

The Double

By Thomas Arent Andersen

00:00

(Music starting)

00:15

Thomas (Voice-over): My name is Thomas Andersen. And I come from Viborg (a small town in Denmark). Another man also called Thomas Andersen lives in Viborg. I have only met him once. And that was a night 13 years ago. But that meeting changed my life.

Female TV-host: A young man's life is in danger after he was run down in a clash between juveniles in Viborg.

Male TV-host: Forensic technicians are investigating the scene after a serious act of revenge. At 3 o'clock this morning a 17-year-old man from Viborg was hit by a car here on Røddingevej (street name) on the outskirts of town.

Thomas (Voice-over): The 17-year-old is me. But I don't remember any of this.

Policeman: Traces from the car itself indicate he was hit from behind. He had been walking along the road when the car struck him from behind. He was then carried some distance by the car until he fell off.

Male TV-host: The 17-year-old has been transferred to Aalborg Sygehus (regional hospital) with an open skull fracture and brain haemorrhage.

Thomas (Voice-over): At that time I attended the second class of the gymnasium (High School). I played the guitar in a couple of gymnasium bands, drank beer and hung out with my friends, cribbed Morten BP's Latin exercises, and had an altogether classic, carefree gymnasium life.

Male TV-host: The driver of the car, a 22-year-old man, turned himself in to police shortly after the collision. He stated that earlier in the night he had been beaten and kicked by the 17-year-old.

Thomas (Voice-over): I had been out with a couple of friends that night. And I've been told that we got into a minor scuffle with another group of boys, and that we cleared out in a taxi. One of the guys we had scuffled with followed us in his car.

Policeman: We know that he followed the taxi that took the others out here and that he then runs down one of the boys involved in the scuffle down

there, at the opposite side of the roadway. We take this very seriously because it's indicative of a deliberately malicious act.

Thomas (Voice-over): The taxi dropped me off on the outskirts of Viborg where I lived with my father. The other Thomas Andersen had followed us in his car without being spotted by us.

Policeman: So, he's been charged with what is called deliberate violence, meaning that he purposely ran down the young man here.

Male TV-host: The police cannot rule out the possibility that the charge will be extended to attempted manslaughter.

Thomas (Voice-over): My life as a 17-year-old, carefree gymnasium student ended that night. But I don't remember any of it. Now, 13 years later, the moment that changed my life is still shrouded in deep and total darkness. I have always known that one day I would have to shed light on that darkness. Try to find out what actually happened that night. And the reason why I was run down. I have always known, too, that there was only one person who had the answers to my questions.

02:50 (phone ringing up)

Thomas (Voice-over): I have made up my mind to try to find Thomas.

Mother: Hello?

Thomas: Hi Mom!

Mother: Hi!

Thomas (Voice-over): My mother is rather worried about my plan.

Mother: It's like, you fear the worst... So you are afraid again.

Thomas (Voice-over): She has heard some rumors about Thomas.

Mother: I have heard that in Viborg, but I don't remember who said it. He has threatened to do something of the same kind to other people. Some shouting from a window of an apartment, and he is said to have threatened to do it again.

Thomas (Voice-over): The only image I have of who Thomas is I have from my family and the people closest to me at that time.

Mother: He is an animal, pure and simple. He chooses to get into his car and mow you down, and then you can pay that price.

Thomas (Voice-over): But I must get my own image of Thomas. Find out who it was that changed my life back then. And find out whether I changed his too.

Mother: Well, I get terribly upset. I'm moving around in circles now, because I can feel it. Exactly as it was back then. It was his pure luck that it didn't end in murder. It was *attempted* murder!

04:06

Thomas: I have just found Thomas on Facebook. It's a rather closed profile showing only a couple of photos. There is a photo of a couple of dogs. And there is a selfie of him looking into the camera. Short crew-cut, dark hair. And some stubble. And he sits with a rather uneasy smile on his face. I had hoped to see a bit more of him here.

Thomas (Voice-over): I have spent several days getting a grip on myself. And I have spent several hours writing this message.

Thomas: Dear Thomas. I have wanted to get in touch with you for a long time. And now, at long last, I have worked up the courage to do something about it. The fact is that it is difficult for me to tell you exactly why. But I have felt a desire and a need to contact you growing in me. Because whether we want it or not we do share the past and the event that we were both part of 13 years ago, which in a way ties us together. Something in me tells me that we should meet. It doesn't have to be a big thing. Maybe a coffee or a beer? Sincerely, Thomas.

