

THE LAST POST

By Peter Moffat

Episode Six

Cherry Revisions

21.02.17

Bonafide Films		The Forge Entertainment
5 Denmark St.		2nd Floor, The Zeppelin
Building		
London WC2H 8LP		59-61 Farringdon Road
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JOE stripped naked, feet wide apart, hands (handcuffed) up against the wall while he and his clothing are searched. One SIB man does the clothing; a second SIB man does Joe. A torch in his face.

SIB MAN

Open.

JOE opens his mouth. The torch shone inside his mouth.

SIB MAN (CONT'D)

Legs apart.

The torch shone up his arse.

JOE

What are you looking for?

No answer. When the search is over the SIB men go without saying anything. JOE isn't sure whether he's allowed to get dressed or not. He hesitates and then decides it's all right to put his clothes back on - but it's incredibly difficult to get dressed whilst wearing hand cuffs and noises outside his cell keep making him think they're coming back and maybe he's not supposed to be getting dressed.. Everything is foreign and disturbing as hell. He gets his pants on and his trousers but impossible to get his shirt back on - it goes over his head, but the arms are impossible.

HONOR searching frantically for and finding the film in Joe's wash-bag. A loud knock at the front door. She turns.

Three SIB men (not Carter) searching the married quarters. It's not a considerate search and they don't care that HONOR standing very still, looking on, the film in her fist, knows it. She puts her other (empty) hand into the pocket on the front of her dress; then the other hand (with the film in) joins it. SIB men finish the search. They look at HONOR. They should search her. She takes both hands out of her pocket and clasps them in front of her. She smiles - bravely, sweetly and in defiance of the tears forming in her eyes - and the men know they won't be searching her..

ARMSTRONG grabbing a few possessions and putting them in a knapsack. STONEHAM comes in.

STONEHAM
What are you doing?

ARMSTRONG
Cover for me.

STONEHAM
Where are you going?

ARMSTRONG
The NLF will kill Yusra for what
she did - and we're letting it
happen. I'm not having that.

Noises off. ARMSTRONG has to go right now.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
(Imploring) Please.

ARMSTRONG goes, fast (a second exit, not the main way in).
SIB men come in including Major CARTER and Corporal MURRAY.
BAXTER is with them - detailed to show them where to go.

CARTER
Corporal Armstrong. Where is he?

A half hesitation. STONEHAM catches BAXTER's eye.

STONEHAM
On patrol, sir.

CARTER
Get him back.

STONEHAM
No radio contact, sir. It's a
problem up in Radfan.

BAXTER catches STONEHAM's eye. STONEHAM keeps his deadpan
expression going. BAXTER knows Stoneham is lying..

5 OMITTED 5

6 INT. CELL. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. DAY. 6

JOE alone. The power cuts out. The fan above him slows to a
stop. No air. It's phenomenally hot. He's very alone. The
cell feels smaller. It's a long way from Aldershot.

7 INT. MARTIN FLAT. DAY. 7

A light goes out. HONOR watches the fan slow. She takes the
film out of her pocket. The flat is a mess from the search.

ALISON
What are you doing?

ALISON at the door. She's sober, she hasn't had a drink.
HONOR jumps and instinctively makes a fist around the film.

HONOR
I don't know.

ALISON
What's in your hand?

HONOR
Dead soldiers. A film..

ALISON
Who are you hiding it from?

Alison focused, her sharp intelligence at work.

HONOR
Them.

HONOR looks about her at the mess they've left.

ALISON
So you do know what you're doing..

8 OMITTED

8

8A OMITTED

8A

8B OMITTED

8B

9 INT. MARKHAM FLAT. DAY.

9

MARY strips baby PETER down to his nappy to keep him cool. MARKHAM on the phone. GEORGE playing with his action man.

MARKHAM

(On phone, aggravated) Get the back up generator going. No. We don't need REME. We can fix it.

GEORGE is echoing every one of his father's words and applying them to his action man game. MARY throws all the windows and doors open.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Darling, I think that might make it worse.

Then he's back on the phone. He's sharp on the phone.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

(On phone) Yes. Or I'll bang some heads together.

GEORGE (in shorts only) smacking the head of his action man against the table leg.

GEORGE

Bang. Bang. Bang.

MARY

Bit quieter, darling. Daddy can't hear himself think.

GEORGE not happy at this (mild) admonishment. A beat.

GEORGE

Where's Yusra?

MARY and MARKHAM (finishing on the phone) glance at each other. GEORGE pulls the head off his action man and rolls it (the head) across the floor. MARY sees MARKHAM wince.

MARY

Go and play in your bedroom,
George.

GEORGE does as he's told, kicking the head of his action man into the bedroom ahead of him as he goes.

MARKHAM

They've taken a statement from me.
Which means they want me to give
evidence.

MARY

In court? Against Joe?

MARKHAM

It's not "against" him - it's just
the facts. I gave him the order; he
disobeyed it..

MARY

He saved George.

MARKHAM

Mary..

MARY

I don't understand. He'd be dead if
it weren't for Joe Martin.

MARKHAM

An order is an order; there's
nothing I can do for him.

MARY

You're part of the prosecution case
against the man who saved our son's
life.

GEORGE in the doorway.

GEORGE

He rescued me from the bad men.

MARY

Yes.

GEORGE

So why is he in prison?

There's really no good answer to that.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 Daddy will help him, won't you
 daddy?

The fan comes back on. Mummy doesn't look at daddy.

9A EXT/INT. GORDON HOTEL. DAY.

9A

Packed lobby. HONOR comes in. MAN in a suit looks up from his newspaper and then goes back to it. HONOR heads upstairs.

9B INT. MARTHA'S ROOM. BATHROOM. GORDON HOTEL. DAY.

9B

MARTHA developing the film in the bathroom. HONOR beside her. The photographs of the dead come into focus. HONOR struggles to keep steady as the images clarify.

HONOR
 Joe saw all this. He was there.

MARTHA
 And was asked to deny that it had
 ever happened.

HONOR
 He kept the film.

MARTHA
 You know a good man from how he
 acts under pressure.. What he does
 before he starts thinking.

MARTHA pegs the last of the pictures up like clothing on a washing line. Di Marco's head on the stake.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
 Did the British want these
 photographs destroyed because
 they're embarrassing? Yes. Because
 they tell a story that isn't the
 official account of what's
 happening here? Sure. Do the
 families of these men have the
 right to see them? I think so. But
 there's a bigger question..

HONOR
 What's that?

MARTHA
 Who do they think they are?

10 INT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY. 10

CARTER and MURRAY (note taker) across a narrow (2 feet wide) table from JOE in an interview room straight out of Graham Greene - peeling walls, slow fan, sticky fly trap; the heat has won in here. MURRAY has very bad eczema on the inside of his elbows. JOE's wrists cuffed together.

10A INT. MARTHA'S ROOM. GORDON HOTEL. DAY. 10A

HONOR about to go.

HONOR
I should go to him.

MARTHA
Honor. The little man has to lose.
Every time. You do know that? You
know how big they are and how small
he is and you are.

HONOR
No. I didn't. I don't.

11 OMITTED 11

12 INT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY. 12

CARTER incredibly still, looking very intensely at JOE.

CARTER
What was it?

JOE
You know what the order was.

CARTER flies across the table, picks up Joe by the shirt front and slams him against the wall. (Joe hand-cuffed and therefore helpless) Like all the most effective violence it's totally surprising. It comes from nowhere and it's VERY committed. CORPORAL Murray puts his pen down. CARTER right in Joe's face - seemingly his anger is righteous and real.

CARTER
I can make this so hard for you.

CARTER lets him down and returns to his seat. So he can turn it on and turn it off..

MURRAY picks up his pen and rolls it up and down the eczema to try and cool the inflamed skin. JOE clocking this.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Eczema. The heat makes it virtually intolerable. He never gets through an interview without a good itch. Maybe this time..

CARTER stares at JOE. They're ready for his answer now.. JOE from his standing position against the wall:

JOE

The order was to escort a prisoner.

CARTER

Who gave you the order?

JOE

Major Markham.

CARTER

Did you obey it?

JOE

No.

CARTER

When did you decide to disobey the order?

JOE

Once I had the prisoner on board.

CARTER

You understand what it means to disobey an order?

JOE

Yes.

CARTER waits for Corporal Murray to get this down in his notes. "I understand what it means to disobey an order.." MURRAY puts his pen down. JOE clocks this. They've got the basic confession they need.

CARTER

Sit down.

JOE does as he's told. It feels like maybe the worst is behind him now..

JOE

What would you have done? I had a choice. A child with all of his life ahead of him..

