

= Adrift (Torchwood) =

" Adrift " is the eleventh episode of the second series of British science fiction television series Torchwood , which was first broadcast by BBC Three on 19 March 2008 , and repeated on BBC Two one week later . The episode was written by series one and two head writer Chris Chibnall , directed by Mark Everest and produced by Sophie Fante and Richard Stokes . The episode featured the five initial series regulars John Barrowman , Eve Myles , Burn Gorman , Naoko Mori and Gareth David Lloyd plus recurring actors Kai Owen and Tom Price .

The episode begins with Torchwood employee Gwen Cooper (Eve Myles) being called in to investigate a missing person case by her former colleague Andy Davidson (Tom Price) . When bereaved mother Nikki Bevan (Ruth Jones) starts a support group for missing people , Gwen realises the problem is widespread . She pursues the investigation against the wishes of her boss Jack Harkness (John Barrowman) and is able to track Nikki 's son to an isolation facility . It is revealed that Nikki 's son Jonah , like the other missing individuals around Cardiff , was taken by the space @-@ time rift and returned physically and mentally scarred . After realising she cannot have a relationship with her son , Nikki implores Gwen not to reveal the truth to any other bereaved relative .

Chris Chibnall wanted to write a story that tackled the issue of loss and revolved around a missing person case . Executive producer Russell T Davies appreciated the character dynamics and domestic themes in the episode and cited the script as one of his inspirations in continuing the series . Ruth Jones , who is generally better known for her comedic roles , was cast against type in the central guest role of Nikki Bevan . The episode was filmed largely on location in South Wales with the island of Flat Holm featuring prominently . Response to the episode was generally positive . Reviewers generally praised the episode for illuminating the conflicting elements of Gwen 's character and providing a central dilemma with no easy answer . Some critics identified ostensible plot holes , though felt that the episode 's emotional successes negated these .

= = Plot = =

Jonah Bevan (Oliver Ferriman) is walking home across the Cardiff Bay Barrage when a mysterious bright light appears . He vanishes . Seven months later , at the instigation of her former police colleague Andy Davidson (Tom Price) , Torchwood agent Gwen Cooper (Eve Myles) is investigating Jonah 's disappearance . After Jonah 's mother Nikki (Ruth Jones) starts a support group for relatives of missing people in the Cardiff area , Gwen realises that there are more cases resembling Jonah 's disappearance . Gwen collates a chart of the missing people and her colleague Toshiko (Naoko Mori) discovers that all the disappearances occurred during negative spikes of activity from the Cardiff space @-@ time rift . The two women postulate the implications of this : that the rift can take people away and discard them elsewhere . Gwen confronts her boss Jack Harkness (John Barrowman) with her research but he informs her that nothing can be done and orders her to stop the investigation .

Gwen becomes consumed with the issue of the missing individuals and this takes its toll on her relationship with her husband Rhys (Kai Owen) . They argue , and he states that if Gwen is working to safeguard ordinary life then she has not been successful . Returning to Torchwood 's headquarters , Gwen interrupts Jack and fellow Torchwood employee Ianto (Gareth David @-@ Lloyd) during a sexual encounter . After apologising , she tells Jack that she wants to continue the investigation . Jack refuses to help , but Ianto later gives Gwen a GPS device with coordinates to a hidden location , leading Gwen to a facility on Flat Holm . It harbors 17 of the missing people that the rift has taken and subsequently brought back . Gwen finds Jack there , and demands access to Jonah . Jonah (now Robert Pugh) has aged and become physically deformed after being stuck on a burning planet shortly before witnessing the burning of a solar system . Jack reveals that he set up the facility when he first took command of Torchwood , in order to care for the victims of the rift , who had previously been locked away in the Torchwood vaults .

Gwen brings Nikki in to see Jonah under the supervision of a facility staff member . At first Nikki is

horrified , believing it to be a cruel joke , but Jonah starts reminiscing on his childhood . Nikki calms and thinks about taking Jonah home to care for him herself . However , Jonah starts screaming horribly , necessitating that everyone leave his company . In a voiceover , Gwen reveals that the scream lasts for 20 hours every day because Jonah looked into the heart of a Dark Star , which had the effect of driving him insane . Gwen visits Nikki a week later , who implores her not to show the island to anyone else . Nikki states that it would have been better for her to have remembered her son as he was , rather than to know of his true fate . Nikki packs up Jonah 's belongings and knowing he can never return home , breaks down into sobs . At home that night Gwen prepares a romantic candle @-@ lit dinner for Rhys who , realising that she is upset , insists that Gwen shares her burden .

