeopardy and the sense that it was all-pervading—Warren's power.

ASHLEY: And that all the police, although they took advantage of it, they all knew they were slightly sullied by that.

JOHN M: And I guess they didn't talk about it.

ASHLEY: No.

CLAIRE: And there was a similar debate at the beginning of this scene, I think, with Joni. In fact there was a whole other sectioned scene in which Annie appeared.

JOHN M: Yeah, Annie was in the beginning of this scene, and as scripted Joni said she wouldn't talk until Annie left, which we found ultimately made her seem too much like a bad girl too quickly.

CLAIRE: Too manipulative.

JOHN M: And again was kind of telegraphing the fact that she was going to take advantage of Sam in some way. So by chopping that sort of material out after we'd shot it, hopefully we kept the audience guessing about how bad she was or what her intentions were.

JOHN S: Also Annie would have been watching like a hawk as well, wouldn't she, so they probably wouldn't have been able to get out of the station.

ASHLEY: I think she's a terrific actress, Kelly. She acts each level of character completely believably.

CLAIRE: Yeah, and it was something we definitely were really conscious of when we were casting and we were working on the script, Ashley, because there were so many transformations in the character and revelations about her. And she's almost a different character in every single scene you see her in.

JOHN M: Yeah, like she's not fixed yet.

ASHLEY: We thought, episode 4, John, you needed a bit of a love interest. You've been away from home a long time.

JOHN S: Yeah, it was just another female around the place. It was such a male atmosphere, wasn't it, in that police station.

(Phil chuckles)

JOHN S: It got a bit smelly.

JOHN M: Great coat.

CLAIRE: It's actually probably the first time we're properly seeing Sam in a kind of domestic situation. But he's still always the copper.

JOHN M: When I first saw this set, Sam's flat, I couldn't believe how oppressive it was. If you actually stand in the room, these windows are a lot smaller than you expect the window to be. The fixtures and fittings in the room, like the sort of picture rail there, and the skirting boards were very mean and they were very grimy. And I thought it would never work, I thought it would seem like we were shooting in some sort of derelict slum, but Brian Sykes, the designer, was very clever. And he knew it would all kind of bed down on camera and simply seem like a kind of grimy flat. And the relative meanness and the small size of the surroundings would just kind of work on you in a very subtle, psychological way that it wouldn't feel like luxury.

JOHN S: It certainly didn't feel like luxury.

JOHN M: Did it not, John?

JOHN S: No.

CLAIRE: That bed doesn't look very comfortable either.

JOHN S: I was on it a lot before. It's obviously not very clean because he never takes his clothes off to go to bed. He just always falls asleep fully clothed.

JOHN M: I remember we talked beforehand, John, about how much you believed her or not, and about the tension between sort of fancying her and sort of wanting to protect her in a very above-board way.

JOHN S: Yeah. He does keep his distance, though, doesn't he? When he sits down and she sort of invites him to get in bed with her.

JOHN M: Yeah.

JOHN S: That, you know, like you said, Claire, he's a cop all the time.

JOHN M: It feels almost like a parental relationship to me. Especially in this particular scene.

JOHN S: It just says a lot about him as well, because even if he's dreaming all this, you just kind of think, well, why not, you know? Why not, this is all in my head anyway.

PHIL: Yeah.

JOHN M: That's the first time we mention Maya, isn't it?

JOHN S: She also, because she mentioned Maya as well, he's probably felt the guilt in his head.

CLAIRE: Love this theme that Ed's put on here. It just comes as echo just at the end, when the two of them part for the last time before we see her by the canal.

ASHLEY: Quite an interesting concept of a man who might be in a coma or back in time having acid.

JOHN S: Yeah. This would drive him mad. It mustn't have been that strong now cause he still would've been going for days, wouldn't he? Apparently all this stuff going around in the 60s and 70s was really strong. I love all this, I love the cat at the door.

JOHN M: I think the cat at the door is derived almost entirely from the kitten that knocks down the city in *The Goodies*.

JOHN S: Oh yeah.

PHIL: Christopher's tower.

JOHN M: And Basil Brush *did* make an appearance.

ASHLEY: Yeah, of course.

JOHN S: Britney. Britney's in there somewhere as well, isn't she?

JOHN M: Little premonitions of the end of the series. Test card girl. I think one of the reasons the acid trip works is because of this scene immediately afterwards.

CLAIRE: Off of Liz's expression here.

JOHN S: It was a nice thing for Gene to do that, wasn't it?

PHIL: Yeah.

JOHN S: Invite her in.

ASHLEY: Lucozade in a wrap.

PHIL: In a wrap.

JOHN M: We were talking in the last episode about— Nick Beeks-Sanders is the operator on this series, he's the man who sort of handles the camera, and how he was always choosing great frames to shoot characters and scenes in. And this scene in particular seems very like Nick to take low angles on people, and yet be able to group several characters together into one scene in a way that's different from most TV now. We tend to go for *one* character, *one* character.

CLAIRE: We had a lot discussions about this moment. Initially, I think when you scripted it, Ashley, it was scripted as— There were various different options.

ASHLEY: They morphed into animals.

CLAIRE: They turned into animals, and then we talked about just distorting the screen, and in the end when we recorded the sound for this and recorded the two guys doing their doctor sounding voices, it was so funny and disturbing.

ASHLEY: Very, very Dennis Potter.

JOHN M: It feels very Dennis Potter, just to alter one thing.

PHIL: And in the end we went for Hawkwind.

JOHN M: Yes, [we just gotta push it?] somewhere.

ASHLEY: I like the fact that it irritates Gene that he sees himself as a sheriff sometimes, Sam.

PHIL: Spat on you there, sorry about that.

JOHN S: Yeah, there was a lot of that throughout the six months, Phil.

CLAIRE: Do the two of you find it more enjoyable to do these kind of tension scenes or the comedy scenes when you're playing off each other. Cause there's kind of a lot of examples of both of those in the series?

JOHN S: I don't know. I don't know, it was quite, I just thought it was quite easy to do any of these kind of scenes. I guess because we knew each other before and all that. To me they were the most interesting scenes to do.

CLAIRE: The two of you, hats-off head-to-head.

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN M: It feels like a fantastic tennis match to me, you know. Even though you're being sort of very rough and sweaty with each other, feels like two characters and by implication two actors, you know, sort of playing to the top of their game. I imagine that if one you did good, then the other one would be encouraged. That is one of my favourite Annie scenes.

PC: It's lovely seeing her being really strong.

JOHN M: Yeah. And yet it ends with a kiss.

ASHLEY: There's something slightly arrogant, Sam expects her to go with him if he wants her to. So I like that reversal.

JOHN S: It's the first time she's actually kind of snubbed him a little bit, isn't it? (Re: Annie giving Sam a kiss on the cheek) That's the nearest he'll ever get, isn't it?