05:30 (Slamming hands on table)

Mother: I could strangle him. To put it bluntly.

Thomas (Voice-over): That's how it sounds when we talk about Thomas in my family.

Mother: I really could kill him.

Thomas (Voice-over): When my mother talks about what happened back then she seems to be reliving it.

Mother: The phone rang very early that morning. And I knew at once when the phone rang that something had happened. I remember calling the hospital ... And then they say that it's very serious... And then I scream, of course: "He mustn't die!" And then they say that they can't promise that but I must come as soon as possible.

Thomas (Voice-over): I can see the whole scenario in front of me. Me lying on the hospital bed and my family standing around me. And my mother sitting on a chair beside me.

Mother: I talked to you, on and on. Kind of an illusion I have from some novels, that his subconscious mind could hear me.

Thomas (Voice-over): I can almost feel the atmosphere in the ward.

Mother: It was as if time stood still. So, it was as if the clock hands didn't move at all. You just kept an eye on all faces.

Thomas (Voice-over): I can see myself lying there on the bed, too.

Mother: But, your face was badly bruised. Blue All colors. You were on a respirator.

Thomas (Voice-over): I can picture it all in my head, but it is as if it isn't me lying there on the bed. It is as if I am standing there looking at it all from the outside.

Mother: I sat holding your hand and stroking your shoulder and things like that. And they said I shouldn't do those things because it could be very irritating for someone coming out of a coma.

Thomas (Voice-over): It's strange to be the main character in a family trauma when I have no memory of it.

Mother: Then, all of a sudden, you simply jumped up like a Jack-in-the-box. The breathing apparatus and everything fell off. And I screamed. That was the first step. It was this thing "would you survive?"

07:55

Thomas (Voice-over): When I came round my family tried to explain to me what had happened.

Sister: You simply didn't understand it.

Thomas (Voice-over): In my head it was chaos. My sister Rikke tried to help me bring order to that chaos.

Sister: It wasn't like you just thought: Now I'll just explain to you that you have been run down and this and that has happened.

Thomas (Voice-over): No matter how hard Rikke and the others tried to explain to me what had happened I never really understood it. That it was someone else who had done this to me. On purpose. Actually, it wasn't important to me either. I had other things on my mind.

Sister: Then, gradually, it dawns on me and on the others around you, too, that it wasn't just some blows and a skull fracture which would heal over again, and such. That in fact it had caused real brain damage. That there were some things that were lost. The ability to read. The ability to play music. The things you were most enthusiastic about, they had been taken away or erased.

Thomas (Voice-over): When I looked at the pages of a book it might as well have been in Russian. When I looked at a music book it was as if I had

never seen notes before. At first, I thought it would all come back by itself.

But it did not.

Sister: You were simply... down in a big black hole...

Thomas (Voice-over): I felt as if *I* was gone. That I was no longer someone.

That all my future plans, dreams and ambitions had been taken away from me.

Sister: You were deeply frustrated about what your life would be like.

Thomas (Voice-over): I could watch my friends finish gymnasium (High

School) and leave town. And in my head it had always been my intention to leave too. Copenhagen. The music academy. Something to do with music. But I stayed in Viborg.

Sister: And that's when you were apprenticed to a carpenter.

Thomas (Voice-over): That had never been the career I had had in mind

for myself. But it was my only option at that time.

Sister: And, as a matter of fact, you end up a fully qualified carpenter. You

seem to find some satisfaction in having now completed something.

Thomas (Voice-over): It seemed hopeless. Humiliating to be studying 1st grade textbooks. A for Ape. B for Bike. C for Car. But slowly, I learned to read and write. From scratch. I also learned to play the guitar again.

Sister: And I think that's when, little by little, your will to live was returning. Because it wasn't actually there.

Thomas (Voice-over): And with a few years delay the old dreams started to come back.

Sister: You had a new goal now, which was that you would try to be admitted to the National Film School of Denmark. And you made it.

10:56

Thomas (Voice-over): What happened to Thomas in those years, I know very little. What I know is that he was sentenced to 2.5 years imprisonment. And when he was released he moved back to a small town near Viborg. I also remember that he was called "the swine". By his neighbor Orla who was one of my colleagues from the carpenter shop back then.

