

number 10
series three

a drama series
by jonathan myerson

about the research process and content:

This is the third season of an ongoing series commissioned by BBC.

Thus, in these scripts, the characters have by and large been established, though each episode was preceded by a short introduction to the five major characters, explaining their individual roles in Downing Street.

The series is set in a parallel present – different government, exactly the same country and issues. It was never intended to be a comment on or satire of current politicians.

The research problem was to find issues which were currently of great concern in the UK but which had not recently come to prominence (if they had, the play was likely to turn into a satire of what had happened – as opposed to an examination of *what might happen*). The research task was then to find a sufficiently urgent way of dramatising the issue so that it would play out within a single day – nearly all the episodes in the series take place within a 24-hour span.

This series of 45-minute plays was broadcast in November 2009.

number 10: episode one

“be a good chap” by jonathan myerson

cast

ADAM ARMSTRONG, Labour Prime Minister

MONICA, his speechwriter

POLLY, Number 10 Chief Of Staff

STEVE, Number 10 Director Of Communications

and

SIR COSMO

SIMON LAITY

LEWIS SMILEY MP

BILL FLAGG, NEC

once

PETER CHADWICK

PALACE EQUERRY doubles with TV PRODUCER

and

ASSORTED REPORTERS

DRIVER

SCENE 1. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. WEDNESDAY: SIX DAYS AFTER
THE GENERAL ELECTION. 10.15AM.

ADAM AND STEVE ARE BEING STEERED DISCREETLY UP THE STAIRS BY A
 YOUNG EQUERRY

EQUERRY This way, please, Prime Mini – (HE STOPS HIMSELF,
 DOUBTING) This way, please, sir.

ADAM You were right the first time. I am still PM.

EQUERRY Forgive me, Prime Minister.

ADAM She has yet to ask for my resignation.

EQUERRY Her Majesty prefers not to make such requests.

STEVE Her Majesty simply sends someone to remind you that there
 still remains time to think again.

EQUERRY Sir Cosmo will meet you outside Her Majesty's rooms.

ADAM Steve, here, will handle the reporters afterwards.

EQUERRY Are we expecting any?

STEVE Out front, the thirty-eight vans parked up on Green Park?
 Everything from Radio Pitlochry to Azerbaijani Pay-Per-
 View.

EQUERRY Traditionally we don't answer press questions.

ADAM These monarchs have it so easy, don't they?

DURING THIS, SUDDENLY APPROACHING:

CHADWICK (BLUFF SURPRISE) Adam.

ADAM Peter.

SIR COSMO Forgive me, Prime Minister. Not what I – (POINTEDLY REMINDING HIM) the Cumberland Stairs, Philip.

EQUERRY Indeed. I'm so sorry, Prime Minister, I should have brought you....

MEANWHILE OVER THE END OF THIS:

ADAM Have a good chat, Peter?

CHADWICK She's not giving much away.

ADAM Does she ever?

CHADWICK She did express a desire to visit the Holy Land.

ADAM Somewhere less controversial.

CHADWICK Which is maybe her way of saying she's getting pretty hacked off and isn't it time her kingdom had a government.

ADAM Happy to form one just as soon as –

CHADWICK We won.

ADAM We got more votes.

CHADWICK We got more MPs.

ADAM Yet strangely HMQ didn't ask you to form a government either.

CHADWICK She will. Count on it.

ADAM At least we could stop living out of suitcases, I suppose.

MOVING OFF:

CHADWICK Happy to send anything on to you, that we find. Just leave a forwarding address.

CHADWICK IS NOW OUT OF EARSHOT

STEVE (MILDLY BAFFLED) When did you get so chummy with him?

ADAM He's a slimy little dog-hole and I wouldn't throw him a rope if he was drowning in viper shit but you have to do the right thing, don't you, Sir Cosmo?

STEVE Careful, boss, you never know where there's a live mic.

ADAM Does Her Majesty bug the palace, Sir Cosmo?

SIR COSMO Forgive me, Prime Minister, you were supposed to be brought in via the Cumberland Staircase, while Mister Chadwick departed by the -

ADAM Shall we get on with it? Generally I find it's best not to leave monarchs hanging round with nothing to do. They tend to start talking about Divine Rights and things.

SIR COSMO (ANXIOUS) Her Majesty no longer calls on -

ADAM Joking, Sir Cosmo, joking.

AND STRAIGHT INTO:

TITLES

SCENE 2. DOWNING STREET: STRATEGY UNIT. 10.20AM.

POLLY IS FRANTICALLY SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING IN A CRATE

POLLY Where are the bloody NEC reports?

MONICA The blue crate.

POLLY Monica, there must be at least thirty blue –

MONICA (AU CONTRAIRE) Blue, turquoise, purple, heliotrope and lilac.

POLLY Heliotrope?

MONICA I was hopeless at art, I made a thing of the theory.

POLLY (POINTING, CHECKING) That's blue?

MONICA The blue crate that says Foreign Policy.

POLLY (SHE OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T HEAR) Labour Party National Executive Reports, Monica. Anything but blue.

MONICA (STRIDING OVER TO THE BOX IN QUESTION AND FLIPPING OPEN THE LID AND THEN LIFTING OUT FOLDERS, KNOWING WHAT EACH WILL BE) Foreign Policy, China; Foreign Policy India and Nepal; Nuclear Proliferation East of Tehran, West of Beijing, 1998 to 2008; National Executive Reports 2003 to Present. Or did you want earlier?

POLLY You hid these, didn't you?

MONICA I watched Steve pack them.

POLLY Why didn't you get him to – (SHE STOPS HERSELF) – bloody Lib Dems, bloody bloody Lib Dems.

MONICA It's not their fault.

POLLY We cannot run a government from a heap of packing crates.

AS SHE MOVES AROUND THE ROOM, FLIPPING OPEN CRATES

POLLY What if something happens? Something that requires policy? Maybe even something momentous like a decision?

MONICA We'll get together and form a consensus. No policy allowed.

POLLY Might as well be a bloody Lib Dem then.

MONICA (SLIDING PAST POLLY) Excuse me, I've been looking for that –

POLLY Careful.

MONICA No, no, no.

BUT IT'S TOO LATE, THE CRATES SLIDE DOWN AND THERE IS AN ALMIGHTY CRASH AS THE HEAP TOPPLES ACROSS THE FLOOR

POLLY That was an avalanche waiting to happen.

MONICA (EXASPERATED, CRACKING) It's not fair. It's not. Everyone except us is allowed to do things. Everyone except the actual current British government. They're all out there, clogging up Millbank, talking about the bloody constitution (which, incidentally, nobody has found the time to write down for the last six hundred years) and we've got a country to run but we're not allowed to even unpack. So let's just give the Lib Dems what they want and start doing the thing.

POLLY They're not getting Proportional Representation – not from Adam, not from nobody.

MONICA What if the Tories crack first, start reeling in the Lib Dems with a referendum on PR?

POLLY They can't. And they know we won't.

MONICA I've played poker – well, whist – and someone always folds first.

POLLY Not to mention Trident – the Lib Dems want it cancelled and no way can True Blue Tories leave our nation defenceless.

MONICA Maybe they're going a bit turquoise, heliotrope?

POLLY You've got issues.

MONICA It's a system.

POLLY It's all over the floor.

MONICA That's why we need to get Adam to do a deal.

POLLY You want PR?

MONICA I want to form a government.

POLLY Only the Queen does that.

MONICA It's so obvious. A teeny-weeny bit of PR.