CLAIRE: Yeah. This one was actually one of the biggest sort of scale location dresses that we had to do, wasn't it? It was, uhm... We had to really choose carefully which... A nightclub that we could believe was already quite close to being a 1970s nightclub, because it was such a massive space.

JOHN M: Yeah.

CLAIRE: There was still quite a lot of work to do.

JOHN M: The trouble with most nightclubs is, they get knobbled every two or three years, don't they? They change.

ASHLEY: Not Rochdale, though.

JOHN M: [??] Rochdale. And, well, I guess if you watch this from too closely, you'll see things that were put in in the 80s or the 90s, but, uhm...

CLAIRE: Yeah, the sign I've just spotted up there on the top of the screen.

JOHN M: Yes. Most of what we did was take things away to show the original kind of 1930s shape of the building. There's an inappropriately parked 1970s vehicle. I wonder what that's covering. This was one of the hottest days, wasn't it, John?

JOHN S: They just all seemed to be baking red-hot brick days, didn't they? Just red bricks, gleaming. It was very oppressive, because it's quite a small street, isn't it?

JOHN M: Yeah. And did you go back there lots over the series?

JOHN S: Yeah, we were... Yeah, I think so. I don't know if it was that particular street, they were very similar. And they always seemed to be baking hot every time we...

CLAIRE: And they were such hard work to film in because obviously they were residential streets, and there are a lot of people around and cars and a lot of unpredictability.

JOHN S: And get a lot of things, trying to get it all finished before school finishes.

JOHN M: Yeah.

JOHN S: When the school kids arrive.

JOHN M: Suddenly you've got sixty school kids all standing right behind you.

JOHN S: It's never easy, is it?

ASHLEY: Series 2 will be harder because they'll all know about it.

JOHN S: Yeah. There's a theory. There's a lot of people— There's no way you can cover everything, is there. I mean, a lot of people say why is there a tree growing out of that house when it's covering, like a—

PHIL: Sat dish.

JOHN S: Yeah, a sat dish or a burglar alarm or something. But there is a theory that it doesn't matter, because it's in his head, isn't it? You know, he wouldn't get it all particularly right. He wouldn't get it absolutely right because his memory of it isn't *that* clear. So things would slip through.

ASHLEY: I like that theory. Because it means we can't make any mistakes at all.

PHIL: Absolutely.

JOHN S: It covers everything, doesn't it? So let's stick with that one.

CLAIRE: So this actually, this is a reference to a strand that got cut from the end of the episode.

JOHN M: Yeah, we had the telly falling off the wall in the end, didn't we?

JOHN S: Of course, yeah. Yeah. Of course, that's what it— Does it not do it?

JOHN M: No, it doesn't do it in the official cut.

JOHN S: Ah.

ASHLEY: Did you shoot it?

JOHN M: Yap.

CLAIRE: Yap.

JOHN S: Why did you take it out?

JOHN M: Uhm. I think we chose one particular way of ending over several alternatives, and the telly falling, uhm... It was a combination of facts that it was... The telly used to fall and come on with a particular picture, and it was technically quite difficult to do because these were original 1970s tellies, and you just have to sneeze and they stop working, never mind drop it off the wall.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

JOHN M: Uhm, so it kind of wrote itself out of the plot.

CLAIRE: And actually the shot that we ended up with, the very last shot with Sam in his room...

JOHN M: Yes.

CLAIRE: ... I think was absolutely the right decision in the end for Sam to be in the end scene because the TV ad that was written was always scripted to come on and, you know, to have his mum speaking, but, uhm, we'll come to this at the end.

JOHN S: Of course, yeah, it wasn't in the— She's not there, is it?

CLAIRE: She wasn't in the scene as originally written. And actually, it's a really, it's a nice moment as it is.

ASHLEY: What's that building in the background?

JOHN M: It's a mill, isn't it? Lion Mill. Where are we? We must be out...

PHIL: Oldham way.

JOHN M: Yeah, Oldham. This is very near the slaughterhouse that appears later on. Often when you're making, you group locations together so that there's only a short drive in between when you're changing places halfway through the day.

ASHLEY: The music's great here, because it actually makes you believe her, doesn't it? Finally.

JOHN M: That she's going somewhere.

CLAIRE: That was a very deliberate choice about where to bring that music in in the moment where Sam makes the decision to believe her. This is the place that echoes the earlier moment where Sam tells her it's a beautiful life. That's such a clever piece of writing and directing, I think, that you really feel that's the end of their story. It's very resolved and I think it makes the next scene even more shocking.

JOHN M: I like the atmosphere in the pub in this scene. Daytime pub. Fags, smoke and sunlight. I remember pubs like that.

PHIL: When you were at school.

JOHN M: Yeah. When I was *not* at school.

JOHN S: We have to get him some pyjamas for series 2.

JOHN M: And a duvet.

JOHN S: Yeah.

PHIL: We can get matching pyjamas for the show, almost.

JOHN S: Yeah. I love the soundtrack over this bit. The music they use there, it's fantastic.

JOHN M: This is an important scene in the sense of the series that Sam realises that he can hurt emotionally. Doesn't matter that he's in a coma or time travel or whatever he is, it hurts.

CLAIRE: That's right. And it felt like it was the right point halfway through the series to really confront him with that possibility. And also that, however hard he tries, you know, he's still in this alien world. He can't control it.

JOHN M: (Re. "He might as well have slit her throat himself" line) Which in some ways is a true statement. If he hadn't wavered from the police line, she would be alive. I really like that sort of moral ambiguity.

JOHN S: I like the look that Gene gave him then as well. It said a lot about him, Sam, didn't it, that relationship, even Gene thought he was out of order.

ASHLEY: Ooh, he's had that coming, doesn't he?

CLAIRE: Ah, this was quite an interesting scene, wasn't it?

JOHN S: It was real whisky, so by this time, he's very drunk.

PHIL: Real whisky, it was about five o'clock in the morning. We were absolutely mashed. No.

CLAIRE: It was actually a lot more complicated, though, wasn't it? In the original script and when we came to... The backstory was much more complicated.

PHIL: We had to change, yeah, we had to flip things around to move it. But it wasn't really moving the story on. No offense, Ashley.

ASHLEY: None taken.

PHIL: We just had to make it a bit clearer.

ASHLEY: There's always a risk with these kind of scene is that the story stops, isn't it?

CLAIRE: I think originally it was the backstory was much less personal to Gene, it was something he'd observed rather than something that he'd actually—

PHIL: Actually involved in.

CLAIRE: —actively done himself, yeah.

PHIL: And it's this real confessional between the two of them, Gene confiding in Sam and you sort of forget any sort of disparity between them at this point. And sort of, this is buddy time, this is...

ASHLEY: This is a real step up in their relationship, this is a friendship, really.

PHIL: Yeah, and resolving to do something together for the good of the community.