11:16

(Incoming Facebook-message)

Thomas: Thomas has replied just now. I'm bloody nervous about what he has written. My hands are trembling. Okay. "Hi Thomas. I have been thinking a lot about you. And I still am. Like you, I have wished to meet. But I felt it was improper to contact you. You probably have, as I have, quite a few questions. So hearing from you makes me glad and nervous at the same time. Glad because you have found strength to contact me. And glad because you are able to contact me. Nervous because the sense of guilt lies heavy on me. And an uncertainty about how it has affected your life. Here, among other things, I'm thinking of whether you are suffering permanent injury. I remember being told that you were very keen on playing music. Are you still able to do that? About a meeting, well, I have often had a mind to. I hope you can give me time to digest the situation before we meet. Greetings Thomas. " Shit ...

Thomas needs time but I'm ready now. Now that it seems that it's going to happen I cannot wait any longer.

12:30

Info-voice on train: Next stop: Viborg

Thomas (Voice-over): I'm going to Viborg to be there when Thomas is ready for a meeting.

Thomas: In fact, it's been a long time since I was here. I have such a really odd feeling in my body. And sitting on the train I got to thinking that I am, in a way, physically closer to Thomas now that there is such a real possibility of running into him in the street.

Thomas (Voice-over): Viborg looks completely like its old self. I take a walk down Jernbanegade (street name). It's the same buildings. The same shop windows. The kiosk. The hairdresser. And the same pizzeria.

Thomas: Incidentally, I'm at the pizzeria where I and my friends had a scuffle with Thomas and his friends.

Thomas (Voice-over): I can see Hardit through the window. The same man who had the pizzeria back then. He was the pizza-king of Viborg.

13:41

Hardit: Hi Thomas! Hi my friend! How are you? It's been a long time. It's been a long time.

Thomas: Hi Hardit! You Haven't changed a bit.

Thomas (Voice-over): Hardit remembers me well.

Hardit: Thanks. The same to you. Except for a little more beard...

Thomas (Voice-over): I and my friends ended up at Hardit's almost every time we had been out.

Hardit: You were not the sort of blokes who were hot-headed and annoying at all. On the contrary, you created a good atmosphere.

Thomas (Voice-over): Hardit doesn't remember that night 13 years ago either. But he does remember Viborg-by-night and the sort of people who came to his pizzeria.

Hardit: You tend to split people up in this town. You can easily see who the hot-headed and annoying people are, who you need to keep an extra eye on. Or who just came in for their last midnight snack.

Thomas (Voice-over): Everyone came at Hardit's. Both those who wanted to avoid a fight...

Hardit: I often had people running into the place and practically hid in here.

Thomas (Voice-over): And also those who were looking for a fight.

Hardit: Sometimes someone came to us: "Have you got a knife? Have you got a knife? I need a knife!" Really, it was that kind of thing.

14:35 (Silence)

Thomas (Voice-over): I cannot remember that night, but I can remember many other Thursday nights of that time. And almost all of them followed the same pattern.

Friend 1 (Lasse): Well, it was a Thursday night like many others down at Chaplin (local bar), as usual.

Thomas (Voice-over): Lasse, Rasmus and I... Me and the boys drinking beers at Chaplin.

Friend 2 (Rasmus): It was a draught beer party at Chaplin. Where we always were. Basically. Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

Thomas (Voice-over): There were two places in Viborg back then: Chaplin where we came. The gymnasium freaks in flowery recycled shirts and holes in the trouser knees. Us, who were something.

Friend 2 (Rasmus): We were cheeky, too, I think. Perhaps we didn't go straight for a fight, but if we were a few mates together we could be kind of bold. Too bold.

Thomas (Voice-over): And then there was Crazy Daisy (club). With the pop boys and the rowdies in tight, white T-shirts. But we always met at the same place. At Hardit's pizzeria.

Friend 1 (Lasse): And then we had gone down to grab a bite to eat. And then I think that you and Rasmus Eriksen got involved in a quarrel with some kids outside.

Thomas (Voice-over): Neither Lasse nor Rasmus had seen them before. But they knew their type.

Friend 1 (Lasse): Ha-ha, you always see yourself as the nicest bloke. But I do think that they were the ones getting on a slippery slope. They were the ones pulling us into a row and a fight.

Thomas (Voice-over): They take particular notice of one of them. Thomas.

