

= A House Divided (Dallas) =

" A House Divided " is the 25th and final episode of the third season (1979 ? 80 season) and 54th overall of the American television series Dallas . It is the episode known for spawning the eight @-@ month " Who shot J.R. ? " hysteria . The episode ended with the mysterious shooting of J.R. Ewing (Larry Hagman) in his office by an assailant that would not be revealed until the following season . The episode served as both an introduction to the now common practice of season @-@ ending cliffhangers and the beginning of an eight @-@ month international media frenzy . The mystery was resolved in the fourth episode of the following season , entitled " Who Done It " , which continues to be the second most @-@ watched episode in TV history .

In the episode , nationalization of the Asian fields causes financial ruin that affects the cartel members and J.R. Ewing 's banker . This leads to the suicide of cartel member Seth Stone (Buck Young) . J.R. attempts to run both Kristin Shepard (Mary Crosby) and Alan Beam (Randolph Powell) out of town as they both plot revenge against him . He also attempts to move Sue Ellen Ewing (Linda Gray) back into a sanitarium . With Cliff Barnes (Ken Kercheval) having sought revenge upon J.R. based on an agreement he realized Jock Ewing (Jim Davis) and Digger Barnes (Keenan Wynn) had , J.R. has the oil fields stopped to keep Cliff from earning any royalties . Pamela Barnes Ewing (Victoria Principal) and husband Bobby Ewing (Patrick Duffy) move out of Southfork out of disgust at J.R. ' s dealings . In the end , J.R. is shot while working late at the office .

= = Plot = =

= = = Background = = =

J.R. Ewing is a fictional character that William K. Stevens of The New York Times described as " the nastiest man on television , the lingo of Texas oilmen , the smiling snake of a star of Friday night TV 's Dallas , a man so venal , so low , so mean , so diabolical that he has become an absolute delight to an estimated quarter of a billion viewers around the globe . " His New York Times colleague John J. O'Connor described him as " the eldest son of the oil @-@ rich Ewing family ... " who is " ... a sadistic bully and a swindler " that " captured the public 's imagination " . Season 3 left the viewer with numerous people to suspect for the murder .

Sue Ellen Ewing (Linda Gray) is J.R. ' s wife . J.R. had threatened to reinstitutionalize her for alcoholism . Kristin Shepard (Mary Crosby) is J.R. ' s ex @-@ mistress and Sue Ellen 's sister . J.R. broke his promise to marry her and gave her 24 hours to leave town . J.R. framed her for prostitution in response to business pressure she put on him . Dusty Farlow (Jared Martin) is Sue Ellen 's lover . He was supposedly killed in a plane crash . Vaughn Leland (Dennis Patrick) is J.R. ' s business partner . J.R. swindled him out of \$ 20 million (US \$ 57 million in 2016 dollars) . Miss Ellie Ewing (Barbara Bel Geddes) is J.R. ' s mother . J.R. mortgaged the family ranch , unbeknownst to his parents , and had plans to drill for oil on the property . Cliff Barnes (Ken Kercheval) is Bobby 's brother @-@ in @-@ law and business rival . His father (Digger Barnes) was swindled by J.R. ' s father (Jock Ewing) , leaving him penniless except for some oil wells that J.R. had shut down . Alan Beam (Randolph Powell) is a political fixer . Beam knew too much about J.R. ' s dirty dealings , making him expendable after J.R. tried to extinguish him , giving him motive . Marilee Stone (Fern Fitzgerald) is the widow of a business associate . Her husband committed suicide as a result of business dealings with J.R. Bobby Ewing (Patrick Duffy) is J.R. ' s mild @-@ mannered brother . He is the classic sibling rival , who is fed up with J.R. ' s handling of family business and slights to Bobby 's wife , Pamela Barnes Ewing (Victoria Principal) , who happens to be Cliff 's sister .

Although generally regarded as somewhat of a rival of J.R. in the fictional world of Dallas , Gary Ewing (Ted Shackelford) was not a suspect due to his activity in the related fictional Knots Landing world . Similarly , Lucy Ewing (Charlene Tilton) had an alibi provided by liaisons with a married

college professor .

