



UNLOCKED

by Emma Northcott

A SMITH SCRIPT

This script is protected by copyright laws.
No performance of this script – IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without payment of the
appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.

For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at info@smithscripts.co.uk

Unlocked

By Emma Northcott

A short play for Zoom production.

Characters

Technician 1 (Must appear on same screen as Technician 2)

Technician 2

Madge – Female, American. Frozen aged 73.

Anne – Female, British. Frozen aged 58.

Tony – Male, British. Frozen aged 32.

Roger – Male, British, White, with a monotonous accent. Frozen aged 42.

Bill – Male, American, married to Madge, aged 73.

Patients await reawakening in a cryogenics ‘hotel’.

<https://awol.junkee.com/you-have-to-see-pictures-from-sydneys-newly-opened-capsule-hotel/46442>



Unlocked

Scene: All zoom screens are black, except for the one belonging to the Technician. The technician is in an office with graphs and charts or folders behind her. As the actors speak the screens change to show them in their cells – all using the same background. All characters are dressed the same – perhaps white shirts. Apart from the Technicians none of the characters can see one another, so are talking in their own capsule, rather than directly to each other.

<https://awol.junkee.com/you-have-to-see-pictures-from-sydneys-newly-opened-capsule-hotel/46442>

(Technician 1 sits at her desk, finishing a cup of tea and ticking off a chart on a clipboard. She wears a uniform which is in colour contrast to the clothes of all other characters. She checks the time then addresses the camera.)

Technician 1: Nineteen hundred hours. All units stable. All generators operating within tolerance. One new admission. No reanimations.

(She starts to clear away. Once done she puts on a fabric face mask, cleans her hands with gel and scrolls through Facebook on her phone. After a few moments Technician 2 enters, also wearing a face mask. Technician 2 stands 2m away from Technician 1. They talk to one another, rather than the camera.)

Technician 2: Sorry I'm late. The bus I intended to catch already had five people on it, so I had to wait for the next one. I should've been here twenty minutes ago!

Technician 1: Doesn't matter, I'm in no rush.

Technician 2: Everything okay?

Technician 1: Yeah, nothing to report. Oh, the power's down a little on the forth generator, but that shouldn't be a problem, it should even out before morning. Just keep an eye on it.

Technician 2: Yeah. It was wavering a little last night. I'll keep my eye on it. Any new recruits?

Technician 1: Yes. We've just had another Covid suspect.

Technician 2: Really?

Technician 1: I know!

Technician 2: You'd have thought they'd rather take their chances.

Technician 1: Well, you would, yes.

Technician 2: Man or women?

Technician 1: Fifty eight year old woman.

Technician 2: How long she in for?

Technician 1: (Checking the clipboard.) Reanimation set for August twenty twenty-one (*Insert suitable date.*) Just in time for her sixtieth birthday.

Technician 2: Taking quite a gamble.

Technician 1: Underlying health conditions, she's quite severely asthmatic, and diabetic, so I think she thought...

Technician 2: And maybe there will be better treatment available for asthma or diabetes as well as coronavirus in a year's time.

Technician 1: Maybe. We're going through another spike too and the Nightingale's chocka, so she's opted to try again in fifteen months. *(Insert suitable time frame.)*

Technician 2: It's not long. What if there's no cure yet?

Technician 1: She's left very specific instructions. It all depends upon the R.

Technician 2: Aarh. Of course.

Technician 1: **(Pause.)** Well, I'll be off then. See you in the morning.

Technician 2: Bye. Stay safe.

Technician 1: Thanks. You too.

(Technician 1 leaves. They manoeuvre around each other in a most awkward manner, keeping their distance, as far as they possibly can. Once Technician 1 has gone Technician 2 sprays the area and wipes it down before removing her mask and sitting. She checks the time and notes it on the clipboard then makes a very deliberate act of checking data, from equipment which is just out of view of the camera, making a note of the findings before reading them into the camera.)

Technician 2: Nineteen hundred and fifteen hours. All units stable. All generators operating within tolerance. No planned admissions. No planned reanimations. **(To herself rather than to the camera.)** And there's not likely to be either, not till we have a vaccine that actually works against the coronavirus.

(Technician 2 settles back into the seat and opens a book/magazine. Anne's cell comes on for a second and then goes off. Pause. Anne's cell comes on again, for a little longer, then goes off. Technician 2 looks up, but misses it. Pause. Madge and Anne are both illuminated. They both appear to be asleep. Technician 2 glances up and sees this. She does a double take.)