ASHLEY: And it gives the ending from here to the end real energy.

PHIL: And it's something that Gene has obviously had on his chest for a long time, and the person he confides in to get is off his chest is Sam.

ASHLEY: Yeah, he would never have said this to any of the others, would he?

PHIL: No. Because they wouldn't have understood.

JOHN S: Yeah, they would have thought he was being wussy, and... I like this, because we do help each other out here, don't we, and it's from here on in it's like us two against the rest of them.

PHIL: Yeah.

JOHN M: I like it because it's a back alley I used to pass on my way to work every day. And I thought we gotta shoot something in that alley.

PHIL: Palace Clocktower behind us. This was a very pleasant location.

ASHLEY: Rather glamorous location.

JOHN M: We really did shoot in an abattoir and for operational reasons, the crew had to be reduced to about six people. And we were all in sort of antibacterial suits.

PHIL: Apart from that bloke.

JOHN M: Yeah, apart from him. He was very brave and insisted he didn't need cover ups or anything.

JOHN S: We wrote to him in hospital afterwards, saying how brave he had been.

(laughter)

ASHLEY: Brave to wear those pants.

PHIL: Yeah.

JOHN S: This reminds me of something from *Starsky & Hutch* or something, this is just a real...

JOHN M: In the meat packing industry.

JOHN S: Yeah.

CLAIRE: Particularly with those hats on.

JOHN S: Yeah.

ASHLEY: I think Sam's interesting in this sequence because he *has* joined the Dark Side a bit, hasn't he? I don't suppose he locked up too many people in big fridges in 2006.

JOHN S: And also it's funny because he was swigging whisky before this. It's something he would never have done. He just started drinking quite heavily throughout this series. You notice he's in the pub a lot.

ASHLEY: I mean, this episode is largely about the '73 seducing him a bit, isn't it?

JOHN S: Not many people ate the beef sandwiches that came this day, did they?

PHIL: They didn't. And then bacon sandwiches the next morning.

JOHN S: I think I became vegetarian for about two weeks.

PHIL: For two hours. Who decided to give me that hat?

JOHN S: Stroke of genius.

ASHLEY: Definitely a dog hat.

PHIL: Certainly is, isn't it?

JOHN S: This was great to film.

PHIL: Yeah.

CLAIRE: I love this shot.

JOHN M: These low angles, lower shots are stolen from a Hong Kong movie called *The Replacement Killer*.

PHIL: Homage, homage.

JOHN M: We all looked [??].

PHIL: I remember I got that line in. More out of me than I thought Gene Hunt— (mumbles)

CLAIRE: I think we all know the real truth, though.

JOHN S: Best line in the series coming up now.

PHIL: I'm so thrilled we got to keep that in.

ASHLEY: I like this. You think Gene's doing a decent thing, don't you?

JOHN S: And we had to keep fighting off this bouncer, who was, uh...

JOHN M: Bit of a keen one, wasn't he?

JOHN S: Yeah.

PHIL: And my one wouldn't let me pass, look.

JOHN S: I'll say, we had to fight past.

ASHLEY: All elements of realism.

JOHN S: There's some other guy who tries to grab us here as well somewhere.

PHIL: Yeah. There.

JOHN S: It took about twelve takes for me to convince him, look mate, I'm supposed to push you out of the way.

PHIL: Yeah. Or not push out of the way, get out of the way.

ASHLEY: Again, it feels like he's starting to belong here now, doesn't it? Emotionally. He's actually made a difference in this world.

JOHN S: With this change, he alters history quite early on, then, doesn't he? Not only in the last one, he uh... The fact that they locked Warren up, that would never have happened, would it?

JOHN M: Gotta wonder if the present's gonna be different when he gets back.

JOHN S: It's bound to be, isn't it, somewhere?

CLAIRE: I love this bit.

JOHN M: Now, one of the alternatives that we wound up not having in the cut of the show was that there was a screeching car and a gunshot blast through this window as they toast each other. We shot a smashing window and a...

CLAIRE: Smashing pickled egg jars, everything...

JOHN M: Yeah, things being shot at in the bar, and you two guys ended up on the floor, didn't you?

JOHN S: We ended up on the floor and we just started laughing hysterically.

PHIL: Yeah.

CLAIRE: I think we just felt in the end that actually it was just such a great moment of satisfaction and resolve that we've, that they've managed to overcome Warren that it was worth keeping that moment. And then actually this is the real kind of then emotional ending of the show.

JOHN M: I remember this as being absolutely at the last minute on the last possible day it could be shot and we got about one go at each of these shots.

JOHN S: And your DOP was, uh, he was desperate for another one, wasn't he, to get in, to get another shot in

JOHN M: Yeah. Uhm, but something about it sort of worked. I think you just play it very true.

ASHLEY: I love the light and the yellow sunlight.

CLAIRE: So very, sort of simple.

JOHN S: It's good that we see the football as well.

PHIL: It's good that you made an effort and put a tie on.

JOHN S: Yeah, I was gonna say. The only other jacket that he had, he mopped up all that blood with it, didn't he, and it was, uh... So it was the leather jacket from then on in.

PHIL: I love those [damn?] curtains.

PHIL: Is that a label just behind that said 'John'?

JOHN S: Yeah, I saw that just then.

ASHLEY: That's a clue there.

JOHN S: It's a book, isn't it?

ASHLEY: Your biography?

JOHN S: It was my script, darling.

CLAIRE: And there was obviously much discussion about whether we could get away with ending this episode on Roger Whittaker. But it was, uhm...

AP: Apparently iTunes sales have rocketed. To three.

PHIL: *Sir* Roger Whittaker next year. Although he's got an ashtray on his head.

JOHN S: I don’t remember him being—

PHIL: Looks like a crown, doesn’t it. Looks like a crown.

AP: That’s a clue.

JOHN S: That’s a clue.

PHIL: King Whittaker.

AP: There’s Mr. [Sockly?].

JOHN S: Here he is again.

AP: Who ever would have thought a sock puppet would be moving?

CLAIRE: Yeah.

AP: It worked, though, doesn’t it? It’s a really moving ending.

JM: We were all singing this by the end, weren’t we? We get it on the brain.

CLAIRE: I love the fact that after that emotional ending, we go to this straightforward comedy here. Episode 5.

Life on Mars – Episode 1x08 DVD Commentary

CLAIRE: So hello, this is the commentary for episode 8. I'm Claire Parker, producer.

JOHN A: I'm John Alexander, director of this episode.

JOHN S: I'm John Simm, I play Sam.

CLAIRE: So I think we thought, given that this is the last episode, we would have a bit of a recap for the series.

JOHN A: So in terms of the recap, is this just elements of the series that you need to have remembered to make the last episode come together.

CLAIRE: Yeah, some highlights that would be useful.

JOHN A: How long is it that you've seen any of this material, John?