CARTER shifts his weight a little - more violence imminent? JOE fights a reflex to react. Carter's tone here (calm, direct, quiet) is super menacing because it's seemingly the opposite of the earlier violence - which makes him capable of anything; which makes him frightening.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Who do you think you are? You think a boy like you is qualified to decide what's right? You think the top brass don't consider all the options without asking the escort for his help?

CARTER looking at him, waiting. Ninety nine times out of a hundred this would be a rhetorical question. Not this time.

JOE

No.

CARTER

I want you to listen carefully to this because it's the most important thing you'll ever hear. The whole of High Command know who you are; they're taking a real interest in Captain Babyface. If you try and fight us - you will be crushed.

MURRAY picks up his pen - Murray knows his boss, the interlude of oppressive bullying is over.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Who was driving?

JOE wants to protect Armstrong.

JOE

Can I have a lawyer?

CARTER

Who was driving?

JOE

Corporal Armstrong was obeying orders.

This is a defiant answer - the irony in it is defiance. CARTER smiles and then his smile fades.

CARTER

There's no such thing as irony in here. It's all plain speaking at this level. There's nowhere to go other than straight down the middle with me.

CARTER looks deep into his eyes like he's confirming something he's long suspected.

CARTER (CONT'D)

I think you're the confessing type.
The relief - I know this, I've seen
it - when a man confesses.. like
finding God. Why would you want a
lawyer when you're within touching
distance of God?

JOE

What do you want?

CARTER

We've accounted for every man in
your unit. Apart from one.
Armstrong. Corporal Stoneham says
he's out on patrol up in Radfan. On
his own? Does that seem remotely
likely to you?

JOE doesn't answer.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Where is he?

JOE

I don't know.

CARTER

Aiding the enemy; communicating
with the enemy in time of war.
Hanging has been abolished but
we're such a long way from home and
summary justice has a way of..
happening.

He leans forwards and lowers his voice.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Help me; help yourself.

A beat. MURRAY scratches his eczema.

13

EXT. YUSRA'S HOUSE. DAY.

13

ARMSTRONG arrives at Yusra's house. As he approaches he sees a large crowd gathered. Why? He pushes through them. His POV of Yusra's burnt out house. It has been petrol bombed. He fears the worst. He stands and stares. A word in his ear. The INFORMANT. He's anxious that what follows is not overheard or registered by anyone so he looks at the burnt out house rather than at Armstrong when speaking and Armstrong knows to do the same.

INFORMANT

The NLF don't like it if you help
the enemy.

ARMSTRONG

The family..

INFORMANT

Locked inside, burned to death.

ARMSTRONG's pain.

INFORMANT (CONT'D)

But not Yusra.

ARMSTRONG

Where is she?

INFORMANT

She saw it happen. She was coming home; she saw her own family die.

ARMSTRONG

(Loud) Where is she?

CROWD become aware of a raised English voice in their midst.

INFORMANT

Go. Now.

ARMSTRONG makes a quick exit back through the crowd.

13A EXT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. DAY.

13A

A taxi pulls up. Honor gets out and walks into Middle East Command.

14 INT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. RECEPTION AREA. DAY. 14

HONOR, addressing MURRAY. CARTER busy with paperwork.

HONOR

I'm here to see Captain Martin.

CARTER answers for Murray, without looking up.

CARTER

It's not convenient.

HONOR

I'm his wife.

CARTER turns and looks at her for the first time - taking his time over his appraisal of her. He scrapes back his chair, goes over to her, stands right in front of her.

CARTER

You're a young girl a long way out of your depth.

(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)
Which is a good thing - because it
means you can forget him. Starting
now.

HONOR
It's not convenient.

She's actually quoting him back to himself (see what she says next as a full version of the developing thought) but this should be capable of being interpreted (as it is by Carter) as a fuck you response to his patronising suggestion.

HONOR (CONT'D)

Remember when this is all over -
"It's not convenient" is the moment
I decided to fight you.

He laughs. Really? This girl? She looks at him unwaveringly.

15

INT. LAITHWAITE FLAT. DAY.

15

It's really hot. ED opens the door to allow what breeze there might be in. ALISON drinking a glass of milk.

ED

How's Honor?

ALISON

She loves him.

He nods. A beat.

ED

I should go..

She smiles and nods.. But he doesn't go.

ED (CONT'D)

On our honeymoon - you won't remember this - we were in the flower market in Rome and I was looking at some very delicate.. I don't know what they're called.. The sun was on the back of my neck - and I was happy. Then I turned to look for you and you weren't there. You'd gone. I felt panic and then dread. Silly. But I would have done anything, literally anything for you in that moment. It was only a minute; you'd gone to buy stamps for postcards. "Francoboli!" You said, coming back to me across the piazza filled with the triumph of buying stamps in Italian.. I didn't tell you how I'd felt because it was foolish and I couldn't explain it and the main thing anyway was how much love I felt for you watching you walk and call out.. Every head turned. They loved you too because all Italians understand that life is performance and at the end of the opera you die.

ALISON
Francoboli!

ED

From that moment on I knew what I had to do. I've relished your adventures and I've never stood in your way. I've made myself not be afraid when you're.. away from me.

She sips her milk. And then smiles at him with some real warmth. A thin white moustache on her upper lip.

ED (CONT'D)

I'm going to help Joe. I'm going to do something about this, Al.

She laughs.

ALISON
Sorry, you sound like John Wayne.

.. but he likes it that she's thinking about him, regardless of the content of her thought and it does feel that there's some warmth there.. She looks deep into her milk glass.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Do you know what happens inside a collapsing star? The pull of gravity is so strong nothing can escape from it - not physical matter, or time, or John Wayne at full gallop.. not even light, Ed. And light is the fastest thing in the universe, nothing travels faster than light.. but - Jesus Christ - it can't get out either.

She's near to tears here - she's talking about space-time singularities and she's talking about Joe, but the story is really her own. Let's be clear - this is not self pity, she's not interested in her own victim-hood, only in describing her life honestly. She puts her glass of milk down - a punctuational gesture which helps her steady herself.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Joe's not coming home.

ED

Yes, he is.

He takes a clean white handkerchief out of his pocket and gives it to her.

ED (CONT'D)

You've got..

He indicates that she's got milk on her lip. She wipes it off. He goes, leaving the door open and the handkerchief behind. She calls after him/in the direction of the door..

ALISON

John Wayne. John Wayne is saddling up.

She looks down at the handkerchief and holds it tight. He's right to hope. Suddenly filled with the incredible importance of what she has to do next, she rushes to the door.

15A EXT. STAIRS. MARRIED QUARTERS. DAY.

15A

ALISON comes out of the front door and calls after ED.

ALISON

Ed. They were peonies. In the flower market.

NOW ED has hope. He goes on his way, walking faster. She watches him go.

16 INT. GORDON HOTEL. MARTHA'S ROOM. DAY.

16

MARTHA finishes writing a sentence on her typewriter, stubs out a cigarette and leaves, turning the desk light, the fan off and closing the bathroom door as she goes.

17 EXT. STREET. CRATER. DAY

17

MARTHA employing tail avoidance precautions - doubling back, stopping suddenly, taking last minute turns.

18 EXT. CAFE. CRATER. DAY.

18

MARTHA does the second top button of her shirt up. She is wearing a white head-scarf and dark sunglasses. The cafe is busy, noisy, men only. Filled with life. NLF FIGHTER 1 sits down opposite her and a WAITER brings him what he knows he (NLF Fighter) wants and what she (Martha) will be drinking. Mint tea. Martha doesn't want mint tea..

MARTHA

Coca cola, please. Ice, no lemon.

NLF FIGHTER 1 smiles. He nods his assent to the waiter.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

It's up to you what I drink?

NLF FIGHTER 1

You are a guest.

Here in the cafe and here in his country.

NLF FIGHTER 1 (CONT'D)
Sometimes you forget. You people.

MARTHA

I'd have to do the interview in English. Kadir's English is better than my Arabic. I don't want to misinterpret anything he says.

NLF FIGHTER 1

You don't make the conditions..

MARTHA

If it's not in English I won't agree to it. So, you see, I do.

NLF FIGHTER 1

Western arrogance.

MARTHA

No. A reporter's rules.

NLF FIGHTER 1

How do we know we can trust you?

MARTHA

You don't. I'll write whatever I like - you have no control over that. It's an absolute condition of my agreeing to this that you have no editorial input.

NLF FIGHTER 1

I mean how do we trust you not to bring the British army with you.

MARTHA

You don't know that either. Except it would go against everything I believe in as a reporter and if I did bring them with me I'd never work again because nobody would trust me again.