Friend 2 (Rasmus): Well, I had thought, too, that he was some kind of country bumpkin driving some kind of old bucket of bolts. And thought it was smart driving a car.

Thomas (Voice-over): On the face of it, a night like many others in Viborg. Shawarma and quarrelling in front of Hardit's Pizzeria were practically an integral part of the routine back then.

Friend 1 (Lasse): You were quarrelling with those boys, and I was just standing there observing you and eating my French fries and thinking: "I wonder what's happening again tonight?" Well, like anyone else, you know.

Thomas (Voice-over): Apparently, this is chiefly about Thomas and me.

Friend 1 (Lasse): It is obvious that there was something going on between the two of you. You are the two top dogs. Yes, no doubt about it. Some place in each of our groups, you might say.

Thomas (Voice-over): Usually, it all ended in idle threats. But this time seemed different.

Friend 2 (Rasmus): I also remember him as being extremely aggressive.

Thomas (Voice-over): No one really remembers how it actually started.

Friend 1 (Lasse): And then, all of a sudden, he grabs you. And I think that Rasmus grabs him.

Friend 2 (Rasmus): All of a sudden it becomes a little bit more than just a scuffle. And I think that Lasse hurls his box of French fries in someone's face. I just remember that, out of the corner of my eye, I see a box French fries flying past.

Thomas (Voice-over): A drunken brawl is probably the best way to describe it.

Friend 1 (Lasse): People were pushed around, and they were hopping mad at each other, for no reason. It isn't a pretty fight. We weren't boxers, as far as I remember.

Thomas (Voice-over): In a way, the fight itself is nothing special. No one gets hurt.

Friend 1 (Lasse): And then someone shouts: "The police are coming! The police are coming!"

Thomas (Voice-over): It's what happens next, that is quite out of the ordinary.

Friend 2 (Rasmus): And then we run down Jernbanegade (street name). There are always taxis waiting there. We have probably made fun of it, when we got into the taxi. Making a joke about ... Fuck, what bumpkins or something like that. And we sort of believe that this is over now. We are just going home.

Thomas (Voice-over): We are not aware of it but a car is following us...
That's Thomas.

Friend 2 (Rasmus): Then we drop you off. Say goodbye.

Thomas (Voice-over): I have often thought about what this must have looked like through the windscreen of Thomas' Peugeot. It's pitch-dark out there. He must have spotted me in the light of the headlights. And taken aim. And then Thomas has made his decision.

18:25 (Car accelerating)

18:34 (Message being sent)

Thomas: I have written to Thomas that I am in Viborg now. I can see he has read the message. But he hasn't replied yet.

Thomas (Voice-over): I can see on Facebook that one of my friends is a friend of one of Thomas's friends.

Anders: In our circle of friends, he was just called Boxer, you know.

Because he was a talented boxer when he was a teenager.

Thomas (Voice-over): Thomas' friend is called Anders. And I find out that he was there that night 13 years ago.

Anders: It's a Thursday night, I remember. And I have just moved to Viborg.

I had been on a trip. And then shortly after that, I had left home. And I'm living in a back building in Jernbanegade (street name) in Viborg. They built coffins on the ground floor, and we had such a totally draughty

apartment on the first and second floor. I was out having some beers that night and I'm sitting in ... I can't remember if it's called Doc Holiday or Crazy Daisy at that time. Sort of a real disco, but there's some sort of bar on the ground floor. And I'm sitting there having a few beers. And I'm sitting with Thomas. We are about to leave, and then he wants to go home in his car. And then I say: No, you mustn't. You have had too many beers. You should sleep on the couch down at my place. And then we leave down though Gravene (street name). And then we go to Jernbanegade (street name), and then we go in to eat a durum. We get it, and then we walk out of the door, and then there's a bunch of guys standing outside.

Thomas (Voice-over): There we are. Lasse, Rasmus and me.

Anders: As I recall it you were like "top-dog" in this. The leader of the pack. And then there were some small gymnasium (High School) boys, you know. And then Thomas says something: "Whaat's up?!" Or something like that. Something slightly provocative. And I tell him to shut his mouth. And then we walk on down Jernbanegade. And then when we have almost reached the gate we are going though to where I live in the backyard, then you come running.

20:39

Thomas (Voice-over): Then *I* come running? It's the first time I hear that this was the way it had started.