POLLY The party wouldn't wear it.

MONICA The party might have to try it on. The Tories got more MPs than us - or have you forgotten that glorious night last week?

POLLY The Tories got half a million less votes than us.

MONICA The Lib Dems got almost a fifth of the popular vote and only fifty-five MPs.

POLLY Who hold the balance of power. Cheap at half the price.

MONICA One little PR concession?

POLLY (GOING) I'm watching you, Smith.

CUT TO:

SCENE 3. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. 10:40AM.

ADAM HAS JUST LEFT THE QUEEN'S APARTMENTS.
WHILE WALKING DOWN THE STAIRS, THROUGH A WINDOW, HE HAS
JUST CLOCKED THE LIB DEM LEADER'S CAR ARRIVING.

ADAM I know that car. That's Donoghue's. What the bloody hell is she doing here?

SIR COSMO Her Majesty retains the right to consult any of her subjects at any time.

ADAM Subjects, yes, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats, no.

SIR COSMO If we could just continue our progress down? (HE STEERS ADAM BACK DOWN THE STAIRS) I believe you were informed that she would see each of the party leaders in turn, in order of elected members.

ADAM I am the Prime Minister and, sorry to boast, we secured the largest vote. Thirty-six point nine percent of the popular vote.

SIR COSMO But not the most Members of Parliament.

ADAM No party has an outright majority of members. Now it's all about a mandate to govern.

SIR COSMO I hate to dwell on this, Prime Minister, but the country has now been without a government for six days.

ADAM I am Prime Minister.

SIR COSMO Only because you have not yet been called on to win a vote in the House.

ADAM I am assembling a coalition which will command a clear majority.

SIR COSMO Mister Chadwick has informed Her Majesty that he also –
(STOPPING HIMSELF) – I am in danger of being indiscreet.
I must remind you, sir, of what we discussed before the
election.

ADAM (HE KNOWS WHAT THIS MEANS) I have absolutely no
intention of embarrassing Her Majesty. In fact, I just told
her.

SIR COSMO There must be a political settlement, politically arrived at.

ADAM Then I know exactly what she needs to be saying to the Lib
Dems. She should bloody warn them that if they insist on
Proportional Representation, no-one can form a majority
and I shall request a Dissolution of Parliament.

SIR COSMO Having requested one six weeks ago, it would not be
advisable to place that demand in front of Her Majesty.

ADAM She can advise me not to. And then I shall go right ahead.

SIR COSMO The monarch has not refused a request for dissolution since
before the Reform Act of 1832.

ADAM Then we can all get in the history books, can't we?

SIR COSMO Prime Minister.

THEY HAVE NOW WALKED TO THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS AND OUT INTO
THE COURTYARD WHERE HIS CAR HAS PULLED UP.

ADAM (HANDSHAKE) Thank you, Sir Cosmo. We'll be in touch.

SIR COSMO I have no doubt.

HE IS IN THE CAR AND THE DOOR IS SHUT.

ADAM Stuck-up arse-licking Etonian wanker.

DRIVER Sir?

ADAM Sorry, unforgivable. Tautology. Not to mention physically impossible.

DRIVER (UNFLAPPED) Downing Street, sir?

ADAM Why not? Everyone else seems to want to go there.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4. ITV STUDIOS. MILLBANK. 10:45AM

STEVE IS BEING USHERED INTO AN EMPTY STUDIO

STEVE Where's the camera crew? Where's the interviewer?

PRODUCER We don't need one.

STEVE You know I hate surprise parties.

PRODUCER False pretences, Steve, when I said you were coming here for an interview... I just want to talk.

STEVE (DISAPPOINTED) I've got my facts all here. I've even memorised some of them – and you know what I'm like with numbers. Boundary changes explaining seven lost seats, nationalist surge explaining three lost in Scotland. I've got breakdown of popular vote by race and gender which shows a countrywide mandate for Labour to –

PRODUCER We've all heard those numbers too many times in the last few days.

STEVE They're still just as big. And they're still better than Tory numbers.

PRODUCER We want to offer you a job.

STEVE I've got a job.

PRODUCER He's not going to pull it off. Tories got twelve more seats than you.

STEVE It'll be eleven after the Lancaster East recount.

PRODUCER It'll still be more than you. You Guys Lost The Election.

STEVE Thirty-seven percent of the popular vote to the Tories' thirty-five.

PRODUCER Still not a majority.

STEVE No party has got over fifty percent of the popular vote since the war.

PRODUCER The Lib Dems can't do a deal with you, you lost.

STEVE Right now, the Lib Dems will do it with anyone offering PR.

PRODUCER We're getting off the subject here.

STEVE I work for the Prime Minister.

PRODUCER You work for Adam Armstrong. Currently front runner for Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

STEVE He won't get the job, they'll say you can't be Prime Minister and Opposition Leader.

PRODUCER You're good. Anything I say, you've got a comeback. Sharp, sometimes even funny.

STEVE You're not supposed to be nice to me. Prime Minister's Official Spokesman, remember?

PRODUCER But soon to be lead presenter of Sunday Politics.

STEVE What happened to Andrew?

PRODUCER He can go to Britain's Simply Got X Factor. We want you.

STEVE (STARTING TO BE TEMPTED) I work for the Prime Minister.

PRODUCER We were thinking of maybe two hundred k for a ten-month contract. Renegotiable after that. Percentage of syndication.

A MOMENT.
THEN WITH A LOT LESS CONVICTION

STEVE I work for the Prime Minister.

PRODUCER You'll control the show's agenda. You do the top interviews.
You choose your team.

ANOTHER MOMENT

STEVE Two hundred k?

PRODUCER Plus share options.

STEVE Let me make a call.

PRODUCER (WHILE STEVE DIALS) No job too big to give up.

STEVE (INTO PHONE) Monica, we've got a bit of a situation here.
> ITV studios, Millbank.
> Can you? As soon as.
> OK. Thanks. Ask for Studio...?

PRODUCER Three

STEVE (INTO PHONE) Studio Three. (HE CLOSSES THE PHONE)

PRODUCER Monica Smith? She's cute.

STEVE (BACK OFF) I love her like a daughter.

PRODUCER (WOULD I?) I'm a married man.

STEVE And I work for the Prime Minister.

CUT TO:

SCENE 5. DOWNING STREET: ENTRANCE HALL. 10.50AM

ADAM IS STORMING IN.
AS MONICA IS LEAVING.

ADAM Monica, get me Gwen Donoghue on the phone.

MONICA (TRYING TO GO) I was just on my way to Millbank to –

ADAM We've got Queenie ganging up with the Tories. Probably discussed it over a shredded fox on Sunday.

MONICA But Lib Dems turned down a Royal Commission on Proportional Representation.

ADAM Royal Commissions are so last weekend.

POLLY (APPROACHING) You offer even a hint of PR and the party will unseat you.

ADAM Either we form the government or the Tories do.

POLLY There'll still be a leadership election.

MONICA Actually you don't have to be party leader to be Prime Minister.

POLLY Sorry?

MONICA May 1940 to October 1940, Winston was PM, Chamberlain was Party Leader.

ADAM (ABOUT MONICA) Isn't she a little marvel?

POLLY Exceptional circumstances? As far as I'm aware we are not currently fighting a titanic struggle against world-dominating, self-adoring fascism.

ADAM If you'd just been with me at the Palace, you wouldn't say that.

POLLY So you'll tickle the Lib Dems, get their fifty-five votes, and lose a hundred of your own.