NLF FIGHTER 1

These are just words.

MARTHA

What else is there?

He looks at her long and hard, making a final calculation. Her coke arrives. There's a slice of lemon in it. She takes it out with her fingers.

19 INT. GORDON HOTEL. MARTHA'S ROOM. DAY.

19

MARTHA comes in. The desk light is on. The ceiling fan is on. She's sure she turned them off. She feels that someone has been in the room. She goes to the bathroom - the pictures are there.

20 INT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. DAY.

20

HONOR sitting in the reception area. MURRAY on his way out, clocks her. She sees him see her and looks right at him. He goes over to her. He's going to ask her to leave..

HONOR

My feet.

What?

HONOR (CONT'D)

Behind my knees too but my feet mainly. Raw, bloody. I used to put them under the hot water tap so the pain took away the itch for a moment or two. But what it really comes down to, why it's gone now - the strength not to scratch.

21 INT. LAITHWAITE FLAT. DAY.

21

GEORGE at the door. ALISON putting a plate of cucumber sandwiches out on the table - triangles. She's carrying a bread knife in the other hand.

*
*
*

GEORGE

Mummy and daddy won't talk to me.

ALISON

Right.

GEORGE

Will you tell me the truth?

ALISON

Together we've done Father Christmas, vaginas and God. What else do you need to know?

GEORGE

Why is Captain Martin in prison?

ALISON

Because there was a choice and everybody apart from Joe wanted one thing and Joe did the other.

GEORGE

So he was naughty?

ALISON

Or everybody else was. That's what they have to decide.

GEORGE

What was the choice?

ALISON

Whether you should live or die.

RUSSELL overhears this.

RUSSELL

Hello.

RUSSELL has come in, unannounced.

ALISON

Run along, George. Aunty Alison has to talk to the nice doctor.

22

OMITTED

22

23

INT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. DAY.

23

ED has just come in with HONOR. He's berating MURRAY.

ED

You can't do this. She has the
right to see him.

CARTER gets up, comes over, appraises ED.

CARTER

You're the one with the wife.

24 INT. LIVING ROOM. LAITHWAITE FLAT. DAY.

24

ALISON and RUSSELL on the sofa with cups of tea and
sandwiches cut into triangles with the crusts off.

*
*

ALISON

They're cucumber.

*
*

RUSSELL

Thank you.

*
*

ALISON

I want an abortion.

*
*

RUSSELL

That's against the law.

*
*

ALISON

Yes. I'm asking you to help me.

*
*

RUSSELL

Why do you feel you want to do
this?

*
*
*

ALISON

Why do you feel you can ask?

*
*

RUSSELL

I'm a doctor. I can't just..

*
*

ALISON

Really? Why not? You know better
than me what I want? I didn't ask
you here for moral guidance.

*
*
*
*

RUSSELL

It's my duty to..

*
*

ALISON

It's none of your business.
I'd do it myself if I could but I
can't.

*
*
*
*

The one word she says next takes an awful lot for her to say;
she's only able to say it (and mean it) because she needs
what she's asking for more than the she needs to preserve her
own integrity here.

*
*
*
*

ALISON (CONT'D)

Please.

RUSSELL appears to be thinking carefully for a second. Then
the big question:

RUSSELL

What does your husband say?

She doesn't know whether to laugh or cry or scream. Maybe she
does none of the above; maybe she does all three all on top
of each other. He just can't hear her claim to autonomy. It's
outside the capacity of his brain to hear it let alone take
it in. This is hopeless.

25

INT. CELL. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. DAY.

25

HONOR comes in. JOE stands up. She holds him (his hands are cuffed) so his movements are restricted.

HONOR

Oh Joe.

JOE

I'm sorry. I didn't think of you. I should have been thinking of you.

HONOR

You were just brave..

JOE

I'll be discharged from the army and I'll be - it'll be years, Honor and when I get out of prison..
Find a new life. Don't wait for me.

This is it. This is the defining moment in her life. She bangs on the cell door. Is she going? And again with feeling. She's going. It's over? They're over? The door opens. CARTER.

HONOR

Take the handcuffs off.

CARTER

I can't do that.

She's astonishingly formidable and fierce here.

HONOR

He's in a cell in the most secure building in Aden with the whole of the British army guarding him and you need to keep his hands tied together so that he can't hug his wife? What kind of a man are you?

He goes. A beat. MURRAY comes in. He takes the hand cuffs off. He goes. They hug properly.

HONOR (CONT'D)

Just tell the truth and everything will be all right.

JOE

There. That's what I loved about you. Such uncomplicated innocence. Here's Honor - as she is, as she always will be.

HONOR

Loved? You said "loved.."

JOE
Love.

HONOR
Then that's enough. Everything is
un-picked by love and the truth is
frightened of nothing and no-one.

Her incredible, winning naivete.

JOE
It's not that simple; I'm not that
simple. There's something you don't
know about my past.

HONOR
No. Hush. Not now - I took the film
to Martha. I've seen the
photographs.

JOE
Honor..

HONOR
Why didn't you destroy it? I think
it's because deep down you don't
think concealing the truth can ever
be right..

Her being this nice to him makes his circumstances feel very
desperate suddenly. A bang on the cell door.

JOE
The last time I went to her hotel..
I didn't go in.

HONOR
What did you do?

JOE
Just waited round the corner.

HONOR
For?

JOE
The man I was driving to come back
out.

HONOR
Who was that?

JOE
I was told not to ask.

Another bang on the door.

GUARD

Time up.

HONOR

There's a Yeats poem. When my mother fell asleep in her chair on a Sunday afternoon, my father'd allow himself to go back to their beginnings and he'd whisper it to her..

When you are old and grey and full
of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down
this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the
soft look

(MORE)

HONOR (CONT'D)

Your eyes had once, and of their
shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad
grace,
And loved your beauty with love
false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul
in you,
And loved the sorrows of your
changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing
bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how love
fled
And paced upon the mountains
overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of
stars.

Both have tears in their eyes.

HONOR (CONT'D)

Look at me. Hold on to love for
dear life, Joe. When you have it.

26

INT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. RECEPTION AREA. DAY.

26

ED being searched. HONOR comes out.

ED

I could take you back to base if
you wait..

HONOR

I'm fine. Get him to fight, Ed. Get
him his strength back. Please.

27

INT. CELL. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. DAY.

27

ED in Joe's cell.

ED

An accused is allowed someone
alongside him to talk to, take
advice from, cross examine
witnesses for.. a kind of pal,
really. It's called an officer's
friend. (A beat) Did you know that?

JOE

I did what I did; I'd do it again..
There's no advice to give.

ED

You almost sound like you think you deserve to be punished.

JOE's failure to answer is close to agreement, which is what ED takes it for.

ED (CONT'D)

For this.. And more?

Again Joe's failure to answer comes close to affirmation.

JOE

It's good of you to offer to be - what's it called? - my friend. But I really don't need you..

ED

You don't have a choice, I'm afraid. You saved my life..

JOE

A life for a life.

Off the back of Joe's short laugh (Ed smiles too at the upside-down nature of his remark) comes Ed's big pitch:

ED

I was dead, Joe. On that road. They told me at the hospital I had minutes left when you came for me and dragged me back from the edge.. I can't imagine where you found the courage and the strength. Where's that fight now?

JOE

I have to plead guilty.

ED

That's not what you said to George Markham when they arrested you. You heard him - you're his hero. How is he supposed to make sense of the world if you admit you did a bad thing in rescuing him? And what about Honor?

JOE

Women and children.. [that's an easy bit of emotional blackmail..]

ED

If you want to be selfish and think only of yourself - that's fine too, provided you ask yourself one question and answer it truthfully.

JOE
What's the question?

ED
Do you feel guilty? If you don't and you plead guilty you'll wake up the morning after you're sentenced and look at the walls of your cell and you'll know that nothing you do in the rest of your life can correct the mistake you made in not being honest with yourself. I'm not sure you'll survive, Joe.

JOE
There's no defence. Is there?

There. He nearly has him; evidence in Joe of a flicker of fight.

ED
There's a moral case. (Conscious echo of Joe's question above) Isn't there?

And JOE doesn't say no. ED has his foothold.

ED (CONT'D)
My father's a barrister. He always said if you've got an impossible case - go fishing.

JOE
What?

ED

Throw out some bait, see what happens..

JOE

You didn't answer my question.
There's no legal defence, is there?

ED

Why don't we trust in the moral high ground being a good place to defend oneself..

JOE

Or to fish from.

28

INT. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. RECEPTION AREA. DAY.