JOHN S: I think I saw this a few months ago, probably, this episode.

JOHN A: Because for me it was a great episode. I've only done two of the episodes of the series but 8 was a great one to do because it pulls the whole series together. So you have the 70s, you have the story that's gonna happen to Sam in this episode, but you also have these flashbacks, this making sense of the strange moments that Sam's had over the series.

CLAIRE: And the fact that we shot all of the flashbacks during the shooting period of your episodes.

JOHN A: That's right.

CLAIRE: And edited them back into the rest of the series.

JOHN S: So people are finally going to find out what those buckled shoes are all about.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

JOHN A: And how'd you get your feet into them.

CLAIRE: A lot of theories about that.

JOHN S: Lots of theories.

JOHN A: A very *Life On Mars* thing now – car chase.

CLAIRE: Couldn't be *Life On Mars* without a car chase.

JOHN A: Which I'd love to be able to take full credit for, but we had a second director on this day so there was a storyboard, but Max Wilson did a lot of work on this, so he added a few touches himself.

CLAIRE: This whole sequence, actually, leading up to the car accident or car crash stunt was quite complicated and time-consuming, wasn't it, to set up?

JOHN A: Yeah. Just because you work in a quite tight schedule, so to be able to fit in the moments and the elements you need for a car chase.

JOHN S: It was roasting as well, wasn't it? I remember. Always to be boiling hot.

CLAIRE: Dressed in full suits.

JOHN A: I seem to remember, whenever heat was an issue, there was always... Phil was always keen to take his jacket off underneath that heavy overcoat. In fact, look, he hasn't got his jacket on there.

CLAIRE: Yeah, so he wanted to keep the overcoat.

JOHN A: Now, that's a moment which I hope works now. But it took a while to get right because the idea was that it was gonna be a crash, but it was a surprise as the car drove away, but actually on the day we chose the heaviest car, a Rover, to be hit by a small car, so it didn't really move. There was an awful lot of extra 3D work to do to make that look authentic, but it seems to work in the end.

CLAIRE: Another car skid, obviously.

JOHN S: Of course.

JOHN A: Gratuitous. So Sam's a kind of different role for you, John, really. Would you say? From other roles that you've played over the years.

JOHN S: Uhm, yeah, on many levels. I've never played a cop before. Certainly not a time-travelling cop before. Yeah. It was a real challenge for me because it was... The workload was quite unbelievable.

CLAIRE: Because you're in every single scene.

JOHN S: Yeah.

CLAIRE: And also because of the intensity of the role.

JOHN A: And these moments...

JOHN S: Yeah, these were always difficult scenes to do, these. But by this time now, episode 8, I'd got used to what I used to call 'pigs in space' moments. Having these flashbacks...

JOHN A: Which worked fantastically. There was always something that you're slightly self-conscious about these moments.

JOHN S: Yeah. It's difficult to do because, you know, I don't see any of this, things going on there that you're seeing. I just have to sort of imagine. I don't know what I was thinking when I was doing it.

JOHN A: Of course we're not listening to the story, this is where Sam meets his dad for the first time in episode 8. Which kicks off the whole idea perhaps he's found his reason. Is this

going to explain why he's there? But I remember in terms of performance, you used to often say you used to naturalism, and now you're doing supernaturalism.

JOHN S: I used to drive everybody mad by saying I don't believe this, and I don't believe this, he wouldn't do this and then realised I'm actually talking about somebody who's gone back in time to 1973, so maybe suspend belief.

CLAIRE: But I think what's great about, you know, the way you took the character was that actually everything *is* still believable, you know, everything you're reacting in a way that all of us can understand, and, you know, really feel for you in that situation. What would *we* do if that happened to us?

JOHN S: Yeah. That was the only way to approach it, really, was to be like, you know, the audience. And to be everyman, and to try deal with all these things as naturally as is possible in this situation.

CLAIRE: So this role of your dad, it was quite a hard one to cast because it needed to be... We really liked the idea that it was someone who was younger than you are now. And to find someone with that kind of weight was tricky, but Lee was such an obvious choice.

JOHN S: Yeah, he's a great actor, Lee.

JOHN A: Wasn't it a moment that we met Lee *for* the part, and we thought he was good, and then we went to John and said that we'd just seen somebody who we thought was good, and then John said, hang on, I've got a great idea.

CLAIRE: Yeah, that's right.

JOHN A: And we'd both thought of the same person.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

JOHN S: It was the same person, yeah.

JOHN A: And what was it... You'd never worked with him, but you knew him.

JOHN S: Well, I knew him, yeah. I knew him from... He actually went to the same school as me in a place called Nelson in Lancashire. And so we had the same drama teacher, he was called Mr. Wellock. And he kind of, sort of took both of us under his wing at a different time. I was there, I think, five years before him. And then he also went to the same college as me as well, in Blackpool. So we kind of followed a very, very similar path.

JOHN A: So this kind of completes that circle, or that kind of theatre—

JOHN S: Yeah. Yeah. But it was quite weird calling him Dad. It was quite strange, that. This made me love this big shark fish analogy.

CLAIRE: Classic Gene and Sam moment.

JOHN A: Because of course, and also I did the last block of the series, so there were three other directors, and by the time I'd arrived, the cast and, you know, the whole gang had been formed and working well. How was that to begin with? Everybody kind of coming to terms with the oddness of this series, and coming together as a cast, as a company in a way?

JOHN S: It kind of... It just seemed to happen quite easily I thought. Everybody just immediately started to fall into it. And because we filmed them in sequence, like you know, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, it was, uh... You see it grow, you see the relationships grow and it kind of happens genetically.

JOHN A: I really like the kind of tendons in the emotions you bring to Sam, actually. Cause although this is an action— Or it's got a fair amount of action in it as a series, it's also got some very, it's got a really emotional core to it. And that's... just little connections like that make you bring a moment to life.

JOHN S: I thought he better start smiling a bit more.

CLAIRE: Can't be miserable all the time.

JOHN S: Yeah, he can't be walking around confused and miserable all the time.

JOHN A: And had you worked with Phil before?

JOHN S: Yeah. Yeah, I worked together, we worked together on *Clocking Off*, I was in the very first episode of *Clocking Off*, and on *State Of Play*. He was the policeman in *State Of Play*.

JOHN A: Because it's a great, you know, it's a very comfortable duo.

JOHN S: Yeah, that developed as well really well. We sort of... And I think it helped because we knew each other before, so that did kind of help. But obviously this was a very intense job. We were together all the time, so it was, uh... We didn't do much socialising cause there wasn't much time. Sort of with each other all day every day.

JOHN A: Cause I think it *is* worth saying, probably has been said throughout how hard, how much you *did* work on the series. Cause I mean, a lot of performers, a lot of long-running series that people watch, you're aware that they've got a performer in them a lot as a core performer. But because the conceipt (sic) or concept is very much that *Sam*, that it's *Sam's* world, he has to be in every scene and see everything, so it's an awful... Eight episodes, eight hours of television.