ADAM It's six and a half days since the election and Britain still hasn't got a government.

POLLY The National Executive will - you've heard Bill Flagg, he'd rather eat his own head than -

ADAM They'd rather be out of government?

POLLY They'd rather do ten years in opposition on the promise of being in total power again after that. (IF) We have PR, there will never be a single-party majority again in the House.

ADAM What you mean is they can't bear to work with the Liberal Democrats.

POLLY That sums it up adequately.

MONICA We did our Carbon Rationing Bill entirely thanks to an amendment from a Lib Dem MP.

ADAM I liked him. He had balls. In a wet kind of way.

POLLY That image will stay with me longer than I want.

MONICA Lewis Smiley, Devon Coastal.

ADAM Fish him out, Monica. Towel him down. Get him making some discreet enquiries.

MONICA (KEEN TO GO) OK, I'll get right on to -

POLLY (STOPPING HER) There's no point.

ADAM PR would give us a permanent centre-left coalition. Lib Dems and Labour combined have polled well over fifty percent of the popular vote since Magna Carta.

POLLY Do it and you're giving the parliamentary party only half the prospect of government posts.

ADAM There's more to government than jobs for the boys.

POLLY Not for the boys, there isn't.

ADAM Go, Monica, bring me the still beating heart of a Lib Dem.

MONICA (GOING) I'm on it.

POLLY If it leaks that you're in negotiations, the Tories will move. Then whatever you offer Donoghue, they'll double it.

ADAM We're going hush-hush back-channels, aren't we, Monica, along the Devon Coast?

MONICA Lewis is one hundred percent reli - [*able*]

POLLY The National Executive voted unanimously against any negotiation on the basis of PR.

ADAM That's because the National Executive feels tainted by the whole sordid business of government, because they'd rather be in opposition forever than soil their shiny white souls.

POLLY Principles.

ADAM Pussies.

POLLY Socialists.

ADAM Dipsticks.

POLLY You really want a leadership challenge?

ADAM Bring it on. I'm getting good at elections.

POLLY You just can't accept that you lost that one.

ADAM You should work at the Palace.

CUT TO:

SCENE 6. ITV STUDIOS. 11:00AM

STEVE HAS TOLD HER ABOUT THE OFFER AND MONICA IS APPALLED.

STEVE I'm doing them a favour, I'm taking voluntary redundancy.

MONICA It's not on offer.

STEVE We go into opposition, they can't use all of us, there's going to have to be a cull.

MONICA You're central, Steve. You're The Man.

STEVE I'm not a politics guy, I'm not tribal. I'm a media guy.

MONICA That's why we need you. You're our voice of reason.

STEVE And currently slightly less welcome than the Voice of Albania.

MONICA Loyalty, Steve - we're still in the game. You go now, what are people going to say?

STEVE "Smart lad, he looks after himself. And isn't he handsome, sitting on that sofa interviewing George Clooney?"

MONICA They're making a story out of you, can't you see it? "We got the PM's news guy, the HMS Armstrong is sinking."

STEVE (HIS BOMBSHELL) And I want you to come with me.

MONICA What?

STEVE (VERY EXCITED ABOUT ALL THIS) You could be my Number Two. I made it part of the deal.

MONICA You want to be Number One Rat? First to jump ship?

STEVE (CONTINUING) You make a profile on this show, you'll walk into a constituency in five years' time. We get back in then, you're straight into Junior Minister.

MONICA I don't do TV. I don't do idle chatter.

STEVE You've been doing it for the last three and half years.

MONICA (AMAZED) Number Ten, "idle"?

STEVE Every time we try to get Adam to think about something really radical, what happens?

MONICA (THE SHIBBOLETH) We balance the needs in the real world.

STEVE He waters it down, he pulls it back. He's so middle of the road. If he was a car, he'd be a Volvo, if he was a jumper, he'd be a Pringle, if he was a writer, he'd be Nick Hornby.

MONICA That's been building up quite a while, hasn't it?

STEVE I feel a whole new man. (EXASPERATION) Whenever we want to really change the place, do something radical – Adam blocks it.

MONICA (LACKING CONVICTION) You're not being fair.

STEVE Your Street Sex Offences Bill, make the client the criminal not the prostitute, he sold you down the river. Our prison reform policy, everyone backed it – they allowed it to get amended out of existence.

MONICA That's why we need a second term. We can make it happen this time.

STEVE (GET REAL) In alliance with the Lib Dems?

MONICA (NOTICING, REALISING) This is a TV studio.

STEVE So?

MONICA All these microphones and recording equipment and stuff.

STEVE It's not live. All the lights are off, notice?

MONICA Let's go back, Steve. I'm working for the Prime Minister for the next five years.

STEVE Prime Minister of where?

CUT TO:

SCENE 7. DOWNING STREET, PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE.
11:15AM

ADAM IS BLAMING POLLY FOR THE BAD NEWS THEY ARE WATCHING ON THE TV [*BACKGROUND TEXT TO BE PROVIDED*]

POLLY It's not my fault.

ADAM Why can't you bring me any good news?

POLLY (SHHHH) Would you mind if we listened, please?

TV NEWS REPORTER (IN FIELD OUTSIDE) That's right, I'm here outside Thorpefell Nuclear Reprocessing Plant. We are now led to believe that the leak from the cooling tanks was discovered by chance. The spent uranium rods are clad in aluminium and lowered into water-filled tanks for storage. This prevents them from over-heating but it is now understood that the aluminium cladding has dissolved and reacted with the water.

ADAM (OVER CONTINUING TV) They're international physicists and they can't remember H₂O plus something equals something - something that usually explodes?

POLLY They had their eyes on a higher prize.

TV REPORTER (CONTINUING) Crews have gone in to control the leak but there is no further update from the Nuclear Installation Inspectorate at this point.

ADAM All this to build a bomb we never used?

POLLY We had some very spectacular test explosions. Atolls you never knew existed suddenly didn't exist.

ADAM Why can't we just leave it in the tanks, whatever it's turned into now?

POLLY Fifty years, Adam, the tanks are crumbling.

ADAM I still don't see how a cooling tank falls apart without anyone noticing?

POLLY Two years ago they started sending in robots to extract the radio-active material. Remember that cheque you signed for three billion?

ADAM (AMAZED) It's costing three billion?

POLLY Three billion every year. Hang on to this job and you'll be signing another one pretty soon.

ADAM Why haven't they shut it down? Don't they understand Health and Safety?

POLLY Because you introduced personal carbon allowances. Because everyone wants to buy nuclear-generated electricity.

ADAM I get blamed either way.

POLLY There is a way to spread the blame....

ADAM (KNOWING WHERE SHE'S GOING) I'm not sitting down with Chadwick. Let alone Gwen -

POLLY You're a caretaker government.

ADAM This isn't a policy issue. It's an event.

POLLY The leak could spread. Then the question is do you shut down or play the odds. That's policy.

ADAM It's crisis management.

POLLY And the next government, the next real one I mean, gets to clean up the mess.

ADAM I have put my name, my reputation to reducing our carbon footprint. Nuclear is essential for that. You know Chadwick

doesn't give a damn about global warming, probably looking forward to polar bears drifting down onto his estate so he can shoot them and put their heads over his fireplace. Which he won't need, Leicestershire by then being a sub-tropical zone.

POLLY (IMPLACABLE) You have to form COBRA and you have to invite the other guys.

ADAM Even the Lib Dems?

POLLY (THE UP-SIDE) Might give you a chance to have your quiet word.