Technician 2: Shit!

(She leaps from her chair and runs out of the office. Anne stretches a little, removes the mask from her eyes and looks around her.)

Anne: Hello? Is this it then? August two thousand and twenty-one? *(Insert suitable date.)*
Hello?

(Madge yawns, stretches, removes the cotton pads over her eyes, licks her fingers to smooth down her eyebrows and feels for hair on her top lip and chin. She pulls a face to suggest that she is not entirely pleased with what she's found.)

Madge: Hey?

Anne: Hello?

Madge: Hello.

Anne: Hello, where are you? I can't see you.

Madge: Well I don't know honey, but until I can get to a pair of tweezers that's probably just as well!

Anne: Is it over? Is there a vaccine?

Madge: Whoa! One at a time! Is what over?

Anne: The Coronavirus pandemic?

Madge: The what?

Anne: Is there a cure or a vaccine?

Madge: I'm afraid I haven't the foggiest lady.

Anne: What's the date?

Madge: How the hell should I know?

Anne: Aren't you the doctor or a technician?

Madge: Darling! Sweet of you, I'm sure, but no. I am Madge Montmorency!

Anne: Who?

Madge: Madge Montmorency!

Anne: **(Pause.)** No, sorry. Should I know you?

Madge: I'm in the movies sweetheart; Daddy Come Home? Nineteen twenty five, I played the distraught daughter.

Anne: **(Pause.)** Sorry, no.

Madge: Welcome Back Soldier? Nineteen thirty eight, I played his dutiful wife.

Anne: No, I'm sorry, never heard of it.

Madge: Nineteen forty-six, Little Boy Lost? I played his mother. In technicolour!

Anne: Look, I don't know who you are and I'm afraid I wasn't born until nineteen sixty-two.

Madge: You have cine don't you? And TV? Everyone has television nowadays, most people even have colour! Surely they're still showing my films?

Anne: Possibly.

Madge: And where's Bill? He's supposed to be here when I wake up. He promised. **(Pause.)** Well I guess those scum bag press were right. **(Pause.)** I kinda knew it all along. He told me to ignore the papers and the gossips, but I could see the attention he was getting from those girls. Those young girls. Hundreds of beautiful, beautifully young girls. He promised me he was devoted only to me, that age didn't bother him. But I knew. I've seen it before. And once his career got going he wouldn't need me. It wasn't fair to hold him back, just when his career was taking off and mine was all but over. He was an Adonis. Why'd he wanna be stuck with an old has-been like me? He pleaded with me not to do it, but I insisted. We'll show'em I said. Prove our love could stand the test of time. But I knew. I couldn't bear to think that I'd be holding him back in any respect, so I let him go. I set my beautiful boy free, for forty two years. Of course I hoped he'd be here. But I never truly believed that he would.

Anne: Okay. Look, I don't mean to be rude, but I'd like to know how long I've been asleep, because it only feels like a few hours and that can't be right.

(Tony and his capsule flicker into life. He also licks his fingers to smooth down his eyebrows and rearrange his hair.)

Tony: Hello? Anyone there?

Anne: Hello, who's that?

Tony: Tony. Tony Bianchi.

Madge: Not *the* Tony Bianchi, fashion designer? London's answer to Calvin Klein?

Tony: Hello, who's that?

Madge: Don't you remember me? It's Madge darling! Madge Montmorency!

Tony: Madge Montmorency! Oh, my, god! Darling! How are you?

Madge: About the same as I was when I arrived.

Anne: And when was that exactly?

Madge: October nineteen seventy-eight, just after the Oscars.

Anne: You mean you've been here since nineteen seventy-eight?

Madge: Yes darling. And what about you?

Anne: I didn't know they'd been freezing people for that long!

Madge: Tony, when did you check in?

Tony: I've been here since nineteen eighty-seven. Just after Freddie was diagnosed.

Madge: Freddie?

Tony: Freddie Mercury.

Anne: You don't mean Freddie Mercury, from Queen? You were friends with Freddie Mercury?

Tony: I was his tailor. I managed his wardrobe! Those vests and the spandex were all my idea! I wanted to go more flamboyant, but Freddie always reined me in! I got my way with the video for I Wanna Break Free in eighty-four.

Anne: I remember that. The tight pink t-shirt and Freddie wearing a mini skirt, stockings and a giant moustache.

Tony: We had some fun!

Madge: You dressed me too darling. Do you remember? For my last Oscars I wore Tony Bianchi!

Tony: Darling, I remember.