JOHN S: Yeah.

JA. Is an awful lot to get through. Get in your mind, learn all those lines, understand what's happening in all these stories and, you know, kind of still bring it to life. It was a huge achievement.

JOHN S: It was a tough one. Really we were very tired by now because obviously this is the last episode, but it's a testament to how good this episode was, that it kind of, I think it has a lot of energy, kind of racing towards the end.

JOHN A: Now this is a thing, isn't it? This is the interview room where we could not get this smoke to stand still. Every other episode seems to have static smoke.

CLAIRE: No, not every episode.

JOHN A: But we seemed to have the mist be... And no matter how many doors we closed—

CLAIRE: It's what I call a barbecue effect.

JOHN A: —it would still move. But actually I think what I like about it, because there's a strange feeling of 'where are we', you know, are we back in time, are we in Sam's mind, are we in the present, the strangeness of this smoke, actually, I could convince myself that it creates an atmosphere.

CLAIRE: It adds to the atmosphere.

JOHN S: There's a theory on one of those forum discussion things on the internet that they noticed in, I can't remember which episode it was, I think last week's, actually, episode 7, that there wasn't as much smoke, so they were thinking that maybe Sam has had an influence on his fellow officers and they all quit smoking.

CLAIRE: That's a nice idea.

JOHN S: Yeah.

CLAIRE: I don't think they'd be so easily swayed, sadly.

JOHN S: In fact, yeah, there's more smoke there.

JOHN A: Yeah, that's on fire. And what about the whole 70s thing for you, John. Is that... Did you have... cause obviously you were, like Sam himself, only very young in '73.

JOHN S: Yeah. Yeah.

JOHN A: But was it a period that you kind of enjoyed recreating or being in or...?

JOHN S: Yeah, it was really enjoyable to do. In the beginning it's like a novelty, you know, we're racing around in classic cars and, you know, Cuban heels and flares and all that. But it's quite... It *is* fun. It was a kind of fun time to pretend to be in with all the paraphernalia lying around, and, you know, it made everything a little bit more interesting because it kind of is a period piece, really, isn't it?

JOHN A: Yeah.

CLAIRE: There was always something to look at in CID, or some new prop that turns up that'll bring back a flood of memories, wasn't there?

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN A: I've got a feeling that car is also parked, although it looks very nice within the frame, I've got a memory it's hiding something from 2005.

JOHN S: Most things, most cars are hiding something there.

JOHN A: But this house, actually, although we've created an awful lot of period places, I think I remember this house was pretty much untouched. We got really lucky with this interior because a lot of locations were very difficult to find for that period. Because it is a period. Everything outside the frame doesn't exist unlike a contemporary drama where you can steal a little bit from the street or a little bit of action. We didn't have that, just like as if you'd create in the 18th century or whatever, but this house did have a nice… we'd hardly done anything to it, I seem to remember. Of course this is Sam visiting his mum back in one of their old family houses. I almost wish I had a close-up here.

CLAIRE: This is a lovely performance from Joanne Froggatt.

JOHN A: I remember this next one was another one of those moments that at the time we weren't sure how it would work.

JOHN S: Yeah. Yeah, there's a lot of sniggering going around. He's sort of sniffing his jacket.

CLAIRE: But actually it's really a very emotional moment.

JOHN S: Yeah, it works really well.

CLAIRE: As ever with *Life On Mars*, straight back into a contrast – some comedy.

JOHN A: And it *is* that contrast. There was a real emotional truth and heart to that moment, and you snap out of it, don't indulge in it.

CLAIRE: Phil's second favourite item of his costume: The driving gloves.

JOHN S: Yeah.

CLAIRE: Closely… Close second to his white shoes.

JOHN S: Yeah, the shoes should get a series of their own, shouldn't they? There's Jimmy Lips.

JOHN A: And you would think that actually Jimmy Lips is bald.

JOHN S: Oh yeah.

JOHN A: Yeah, he… When we met him in casting…

CLAIRE: Yeah, it was a big concern.

JOHN A: He turned up on the day, didn't even recognise him. Look, he was… I think he kept that. It's just a good look, I think it worked for him.

JOHN S: It does look good on him.

JOHN A: But in terms… I mean, how much does costume affect a part, when we talk about Philip's gloves and… Does it bother you when you do a role, does that leather jacket… did that leather jacket kind of…

JOHN S: Uhm… I feel like I'm him if I put it on. Because it's, you know… I don't really think about it that much, really. Only when we were deciding what to put him in.

CLAIRE: But it was your decision to put the St. Christopher…

JOHN S: Yeah. Yeah. Because I figured he'd have that anyway in 2006.

CLAIRE: Such a nice touch.

JOHN S: But as the episodes go on, you find that it's not so gaping because I end up doing a button-up, I got sick of the medallion thing. I've got to tuck that in now.

JOHN A: What kind of look was that kind of based on? It had a…

JOHN S: I kinda thought if it's in his head, when he wakes up, he's not gonna end up with a massive kipper tie and a dodgy suit. I kinda thought, you know, if it *is* in his head, he's gonna wanna look quite good. And I thought, one thing I had in my head when we were dressing him, it was a… because of the short hair, he's got very short hair, I thought of Bodie from the Professionals – Lewis Collins – I kinda took a lot, not loads, but quite a lot from that character, the way he was. His nicknames for me change every week as well. Einstein, Gladys, Sherlock…

CLAIRE: Brainiac…

JOHN S: Yeah, Brainiac.

JOHN A: Yeah, but the whole CID crowd at least look great as well.

JOHN S: They *are* great, yeah.

JOHN A: The Motley Crew.

CLAIRE: But I think what works brilliantly about, when we talk about that affection and this kind of ease between the two characters here, which later gets really challenged in this episode, I think works really well.

JOHN S: Yeah, it's by now we're kinda friends, aren't we? It's kind of happened.

CLAIRE: Yeah, there's a real rapport between you.

JOHN A: Just mention this moment, this is a really interesting moment cause… So Sam just heard little Sam as his young self on the phone. And when we came to this moment back in the cutting room, I remember that when you viewed it, Claire, you felt that it didn't quite have that kind of punch of it being a big moment. And we realised that what we'd done, is what you normally do, is he'd answer the phone and we cut to Gene and we cut back and we're taking the moment, sharing the moment between Gene *and* Sam, but actually the far more powerful moment is don't cut away, just stay on John, stay on Sam and kind of experience that moment through one character. I think very much with this series it was all about keeping as close to Sam as possible. Here are more pigs in space. Another period detail of Thunderbird 2.

CLAIRE: I think that's true. I think, you know, as an audience when you're watching it, you really trust in Sam and you trust in that he is your guide through the world. And that's why I think we need to kind of keep with him.