ADAM (BUT) She's the one person you don't want me to talk to.

POLLY It's fine if I'm listening in.

CUT TO:

SCENE 8. HOUSE OF COMMONS LOBBY. 11:45AM.

A BUSY LOBBY SO SMILEY IS PANICKED, ESPECIALLY WHEN SHE TELLS HIM TO BE DISCREET

SMILEY What if they see you talking to me?

MONICA We're old muckers.

SMILEY (PLEASED TO HEAR THIS) Are we?

MONICA We worked together on the Carbon Allowances Bill.

SMILEY I enjoyed that.

MONICA Thing is, we want to go on working with you.

SMILEY That'd be fun.

MONICA (HOW MANY HINTS DO I HAVE TO DROP?) In government.

SMILEY Well, obviously.

MONICA In government with you.

SMILEY I said before, I am not going to defect. I know you people, you always think we've got no principles but actually we really really do have lines in the sand which –

MONICA (OVER MUCH OF THIS) Lewis. Lewis. Lewis. Lewis. Lewis.

FINALLY:

SMILEY Yes?

MONICA My boss wants to talk to your boss about proportional representation.

SMILEY That's one of the things which we will never – (THEN HE REALISES) – you said you wouldn't.

MONICA He wants to open negotiations.

SMILEY Shit.

MONICA You just swore in front of Gladstone.

SMILEY (HORRIFIED) Where?

MONICA Statue, behind you.

SMILEY (RELIEVED) That's alright. Had me worried for a moment.

MONICA My boss wants to talk to your boss. Discreetly. Via you. What's the minimum demand?

SMILEY PR.

MONICA (LISTING THEM) Single transferable vote in a multi-member constituency or Party list system in a multi-member constituency or additional-member system, mixed – ?

SMILEY Anything that keeps the BNP out, really.

MONICA What about cabinet places?

SMILEY Proportional. We're not greedy.

MONICA Can you get Gwen on the phone?

SMILEY I presume so.

MONICA Do it.

SMILEY Right.

NOTHING HAPPENS

MONICA Off you go. Now.

SMILEY (GOING) Right.

MONICA IS MEANWHILE DIALLING HER MOBILE
THEN IT RINGS (DISTANTLY IN HER HAND)
THEN:

MONICA You told them yet?
 > You promised me.
 > No, Steve, no, no, no, No Way, No Pasaran, and Yes We
 Have No Bananas.
 > You ring and say Thanks For The Offer But I'm Happy
 With The Job I've Got.
 > Promise?
 > Right now?
 > Good boy.
 > You'll thank me one day.

CUT TO:

SCENE 9. DOWNING STREET, PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 12:15PM

THINGS ARE ALREADY FRACTIOUS

ADAM And exactly where in the constitution does it say I have to be a “good chap”?

SIR COSMO We both know that the Constitution is a sketchily written document.

ADAM Sketchy? It's invisible.

SIR COSMO We all understand that Her Majesty has only the good of her subjects at heart.

ADAM We also know she's never entirely comfortable when our lot are in.

SIR COSMO Comfort is the least of Her Majesty's prerequisites. The country, however, has been without a government for over six days – this is far from satisfactory.

ADAM Was there anything else, Sir Cosmo? I do have a major nuclear leak on the Essex coast to deal with.

SIR COSMO Which is precisely why the United Kingdom requires an administration.

ADAM And that means the Conservative Party?

SIR COSMO It's galling, I understand, yet they did manage to secure the largest number of seats.

ADAM They will still be a minority administration. The Lib Dems will vote down the Loyal Response.

SIR COSMO We think, by that stage, after a bit of talking to, they'll also be good chaps.

ADAM If Donoghue doesn't dig her heels in for PR now, she knows she's finished.

SIR COSMO That, of course, is a party matter.

ADAM (BLUFFING) I didn't want to mention this too soon...but...we are in the final stages of negotiations to form a coalition with the Lib Dems.

SIR COSMO (SURPRISED, BUT) Her Majesty intends to invite Mister Chadwick to form a -

ADAM (KEEPING IT UP) We will form a functioning majority coalition by tomorrow morning.

SIR COSMO Your party executive flatly ruled out PR as part of negotiations.

ADAM They know how to be good chaps too.

SIR COSMO That's in the Labour Party Constitution, is it?

ADAM It's written in our working-class, coal-smearred, chain-smoking souls.

SIR COSMO Her Majesty would like to see this resolved by six o'clock.

ADAM Then book me a car to the Palace.

IT'S A STAND-OFF.

SIR COSMO KNOWS HE'S BLUFFING BUT CANNOT SAY SO

SIR COSMO Thank you, Prime Minister.

HE GOES.

ADAM (TENSE, URGENT) Polly! Polly, quick!

BILL FLAGG (WALKING IN) That's no way to talk to your Political Director.

ADAM What are you doing here?

BILL Didn't you read the minutes of my National Executive Committee?

ADAM You own it now?

BILL Did you read them?

ADAM Never miss an episode.

BILL The Party has voted against any kind of PR.

ADAM That ship's sailed, Bill.

BILL Call it back to harbour.

ADAM You want to spend the next decade in Opposition?

BILL Did you see what Donoghue called me in the election?

ADAM You're not that well-padded.

BILL We can't work with these people. I won't.

ADAM They secured nineteen percent of the popular vote. Means each of their MPs cost them ninety-five thousand votes, each of our MPs cost thirty-nine thousand votes.

BILL Shows what good value we are.

ADAM That's the equivalent of three million British citizens not getting their votes heard.

BILL Vote for us, we'll listen plenty.

ADAM I intend to offer the Lib Dems a referendum on PR.

BILL The Labour Party will campaign against.

ADAM They won't stay in the coalition.

BILL Break my heart.

ADAM It's my job to talk to Donoghue.

BILL Then we'll find someone else to do your job.

POLLY (KNOCKING AND ENTERING) Sorry, Adam, we need to get to the Thorpefell meeting. (WITH A NOD) Bill.

BILL Polly.

ADAM (HEADING OFF WITH POLLY) Call the NEC, Bill. Get them to reconsider.

BILL (NO WAY) I'm staying right here.

ADAM Biscuits in the second drawer down. Save us a few chocolate ones.

THEY ARE NOW IN THE CORRIDOR, HEADING TOWARDS THE CABINET OFFICE

ADAM (HALF-WHISPERING) Who the bloody hell told him we were talking to the Lib Dems?

POLLY Any number of people could've...

ADAM Eighteen years screwing up the General & Manual, now he thinks he can do the same to my government.

POLLY The party trusts him.

ADAM (WORKING IT OUT) You mean you do.

POLLY (ADMITTING IT) You can't start negotiating with the Lib Dems if the party Executive will just turn around and tear up your agreement.

ADAM (STOPPING, REALISING) You got Bill Flagg in.

SCENE 10. DOWNING STREET. COMMUNICATIONS UNIT. 12:30PM

STEVE IS ON THE PHONE

STEVE (ON THE PHONE) Right.
> It's an amazingly generous offer and I've always had the
greatest respect for the Sunday Politics Show.

MONICA (MEANWHILE OVER) Just tell them.

STEVE A real agenda setter.
> Thing is....I can't do it.

MONICA (AT LAST) Well done.

STEVE I'm committed to the team here for as long –
> Sorry?
> What?
> (HE IS SUDDENLY ON THE BACK FOOT, PANICKED)
Volvos are excellent cars. Very...safe.