28

ED on his way out.

CARTER

Very touching. Just not sure you can afford to do this with the whole of the army watching and your career so badly stalled.

ED

It's a kind of freedom - my failing career. Nothing to lose, you see.

ED on his way out. One more thing..

ED (CONT'D)

Oh. And you're right. I am "the one with the wife.." Do you know what she said to me this morning? What are they frightened of? Such a good question. Don't you think?

CARTER can't quite hide that this has hit home, which is a small but telling moment (and victory) for ED.

29

EXT. BASE. DAY.

29

RUSSELL waiting outside the office for Ed's return. Here he comes. ORCHOVER, STONEHAM and BAXTER looking on.

BAXTER

Search party, I reckon. For Armstrong.

ORCHOVER

I don't understand it. Why would he just go?

BAXTER

I don't know. What do you think,
Stoneham?

STONEHAM shrugs. He's not the best actor. RUSSELL spots and then steps out to intercept ED. BAXTER moves away. STONEHAM avoids looking at ORCHOVER. RUSSELL falls in with ED and they walk and talk.

ED

Everything all right with..

RUSSELL

Yes and no.

ED

What is it, doctor?

RUSSELL

She doesn't want them.

ED

Hmm?

RUSSELL

She doesn't want them to be born.

ED hurt and shocked. The disclosure so abruptly delivered..

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I've always believed in straight talking where possible.

ED

Yes, of course.

RUSSELL

There's something I want to check with you. This is not an easy question but it has to be asked. They're yours, aren't they?

ED lies - as he and Alison have agreed they will, the children will be his and no-one will know otherwise.

ED

Yes. Of course they are.

RUSSELL uses the moment of Ed's distress:

RUSSELL

The important thing for you to know
is that we can help her, we really
can.

What a good guy. ED appreciates his attitude here.. At last,
someone who knows about Alison and is going to help her
rather than condemn her..

ED

Did you tell her that?

RUSSELL

I tried to. Her sickness stops her
from understanding that she needs
help. That's the trap she's in.
Which is why I've come to you. You
have ultimate responsibility for
your wife, Lieutenant. I need your
permission to help bring her back
to us all. There are wonderful
treatments available now..

ED

What kind of..

RUSSELL

Shock therapy for example.

ED

What is that? Electric shock?

RUSSELL

She'd be asleep. General
anaesthetic and a muscle relaxant
and there's no pain. An electric
current is passed between..

ED

Wait a minute. What are you saying?
What do you want me to do?

RUSSELL

Give us permission.

ED's choice here. RUSSELL's apparent compassion.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Take your time. Let me have your
answer as soon as you're ready.

ED

You can have it now. You ask her.
And if she says no she means no and
that makes it none of your damned
business anymore.. or mine.

30

INT. BEDROOM. MARKHAM FLAT. DAY.

30

MARKHAM with GEORGE.

MARKHAM

I'm sorry I snapped at you earlier.

GEORGE

Is it my fault?

MARKHAM

No, no. I shouldn't have got cross.

GEORGE
I mean is it my fault about Joe?

MARKHAM
Of course not. Why do you say that?

GEORGE

If he hadn't rescued me he wouldn't
be in prison, would he?

MARKHAM hesitates. He doesn't know how to deal with this.
What can he say? Then it gets worse..

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Will they shoot him, Daddy?

MARY has arrived at the door - she overhears and interrupts..

MARY

Time for your father to talk to the
men, darling. What would you like
for tea? How about fish fingers
with fried banana?

GEORGE

And cake?

MARY

And cake.

GEORGE

Cake first.

MARY

Broccoli cake.

GEORGE

Muuuuuum..

MARY

Cauliflower cake?

GEORGE

Muummmmyyyy.

GEORGE into the kitchen. MARY turns, comes back, grabs a
moment with her husband.

MARY

What would happen if you said no?
What if you told them you won't
give evidence.

MARKHAM

My career would be over.

MARY

I see.

She looks at him. He knows that she's saying there's a choice
here. She heads towards the kitchen. As close as Mary Markham
gets to overtly disagreeing with her husband - which her
husband registers.

31 INT. CELL. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. DAY.

31

JOE alone in his cell. The sound of keys outside and the door unlocking. JOE moves away a bit from the door. He doesn't want more of Carter.. His relief that it's ED.

JOE

He's charismatic, you know..

ED

Who?

JOE

Kadir. And enigmatic.

ED

In what way?

JOE

He wasn't as happy as you'd think he'd be.

ED

What do you mean?

JOE

At being freed.

ED

Did he say anything?

JOE

He said: It doesn't matter.

ED

Where were you taking him?

JOE

Map co-ordinates.

ED

Do you remember them?

JOE

I had to memorize them.

ED

What are they?

JOE

I was ordered to forget them.

They look at each other.

32

EXT. BASE. DAY.

32

MARKHAM addressing the men, hands behind his back.

MARKHAM

The rule of law is paramount. We are none of us above it or outside it. It is the golden thread that holds everything together. And if nobody breaks it.. We're all safe.

His hands behind his back are shaking.

I think at least one of you here knows where Corporal Armstrong is. You may think you are helping him by keeping his whereabouts secret. That would be a mistake. It would be breaking the thread, you see.

STONEHAM doesn't say. ORCHOVER glances at STONEHAM - and doesn't say.

33

INT. BARRACKS. BASE. DAY.

33

Minutes later. STONEHAM approaches ORCHOVER.

STONEHAM

I need to tell you something..

ORCHOVER

Biggest lesson a man learns in the army is whether he has a conscience and that can only be done on your own.

34

INT. MARKHAM FLAT. DAY.

34

MARY clearing dishes. She pauses. MARKHAM coming in, passing the kitchen door, catches the fact of her pause, knows something is coming.. and avoids it by walking on by.

35 INT. GORDON HOTEL. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MARTHA'S ROOM. DAY. 35

HONOR sees (white, British) SUIT walking down the corridor. They pass each other. The SUIT doesn't acknowledge her, which seems a little rude/odd to HONOR. She goes to Martha's room. She knocks. The door is open.

36 EXT. GORDON HOTEL. DAY. 36

MARTHA comes into the hotel - the SUIT (same man as in previous scene) is leaving. A moment in the doorway in which the SUIT makes sure he doesn't catch her eye/register her - as good a sign as any that he has registered her. Or is she being paranoid?

37 INT. MARTHA'S ROOM. DAY. 37

MARTHA comes in. She doesn't see HONOR in the chair.

MARTHA
Jesus Christ.

HONOR
Sorry. Hello. I was just..

MARTHA
The door was open..

HONOR
Yes.

MARTHA
Was the light on?

HONOR
What? I don't think so.

MARTHA
The fan? Did you turn it on?

HONOR
No.

MARTHA looks at an open drawer in a chest of drawers - empty. She feels like she's going mad.

MARTHA
Sorry. I just thought..

HONOR
There was a man.

MARTHA

What man?

HONOR

In a suit in the corridor.

MARTHA

He didn't look at you..

HONOR

No.

MARTHA

Just walked on by.

HONOR

Yes.

Same man then. What the hell. A knock at the door. The two women look at each other. HONOR opens the door.

LAUNDRYMAN

Laundry.

On HONOR. Phew. Normal.

MARTHA

I didn't send any.

LAUNDRYMAN

Shall I put it away?

He doesn't wait for the answer. He goes to the open drawer..

MARTHA

Thank you. Just leave it.

He goes.

HONOR

I saw Harvey Tilbrook last time I was here. He lied to me.

MARTHA

What about?

HONOR

Seeing you.

MARTHA

Why would he do that?

HONOR

I don't know. He was actually in
the hotel bar talking to another
man.

MARTHA

Strange.

37A INT. SERGEANTS MESS. NIGHT.

37A

BAXTER drinking alone. A bottle of scotch and a glass.
MARKHAM comes in and sits.

MARKHAM

I'll have the glass, you have the
bottle.

BAXTER

Other way round, maybe sir?

MARKHAM

Court in the morning..

BAXTER

So why are you here?

MARKHAM

If your job is one thing, if being
a sergeant in the British army
comes down to one thing..

BAXTER

Knowing my officers and my men
better than they know themselves.

MARKHAM down the glass. BAXTER very still, watching him,
waiting for the next question.

MARKHAM

Captain Martin..

BAXTER

Is a good man.

MARKHAM

Major Markham..

BAXTER

Doesn't need to ask his sergeant
what to do.

38 INT. CELL. MIDDLE EAST COMMAND. NIGHT.

38

JOE listening to the sounds of incarcerated men in the night.