= = Production = =

" Adrift " was produced as part of its own production block : block seven . Filming of the episode was " double banked " with block five , which consisted of the episodes " From Out of the Rain " and " Fragments " . This accounted for the lack of availability of some of the regular cast members . Unlike the rest of the episodes in the series , this episode was not solely produced by regular series Richard Stokes but by guest producer Sophie Fante . Discussing the premise of the story writer Chris Chibnall states that " the issue of loss " is what drives the narrative and that he had " always wanted to write a story about people who go missing " . Director Mark Everest noted that " people go missing all the time " and that to tackle this theme was " a brave thing to do " . Executive producer Russell T Davies felt it provided good drama to have a story that would also examine elements of " paranoia " and " fear " and " mistrust " between Gwen and Jack as result of her realising she does not know the full extent of his work within Torchwood . Davies later stated in his book *The Writer 's Tale* that " Adrift " was one of the scripts that " paved the way " for the third series of the show ; his intention being to write Torchwood characters as " real people " with " families , feuds , aches and pains " . The episode underwent less rewriting than any other script from the first two series with the final version being essentially a second draft . Gwen was initially referred to by her husband 's surname , Williams , but Eve Myles vetoed this idea as she believed that an independent professional woman would want to keep her maiden name . A change made in the editing of the episode was the cutting of a short scene hinting at a possible romance between Nikki and Andy . This scene is included in the deleted scenes included in the series two boxset .

Ruth Jones was cast in the central guest role of Nikki . The actress stated that she was both " excited " and " scared " to appear in the series as it was " a very serious role " and comedy had previously been her " comfort zone " . Robert Pugh was cast as the aged and scarred version of Nikki 's son Jonah . Richard Stokes estimated that the actor had to spend between two and two and a half hours in make @-@ up in addition to a twelve @-@ hour filming day to have prosthetics applied to create the appearance of scarring . Ruth Jones found the prosthetics to be " absolutely fantastic " and " very gruesome " . The reveal of Jonah 's Scream was initially going to be a wholly alien effect with Pugh just miming on set . However , Pugh was keen to give the scream a go . Everest states that in the final dub the scream was " tweaked " and " layers were added " although stated that the fundamental basis of it was Pugh " screaming his lungs out " . Discussing the return of Andy , Stokes stated that it was always the plan for the production team to give the character greater focus in an episode due to his " comic value " , whilst Eve Myles had joked it was her " personal mission " to get the character back .

The episode was largely filmed on location around South Wales . Jonah 's disappearance and Jack 's subsequent investigation were filmed at the Cardiff Bay Barrage . The exteriors of Nikki 's house were filmed at the Penarth Marina , whilst the scenes of the missing persons meeting were filmed at the Church of All Saints on Victoria Square , Penarth on 22 September 2007 . The café sequences with Gwen and Andy were recorded in Fortes Café on Barry Island whilst the scene of Gwen and Rhys ' picnic and argument were shot in Bute Park , Cardiff . The main location shoot for the episode was the island of Flat Holm in the Bristol Channel where exterior shots were filmed at the end of September . As the island does not allow vehicular access the production team were