MONICA (PICKING UP THE PANIC) What are they saying? Steve?
What?

STEVE (INTO PHONE, ACTUALLY) I own several Pringles myself.
> A blue and pink diamondy one. And a...
> OK.
> Got it.

HE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN

MONICA What was that - [*about?*]

STEVE That thing I said. About Adam. Knitwear. Fever Pitch. You
know.

MONICA (WORKING IT OUT, DREAD) The mics were live.

STEVE And if I'm not on their payroll, well, it's too good to waste.

MONICA We need a plan.

STEVE I take the job, they destroy the tape.

MONICA You can't go work for them, not on that basis.

STEVE I may have to take one for the team.

MONICA You want this, don't you?

STEVE You think I said all that deliberately, so they could –

MONICA (GOING FOR HIM, DESPISING) You're gagging for this job.
You think you've really arrived, got what all your –

POLLY (HEAD ROUND DOOR, INTERRUPTING) 'Bye then.

MONICA Where are you going?

POLLY I've been fired. Just thought I'd say goodbye. Goodbye then.

AND SHE TURNS TO GO.

MOMENT OF FLABBERGASTED INABILITY TO FORM WORDS, THEN:

MONICA Polly?

POLLY (STOPPING DOWN THE CORRIDOR) Yup?

MONICA What do you mean?

POLLY (DISTANT) Ask your boss.

AND SHE WALKS OFF

MONICA But...he can't...you can't.

STEVE Bloody Christ.

MONICA (TRYING TO EXPLAIN IT) It's another of their stand-offs.
They've done this before.

STEVE Not P45ed.

MONICA He doesn't mean it. It's brinkmanship.

STEVE She's cleared her desk, Monica. This place is – the whole thing's collapsing.

MONICA That lines you up nicely, you reckon?

STEVE At least a hundred and fifty k, Monica.

MONICA You want me to work for blackmailers?

STEVE I'd do the same in their position.

MONICA Number One Rat, Steve, shafting us all.

ADAM (CHARGING ALONG THE CORRIDOR) Turn the TV up. Where's the remote? Someone?

WHILE THEY URGENTLY SEARCH:

MONICA Adam, Steve's got something to discuss with you.

STEVE It's fine. It's handled.

ADAM (POINTING AT MUTE TV SCREEN) Look at this bastard.

MONICA Adam, what's going on?

ADAM We've just finished the COBRA meeting. We talked, we debated, we voted. We voted to keep the plant running and isolate the leak. The Lib Dems voted against and now she's walked straight out to St.Stephen's and -

AS THE TV VOLUME COMES UP:

ADAM Quiet, I need to hear this.

DONOGHUE *That wasn't the problem, it was a very amicable meeting. Too amicable. Stitched-up even.*

REPORTER *But you don't feel able to find a consensus?*

DONOGHUE *We were out-voted. It's madness. The plant must be shut down to isolate the leak. It's the only responsible course of action.*

ADAM (OVER THIS) She lost the vote fair and square, now she's out there, crying to Mummy.

DONOGHUE *Instead, the committee voted to continue action with the plant still functioning.*

MONICA Doesn't she know about collective responsibility?

DONOGHUE *We consider this hugely irresponsible. The risk of a fire breaking out is now a hundred times bigger.*

ADAM That's nonsense. They ruled that out.

STEVE She can't hear you, boss. I suppose, actually, if you shouted a bit louder –

ADAM She wants her place at the table but won't carry the -

BILL (APPEARING) And you want to work with these people?

ADAM You still here?

BILL The Party instructed me to –

ADAM I am well aware, Tovarich.

BILL First time you've sat in committee with them, they've broken the rules. Any lesson to be drawn?

ADAM It's a tactic, she's squeezing us.

BILL Any deal you do, they'll break it. It's in their DNA.

ADAM I am not negotiating with the Lib Dems. What's your problem?

BILL (GOING) Looks like the problem is mass panic up and down the Essex coast.

ADAM He gone?

STEVE Are you scared of him?

ADAM (AS IF) Him?

STEVE (KNOWING HE IS) Right.

MONICA What's happening, Polly just said something about – ?

ADAM Did you speak to your Lib Dem chappy?

MONICA He's talking to his boss. She's ready to take your call.

STEVE (OF THE TV NEWS, WHICH HAS BEEN CONTINUING IN THE BACKGROUND) They're going to go big on this.

TV NEWS *Even if there was a becquerel release in the low thousands coupled with a North-Easterly wind, that would carry significant radiation from Thorpefell up the coast to Harwich and then Felixstowe. A south-easterly, would see Clacton and Southend at significant risk.*

DURING THIS A PHONE RINGS.
MONICA ANSWERS IT [BACKGROUND AD LIB]

STEVE (OVER THIS) You're going to have to do something.

ADAM The cross-party committee has made its decision.

STEVE Then get behind it. Make it yours. Take charge.

ADAM So get me a helicopter.

BILL (ENTERING) We need you here, Adam.

ADAM You weren't gone long.

BILL We need you here.

ADAM Never thought I'd hear you say that.

STEVE He does this. Show him a disaster, natural, man-made or military, and he's there like a rat up a drain.

ADAM Perhaps one shouldn't compare Her Majesty's First Minister to a rodent in a – [sewer]

MONICA (CUTTING RIGHT ACROSS THIS) Peter Chadwick's on the phone, Adam.

THE ROOM FALLS SILENT

ADAM Sorry?

MONICA Do you want to take his call? Or...?

BILL What's he after?

STEVE Maybe he wants to form a National Unity Government.

ADAM Put him on speakerphone. (PROJECTING INTO PHONE) Peter.

CHADWICK (THROUGH SPEAKERPHONE) *Are you bloody talking to those Lib Dims?*

ADAM I would never do that behind your –

CHADWICK *Not what I'm hearing.*

ADAM If you'd like to speak to my National Executive Committee, one of its senior members is standing right here and he will assure you that my party has voted against offering any form

of Proportional Representation to the Liberal Democratic Party.

- CHADWICK *Frankly, Armstrong, I've never believed you and I don't intend to start now.*
- ADAM What you mean is you want clearance to do a deal with them yourself.
- BILL Let me speak to him.
- ADAM Still, Trident's going to be a bit of a problem for you.
- CHADWICK *Hardly. Think about it. Nuclear's suddenly not so squeaky wonderful, is it?*
- ADAM (WORKING IT OUT) ...Right.
- CHADWICK *Good talking to you See you at the Palace..*
- ADAM (MILDLY WORRIED) Well, yes, always good to talk to you.
- HE HANGS UP.
- BILL What's he playing at?
- ADAM He's convinced we're talking to the Lib Dems about PR.
- BILL Which you are.
- MONICA Even if we were, he doesn't know that.
- BILL What's that about Trident?
- ADAM He couldn't move because of the Lib Dems' demand to cancel Trident.
- MONICA (ALSO WORKING IT OUT) But now there's a nuclear leak at Thorpefell.
- ADAM He can cancel Trident and look like a national hero.

BILL His front bench will never -

MONICA Will be delighted they've got an extra twenty-one billion of tax cuts.

STEVE And they get to blame the Lib Dems.

ADAM Helicopter, Steve? Monica, make sure your Lib Dem brings his own helmet.

CUT TO:

SCENE 11. HOUSE OF COMMONS. TERRACE. 1:30PM.

IT'S BUSY, IT'S ALIVE. THESE ARE FEBRILE DAYS.

POLLY Doesn't take long, does it?