Madge: And that despicable child of a journalist wrote the most hurtful article. About Bill and I, saying he'd only married me for the money. What would she know, she was only sixteen?

Tony: Of course, you married that delicious young man. And they didn't photograph you in the dress, just printed the story.

Madge: Nobody wants a picture of a seventy three year old leaping out at them over their coffee and bagels. They don't photograph ladies over forty these days.

Anne: I remember that! Little boy lost was the headline; I get the reference now. I wondered why such a handsome young man would marry... **(Beat.)** Didn't he go on to become a female impersonator? Big in America I believe. Vegas.

Madge: I beg your pardon?

Anne: So what is the date now? How do we tell? Are we supposed to get up straight away, or wait for some sort of medical intervention?

Madge: I'm not moving a muscle until they send in hair and make-up.

Tony: And costume darling, don't forget us!

Anne: I must say I'm a little disappointed with the service.

Madge: I'm more than a little disappointed that they were right about Bill: that he's not here.

Anne: You don't know that yet. Maybe he hasn't been told? It all seems somewhat irregular.

Tony: But you know what? It must mean there's a cure!

Anne: For Coronavirus?

Tony: No, aids! That's why they've woken me up.

Anne: Well, I don't think we've been woken up as such. I think...

(Roger's cell comes to life. He checks his watch, clears his throat in an unpleasant manner and sniffs before speaking.)

Roger: Hello. This is capsule four hundred and seventy-five to ground control. Do you read me? Come in. Ten four for a copy. Over.

Tony: Who's this?

Roger: Roger.

Anne: Roger who? Do you work here?

Roger: No. Yes. But not *here*. I'm Roger, Roger Breakwater from accounts, but I've been a resident here for **(He checks his watch.)** twenty years? That can't be right. Twenty years!

Anne: How do you know its twenty years Roger?

Roger: I looked at the date on my watch. I think there must be some sort of mistake, because I was only supposed to be in hibernation for two weeks. **(Pause.)** Oh, I get it. This is a joke, a practical joke. It's January two thousand. I've slept through the millennial change over without a hitch, but one of you immature bastards has changed my watch. Ha, ha, very funny. Now come and let me out.

Anne: I don't think it is a joke.

Roger: Sorry?

Anne: I'm afraid it's at least the twenty-first of June twenty twenty. **(Yesterday's date.)**

Roger: How do you know?

Anne: Because that's when I was frozen. Has anyone got the exact date?

Tony: My digital also says two thousand and twenty. June twenty second, twenty twenty. **(Today's date.)**

Anne: But that means I came in yesterday! Something's gone terribly wrong.

Madge: Oh my! That's forty two years. Bill will be the same age as me! But I'm not due to be woken for a couple of months. What's going on?

Roger: So, where is everyone? Anyone got a newspaper?

Anne: Or a tablet?

Madge: Honey, I could use a tablet. Some little pick-me-up?

Anne: No, like an iPad.

Madge: I just removed my eye pads. Whatever are you talking about?

Anne: It's a device, like a small computer, where you can access the internet.

Madge: The inter-what?

Roger: The internet, or World Wide Web.

Tony: What on earth?

Roger: It was created by Computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee in nineteen ninety and became publically available in nineteen ninety-one and fundamentally changed the world as we knew it!

Tony: Wow, it's like you literally swallowed an encyclopaedia!

Roger: You don't actually mean literally, you mean metaphorically.

Tony: But what is it?

Roger: Lots of information that you can access electronically, pretty much anywhere, so long as you have a PC.

Tony: Why do you need a police officer?

Anne: Or a mobile?

Madge: Ceiling decoration?

Anne: A phone, mobile phone.

Tony: Who are you going to call?

Anne: There might be some clues; a news feed or something.

Madge: What are you talking about? Maybe *she'll* know what's going on?

(Madge points and all eyes travel from left to right, following the path of Technician 2)

Anne: Why is she running?

Roger: Never a good sign.

Madge: Nor the look on her face.

Tony: Nice outfit though, utilitarian.

Roger: Admin technicians don't usually leave the office unless something gone terribly wrong.

Anne: Oh no! Like what?

(Technician 2 appears in the office. She scans the screen before picking up a phone and making a call. All other characters look up, as if looking towards a control tower, were the office is. They can hear her conversation. But she cannot hear them.)

Technician 2: Hello? Mr Sinclair? Yes. Sorry to bother you but, umm, well... there appears to be, well... a problem. **(Pause.)**

Roger: I knew it!

Anne: Ssh, I want to hear this.