restricted in the filming equipment they could take on to the island . Though Flat Holm does possess a derelict cholera isolation hospital , the scenes of Torchwood 's isolation facility were in fact filmed inside a Ministry of Defence building in Caldicot , Monmouthshire . Incidental music used included Richard Hawley 's song " Serious " from his 2007 album Lady 's Bridge and the song " Hard to Beat " by Hard @-@ Fi from their album Stars of CCTV which are heard the first and second time Gwen and Andy meet in the café . Also used is the song " Other Side of the World " from KT Tunstall 's album Eye to the Telescope which plays during a scene where Gwen brings Rhys breakfast .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Adrift " was first broadcast on the digital channel BBC Three on 19 March 2008 at 10 : 00 pm . It received its first terrestrial broadcast two days later , 21 March , at 9 : 00 pm on BBC Two . A pre @-@ watershed version of the episode was aired at 7 : 00 pm 25 March 2008 . According to consolidated figures the episode 's BBC Three broadcast was watched by 0 @-@ 97 million viewers , its BBC Two debut by 2 @-@ 52 million viewers and the pre @-@ watershed version by 1 @-@ 00 million viewers , amounting to an aggregated total of 4 @-@ 49 million viewers across its three initial showings . The episode was also available to watch on the online catch up service BBC iPlayer , where it was the 16th most viewed individual broadcast between 1 January and 31 March 2008 .

= = Critical reception = =

Ian Berriman of SFX rated the episode four and a half stars out of five and felt that it showed " how every SF @-@ related casualty is more than just a statistic ? it ? s also someone ? s life @-@ destroying tragedy " . He thought the episode had a few logic gaps but that the emotional focus was enough to distract the audience from this . He felt that the sequence where Gwen 's husband Rhys " tears a strip off Gwen , then reminds her what Torchwood is fighting for " was the episode 's highlight . Ben Rawson @-@ Jones of Digital Spy stated that the script " neatly brings out the conflicting components within Gwen 's character " and praised the episode for raising the moral dilemma of whether to reveal the truth or not . He gave the episode four stars , feeling it to highlight the versatility of Torchwood as a series and to show " how badly science @-@ fiction is overlooked as serious , well @-@ crafted drama " . IGN 's Travis Fickett rated the episode 9 @-@ 5 out of ten (" Amazing ") and stated it to be " the kind of science fiction that every series should aspire to create . " He felt that the episode worked for viewers unfamiliar with the show whilst managing to progress " every regular character in the series " . He felt that the episode handled the subject matter of missing people thoughtfully and sensitively whilst furthering the relationship between Rhys and Gwen , stating that it was the " best episode Gwen has had to date " which showcased " Eve Myles range " and Kai Owen 's " tremendous power as an actor . " Fickett concluded his review by stating that " this is very nearly a perfect episode of not just Torchwood , but the genre of science fiction and the medium of television " .

Joan O 'Connell Hedman of Slant Magazine also gave a positive review feeling the episode to explore " Torchwood 's bread and butter topic : the intersection of the human and the alien , and what it means to be human in the aftermath . " She stated that the episode " played to its strengths , namely Eve Myles ' Gwen and how she relates to both human and alien " and stated it to demonstrate " how perfect Rhys is for Gwen " . She felt that the episode was flawed in its " cop @-@ out " ending and Jack 's handling of Gwen but in her conclusion noted it be " the first episode of Torchwood that left me choked up , crying with Gwen at the end " . Airlock Alpha 's Alan Stanley Blair felt the episode to be a vast improvement on its predecessors stating it be " hard hitting , edgy and explores much bleaker and darker avenues to life in Torchwood " . He also felt that the personal effect of Gwen 's struggles on her domestic life was one of the most interesting aspects comparing it to the television series Angel which " touched on some of these threads through the meta @-@ story and vampire mythology " but not " on the scale of this [episode] " . He concluded that the episode 's conclusion was both to its credit and its biggest disappointment because it showed that there is " no way to make everything all right " but left its audience " screaming for a happy ending

that will never come " . Jason Hughes of AOL TV was more mixed in his review . He felt that the episode was a " vast improvement over last week 's episode " and stated that it lived up to Torchwood 's reputation as " the darker , more mature cousin of Doctor Who " . However , he stated that the episode had " some logistical problems " and " at least one ridiculously convenient coincidence that the emotional hook of the episode hinged on " . He praised the " tragic emotional impact of the moment when Jonah 's mom told Gwen to promise her not to do that to any other families " and stated that he liked " that there weren 't any easy answers " . io9 's Charlie Jane Anders described " Adrift " as " easily the best episode of the Doctor Who spin @-@ off since the one where Martha Jones showed up " . She stated that " the fact that it offered no easy solutions and gave us that super @-@ bleak ending was enough to win me over " .