JOHN A: And in these moments it's good when the kind of information from 2005 or 6 comes through odd devices like radios or telephones or...

JOHN S: Yeah, that's how... I like... It's a great idea, that. I love the fact that he gets... that they talk to him through radios and things like that. I love that the Disco 2000 thing, in the...

CLAIRE: The Pulp moment.

JOHN S: Yeah, the Pulp thing through the radio. God, I remember this scene. I was on meltdown by now. Do you remember? I just couldn't get it right, this one. Took me ages. I think I'd gone line-blind. I couldn't learn the lines fast enough.

CLAIRE: And normally you're *so* good at learning lines. You can just pick them up straight away.

JOHN S: I know. I got to a point where I could... they were in my head for, like, an hour as long as I just kept concentrating on them, and then... They were turning the sets round and we were going on for a different scene. I'd be desperately trying to learn the next scene. So I do remember that was a tough one, that.

JOHN A: Another one of those kind of period details, that kind of projection and small projector. Super 8.

CLAIRE: This episode in particular but all the episodes, John, you're having to kind of think about the character on so many different levels. Thinking about, you know, the '73 world, but also where you come from. Was it kind of hard to keep that at all times, or...?

JOHN S: Uhm, yeah, it was kind of... There was a lot of it where I just kinda felt, right, I've just got a... I can't be thinking about the fact that I'm from 2006 all the time. I think a lot of the time you kind of just have to be doing this job, and it just becomes a '70s, well, a copper based in 1973 but not necessarily using their methods of policing. But, you said, the dilemma is going on, through his head the whole time, which was, I think it was right, it was so draining. I never had a scene that was kind of normal where I didn't say anything or was really jolly in the background, like that. There was always some nightmare going on in my head or... Either that, or we're chasing somebody. But this, this last episode, uhm, his head really *is* jumbled up in this one. Because I think it starts off, and he's kinda quite... I dunno, he's not... He feels kinda settled in, I think, and then suddenly when he sees his dad, it just, like, knocked him for six again. Which he always gets knocked for six every week, but the dilemma in this one starts really early and it gets worse and worse, like you say, and it culminates with, uhm, him falling... well, kind of having a fight with Gene. And I guess you just have to be a bit manic in this one, it gets worse and worse and worse cause he obviously...

CLAIRE: Becomes so single-minded about...

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN A: Does he believe him, does he not believe him?

JOHN S: Yeah, it's confusing as well for him, isn't it? Because he's his dad and he wants to believe and he... But the fact that he's, uhm, he's very sort of big on doing his job cause Gene says.

JOHN A: Tasteless period moment. Not many women in the series there, are there?

CLAIRE: Well, there weren't many, yeah, there weren't many prominent women in the police force at the time. So it stretched some credibility to have Annie such a strong character in '73 in policing. But there are actually some strong female guest leads.

JOHN A: Yeah, that's where… Yeah. But there's usually more… yeah, Liz playing Annie, we managed to make an active character. You know, she does have her moments that helped drive the… that drives the story.

CLAIRE: Absolutely. Oh, definitely. Which is about her character beyond really the expectations for women, particularly policewomen at the time.

JOHN A: So I think coming up, isn't it, one of our opportunities to go a little wider for our 70s world. There's great gasworks in the background there.

CLAIRE: I don't think we had to do any post-production computer generation at all in that scene. Unusual.

JOHN A: Well, the car moves because that door moves. I can't remember why we moved it, but it does. It's gone, look, it was over his shoulder, it's down the end of the street. Again, this was leading up to another moment which we were finding hard to kind of find a way of getting from… Cause the series has… juxtaposes such strange moments. There's this moment you're trying to lead into a football game with his dad, and you're struggling for ages of how could you slip from that one… It seems a small thing for an audience to think of, just get the ball out, but actually in your head you've got to find a reason.

JOHN S: Yeah. To get there, yeah. And not to make it, like, cheesy.

JOHN A: Yeah. This is a nice one between father and son, a game of football.

JOHN S: And I remember the crew were laughing at us here because it's really difficult to play football with Cuban heels.

CLAIRE: I remember this was Friday afternoon and it had been a really tough week, and we were really… I had a real sense that I wanted this scene to just… the sun to shine in this scene and it just did and it was perfect.

JOHN A: It did. And we kept it quite free as well because you just kicked that ball around. And we'd just keep shouting, "Just keep smilin'! Just keep enjoying yourselves."

JOHN S: Yeah.

CLAIRE: It was quite hard to keep up.

JOHN S: Here's another rare Sam smiley moment.

JOHN A: There was going to be this great discussion about telephone box doors. It's about the fact that they don't close immediately. So we had to do a slow close on a telephone box, when we didn't have that because it wasn't a real telephone box, obviously. So there's actually somebody sat on the ground. So whilst there is this intense emotional scene, there's somebody just closing that door very slowly. Oh, you've got… No, you can't them now. But we're just closing that door slowly. But there'd always be somebody on the crew who would be able to help with a 70s moment. So, I can't remember who it was, but somebody did say, look, the doors don't close. They were on a...

CLAIRE: It's so true.

JOHN A: They became obsessed with little things like that. Now this was… I remember this scene.

JOHN S: This was a grim day, wasn't it? It was just raining all day.

CLAIRE: This was one of the few days, amazingly, where the weather really… We had to… Didn't we have to—

JA. They weren't acting there. That's not acting.

CLAIRE: No. It was really wet.

JOHN S: It was very wet. We were very miserable that day.

CLAIRE: This was August. Wasn't this August?

JOHN A: It would start raining and it would stop and we couldn't work out whether to abandon the scene or whether to keep going, or what. People were in and out of cars.

JOHN S: It started…

JOHN A: Overcoats on, overcoats off… Makes for a funny moment, actually. It works with the scene. We got a shot of Gene's shoes here, I seem to remember.

JOHN S: Jimmy Lips.

CLAIRE: That's the end o' him.

JOHN A: And this was another great location that we found.

CLAIRE: Again, barely touched.

JOHN A: Barely touched. I have no idea what those things are on the wall. They were there. They were order forms for a factory. So why they were at the back of a snooker club, I don't know, but they looked great. I think all of the setting stuff was just genuine in that room.

CLAIRE: We might have put in the telephones.

JOHN A: Possibly.

CLAIRE: Maybe not.

JOHN A: Yeah, you could be right. These stand-offs between Gene and Sam were always good fun.

JOHN S: This is the first time they start to face up to each other, really, don't they? Because I think he becomes really single-minded now, all the buddy-buddy thing goes out the window. He's really horrible to him in this scene, isn't he?

JOHN A: An unexpected *Life On Mars* moment. Back from the…

JOHN S: Jimmy's back.

JOHN A: Back from the apparent dead. There's a look that Grant Scott Cameron, who was DOP on this block, got in this room because they're using those fluorescent lights.