LAITY Perhaps it was the way you stopped and chatted with the press corps outside. Wagged your P45 in their faces.

POLLY I still didn't expect a job interview this fast.

LAITY That's not why I'm buying you a cup of over-stewed parliamentary tea.

POLLY But not even a sniff of a biscuit. In the Labour Party, we make a real effort with the finger food.

LAITY (STANDING) I'll get you some.

POLLY (STOPPING HIM) I was joking.

THEN:

POLLY Everyone's watching us.

LAITY (DRY) No-one's going to think I'm making a move on you.

POLLY That's the problem, Simon.

LAITY The pact has broken, hasn't it?

POLLY The Lib Dems have played it well. Hanging on to their underdog status while being bloody bloody-minded.

LAITY No-one can work with Chadwick.

POLLY You mean it's time for the modernisers to make their move?

LAITY He sneers at us. Then thinks he's being 'groovy' when he talks about the pink vote at shadow cabinet.

POLLY The blue rinsers love him.

LAITY They're a dying breed.

POLLY By definition.

LAITY Let me get you a biscuit.

POLLY Really, I –

LAITY (STANDING) And I'll leave my papers just here.

POLLY (WHAT'S AFOOT?) Uh-huh...

LAITY Please don't look at the email from Chadwick, on top, to the entire Shadow Cabinet.

POLLY Of course I –

LAITY Which mentions his Lib Dem strategy. To promise them PR but later plead he can only manage a Free Vote in the House.

POLLY They'll walk straight out. The House will never vote for PR unwhipped.

LAITY Possession is nine tenths, Polly. By then he'll be PM and either the Lib Dems will make the best of it or he reckons we'll run a minority administration.

POLLY This email gets out, it'll scotch any Tory chances of forming a coalition.

LAITY Garibaldi or digestive, I've forgotten already?

POLLY Ginger nuts.

CUT TO:

SCENE 12. HELICOPTER. 2:00PM

IT IS JUST TAKING OFF
ALL DIALOGUE THROUGH MOUTH MIKES/RADIO

ADAM Well done, Lewis, nice disguise.

SMILEY Thank you, sir.

ADAM Still, I like a man who doesn't need a seat belt.

SMILEY (HE HADN'T REALISED, PANIC) My God. Give it to me.
Where does this bit go?

ADAM Show him, Monica.

MONICA I don't know. You're the one who was on these things before
I was born.

ADAM We didn't use belts, we just jumped. Shall I show you how to
do that?

SMILEY I'm alright, thanks.

ADAM (SERIOUS, STRAIGHT) Right, Lewis, who told Chadwick
you and me were in negotiations?

SMILEY Not us. Why would we?

ADAM It wasn't us.

MONICA So it was the Palace.

ADAM They're above all that.

MONICA Wikipedia. Sir Cosmo Pickavance, Eton, 1968 to 1973. Peter
Chadwick, Eton, 1964 to 1969.

ADAM Sir Cosmo was his fag.

MONICA And you never stop toasting your man's crumpets.

ADAM Sir Cosmo's above all that.

SMILEY There's an establishment in this country and they don't like it when they're not running the place.

ADAM What do you want, Lewis? To make this coalition stick.

SMILEY Right. Yes. PR for the Commons in the Queen's Speech. Plus three in cabinet. One of those getting one of the big three.

ADAM Is that all?

SMILEY I'm not empowered to negotiate.

ADAM That's that then.

MONICA What?

ADAM Way too much. And if you can't negotiate.

SMILEY I wish I could, but I can't.

MONICA But the Tories'll get –

ADAM Get me Bill Flagg on the radio phone, will you? I'll break the good news to him.

MONICA Boss?

ADAM We tried. The Tories have outbid us.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13. ST.STEPHEN'S GREEN. 2:45PM.

TV INTERVIEW ON THE GREEN.

BILL To be honest, Toby, I'm baffled. The Tory Party now says it's negotiating with the Liberals about –

TOBY Liberal Democrats.

BILL Is that what they're called these days? How can Peter Chadwick negotiate with them when they're big demand is the cancellation of Trident.

TOBY Everyone's saying the country needs spending cuts.

BILL The Tory backbenchers, they won't stomach it.

TOBY And your party will?

BILL We've got the only party leader who has put on a uniform, picked up a gun and fought to defend this country. Who are you going to trust?

TOBY And you, Simon Laity, Shadow Minister for Education, not strictly your department, but what's your take on today's shock developments?

LAITY You're easily shocked.

TOBY But is your leader really talking about - ?

LAITY Look, we do have to seriously examine public spending commitments but are we really prepared to put the defence of the realm at stake?

TOBY So you're surprised?

LAITY Frankly, I think Bill here has got the wrong end of the stick. There's no way Peter Chadwick could even think about

cancelling Trident. He wouldn't be leader of this party if he did.

TOBY (TO BILL) That's pretty categorical.

BILL That's Simon's opinion. Seems to me, we've got to ask the man himself.

TOBY We did contact his office for a comment. So far no luck. Thank you. Back to studio.

STEVE Nicely done.

BILL I even cross the road on my own, these days.

STEVE Belt and braces.

LAITY Still here, Steve?

STEVE Sorry?

LAITY Heard you were...pursuing other options. Other things to do on a Sunday....

STEVE (BAD ACTING) No. No. No.

LAITY (GOING) My mistake.

BILL What's he on about?

STEVE Shall we get back to Downing Street?

CUT TO:

SCENE 14. THORPEFELL NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT.
3:00PM

PRESS GAGGLE ROUND ADAM WHO IS IN PROTECTIVE SUIT, HELMET UNDER HIS ARM

REPORTER 1 You're really going in there yourself, Prime Minister?

ADAM You think I normally dress up like this?

REPORTER 1 Is there any possibility you might obstruct the men working to - ?

ADAM There's been a huge amount of speculation in the last few hours about how we should deal with this event. I've received advice and now I intend to see for myself.

REPORTER 2 Isn't it dangerous?

ADAM There are men and women in there, working round the clock, to save this power plant. Someone has to show them leadership.

REPORTER 3 How much do you know about nuclear crises?

ADAM Absolutely nothing.

REPORTER 3 Then, surely Prime Minister –

ADAM I do know that people, doing dangerous jobs, need to feel that the bloke at the top cares about them, supports them and appreciates their efforts.

REPORTER Is that a dig at Peter Chadwick?

ADAM Peter who? Sorry, is there anyone here called Peter Chadwick?

REPORTER So it is?

ADAM Peter Chadwick has got his own problems going nuclear right now. (MOCK SYMPATHY) I understand that. As soon as I've dealt with this, I'm going back to London.

REPORTER To see the Queen?

ADAM Who do you think I am, Christopher Robin?

REPORTER So it's business as usual – we're hearing rumours about your staff defecting?

ADAM I am going into this nuclear plant now, to see for myself, so I can make the best decisions for the future of this nation. That's what governments do. Once I come out we can talk about the tedious business of forming one.

HE TURNS AWAY AND STARTS WALKING TOWARDS THE PLANT

ADAM Alright, everyone?

MONICA "Tedious"?

ADAM You think of a better word.

MONICA Honourable. Dignified. Humbling.

ADAM Do your parents like you?

MONICA I like words.

MEANWHILE MONICA'S MOBILE HAS BEEN RINGING.
SHE FISHERS IT OUT DURING:

ADAM Who the hell's defecting, what do you know about this?

MONICA Hang on. (ANSWERING PHONE) Hi, Polly, how's –
> Right.
> About to go into the plant.
> OK, I'll tell him.