39 INT. MARKHAM FLAT. MAIN BEDROOM. NIGHT.

39

GEORGE (O/S) screams. A really shocking, full blast night terror. MARKHAM and MARY in bed. MARY out of bed to go to him almost before she's awake.

40 INT. LAITHWAITE FLAT. NIGHT.

40

ED wakes - he's been asleep. ALISON, not asleep, smoking in bed, reading Catch 22.

ED

Jesus. Did you hear that?

ALISON

He's right to scream.
I'm going to help him.

ED

How?

ALISON

Teach him to smoke.. mix
Martini's.. play poker..

ED

They'd have each other - our two.
All through life they'd know the
other one was there.

He's not looking at her. She stops reading but carries on looking at her book. Her breathing a fraction faster. He looks at her. Her gaze stays where it is - on the pages of her book. He looks away. Her eyes lift a fraction so that her gaze is just above the level of her book.

*
*
*
*
*

41

INT. BEDROOM. MARKHAM FLAT. NIGHT.

41

MARY leads GEORGE into the bedroom by the hand.

MARY

I said he could come in with us,
daddy.

MARKHAM

I don't think that's a good idea,
mummy. The sooner things get back
to normal the sooner they'll get
back to normal. Back to your own
bed, my boy. You'll be fine.

42

EXT. GOATHERD HUT. DAY. DAY TEN.

42

This is the same location in which Armstrong hid in EP1 and in which Yusra found him. His POV as he approaches the entrance and looks in. There she is. She opens her eyes. The first words are easy:

ARMSTRONG

(Arabic) I love you. (English) I
love you.

43 INT. GOATHERD HUT. DESERT. DAY.

43

ARMSTRONG gives YUSRA water from his flask.

YUSRA

You can't stay with me. It is not
safe.

ARMSTRONG

I saw your house.

Her pain.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)

All your family..

Her pain. His promise:

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)

I thought you were dead; I wanted
to die. I thought I'd never see you
again; I'll never leave you.She looks into his face, sees how complete his resolution is
and knows that she can't make him leave - not now.

44 INT. BEDROOM. MARKHAM FLAT. MORNING.

44

MARKHAM wakes up. Mary isn't there. He gets up. Where is she?

45 INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM. MARKHAM FLAT. MORNING.

45

MARKHAM comes in. MARY in with GEORGE, both asleep, her arm
around him.

46

INT. KITCHEN. MARKHAM FLAT. MORNING.

46

MARKHAM polishing the living hell out of his belt and shining his shoes - all set out on the kitchen table. MARY comes in.

MARKHAM

You know what they teach you at Sandhurst? If you can't see your face in your shoes they're not ready.

MARY

And can you?

MARKHAM

Yes.

MARY

Doing the right thing. Four words you've lived your life by.

MARKHAM

Mary..

MARY

I think it's a wonderful way to live; but I wonder if the things we know best and rely on the most, we can sometimes stop hearing. I'm asking you to be sure you're still listening to the four words.. and what they mean.

47 INT. CELL. MIDDLE EAST HQ. MORNING.

47

JOE spits on his palms and smooths down his hair with them.

48 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

48

BISHOP and ED all set. Footsteps audible down the corridor. HONOR, MARY and ALISON in public gallery look up.

49 INT. CORRIDOR. DAY.

49

The marching in of the prisoner. JOE quick marched down the corridor by two UNIFORMED GUARDS. This is proper parade ground full on smart as fuck marching.

50 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

50

ED, BISHOP, MARY, ALISON, HONOR waiting for his arrival. JOE marched in. He looks about him.

His gaze finds and settles on HONOR. Her support. Five person Board come in including the PRESIDENT (a Brigadier), Captain Melanie Gibby (WRAC) and Lt Colonel Gold. Salutes between board and military personnel. BISHOP bows.

PRESIDENT
Remove head dress.

Everyone does apart from BISHOP who touches his wig.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Yes, Mister Bishop.

51 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

51

MARKHAM in the witness box taking the oath. He has to hold the Bible up and that's hard with his hand shaking. He grips the book tightly to help with the shaking. MARY looking on. HONOR and ALISON also present.

MARKHAM
I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

52 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

52

A few minutes later. MARY, HONOR and ALISON watching. MARKHAM gripping the sides of the witness box. It's not an unnatural stance.

BISHOP
Who gave Captain Martin the order?

MARKHAM
I did.

BISHOP
Personally? Directly?

MARKHAM
Yes.

BISHOP
Did you later discover whether the order had been carried out?

MARKHAM
Yes.

BISHOP
And had it?

A beat. He really doesn't want to be doing this.

BISHOP (CONT'D)
Was the order carried out, Major
Markham?

There's nothing for it.. This has to be done.

MARKHAM

No.

BISHOP sits, job done. ED gets to his feet.

ED

You've dedicated your life to the army, to the corps.. You have an exemplary record; DSO and bar; mentioned in dispatches twice; a career to be proud of..

PRESIDENT

The point of cross examination is to challenge what a witness has said.

GIBBY

I think the president is asking whether you dispute the evidence Major Markham has given, Lieutenant?

ED

No.

PRESIDENT

Then the president is asking where this is all going and what's the damn point of it? I will not allow you to put good men through cross examination which undermines esprit de corps if it doesn't..

ED

(To Markham) What would you have done? If you'd been in Captain Martin's shoes? What if it was his child being held hostage, sentenced to die, clock ticking down.. and you had the chance to save him. Your duty/his child..

It's a brilliant question. ALISON leans forward a little. MARY working so damn hard not to show what she's thinking and feeling. How impossible is this? But he has to answer.

MARKHAM

My duty.

There. Christ. A truly dreadful moment. But it's over now. The PRESIDENT has had enough of this discomfort.

PRESIDENT

Thank you, Major.

But it isn't over.

ED

What if it were your own child?

Complete stillness in court.

Abraham was prepared to kill his own son because God demanded it. What about you, sir? If the army asked it of you? Would it be the right thing?

MARY looking at MARKHAM. Those four words now.

MARKHAM

No. I couldn't. Sorry. So sorry.

ALISON is very moved by what is happening but in particular by the courage of her husband in pursuing this line of questioning. MARY blinking back tears.

PRESIDENT

This is all hypothetical..

ED

If this officer, whom everyone describes as the best and the most upstanding of men, tells us that there are circumstances in which it is right to disobey an order then it proves such a possibility exists. The principle is established. Disobeying an order can be the right thing to do.

GIBBY

He's right.

PRESIDENT

I don't agree. Law and morality are the same thing.

ED

In Nazi Germany?

PRESIDENT

This is not Nazi Germany.

ED

Or at Amritsar. Would you have shot those 600 defenceless Indian men, women and children because your commanding officer ordered you to do it, Brigadier?

The PRESIDENT on the spot.

ED (CONT'D)

My question is not a rhetorical one, sir.

PRESIDENT

It's impertinent.

ED

Which is usually a word put up when there's no real defence other than rank and status.

ALISON loves this. MARY and MARKHAM looking at each other through Ed's next speech.

ED (CONT'D)

If my CO's moral map has room in it for conscience... then this is not a strict liability offence. Shoot these women in the back of the head? No sir, I won't. Gas these Jews. No sir, I can't. Ignore the chance to save a six year old boy from certain death? I'm not sure I can. Why? Because military law and morality are not the same thing. It's our job to look at the quality of this order, it's provenance, it's moral standing.

PRESIDENT

This is a fishing expedition..

MARY looking at MARKHAM. He delivers the next line while still looking at his wife. It's almost as though it's for her.

MARKHAM

There's something I want to say.

Harry Markham's tone here, so personal, so not of the environment he's in, so heartfelt, stops everything dead.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

When I gave the order to Captain Martin.. my son was missing. I believed then that he was certain to die. The end of his life felt like the end of my life. Everything I have done as an army officer, every decision taken, every order given has been with the deep care that the privilege of commanding the best soldiers in the world asks for.

PRESIDENT

Major..

MARKHAM

Not this time. Not then. I have to tell you that when I gave Captain Martin that order I was not fit to do it.. I was unfit to command my men. I'm sorry.

MARY's silent tears. He looks back to her as if to ask: Is that all right? Have I done the right thing?

ED

(To the board) Sir, if the order is not legitimate because the officer giving it is not fit then this court martial..

PRESIDENT

..Asks itself one question. Who gave Major Markham the order?

53 OMITTED 53

54 OMITTED 54

55 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY. 55

TILBROOK in the witness box. MARKHAM has joined MARY, HONOR and ALISON in the public gallery.

BISHOP
Who gave Major Markham the order to
escort Kadir?