CLAIRE: Mm. It looked great.

JOHN A: I think we had lots of debate about where those keys could have been hidden on that set as well.

CLAIRE: Yeah, I think it was written originally as under a gnome.

JOHN A: Gnomes, flower pots…

CLAIRE: This scene as well is really the first time that Annie starts doubting Sam, isn't it?

JOHN S: Yeah. She gets a bit sick of it by now, doesn't she? She really does think he's losing his mind.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

JOHN A: Which is always a twist. He has though. He *can* prove that he has, in fact, searched the house before, so it could well have been known from then. It was like a determination of Sam sitting down there. Cause actually that's one of these things that people might think that these are actually rehearsed, these moments, but of course as we know they're not, are they?

JOHN S: No.

JOHN A: We are there and we do a scene and you're in a space, and it's how do you make this scene work in that room and then you try and use it in a way that makes it feel like it's deliberate. And that was one of those moments – that choice to sit on that… sit down into that seat where we knew it was taking us.

JOHN S: Yeah, to bed himself down.

JOHN A: Yeah.

JOHN S: Yeah, it's true. You don't get rehearsal, really, you have to see what happens.

JOHN A: So you have ideas and you've planned everything, but it's nice that if something from the day or from the moment can be kind of used, just…

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN A: So even in this scene, I remember that during rehearsals it wasn't scripted that there's a handshake. But I remember that the handshake that's coming from the moment. I think it was Lee saying I just feel like we should shake hands.

JOHN S: That's right.

JOHN A: Or you said we should shake hands, but I remember it was just something that came from playing the scene, but it was nothing that was intended, it hadn't have been planned.

JOHN S: Yeah. And it turned out that that's the moment when he thinks, well, I've done it.

JOHN A: Yeah, it adds, it adds, definitely, yeah.

CLAIRE: Really nice moment.

JOHN S: Here come the pigs in space.

JOHN A: But this was a big moment to do because you had to think this could have been it.

JOHN S: Yeah. The big wake-up.

JOHN A: And again, I think it was a late Friday afternoon scene as well, was it?

JOHN S: It was.

JOHN A: Yeah. But it's… the energy. This is…

CLAIRE: It's because you knew you were going home that night.

JOHN A: That's it.

JOHN S: Yeah, desperate to get it done so that I could get on the train.

JOHN A: This, I think, again, Roy Sharman who cut this scene, it's a really nicely cut scene. Two angles, open book, but just jumping and making us feel that we're disorientated. And it's a great moment when it's all gone and it hasn't happened.

CLAIRE: You just feel for Sam's pain so much there. Brilliant performance.

JOHN S: Someone on one of these spy forum things on the internet says that the theory about the buckled shoes was that he goes back in time so many times that he's thinking back to when he's like, it's like the 1800s or something. It's like he's a copper there in these shoes. *Witchfinder General* or something. He's a copper then.

JOHN A: But I know for you as well, Claire, you went through the series and kind of developing scripts, there was always the mind games of where he was or when he was, like

that moment. So if he hadn't woken up, what was the reason for not waking? Having to always kind of double-guess what was happening outside.

CLAIRE: Absolutely. And there is…. There is a logic there, but…

JOHN A: There's always a logic. I know. I've tested a lot of it.

CLAIRE: Very hard to maintain that logic when actually it's so complicated, particularly with this episode and the idea of revisiting history and the possibility of changing history and playing with all those rules. Yeah, it was quite hard work at this stage, I think. Me and Matthew and Jane and our script editor Elwen had many hours with our heads in our hands, trying to figure it out.

JOHN S: This, even by now you don't really know who Nelson is, do you? And it's still really ambiguous.

CLAIRE: I love the way that Sam, as a character, just can't help doing his job.

JOHN S: Yeah. It's one thing he's slipping back into. In fact, it's the only thing that's kept him sane, isn't it?

CLAIRE: Yeah. More car screeching.

JOHN A: (re. Gene's line of 'having your vicars in a twist') Wasn't that your line?

JOHN S: That was my gag. I didn't a credit for it. It originally said… what was it he said? 'Put your head on the right way round, sweetheart, you're nicked.' He didn't do that in the end, did he? The exorcist woman.

JOHN A: That's it, yeah. Right now. That was your line during the rehearsal moment.

JOHN S: This was a good day, this, I remember.

CLAIRE: This was the *last* day.

JOHN A: This was the very last scene, wasn't it?

JOHN S: The very last, yeah, I think it was, actually.

CLAIRE: Yeah, it was.

JOHN S: He's in real meltdown now, I think.

CLAIRE: And having, like, gone, you know, already in quite a heightened state for the whole series, was it hard to then take it up a notch at this point?

JOHN S: I don't know, it was like, like I said before, it was quite exciting because it was the last series, it was the last episode and there was just like the energy came from somewhere. And they're also really good scenes and enjoyable to do as an actor, these kind of scenes. For once, I get to punch him in the stomach. So this is when we find out all of what the red dress and the buckles was about. Wasn't this filmed in the airport capitol of the world?

CLAIRE: Yeah. Seemed like such a great location at the time.

JOHN A: Well, it *was* a great location originally. Nobody had said anything at this location.

JOHN S: The fact that it was actually in an airport.

JOHN A: And then this moment grew and grew, these moments grew and grew, and then we ended up with lots of dialogue direct on a flight path.

JOHN S: It really really came to a head in the woods, didn't it? When we were trying to do scenes in the woods.

JOHN A: Yeah, we had to, yeah.

CLAIRE: It was actually a different location, but it close, quite close, wasn't it?

JOHN A: Very close, yeah.

JOHN S: It was Stockport, and we renamed it airport.

JOHN A: I love his little dad dance there.

JOHN S: Yeah, it really is a dad dance, isn't it?

JOHN A: It becomes him there, yeah. A lot of animals noises thrown in there, just to…

CLAIRE: And this moment when *Life On Mars* comes back at the end, it's fantastic. There's something about the way this is lit, as well. It's an almost sepia quality. Yellow and so atmospheric.

JOHN S: It's great that they use it again at the end, this song. It's taken eight episodes to come back.

CLAIRE: It's starting to feel quite satisfying, I think.

JOHN S: And that's such a sweet thing for him to see that. The last time that his mum and dad see each other.

JA. That moment with Lee at the door when his dad there, and there's just a… There's a change there.

CLAIRE: Very sinister [??].

JOHN A: A very sinister moment. Just the way he holds himself, he turns his head. This when we realise that she was in that red dress. The moments just come thick and fast now. Annie in the red dress, young Sam.

JOHN S: Does he look?

JOHN A: Does he look?

JOHN S: Is he gonna look?

JOHN A: He can't resist. And then we're in the woods.

JOHN S: These were two very intense days in the woods, weren't they?