Anders: And I don't exactly remember what was said, but I clearly remember you knocking the durum out of his hand.

Thomas (Voice-over): I have always been told that they were the ones who started.

Anders: And then it's getting more and more out of control. At some point I go totally bananas and start chasing you around. And swinging in the air, nowhere near you.

Thomas (Voice-over): He has a quite an accurate recollection, Anders.

Anders: I remember, too, that at some point I'm being held back by a couple of guys.

Thomas (Voice-over): It was me starting it. It was me knocking the durum out of Thomas's hand. And I'm sure I was bloody provocative. But was that really it?

Anders: And then it stopped.

Thomas (Voice-over): Was that really enough to make him so furious?

Anders : And Thomas is gone. He is not there.. And me and Rosa, who I live with, we go to the flat and have a gin-and-soda and sit down to cool down. And I'm thinking: What the hell happened? Shit. We sit there simmering a little. I have no idea how long time has passed.

21:45 (Knocking on door)

Anders: And then there's a crazy knocking on the door, all of a sudden. And Rosa goes out to answer the door. And then she gets all hysterical when the door opens. "No, you can't come in! You can't come in! And things like that.. It's Thomas coming back, and he is totally beside himself. And says something like: "I have run him down. I have run him down." Yes, and that's when I lose my head again just shouting: "Fuuuuck, man! You just didn't do that! You just didn't do that! You just haven't done that!" And so on. And then he shouts something like: "Yees! I did it. And then he gets someone's phone and calls the police, who arrive shortly after. And then he's gone.

22:39 (Incoming Facebook-message)

Thomas: I have just received a message from Thomas. And he writes that he would like to meet me.

Thomas (Voice-over): Now it's finally happening. We arrange a meeting at a bar in Viborg.

Thomas (Voice-over): It's a quarter to three, so I have plenty of time. I have taken a seat at a table by itself. In the corner of the bar. I sincerely hope that I don't meet anyone I know in here. I'm bloody nervous.

Thomas (Voice-over): I sit there staring at the door. My heart is pounding away. In a short time I'll look him in the eye. The man who changed my life 13 years ago.

Thomas: It is ten minutes past three now, and Thomas hasn't turned up yet. I have just sent him a message that I'm waiting here now.

Thomas (Voice-over): In a way, I have been waiting for this for 13 years.

Thomas: Now it's twenty minutes past three, and Thomas just wrote to me. He has written: "Sorry. I forgot about it. Can we do it some other day?"

Thomas (Voice-over): Thomas has forgotten me. I simply refuse to believe that. Of course he hasn't forgotten. I don't think anyone can forget what happened that night. In any case, his friend Anders cannot.

24:03

Anders: I wake up early next morning. It has got very late, and I haven't slept much that night. And then people are coming. They kind of meet in my and Rosa's apartment. And then we turn on the Radio Viborg news at I-don't-remember-what-time. And it's just there ... The news of this incident last night. There's a young man who has run down another man. The man in question has been injured very badly. And I remember clearly that I stood as if petrified listening to it. And then the penny drops. Shit, this is just not good... I remember, for instance, that another mate goes to pick up the car. And that... This episode of him getting the car, that's extremely spooky, because in connection with the investigations the police have made, they have spread some substance over the bonnet of the car to find out how you have... What imprint you have made. And it is still all over the hood when he drives home. And there was one thing we talked a lot about. It was that at some point when he was on his way out of Viborg in the car, then someone in another car gives him the finger. And we do a lot of interpretation on that. There might be some one having it in for us after this. For some time after, the thing was, when I went to bed at night, then it sometimes crossed my mind that anyone could just walk into the yard, and my bedroom window was on the first floor. And then I'm thinking: Fuck. What if some object is thrown through this window, right?

25:48 (Phone calling up)

Thomas (Voice-over): I have found Thomas' number on the net.

Voicemail: Welcome to the answering machine. Please leave a message after the beep.

Thomas: Hi Thomas. Thomas speaking. Would you please ring back? It's very important that I get to talk to you. Thanks.

Thomas (Voice-over): I'm losing heart here. But then ...

26:17: (Phone ringing)

Thomas: Hello?

Thomas A: Hi Thomas. Thomas speaking.

Thomas: Hi Thomas. Thanks for calling.

Thomas A: I'm sorry that I haven't been very reliable in relation to our appointments. Please accept my apology. I have had a lot on my plate.