TILBROOK

I did.

BISHOP

And you were fit to give the order?

TILBROOK

Of course.

BISHOP sits. ED to his feet.

ED

Where was Kadir being taken?

TILBROOK

We had intelligence that he wasn't secure where he was being held.

ED

That doesn't answer my question.

TILBROOK

I can't say where he was being taken. I would have thought the reason for that is obvious even to you.

GIBBY

Mister Tilbrook, this is not personal.

TILBROOK

I've never known an officer in the British army less good at separating the professional from the personal than Lieutenant Laithwaite. It's best to keep it personal.

ED

You're right. And just to be clear - I hate you and everything you stand for. Why do you think you're here?

TILBROOK

Because Captain Martin saved your life. You feel - because you have the emotional maturity of a child - that you have to make a song and dance on his behalf so that your idiot sentimentality is gratified. Beyond that, frankly, I don't know. After all, the accused made full admissions in interview. Does he say he didn't?

No. A long silence which Tilbrook - in control of the room because he's looking round the faces - lengthens, before:

TILBROOK (CONT'D)
Is that us? [Are we done?]

56 INT/EXT. GOATHERD HUT. DAY.

56

ARMSTRONG brings in an armful of twigs and sticks for making a fire. He goes down on his haunches and using three sticks for each triangle (so six in all) makes a two triangle (one on top of the other and tip to tip) map of Britain. He finds a pebble and marks the spot on his twig map..

ARMSTRONG
Manchester.

YUSRA
Manchester.

ARMSTRONG
Where I was born. A million miles
away.

YUSRA
Manchester.

ARMSTRONG
Yes.

He so wants to kiss her. She looks down at the ground for a long time. Grief comes in but she holds it at arms length.

YUSRA
You have brothers and sisters,
Tony.

ARMSTRONG
Yes.

YUSRA
And your mother and your father..

ARMSTRONG
In Manchester.

YUSRA
Good.

57 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

57

JOE in the witness box. HONOR, ALISON, MARY, MARKHAM and TILBROOK in the public gallery. BISHOP on his feet.

BISHOP
Are you an honest man, Captain
Martin?

JOE

Yes.

BISHOP

Where were you on the afternoon of
Christmas Day?

JOE

I had work that had to be seen to.

BISHOP

What kind of work?

JOE

An interview.

BISHOP

On Christmas Day?

JOE

Yes.

BISHOP

Who were you interviewing?

JOE

A reporter.

BISHOP

Name?

JOE

Martha Franklin.

BISHOP

In the office?

JOE

No.

BISHOP

Somewhere else on the base?

JOE

In a bar.

BISHOP

On Christmas day?

JOE

Yes.

BISHOP

You were supposed to be taking
George Markham for a swim.

JOE

Yes.

BISHOP

Did you tell him why you couldn't
do that?

JOE

No.

BISHOP

Did you tell your wife you were
going off to meet a woman in a bar?

JOE

No.

JOE really struggling.

BISHOP

When did you next see Martha
Franklin?

JOE

The next day.

BISHOP

Boxing day.

JOE

Yes.

BISHOP

Same bar?

JOE

No.

BISHOP

Where?

JOE

The Gordon Hotel.

BISHOP

Another interview.

JOE

Yes.

BISHOP

In the lobby?

JOE

No.

BISHOP

In the bar?

JOE

No. I wanted to..

BISHOP

Where did you meet? For your
interview, Captain Martin.

JOE

In her room.

Joe wants to explain why he was seeing her but Bishop is timing everything in his cross examination to perfection and he hasn't and doesn't let Joe in.

BISHOP

Are you an honest man, Captain Martin?

58 EXT. GOATHERD HUT. DAY.

58

ARMSTRONG takes army issue biscuits out of his pack and gives YUSRA one. A noise outside. They freeze. ARMSTRONG creeps to the doorway. Nothing.

ARMSTRONG

It's fine.

But the reality of their situation has walked into the room. This can't go on. She really knows the future has to be faced; he's working hard to avoid facing it.

YUSRA

I can hide..

She pulls her scarf across her face so only her eyes are showing.

YUSRA (CONT'D)

But with a British soldier beside me - it's not possible..

He can't bear this. He knows she's right; but he doesn't want it to be.

YUSRA (CONT'D)

You must go back.

ARMSTRONG

No.

YUSRA

If you love me, if you want me to
be safe - you have to go back.

59 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

59

JOE in the box. HONOR, ALISON, MARY, MARKHAM and TILBROOK in
the public gallery.

BISHOP

In interview you were asked the
whereabouts of Corporal Armstrong..
Do you remember that?

JOE

Yes.

BISHOP

And you said: "I don't know.." Was
that the truth?

JOE

Not exactly.

BISHOP

Yes or no?

JOE

Not exactly.

BISHOP

You're going to have to explain
that answer for those of us who
believe the truth to be a simple
concept.

JOE

Those who claim the truth is a
simple concept are usually
pretending to be more stupid than
they actually are in order to
persuade the genuinely stupid that
they're right. It's called
politics.

BISHOP

Did you lie in interview about
Armstrong or not?

JOE

I had a good idea where he might be
but I didn't know for sure.

BISHOP

That's not the same as "I don't know.." is it?

JOE

No.

BISHOP

In plain English: you were lying which it seems, you do habitually. Who do you think you are?

MARKHAM looking on.

PRESIDENT

Lunch?

59aA INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

59aA

ED goes over to the witness box to join JOE. The rest of court is clearing. GUARDS are approaching to take Joe back to his cell.

JOE

It's over, isn't it? I'm going down.

ED

Honor.

JOE

What?

ED

I want them to hear her talk about you.

JOE

I don't want her to go through that..

ED

That would be up to her.

59aB INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

59aB

ED on his feet addressing the board. The court empty of all but the lawyers, ED, JOE and TILBROOK sitting behind BISHOP.

PRESIDENT

She's been in court. She's heard all the evidence. The rules say she can't be a witness.

TILBROOK whispering something to BISHOP.

BISHOP

Sir, on this occasion, because she's clearly being called as a character witness only, the Crown are prepared to allow this.

59A INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

59A

HONOR in the witness box. ALISON, MARY, MARKHAM and TILBROOK all watching.

HONOR

My husband is a good man. I know he is.

ED

Thank you.

ED sits. BISHOP to his feet.

BISHOP

How long have you been married?

HONOR

Nine weeks.

BISHOP

And before you were married, how long had you known him?

HONOR

Not long. We met on Valentines day.

BISHOP

How romantic.

HONOR

Yes.

BISHOP

How much do you know about his life before he met you?

She hesitates.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Does the name Valerie Cotton mean anything to you?

HONOR

No.

BISHOP

Really? Nothing?

She shakes her head.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

She drowned herself a week after writing a letter to your husband.

HONOR

Oh my goodness.

BISHOP

The letter said: "I love you. I will leave my husband and my children if you promise to be with me. If you don't make the promise then I cannot live.." She received no reply. You don't know about this, do you?

HONOR

No.

BISHOP

The date of the letter? The second of February 1964. One year and twelve days before the Valentines day on which you met Joe Martin. Was it a dance?

HONOR

Sorry?

BISHOP

Did you meet at a dance?

HONOR

Yes.

BISHOP

Is he a good dancer?

HONOR

Umm... Yes.

BISHOP

That's about all you can say, isn't it? Concerning the character of your husband? He's a good dancer. But you know from this court that he has been visiting Martha Franklin in her hotel room?

HONOR

Yes. I went there. It was so awkward.

BISHOP

I bet. So you went to the Gordon hotel to confront the woman you suspected of being your husband's lover. A year after the suicide of Mrs Cotton and nine weeks after marrying you.. And you lied to Harvey Tilbrook out of shame and to protect the good name of your brand new, thoroughly dishonest husband. Which is, roughly speaking, exactly what you came here to do this morning.

He sits. Job Done. HONOR finds within herself the strength of fight back.

HONOR

No.

HONOR (CONT'D)

No. You don't understand. It was
awkward because I knew he was
lying. Sorry.

TILBROOK's expression. As inscrutable as he can manage
without sunglasses.

GIBBY

What did he tell you?

HONOR

He told me he'd just been seeing
Martha Franklin. Which couldn't
have been true. Because I'd just
been with her.

GIBBY

You can't both be telling the
truth.

HONOR

I know I am..

GIBBY

A confusion of date and time..?

MARKHAM leaving court.

HONOR

No.

PRESIDENT

So one of you is lying.

HONOR

We could ask Martha? That would
clear it up.

PRESIDENT

Ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

59B EXT. OFFICE. BASE. DAY.