HOLDING THE PHONE AWAY. TO ADAM:

She says she's got something you may want.

ADAM Loyalty? Integrity? Veracity?

MONICA Did your parents like you?

ADAM (GLIMMER OF FORGIVENESS) Tell her to bring it to Downing Street.

MONICA He says –

ADAM Tell her to come in the back door. And then tell me who's trying to jump ship.

CUT TO:

SCENE 15. DOWNING STREET. ENTRANCE HALL. 5PM

STEVE IS WAITING AS ADAM COMES IN

STEVE Nice work, boss. It's all over the six o'clocks. 'Taking The Lead', 'I'm In Charge Here?' and 'Where's Chadwick?'.

ADAM Not sure about that last one.

STEVE Over a shot of you with the foam guys.

ADAM Maybe.

STEVE Polly's here.

ADAM (DELIBERATELY BRUSQUE) What you got?

POLLY (AS SHE HANDS IT OVER AND HE READS IT) "Thank you, Polly, I knew that even if I behaved like an uptight arsehole, you'd stand by me, stand by the party and the need to rise above – "

ADAM Where did you get this?

POLLY From my wide range of contacts throughout both Houses of Parliament, for which I am, in many eyes, indispensable.

ADAM It's got to be Shadow Cabinet and it's got to be someone who's gunning for Chadwick.

STEVE (SARCASTIC) That narrows the field.

BILL I heard even Mrs. Chadwick is gunning for Chadwick.

ADAM Which moderniser reckons he's in with a chance if Chadwick fails to form a coalition?

STEVE Dennis Birch.

BILL Paul Strage.

MONICA Simon Laity.

BILL Like they're going to elect a queer as leader.

STEVE Steady.

BILL Present company excepted.

POLLY Why don't we just slip this document out, tell the world Chadwick was always going to shaft the Lib Dems, and then get on with forming our own government?

MONICA He thinks it's tedious.

ADAM (HANDING HIM THE DOCUMENT) Bill, why don't you handle it.

BILL (TAKING IT AND GOING) Thank you.

ADAM Now, where's Lewis gone?

SMILEY Right here, Prime Adam.

ADAM What did she say?

SMILEY Says she's willing to talk.

ADAM See?

POLLY What about me?

ADAM What about you?

POLLY (DON'T MAKE ME BEG) Adam.

STEVE (SAVING HER) Does she get her job back?

ADAM (WALKING AWAY) She never lost it.

STEVE But –

POLLY Don't argue with him, Steve. He's always right. You know that by now.

STEVE It's what I like most about him.

ADAM Not my famously telegenic looks?

STEVE Sorry?

ADAM Good enough to do my own TV show, wouldn't you, say? Or maybe you wouldn't. Still, you're the expert.

STEVE Boss, I got myself into a bit of a –

ADAM (COLD FURY) Haven't I earned anything from you, Steve? Everything we've done together in this place? Everything we've tried to do and failed, sure, failed plenty of times. Every time you've protected me or I've protected you. Sure, I can be a shit, sure, I can sometimes lose my nerve – but what about the things we've done together to actually change this country for the better?

STEVE Sure, I know, I –

ADAM We work together – you, me, Polly, Monica, isn't that enough, just to keep your peace for –

STEVE Sorry, boss. I'll deal with it. Whatever it takes.

ADAM I've done it.

STEVE You spoke to them?

ADAM Monica told me who to call.

STEVE They've deleted it – the tape, the cars, the Hornby thing?

ADAM I called in a favour.

STEVE Thanks, boss. You don't mind?

ADAM I've had worse. (WALKING AWAY) But those jumpers. That was a low blow.

AND HE IS GOING.

SMILEY (SHELL-SHOCKED) Does that – I mean, does that sort of thing happen often? Round here?

ADAM (FROM A DISTANCE) Move it, Smiley.

SMILEY Coming, Sir Armstrong.

CUT TO:

SCENE 16. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE.
5.40PM

TV NEWS BUZZING IN THE BACKGROUND

ADAM Three cabinet places, it's unthinkable.

SMILEY (INTO PHONE) Three in cabinet is too –
 > OK, I'll tell him.
 (TO ADAM) She says two but one has to be the big three.

POLLY You won't swing that. Helen expects to stay next door.
 Kevin's looking for a bump up to Foreign or Defence.

STEVE Kevin will have to wait.

MONICA You could tell him that since the war only one Labour Home
 Secretary has gone on to become Prime Minister.

ADAM She can have Home. (TO SMILEY) Tell her.

SMILEY (INTO PHONE) He says Home Office.
 (TO ADAM) She says Exchequer.

ADAM Pack your bags, everyone.

POLLY They've been packed since before the election.

ADAM It's a metaphor.

SMILEY Should I tell her?

MONICA Why don't we just put her on speaker phone?

STEVE This goes belly-up, we say Adam never spoke to the Lib Dem
 leader.

MONICA Pedant.

STEVE From you, that's funny.

MONICA I have my moments.

SMILEY (WHO HAS BEEN AD LIBBING ON THE PHONE, NOW TO ADAM) Home Office, but the other can't be something manky like International Development.

POLLY Thought you people liked international charity?

SMILEY "You people"?

POLLY Positively the last time, I promise.

MONICA I doubt it.

SMILEY Single transferable vote in the Queen's Speech?

MONICA First Queen's Speech.

SMILEY (SORRY) She told me to check.

ADAM We done?

SMILEY (INTO PHONE) We done?
> No, that's what he said.
> OK, she says she needs to speak to Chadwick now.

MONICA You don't haggle with the Prime Minister.

SMILEY You're not Prime Minister until we -

ADAM I do like you, Lewis, put you in a corner and you've got spunk.

SMILEY Really? Thank you, sir.

ADAM (TO STEVE) We ready yet?

STEVE Bill said - (CHECKING WATCH) - should be about now.

MONICA Sky News.

STEVE ZAPS UP THE VOLUME ON THE TV. AS:

ADAM Tell her to tune in.

SMILEY I thought we were –

ADAM Tell her.

CUT INTO:

REPORTER I have with me the Leader of the Conservative Party.

CHADWICK And largest party in the Commons.

REPORTER This email, from you to your shadow cabinet members.

CHADWICK I don't comment on leaked documents.

REPORTER Stating that your intention is to negotiate with the Liberal Democrats.

CHADWICK We have not yet spoken.

REPORTER Offer PR -

CHADWICK The negotiations would be –

REPORTER But then scotch it with a free vote in the House.

CHADWICK (BLUSTER) We would proceed on the basis of whatever was agreed -

REPORTER (READING THE EMAIL) "Subsequently, though part of the Queen's Speech, we would tell LD leadership that a whip is not tenable and – "

CHADWICK (WORSE) That situation might indeed occur and we would be forced to....

REPORTER *Doesn't this mean that you are admitting you do not have control of your party.*

CHADWICK *Hardly.*

REPORTER *You either enter a coalition guaranteeing PR or you don't. If you guarantee it – and that seems to be what Gwen Donoghue is demanding – then if you can't deliver it...*

CHADWICK *I really don't think you've fully grasped the complexities of...*

DURING THIS:

MONICA Dead meat or what?

ADAM Enough. (TO SMILEY) Does she still want to talk to him?

SMILEY Hello, Gwen, do you still want to talk to - ?
> Right.

HE TURNS OFF THE PHONE

SMILEY She's coming round.

ADAM Book me into the Palace, please.