Thomas: Anyway, it's nice talking to you here instead of Facebook. And actually, I would just like to explain why I really want to meet you.

Thomas A: Well, I can easily understand you. As a matter of fact, I have a bad conscience not turning up at the appointments we have had. I am afraid that you have some questions I can't answer. And that makes me a bit nervous, that I am possibly not able to ...

Thomas: But I believe that's precisely what I think, and I think that we should just meet and then see what we can get out of it. But I just feel, too, that I need it to happen where we look each other in the eye.

Thomas A: Yes, but. You know what? I was in fact, to be perfectly honest with you; I had, as such, come to terms with it and was all set. But then someone actually came to me and said, and I know that's not the impression you have given me. But someone came and said: "Thomas, if it had been the other way around, would you take revenge?" Right? So this lad came to me and said: "He'll bloody well shoot you."

Thomas: Ha-ha.

Thomas (Voice-over): Thomas is afraid of *me*.

Thomas: Wow...

Thomas (Voice-over): He has thought that I have set all this up to shoot him.

Thomas A: Well, it's absolutely ridiculous. But then he said: "Really, I'd have done that, had it been me." Can you even reflect on the comment of such an idiot? Well, it's absolutely daft.

Thomas (Voice-over): But he doesn't seem to believe that anymore.

Talking to Thomas is very different from what I had expected. My mother calls him an animal, and my sister calls him a monster. But what monster says "Jeez"?

Thomas: Well, I'm in Viborg right now. Only to see you.

Thomas (Voice-over): But jeez. In that case we have to meet, then. We just need to set it up, then. Well, can't we just say it's tomorrow then?

28:09

Thomas (Voice-over): So it's going to be tomorrow? Thomas reminds me most of all of a typical Viborg-boy. Such a quiet, timid country-boy without a lot of fuss. Apparently, he hasn't always been like that, though.

Anders: He was sort of ...if you want a little romance around. Such a rock-and-roller who just ... You know, rebel-without-a-cause-like guy, right. He didn't wear a leather jacket, because we didn't do that in our crew. And he was hilarious. And he was wild. Down at the place where we hung out, with one of the other mates, he would always charm the mummy down

there. She would just stand there making sandwiches for us all the time, because he was ever so charming, this Thomas. At the same time, he had such a dark side, in a way. I remember that the first time I smoked hash, it was him filling the bowl. He was the kind of guy who could have secrets. Running about making trouble, you know. Something about breaking into houses and stealing booze and such, right. Which was such an expanded version of an old discipline of stealing beer in people's carports. And in fact, I think that was rather wild. I also remember one time, when I was a Gymnasium student, when there was heavy drinking, Boxer and one of the others were gone for a long time. And then he came back, and they had been joyriding in a stolen car and had run off the road. Really crashed. Like, had been rolling around in a field and so on. And they had walked all the way back. And they were gone for ages. No one knew what had happened. They just came back completely busted, shocked and so on. He goes on a date with this really lovely girl, right. And they became sweethearts later on. And they were totally Bonnie and Clyde. They looked like a million bucks when they came walking down the street in Stoholm (small town). He gets more and more into hash and beer and drugs, crack and all that shit, right. And then it was just as if what happened to you at that time was the culmination of something that had been building up.

That seemed to be the point when his savagery really came to cost both him and you dear, you know.

Thomas (Voice-over): I hardly get any sleep the last night in Viborg. There are too many thoughts in my head. I'm thinking about how Thomas will react when I ask him why he did it. And will he be able to answer that question at all?

30:33 (Incoming text-message)

Thomas: Right now, I have woken up here in Viborg. And I have just woken up to this message from Thomas A. "Hi Thomas. I cancel today. I cannot cope with meeting you. Sorry. Greetings Thomas".

Thomas: Oh shit, what a downer.

Voicemail: Welcome to the answering-machine.

Thomas (Voice-over): I spend the next four hours ringing Thomas incessantly

Voicemail: Welcome to the answering...

Thomas (Voice-over): Now that I'm so close it seems more important than ever to meet him.

Voicemail: Welcome to the answering-machine.

Thomas (Voice-over): I keep on ringing.

31:20

Thomas A : Hi Thomas.

Thomas: Hi Thomas. I just keep on ringing you because I was afraid that I wouldn't hear from you again.