59B

MARKHAM unlocks the office door and goes in.

59C INT. OFFICE. DAY.

59C

MARKHAM unlocks the bottom drawer of filing cabinet. He takes
out a log book. He turns the pages to the most recent entries

59D INT. HALLWAY. COURT MARTIAL. DAY.

59D

JOE being escorted by GUARDS back to his cell. ED beside him.

JOE

She won't forgive me for..

ED

It was a secret you didn't tell
her; it's not good but it's not a
lie. Tilbrook is a liar.

JOE

I told you I didn't want her to..

ED

Concentrate. Listen. This is much
bigger than your past. Who was
Harvey Tilbrook meeting? And why?

JOE

Martha will know.

59E INT. MARTHA'S ROOM. GORDON HOTEL. DAY.

59E

HONOR comes in. No Martha. She goes into the bathroom. The
photographs have gone. HONOR sits. She's lost and alone.

59F INT. HIGH COMMISSION. CORRIDOR. DAY.

59F

Tilbrook walking fast down a corridor. He knocks on a door
and goes in without waiting for a response.

59G INT. HIGH COMMISSION. ROOM. DAY.

59G

Tilbrook enters a large room. There are some armchairs across
the far side of the room. There is only one person sitting
there. Calvert looks up. He's holding a whisky.

TILBROOK

There's been a complication.

Calvert looks at him steadily for a moment. Then he looks
down at his trouser leg, picks up a small loose thread and
rolls it between his first finger and his thumb, then lets it
drop to the floor.

60 EXT. CRATER. STREET. DAY. 60

MARTHA being jumped by THREE MEN, bundled into the back of a car and blindfolded. Neither she nor we see the identity (ethnic or personal) of her abductors.

61 OMITTED 61

62 EXT. DESERT. DAY. 62

The car out in the desert now, travelling very fast.

63 EXT. DESERT/CRAYFISH FACTORY. DAY. 63

MARTHA led (blindfolded still) through some sand dunes. It's hard to walk blind on sand and even harder when you think you're being led to a place of execution.

64

INT. CRAYFISH FACTORY. DAY.

64

MARTHA ushered into a small room and told:

NLF FIGHTER 1

Sit.

KADIR comes in. It's a completely bare room.

KADIR
Coca Cola - ice, no lemon.

The blindfold is removed. She looks at him, long and hard.

KADIR (CONT'D)
Shall we begin?

MARTHA
Yusra's family. Was that you?

KADIR
We kill people who betray us. It
works as a deterrent so we don't
have to do it very often.

MARTHA
You can't win - militarily.

KADIR
Britain deep down is ashamed of
Empire. She doesn't want to be seen
talking about her shame but she
feels it and always will.

Suddenly, she knows it. The killer question..

MARTHA
Are you talking to them?

And a remarkable answer..

KADIR
Yes.

MARTHA
If that were true you wouldn't tell
me..

KADIR
Go on..

MARTHA
Why not carry on the negotiations
instead of wrecking them by telling
a journalist?

KADIR
True independence is not given away
but taken.

MARTHA
You want me to publish a story
about secret talks?

KADIR

People in Britain need to confront their shame. I am thinking of Great Britain as well as Aden.

MARTHA

The benevolent terrorist.

KADIR

I don't like that word. Mandela is a terrorist? Kenyatta? Nehru? Anyway, the British government doesn't talk to terrorists and certainly not about the handing over of power to them..

He looks at her long and hard. She gets it.

MARTHA

You're using me to expose the hypocrisy.

KADIR

They told George Markham's father to his face that they would not deal with me when they were dealing with me. They allowed him to beat me up to protect their hypocrisy. That's why I wanted you. It's your only test - is the story true? If it is, does it matter how you get to it?

MARTHA

Who have you met?

KADIR

A very distinguished and rare old bird. The Minister for the Colonies.

MARTHA

How can I verify this?

KADIR

Your laundry is back in your drawer; the fan is off; the desk light is on; the photographs destroyed.

MARTHA

You've been spying on me..

Then it clicks. And he, seeing it click, confirms it..

KADIR

Not us.

65

OMITTED

65

66 INT. MARTHA'S ROOM. GORDON HOTEL. MORNING. DAY ELEVEN. 66

HONOR asleep in the chair. MARTHA comes in.

MARTHA

Don't talk to me. I have to write a story and it has to be now. You look terrible.

HONOR

Joe has a past I didn't know about.

MARTHA

You found out..

HONOR

In court.

MARTHA

Barristers are bullies.

HONOR nods. The fact of the bullying cross examination and its memory is an upsetting thing - Martha mistakes this for her feelings about Joe's secret and starts to help her..

MARTHA (CONT'D)

We all have secrets, Honor..

HONOR doesn't. MARTHA stops and looks at HONOR.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Apart from you.

HONOR

They thought that by telling me something I didn't know about Joe they'd turn me away from him.. and this. But they're wrong. I love him and I don't know him. Both things can be true. The first is the one that matters.

MARTHA smiles - she's so incorruptible, this young woman and Martha loves her for it.

HONOR (CONT'D)

I thought you were dead.

MARTHA

Why?

HONOR

Because it all depends on you.

MARTHA

What? To do what?

HONOR

To tell the court martial that
Harvey Tilbrook is a liar.

MARTHA

I have a story to write. It's the
biggest of my career.

HONOR

Then Joe will go to prison.
What did you say? The little man
has to pay the price. Every time.

MARTHA and HONOR look at each other. A huge decision for
Martha. MARTHA gets on the phone. HONOR looks on.

HONOR (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MARTHA

Martha Franklin, Washington Post.
Is the Minister available?
Just a few questions - Oh um..
(MORE)

MARTHA (CONT'D)
about Hong Kong and the lease with
China. Sure. Is he overseas? He's
in London? Thank you.

She digs around in a drawer pulling out old copies of
newspapers until she finds what she's looking for. She hands
HONOR the paper - a big photograph of Colin Calvert smiling.

66A INT. MARKHAM QUARTERS. DAY.

66A

MARKHAM looking in the mirror, adjusting his belt. MARY
behind him.

MARY

You don't have to keep going there.

MARKHAM picks up the log book.

MARKHAM

It's the right thing to do, Mary.

His hands are not shaking. He smiles at her. For once, she knows less than he does about himself.

66B EXT. COURT MARTIAL. DAY.

66B

MARKHAM waiting for and then intercepting ED.

MARKHAM

Something for you.

ED

What is it?

MARKHAM

Redemption.

66C INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

66C

JOE in court. His GUARDS are present but nobody else. ED comes in with the log book already open at the right page and sits down next to JOE.

ED

His code name is Owl.

JOE

Who is he?

ED

Date.. time. 1020 hours pick up;
delivery at 10.55. And the map co-
ordinates are for the Gordon Hotel.

JOE

Who is he, Ed?

HONOR comes in. She puts the photograph of Calvert in front of them.

HONOR

Colin Calvert. Cabinet Minister.

JOE

Yes, that's him.

ED

So, at precisely the same time that Harvey Tilbrook is claiming he was meeting Martha Franklin, which we know to be a lie, the Minister for the Colonies was in the same place at the same time. That's a real coincidence...

ED looking at next entry in the log for Calvert/Owl.

ED (CONT'D)

Here he is again. Owl.

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)
Map co-ordinates eight eight four
triple one..

JOE
No.

No?

JOE (CONT'D)
That must be wrong. Triple one. I
remember them now. That's where I
was taking Kadir..

ED
Starfish.

ED stares at JOE. Oh my God.

JOE
Starfish and Owl.

HONOR
The Minister was here to meet the
terrorist. The Government are
talking to the men who would have
killed George Markham.

JOE looks at HONOR with real gratitude and hope for
forgiveness. However, just as HONOR looks back at him, the
door bangs open and people begin to enter court. The moment
passes.

66D INT. MARKHAM QUARTERS. DAY.

66D

MARKHAM comes in. He looks so much better. MARY smiles.

MARY
Home early..

MARKHAM
I thought I could take George
swimming.

67 INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

67

MARTHA in the witness box. Her shirt buttons undone low.
ALISON, HONOR and TILBROOK watching.

PRESIDENT
One more button, if you wouldn't
mind, Miss Franklin.

MARTHA
Oh. I'm sorry.

She undoes another button - the opposite of what he meant..
as she well knows.

PRESIDENT

Harvey Tilbrook told us he met you
at the Gordon Hotel.

MARTHA

I have never met Harvey Tilbrook at the Gordon Hotel.

GIBBY

He told us he was there.

MARTHA

Not to see me.

