

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING - 6 x 60 minute episode - black comedy

WENNA and GARY GWYNN struggled to afford to raise their eldest daughter MOLLY, then their bundles of financial burden ETHAN and OZZY arrived. Wenna is an artist who moonlights as a cleaner. She's a fighter. The family prison warden; the glue, holding it together. Gary is a failed video rental store owner waiting for VHS to make a comeback. The joint account is drained. Jewellery, Grandad's war medal; all stolen by bailiffs.

Wenna works as a cleaner for the Kolosovs, a family of Russian oil oligarchs who have never visited their Cornish summer palace. The bank is days away from repossessing their house when Wenna is fired and their last lifeline is cut away. The desperate couple devise a plan to fake their deaths and pose as the absent Kolosovs.

An ex-council semi rendered in pebbledash. Wenna keeps watch at the window for the bailiffs. Gary and the kids play along to Mastermind; Dad's scoring dead last. Wenna starts scribbling the first lines of their suicide note, explaining that they have jumped from the cliffs. A chewed up pen racing over the page in shaking fingers. Their neighbour FRANK (88 - wrinkles, racism and a whiff of Newcastle Brown Ale) is dragged off to a nursing home by the police. Frank's confused but convinced this is somehow "*The Romanians' fault*". Gary and the kids watch like the cheering squad at a royal wedding. Good riddance to Scrooge incarnate.

Dead of night. Howling wind. Driving rain. A storm is brewing. Wenna bundles the sleeping children into the car. Gary hangs back to stage their deaths. Wenna's plan is simple - he leaves the suicide note pinned to their front door, places a call to a crisis helpline, and leaves the phone off the hook... Just as he steps out into the wild darkness, Gary pauses. Thinking. '*Fuck it.*' He piles their mountain of overdue bills on the living room floor, soaked in lighter fluid and drops a match. A cleansing fire. '*Yes, that's best.*' They can rise from the ashes. A clean slate. As Gary disappears into the pitch black night he is oblivious of the light flicking on in Frank's house; the only building nearby. The old man has escaped and snuck home.

Days later, the Gwynns emerge as their new Russian alter egos, with sketchy accents and dodgy makeovers, only to find that Gary's bungled arson has left behind a charred body (assumed to be Frank) and a trail of destruction. Frauds. Imposters. Murderers.

The Russians Are Coming is a darkly comic marriage of Barry and Parasite, about the crippling nature of debt, class conflict and the corruptive power of wealth as the police begin to unravel the mystery of their disappearance and Frank's death. Can the Gwynn's keep up with their web of lies in a cruel world determined to punish them? Can the family confront their spiralling charge sheet of crimes?