== Day 1 ==

J.R. explains to Jock and Bobby that Ewing Oil is doing fine , leaving Bobby suspicious . J.R. had swindled most of the other oilmen that he knows to salvage Ewing Oil by convincing their cartel to buy worthless oil fields from him just prior to nationalization . Cartel member , Jordan Lee hounds the Ewings about their underhandedness and makes sure they know Seth Stone committed suicide as a result of the dealings . Soon thereafter , Sue Ellen nurses a hangover while watching the local news to see reports that Ewing oil sold off its holdings just before the nationalization . The report ends with the story of the widowed Marilee Stone , whose husband Seth had bought shares from Ewing Oil . Marilee 's calls to J.R. are refused . Cartel member Vaughn Leland , who lost \$ 20 million (US \$ 57 million in 2016 dollars) in the deal , reaches Ewing Oil offices to express his belief that J.R. duped him , but Jock refuses to offer any restitution . All of the cartel members have lost everything they had in the deal and J.R. increased his wealth in the dealings . The Ewings question whether J.R. took advantage of inside information . J.R. assures his father and brother that such unethical behavior was beneath him . Lucy Ewing spends time with her professor / boyfriend who is only interested in her for one reason . Attorney Alan Beam visits Kristin Shepard for ideas about how J.R. might have swindled everyone . Shepard suggests Hank Johnson may have information . Shepard has been tape recording secrets of the cartel members from between the sheets and learned how J.R. got them all to buy his oil wells . Beam asks her to try to get information from Johnson by pretending to still be J.R. ' s secretary . Bobby talks with Miss Ellie about Pam who has flown to Corpus Christi to find her mother , Rebecca . They both think it is because she is grieving from the recent death of her father Digger . Sue Ellen apologized for her drunken behavior the prior night and laments that it gave J.R. fodder for his plans to re @-@ institutionalize her . Bobby says he will try to keep J.R. from taking that action . J.R. tells Johnson to ignore Shepard 's request for records and to shred them . Sue Ellen sees a psychiatrist , Dr. Elby . She gets a reminder about drinking until you are unconscious and promises to stop . J.R. confronts Kristin about her mischief . He tries to bribe her to leave , but she does not accept the offer . J.R. spends some time with Sue Ellen . She alerts him that Bobby is going to speak up for her . He is not worried . She then inquires about whether he is going to be unfaithful . When he leaves for another woman she gets upset , but finds a gun lying around , which gives her pause .

== Day 2 ==

Cliff arrives at Ewing Oil with paperwork proving his (and his sister Pam 's) claim to a share of Ewing 23 oil well , one of Ewing Oil 's most profitable wells . J.R. confirms it is producing 5 @,@ 000 barrels / month which would give Cliff \$ 500 @,@ 000 / year (US \$ 1 @.@ 436 million / year in 2016 dollars) . J.R. shuts down that oil well rather than let Cliff earn a dime from it . Bobby expresses his concern to his wife about her obsession that has caused her to quit her fashion buyer job to search for her mother . Lucy spends quality time with her professor . After she leaves he calls his wife . Police officer Harry McSween brings Beam to J.R. ' s office to clarify that J.R. wants him to leave town . J.R. demonstrates how he could use his influence to trump up rape charges . J.R. tells Bobby and Jock that he shut down the wells to shut off new claimant Barnes . Bobby is upset , but Jock agrees . Pam and Bobby decide to leave Southfork in disgust .

== Day 3 ==

Bobby and Pam depart in the morning after Bobby informs Miss Ellie and Jock . The parents are displeased . Sue Ellen and J.R. enter at the end of the debate with the parents in time to remind J.R. that he has driven them away . This pleases J.R. and he reminds her that his is going to put her away for speaking ill of him . McSween serves Shepard with a warrant for her arrest on charges of prostitution in front of Beam who was visiting her . He offers them a deal . If they leave town within

24 hours , he won 't chase them . She threatens to kill J.R. J.R. calls Dr. Rogers to take Sue Ellen away that night . J.R. hangs up on Leland who is continuing to threaten him . Sue Ellen continues to ponder the gun and tucks it in her purse before heading out somewhere . Cliff visits Digger Barnes ' grave . He apologizes to his dad that he let J.R. beat him like Jock had beaten the father . J.R. is at the office at night when Rogers arrives at Southfork to cart Sue Ellen away . He steps into the outer office to pour himself a drink . He hears someone outside his door and as he investigates he is shot twice in the gut and collapses .