PRESIDENT

There are lots of reasons why people lie - some of them good reasons..

MARTHA gets out the photograph of Colin Calvert.

MARTHA

This is why he was lying then and to you now.

BISHOP

It's customary for prosecution counsel to see an exhibit before it goes before the court.

MARTHA

What a good idea.

She hands it to the CLERK who gives it to BISHOP.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Rare and distinguished..

ED

Like an owl. Or a starfish.

What's he on about. TILBROOK stares at ED. He knows. Stunned, terrified, capable of anything.

BISHOP

Would the court be so kind as to grant a short adjournment? I need to take instructions.

PRESIDENT

Five minutes.

68

OMITTED

68

69

INT. COURT. INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY.

69

BISHOP in with TILBROOK deep in conversation. MARTHA comes in

BISHOP

You're halfway through your evidence - you can't speak to anyone.

MARTHA

You're a thief and a liar.

TILBROOK

What do you know about anything?

MARTHA

I know you've been talking to Kadir. I know the distinguished cabinet minister is in Aden to hold secret talks with the leader of a terrorist organization who kidnap small children. I know his people in London are lying about his whereabouts. I know just how embarrassing all that would be if it's the next thing I say in the witness box. What would the headline be? Secret talks to hand over colony to Marxist terrorists?

BISHOP

You're threatening us.

MARTHA

He said five minutes. Time's up.
You boys ready?

She turns to go.

TILBROOK

There'd be no story of course...
You'd give up your story.

She looks at both men. She knows she's done it.

70

INT. COURT ROOM. DAY.

70

ALL waiting. Tense. BISHOP comes in.

PRESIDENT

Mister Bishop..

BISHOP

After much careful consideration the Crown has taken the view that there are now compelling reasons why it is not in the interests of justice or the national interest to pursue this prosecution further.

JOE
What's he saying?

ED
He's saying you're a free man.

ALISON stands up. JOE hugs ED. The relief is profound. Laughter and (almost) tears. ED looks up at ALISON and she doesn't look away. She nods at him. She's telling him he's done well and this means everything to ED. JOE looks up at the public gallery. HONOR not there. The court starting to clear. JOE's POV. No Honor. ED clocks this. Then through the throng of people (some milling, some departing) there she is. She's come down into the court room proper and there she stands, looking at him. JOE goes to her. He holds her and holds her and holds her some more. ED looking on - now he really knows he's done a good thing. MARTHA looking on. HONOR looking over Joe's shoulder at Martha and her eyes say thank you, thank you, thank you. JOE spins her round. JOE smiles at MARTHA. She smiles, goes to the door, turns and looks back at the happy couple. She's done a good thing - in close up, she's almost Ava Gardner at the end of Showboat. Then she's gone.

71 EXT. GOATHERD HUT. DAY.

71

ARMSTRONG watching YUSRA adjust her clothing slightly. He's so in love with her. She catches him looking at her. She smiles and his heart heaves.

ARMSTRONG
Yusra..

YUSRA
Yes?

ARMSTRONG
Sorry..

YUSRA
Tony?

ARMSTRONG
I was just.. I was just wondering..
Would it be all right if I kiss
you?

She understands from his tone the great weight of what he's saying, but not what he means.. For a moment ARMSTRONG thinks he might have said the wrong thing.

YUSRA
I don't know this word - kiss.

ARMSTRONG
I'll show you.

He kisses her. Soft, gentle, fragile. He moves back a fraction in order to start the wonderfulness all over again.

YUSRA
(Arabic) Kiss.

ARMSTRONG
What?

YUSRA
Kiss.

They kiss. Impossibly tender, more like a first kiss even than the first kiss.

72 OMITTED

72

72A OMITTED

72A

72B INT. MARTHA'S ROOM. GORDON HOTEL. DAY.

72B

An opened suitcase on the bed. Martha packing to go. She puts the last items of clothing into the suitcase. She turns and looks at her typewriter on the desk. She goes to the typewriter and stands for a moment in front of it. And then she packs it away.

73

INT. LAITHWAITE FLAT. BEDROOM. DAY.

73

ED getting dressed for inspection, looking in the mirror. ALISON comes in and looks at him looking in the mirror. She sits on the bed. He turns from the mirror to look at her.

ED

I've done all I can. But there's one more thing.. No, two.

ALISON

What?

ED

I'm thinking of leaving the army. I don't think it helps us to be fighting against all the damn rules and..

ALISON

It helps them.

ED

What?

ALISON

The army. It's good for the British army to have you in it. It's what you were doing in court - saving Joe Martin and making them all think very hard about what they should be. They need you. What's the second thing?

ED

No.

ALISON

Ed..

ED

Nothing.

ALISON

What?

ED

I'd leave you. If it made you happier.. I'd go.

This is heartbreaking stuff. A love like this. Tears in her eyes but then she pulls herself together because she has to be truthful now, she can't only be emotional.

ALISON

I'm going to have the babies. And let's see. Let's start with new life and see how we go.

ED
New lives.

ALISON
New lives.

74 EXT/INT. MARTIN FLAT. DAY.

74

JOE in uniform looking in full length mirror saying what he
wouldn't say on the plane when he was a very different man.

JOE
She sells sea shells on the sea
shore. The sea shells she sells are
sea shells I'm sure.

A perfect rendition at a decent (but not racing) speed. HONOR
comes in near the end of the tongue twister.

HONOR
You can't go back..

To the past, to rewrite it.

JOE
No. How do I look?

Smart enough for inspection?

HONOR
Terrible.

JOE
Thank you, darling.

HONOR
I love it when you call me darling.

She can't help it - this return to the past (despite what
she's just said) - and there's real pathos here for both of
them - but/and it's also true, she does love it.

JOE
I'm sorry.

HONOR
We didn't know each other.

JOE
And now..

She smiles a wonderful smile which speaks of a future.
They'll make a good go of it, these two.

JOE (CONT'D)
What do you mean I look terrible?

HONOR
Ten years older, dirty.. *

Laughter. *

JOE
Rugged? *

HONOR
Smelly. *

JOE
Windswept and interesting. *

Laughter fading and replaced with feeling into: *

HONOR
More handsome.. more open.. Real. *

They kiss. His eyes shut; hers open. *

75 INT. MARKHAM FLAT. DAY.

75

MARY checking MARKHAM looks smart.

MARKHAM
They lied to us. They lied and
lied. The world upside down.

MARY
And then you did the right thing,
Harry and the world righted itself.
Go out there, inspect your men.

76 EXT. DESERT/GOATHERD HUT. THE END OF THE DAY.

76

ARMSTRONG at the pool - shirt off - splashing his face with water. YUSRA walking up to a vantage point to watch the sun go down.

YUSRA
Tony! The sun is going down. Come
and see.

ARMSTRONG's POV. His love for her. He stands up.

ARMSTRONG
Wait. Yusra.

She turns and walks up to the top of the slope so that she is stood against the sky. The slope/Yusra (in black)/the sky (blue) with as little interfering detail as possible. A flurry of birds fly up in a fluster from the other side of the slope beyond the horizon. ARMSTRONG looks up at them.

Just as he begins a thought about why the birds have been disturbed, YUSRA (she's half a second ahead of him) turns towards him. Bang. A shot from nowhere. She crumples. YUSRA goes down. A single shot in the back. ARMSTRONG running and falling and running up the slope to get to her. Slo mo. Distorted sound. He reaches her. She's dying.

She tries with all the strength she has left in her to live but she's going and those remarkable eyes hold on his and then close for the last time.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)

Noooooooooooo.

He's wild with grief and then he's gentle with her and then back to wild again. Then he stands and blunders a few steps up to the crest of the slope so that he's totally exposed to whoever has just shot Yusra. He holds his arms out wide and yells out his pain to her invisible killer.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)

Please. Please. Shoot me. KILL ME.
Pleeeeaaase.

The desert and the heat carry on doing what they do, being what they are and ignoring the crazed young man who is falling out of his life. The sun and the sky are yellow and blue and infinitely large and they pay him no attention as he goes round and round calling on death to come to him, arms wide, howling out his agony.

A single bugle plays The Last Post over the end of this and into:

77 OMITTED

77

78 OMITTED

78

79 OMITTED

79

80 OMITTED

80

81 EXT. PARADE GROUND. BASE. SUNSET.

81

ALL standing to attention. MARKHAM, JOE and ED stand with BAXTER to one side facing the Union Jack. ALL the men turn their heads to face the flag as the bugler plays. The three women - MARY, HONOR, ALISON stand on the first floor verandah, looking on. The Last Post finishes.

The flag flutters and flaps in the breeze.