Thomas A: No, no, no ... For Pete's sake. I was just called in by my workplace. But are you in Viborg now?

Thomas: Yes. I am indeed.

Thomas A : Well, then hurry down to the swimming bath, because that's where I am right now.

Thomas: I'll be there in ten minutes.

Thomas A: Well, that's fine.

Thomas: So now I'm on my way to the swimming bath to meet Thomas. My heart is pounding. I'm really nervous. I'm also bloody nervous that he won't be sitting there at all. I think I've had this meeting about a thousand times inside my head.

Thomas (Voice-over): Viborg swimming bath is the last place I could imagine for my meeting with Thomas. I had imagined a quiet, dark pub where two men could sit in deep conversation. But in this place there are screaming children, noisy refrigerators, arcade games and sharp neon light. But Thomas *is* here.

Thomas: Hi Thomas

Thomas (Voice-over): He is the only customer in the cafeteria.

Thomas: Hi

Thomas A: You are dripping wet.

Thomas: Yes but it is nasty weather...

Thomas A: Would you like a cup of coffee?

Thomas (Voice-over): In my imagination he was taller by a head.

Thomas: God, I'm so glad you wanted to meet me...

Thomas (Voice-over): He wears glasses, has a high forehead and looks like a typical family man.

Thomas A: Why don't we take a seat in the corner?

Thomas: Yes, why don't we.

Thomas (Voice-over): On a chair there's a small sports bag with swimming gear. And Thomas goes up to order a coffee for me in the cafeteria. This was not how I had figured it would be.

Thomas: Bloody hell, we made it...

Thomas A: Yes... You know what. I was backing down a little. But of course, that's not fair to you. But one is bloody nervous, you see....

Thomas (Voice-over): But now, at long last, we are sitting here facing each other. Thomas Andersen and Thomas Andersen.

Thomas A: Well, I am so afraid that I won't be able to answer the questions you want answered, Thomas. And that troubles me very much.

Thomas (Voice-over): I start by inquiring into that night 13 years ago. I want to know everything he can remember.

Thomas A : Well, I remember being at Anders's place. In Jernbanegade (street name). And I do think that I had been at Crazy Daisy (club), but I'm not quite sure. But that's what's there. It's that thing from Jernbanegade, from the pizzeria. I think there's some scuffle after the pizzeria. But I don't quite remember...I remember that we talked to each other just as we came out from the pizzeria.

Thomas (Voice-over): I try to hide my nervousness and appear composed.

But I'm bloody nervous. Afraid that Thomas can't remember anything from that night either. That he has repressed it. Afraid that I'll never get answers to my questions.

Thomas: This moment, when something triggers you off. Did I do something? Do you remember if I did something or other?

Thomas A: Not at all. And that's what so scary... The only thing I remember about you that is that you wore a red hat.

Thomas (Voice-over): I keep trying. There are so many things I would like to know about that night.

Thomas A: The only thing I remember is that I wanted to give you a sound beating.

Thomas: Did you think about what you were going to do?

Thomas A : No... not at first ... not at first, no. That's also why someone must have said to me: "You must have had time to think about what you were going to do." And I simply can't give an answer. I just can't ...

34:33

Thomas (Voice-over): I cannot believe that he doesn't remember anything either. From the night that changed both our lives forever.

Thomas: Do you remember hitting me with the car?

Thomas A: Eh, I heard a thud, but I don't actually see you. I don't have any memory of seeing you. I don't even look, you know. I just drive... I can only remember hitting you with the side of the car and thinking: "Oh fuck"... And then I drive on. I should have got out of the car immediately. And why I didn't, that's a puzzle to me. Just as it's a puzzle to me how I could get it into my head to do the act.

Thomas (Voice-over): The more I talk to Thomas the more I realize that the events of that night are engulfed in darkness to him, too. All the same, there are some things he does remember.

Thomas A: And I also remember that I was terribly scared.

Thomas (Voice-over): Especially the things happening after he ran me down. From Anders's apartment and onwards.

35:50 (knocking on door)

Thomas A: I remember coming up there, and we called the police. And then I just remember that they arrived – the police. And we drive out there.

I had to come along so that I could show them where it was, of course.

Otherwise they could still have been driving around looking for you out there... I actually think you were tottering around a bit confused. I can't recall at all what you looked like. The only thing I remember is a hat. A red hat, I think.