JOHN A: Again, we were very lucky because the two half hour… Such a huge climax to the series out in the open air. We could have been hostage to fortune, but…

CLAIRE: Just hostage to planes. But the sound design in this section is really fantastic. The guys at Hackenbacker did such a great job. It really helps bringing all those elements together. Young and old Sam. This change here that we can really see the character undergo here, it's fantastic from Lee.

JOHN S: Yeah. This is his memory. It's really telling that even now, he doesn't help Annie up. He doesn't do anything. He just shouts at her when she tries to kick him.

CLAIRE: Sort of, you know he wants to save her and he thinks maybe that's the reason he's there, but he still can't.

JOHN S: It's his dad, isn't it?

CLAIRE: He's got to focus on his dad.

JOHN S: Subtle as always.

JOHN A: A great anthem.

CLAIRE: I think there was at script stage there was even more complication exposition at this point which we managed to lose without too much trouble.

JOHN A: There was a very long list.

CLAIRE: Actually, we didn't… When we got to, we didn't need it.

JOHN S: He's just totally blinded by it, isn't he?

CLAIRE: And that moment just proves it, doesn't it?

JOHN A: I always enjoy this image of you running through the woods in that leather jacket with that gun. That always feels like a 70s show to me.

JOHN S: It is a very enjoyable image.

JOHN A: In a 70s way.

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN A: I know you were always wished for to hold the gun down now.

JOHN S: That always bothers me cause you're supposed to hold the gun down and that is, uh…

JOHN A: But they never did. We're in the 70s.

JOHN S: Yeah, I guess so, yeah.

CLAIRE: And you are under quite a lot of stress.

JOHN S: Yeah, that's true.

CLAIRE: You could be forgiven.

JOHN S: This was the tough one. There were planes every two seconds in this one, wasn't it?

JOHN A: It was actually…

CLAIRE: It's such an emotional scene.

JOHN A: I thought you would go home at one point, I'd lost you completely.

JOHN S: I *was* gonna go home at one point, but I couldn't find a cab.

JOHN A: In the middle of the wood. We'd always get to the same point. We'd get to the big moment when the voices are coming in, and then an aeroplane would be coming in.

JOHN S: Yeah. Yeah. And it was hard, because crying, that was the hard thing. Cause, I think I was drinking water by the end of it, there no liquid left in my body.

JOHN A: He cries quite a bit for a policeman.

JOHN S: I know. He's a bit of a cry-ey policeman, isn't he? Mind you, it is strange circumstances he finds himself in.

CLAIRE: I think it could be excused, given the circumstances. Yeah, we talked a lot about the sound here, the external sounds and what Sam hears. Trying to get the balance right.

JOHN A: Yeah, I remember you felt very strongly that it was just less is more with these voices. Just a couple rather than a great encouragement or… I like Edward's score here as well.

CLAIRE: Yeah, it's beautiful, yeah.

JOHN A: There's something very simple. It's almost a romantic theme, there, is it?

JOHN S: I love how Lee does this. Just literally just clicks, doesn't he?

CLAIRE: Yeah. That silence as well.

JOHN A: Yeah, It's one of the few moments… You rarely have complete silence but we just pulled absolutely everything out there to try and make that moment and long and as big as possible.

CLAIRE: That's the nice detail that Emma Rosenthal put in with the costumes that Sam and his dad are wearing completely opposite shirts – black with white spots and white with black spots.

JOHN S: Oh yeah. Yeah.

JOHN A: Quite a mouthful.

JOHN S: That was a mouthful at this stage.

JOHN A: This is another twist, that his impression is now that he can't… If he stays, he's in prison. He can't make it right, whichever way he goes.

JOHN S: Now there's guilt trip.

CLAIRE: It's little weird for Sam to do that. Really surprising in that moment. Just suddenly takes you out of his immediate real world.

JOHN A: And again, that was one of those choices on the day to have that one extra angle, delaying us leaving this location, getting into the next location, but it was just the feeling that it was worth it for such a big moment. And again, there was dialogue in that scene. Annie did arrive and there was a discussion of what had gone on.

JOHN S: That's right, yeah.

JOHN A: But just the performance in the moment was just, it just worked so well, it felt—

CLAIRE: Just didn't, yeah, better to keep it simple.

JOHN A: Stay with— Yeah. And I think John did a fantastic job here because she's not in the episode a lot and she now has to accept that Sam Tyler is gonna come out of the woods and tell her that her husband's vanished.

JOHN S: Yeah.

JOHN A: Which she might just… Let us… She kind of… Suddenly you see that she did think there was something up. She's not that surprised. She just kept fooling herself, but manages to kind of sell that moment.

JOHN S: Yeah. And we're also relying on the fact that there is some strange thing going on with this policeman that she doesn't quite know what it is. And she does trust him for some reason.

JOHN A: Yeah.

CLAIRE: She senses something.

JOHN A: Now, this is a piece of music that you fell in love with very early on.

CLAIRE: I did!

JOHN A: It was put in during the cutting of it, but you just left it here, didn't you?

CLAIRE: I did because you can just barely hear it barely wafting out, but the line about, you know, dream maker and selling dreams and just has that kind of angle on the scene. And also it's such a kind of wedding-like song.

JOHN A: Never thought I'd be this into Lindisfarne again.

JOHN S: Not again. So I had to tell her exactly what he remembered being told about his mum.

JOHN A: That's right. And then this is the moment that it happened.

CLAIRE: And that takes us right back to the beginning of the series. The idea that maybe Sam is hiding feelings and denying his real emotions. Maybe always has done since that moment. Maybe he's got something to learn from Gene Hunt's gut instinct.

JOHN S: I think he needs to stop crying so much as well.

JOHN A: Now, this is another moment, of course. Scenes don't get finished some days, and you have to pick up in the middle of an emotional moment, so this… Sam got as far as… John goes as far as this at the car, and that was the end of our day, so we had to pick up the rest of the scene elsewhere. And now this is Liz and John in the middle of a field. With a two-piece of… a one piece of flat that we moved from one side to the other. Which… And then they had to remember where they'd been emotionally probably about three weeks earlier.

CLAIRE: Yep.

JOHN S: Mm-hm.

CLAIRE: That must have been hard.

JOHN A: But hopefully when you watched this the first time through, you didn't notice that. You just went with the emotion of the scene.

CLAIRE: We had a lot of discussion about at what point to end this episode. I mean, this was all scripted, but in the edit even we considered ending it on more of a cliffhanger or leaving it. We just all felt that it was the right decision was to end on something a bit warmer. A bit more resolved. Still playing with that double-meaning all the way through. A very fitting end to the series.

JOHN A: And very [??] for me to end on a free track. The Cortina drives off into the sunset.

JOHN S: Well.

JOHN A: Yeah, where to? Where next? Where does it [appear?]?

JOHN S: There we are.

JOHN A: Episode 8, the end of Sam's journey for now.