= = Production = =

= = = Regular cast = = =

Barbara Bel Geddes as Eleanor " Miss Ellie " Southworth Ewing
Jim Davis as John Ross " Jock " Ewing , Sr.
Patrick Duffy as Bobby Ewing
Linda Gray as Sue Ellen Ewing
Larry Hagman as John Ross " J.R. " Ewing , Jr .
Steve Kanaly as Ray Krebbs (credit only)
Ken Kercheval as Cliff Barnes
Victoria Principal as Pamela Barnes Ewing
Charlene Tilton as Lucy Ewing Cooper

= = = Writing = = =

In January 1980 , the producers and writers began plotting the culminating episodes for season 3 . Executive producer Philip Capice says they decided to attempt to work in a ploy to hold interest over the summer . CBS ordered two extra episodes , which gave them a chance to weave many storylines into the scripts . He noted that " J.R. had developed into a character we felt everyone out there wanted to see get his comeuppance . And we did need that sort of a cliffhanger to carry us over to the new season . " He said that there was consensus that a mystery with several suspects was optimal and that it should be a sudden event . Capice denied rumors that the shooting was a ploy to make it easy to write Hagman out of the script if his contract negotiations became too difficult . Producer Leonard Katzman , executive story consultant Art Lewis and story editor Camille Marchetta decided the actual culprit in mid @-@ March by process of logical elimination with the belief that the audience should not be surprised by someone who was not important to the show as the shooter .

= = Reception = =

" A House Divided " served as both an introduction to the now common practice of season @-@ ending cliffhangers and the beginning of an eight @-@ month international media frenzy . International oddsmakers created a set of odds for the possible suspects : " Dusty Farlow (J. R. ' s wife Sue Ellen 's lover , who disappeared after a plane crash) is the 6 to 4 favorite , followed by Vaughn Leland (a banker J. R. swindled) and Kristin Shepard (J. R. ' s mistress) at 4 to 1 . Sue Ellen herself is a long shot at 25 to 1 , as is J.R. ' s long- suffering mom , Miss Ellie . " After Sue Ellen 's fingerprints were found on the gun in subsequent episodes she became the favorite at 3 to 1 according to some oddsmakers , while others listed Shepard and Cliff Barnes as favorites . Even Jimmy The Greek posted odds of various suspects . Tony Schwartz of The New York Times estimates that viewers in 57 countries saw the episode . The script for the subsequent episode that revealed the killer was stolen from Lorimar Productions . The Los Angeles Herald Examiner claimed to have received a copy from a " news source " . Eventually they returned it to Los Angeles Police Department Chief Daryl Gates . Discussion about the mystery took place in a variety of media forms

including Time .

The media publicity was so strong that actor Larry Hagman had a 10 @-@ day holdout in which he demanded \$ 100 @,@ 000 (US \$ 290 @,@ 000 in 2016 dollars) per episode , while Lorimar Productions offered \$ 55 @,@ 000 (US \$ 160 @,@ 000 in 2016 dollars) . After 10 days , Hagman agreed to work filming the subsequent season for \$ 75 @,@ 000 (US \$ 220 @,@ 000 in 2016 dollars) per episode . Hagman had been working for \$ 25 @,@ 000 (US \$ 72 @,@ 000 in 2016 dollars) per episode .

The episode earned Fred W. Berger an American Cinema Editors Eddie Award for Best Edited Episode from a Television Series and earned Irving J. Moore a Directors Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directing ? Comedy Series nomination . The episode finished first in the Nielsen ratings that week and its lead @-@ in The Dukes of Hazzard finished second . Schwartz described the episode as " the most promotable television suspense since David Janssen was vindicated after a four @-@ year run on The Fugitive in the mid @-@ 1960s " . In 2011 , Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly named the episode number one of the seven most " Unforgettable Cliff @-@ Hangers " of prime time dramatic television . Queen Elizabeth was intrigued by the mystery . In 2009 , TV Guide ranked " A House Divided " # 69 on its list of the 100 Greatest Episodes .