He gets you into the back of the car and sits beside you. I was placed on the front seat, of course, and then he gets into the back of the car with you. You know, it's dark in there. And I just remember him saying that they must hurry up because this is not good. But I don't see you. I don't think perhaps... I guess I probably didn't want to see you either. I think you passed out in the car.

Thomas (Voice-over): This is news to me. No one has ever told me that Thomas and I were sitting in a police car together. I have always thought that I was picked up by an ambulance. Thomas and Thomas in the same car. The same man who has just run me down on purpose is also the man who has come with the rescue team. And is sitting 50 centimeters away from me and cannot look me in the eye. It's been 13 years, and now he is again sitting 50 centimeters away from me. But now he is able to look me in the eye.

Thomas A: I don't know why there was such a wish for revenge, that's probably what it was, I guess. Why? I cannot... I simply cannot... And that's precisely what I feared, Thomas. I simply can't ... I cannot put it into a feeling or a word what it is that did it. What it was that made me do it. I simply can't ... I can't describe it. And that's a bit scary. All I can say is that I am extremely sorry. And again, that's not of much use to you. But why? I simply can't... I simply can't tell you, Thomas... And that's not ... And that doesn't bring you any peace of mind, does it?

Thomas: But ...

38:36

Thomas (Voice-over): I simply don't know what to say to Thomas. But he's right. He can't give me what I really want. The answer to the big question: Why?

Thomas A: I wish with all my heart that I could give an answer to that. But I simply can't. But I don't know what you were expecting. Oh hell, I feel incredibly sad, Thomas.

Thomas (Voice-over): But sitting there facing Thomas makes me realize that I really could give him what he has come for. Forgiveness. At this

instant I could say to Thomas: "Let's put the whole thing behind us. Let's just forget it." But I don't.

Thomas A: I have an older sister, and she subsequently went to see a psychologist, and asked and talked about: "My younger brother has done this and that. Could I think of doing that?" And that's subsequently what I have felt. Why could I even think of doing it? What is it inside your skull that makes you do a thing like that? It's ...

Thomas (Voice-over): I can't say to Thomas that I forgive him. Because this is not just about me and Thomas. I can't help thinking what my mother would say if she found out that I had forgiven *the animal*.

Thomas A : This doing time and being rejected by some of the family and all the things on top of that and apart from financial things, that means nothing compared to... So, the prison sentence is really nothing compared to having to live with the fact that you have injured another person. If you get my meaning. It's tough luck, and there are sacrifices, but you get over it, you might say. When you have served your time then it's like a closed chapter. But it's not, you know. The thing is that it's always in your thoughts. The moment that you see something on television or hear someone talk about something it's there, right away. And it will be the same thing for you, right? As you say, we are connected in some way or

other. You will probably think that I, of course, got off easier than you, and I can only regret that.

40:47

Thomas (Voice-over): A couple of hours pass, and then the conversation seems to come to a standstill spontaneously.

Thomas A: Can we...?

Thomas: Thanks for the coffee.

Thomas A: You are welcome. Thanks a lot for the talk, Thomas.

Thomas: Well, I thank you too.

Thomas A: So, now I'll go home and sleep for an hour before going to work. Can we agree to write to each other? You are always welcome to ring me if you have any questions ...

41:12

Thomas (Voice-over): It ends with a somewhat awkward handshake before Thomas disappears from the cafeteria of the swimming bath carrying his small sports bag. Out into the rain in Viborg I go and pack my things. I want to go home now. Away from Viborg.

I think I had expected this to feel like closure. An ending to the story of Thomas and Thomas. But it really doesn't feel that way. I guess there is no possible ending to that story. Because the main characters don't exist anymore. That night 13 years ago when Thomas Andersen crashed into Thomas Andersen, that's when they both disappeared. Two new Thomas's remained standing. The one I met in the swimming bath and me. The one I met in the swimming bath is full of remorse, weighed down by guilt of what happened then. The Thomas who sat in his car full of rage. Only looking for revenge. But I'll never meet that one. Thomas said to me that he was sorry about getting off easier than me. But I really don't think that's how it is. I think back on the time after that night as the worst time of my life. But also as a new beginning . As the point from which I was to build up the Thomas I am today. And, above all, it's a point that belongs in the past. But to Thomas this is still the present time. He has to live with his shame. And his conscience. Whereas I can leave the whole story behind me in Viborg.

43:36

The End