MONICA Six?

POLLY Hold up, here.

ADAM She's back.

POLLY You can't offer them PR without approval from the NEC.

ADAM It's the only way this country's going to get governed.

POLLY The Party will turf you out and Bill Flagg will lead the scalping party.

ADAM (OF TV) What's that, what's Laity saying?

STEVE ZAPS IT BACK UP
ON TV:

LAITY *Obviously, I can't deny having received the email.*

STEVE You so could have.

LAITY *And I'll admit I had my concerns.*

REPORTER *But you said nothing?*

LAITY *There's been plenty of discussion in Conservative Party ranks. I just didn't think he meant it.*

REPORTER *Because...?*

BILL (ENTERING) Because it makes you into a lying cheating treacherous bastard, that's why.

ADAM (TO BILL) You're doing it again.

LAITY (CONTINUING UNDER) *It seems a mendacious basis on which to form a government. An alliance based on a false promise.*

REPORTER *Mendacious – that's a pretty serious word?*

ADAM (WORKING IT OUT) It's him. Isn't it? He's going for it.

LAITY *I'm sorry but we are going to have to look at this very seriously, especially if we fail to form the next government.*

ADAM (OVER THIS, TO POLLY) Laity gave you the email, didn't he? He's the one shafted Chadwick.

POLLY I have a wide range of contacts.

BILL He's the stalking horse. Who's he working for?

KNOCK AND ENTER:

ASSISTANT Excuse me, Prime Minister, I have Sir Cosmo here for you.

ADAM Show him in. (TO BILL) See? He asks to be admitted.

BILL First thing they teach them at Eton. Bend over and may I come -

SIR COSMO (ENTERING, BREATHELESS) Prime Minister, forgive my intrusion.

ADAM You're always welcome, Sir Cosmo.

SIR COSMO I was told you have requested an audience with - ?

ADAM A political solution has been politically arrived at.

SIR COSMO But Peter Chadwick has also requested –

ADAM I am about to seal a coalition with the Liberal Democrat party, aren't I, Lewis?

SMILEY Certainly, Prime Minister.

ADAM Which ensures a government elected by – by –

MONICA Fifty-seven.

ADAM Fifty-seven percent of the popular vote. Securing –

MONICA Three hundred and twenty-four

ADAM Members of parliament. A working majority of

SMILEY Twenty-two.

ADAM Twenty-two.

SMILEY Sorry.

BILL I hope the price wasn't PR.

ADAM You can swing the NEC before you leave to join us, can't you, Bill?

BILL The NEC is rock solid opposed to -

ADAM Of course, I am hoping that Mr Flagg here will be joining me as my Parliamentary Private Secretary.

BILL What?

ADAM Someone with muscle, someone the party trusts, working at the heart of government.

BILL (FLATTERED) Well...

ADAM No less than you deserve, Bill.

BILL If that's...I hadn't....

ADAM Thank you, Bill, honoured to have you join us.

SIR COSMO Her Majesty does prefer if...

MONICA What?

POLLY Yes, what does she prefer?

SIR COSMO I shall make arrangements, Prime Minister.

ADAM Thank you.

SIR COSMO GOES.

ADAM Steve, you'll get everyone ready? Car to the palace, back, press conference with Gwen outside.

STEVE Do it in my sleep.

ADAM And what do you think, dark suit or maybe slacks and a Pringle?

STEVE How long are you going to keep this up?

ADAM I've barely begun. (ALL ENERGY) Right, Monica, some words for the press. Polly, start typing out the basics for Gwen. Steve, get me your tamest interviewer. Lewis, try and get your beloved leader to smile.

THEY START MOVING.

BILL What about me?

ADAM Get round to the House, tell them they've got five more years.

BILL There'll be grumbling.

ADAM And Bill. Tell them – no more Liberal Democrat jokes.

BILL What are we going to talk about?

ADAM That's your new job – you'll think of something.

end

number 10: episode two

“and drugs won” by jonathan myerson

cast

ADAM ARMSTRONG, Labour Prime Minister

MONICA, his speechwriter

BILL, his Parliamentary Private Secretary

POLLY, Number 10 Chief Of Staff

STEVE, Number 10 Director Of Communications

and

**GWEN DONOGHUE, Leader Of The Liberal Democrat Party and Home
Secretary, in coalition with the Labour Party¹**

HELEN RIDOUT, Chancellor of the Exchequer

CHAIR OF BOLSWELL NORTH CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY

LUCY, C4 News Reporter

CHIEF SUPERINTENDANT

TERRY, member of Bolswell North Labour Party

and

REPORTERS

¹ this episode written in 2009, long before the Tory-Lib coalition

SCENE 1. ELTHAM, OUTER LONDON. 10.15AM.

GWEN DONOGHUE, THE LIB DEM HOME SECRETARY, IS VISITING THE SCENE OF A FIRE.

REPORTERS ARE YELLING AT HER FROM BEHIND THE BARRIER:

REPORTER 1 Home Secretary, any comment?

REPORTER 2 Home Secretary, any time for an interview? We can give you exclusive?

STEVE Don't talk to them.

DONOGHUE (WITH EDGE) Thanks for the advice, Steve. Would never have occurred to me.

STEVE All part of the package.

DONOGHUE You really don't need to be here.

STEVE Adam said you'd appreciate it.

DONOGHUE Doesn't trust me out alone, you mean.

CHIEF SUPERINTENDANT This way, Home Secretary. You get a good view from here. The fire clearly originated in this property – that there's the bypass cable running out to the mains –

DONOGHUE This house was the skunk cannabis factory?

CHIEF SUPER It's a safe working assumption.

DONOGHUE And the fire then spread in both directions?

CHIEF SUPER The hydroponic lights in there – hundreds of watts of heat and light – that prompted the ferocity of the blaze, then the wind – a perfect storm.

DONOGHUE Except this was a man-made storm

CHIEF SUPER You can set up a skunk factory in any suburban house. Cram it with lights and plants, harvest three crops a year. It's a license to print money.

DONOGHUE I still have four houses gutted. Seven dead, three of them children.

CHIEF SUPER Give us another heat-seeking helicopter, task dedicated, and I'll bust a skunk house every night, that's a promise.

DONOGHUE It'll mean cuts elsewhere in your budget.

CHIEF SUPER Not quite what I meant.

DONOGHUE I'm sure it wasn't, Chief Superintendant, but as long as that heartless, tight-fisted witch has her hands on the Treasury –

STEVE Home Secretary, perhaps this isn't the moment to discuss –

DONOGHUE Tell me, Steve, does three kids burned in their beds change the Chancellor's mind? No? Right then, I'll stick with 'heartless'.

STEVE (TENTATIVE) But we can pull back on the 'tight-fisted', yes?

BUILDING UP AGAIN DURING THIS, CALLING OVER, ALL AT ONCE:

REPORTER 2 Home Secretary, anything you'd like to say to neighbours, the bereaved families?

REPORTER 3 Mrs. Donoghue, Mrs. Donoghue, what are you going to do about this?

AND MORE REPORTERS AD LIB, DURING:

STEVE (OVER TO REPORTERS) We've got a press call in – (WRISTWATCH) – fifteen. Hold it all till then.

DONOGHUE Maybe I will say something.

STEVE (NO WAY) The Prime Minister made it clear he wanted to confer with you before you announced any –

DONOGHUE (AS SHE MOVES TOWARDS THE REPORTERS) It looks callous just to walk past. Heartless, even.

STEVE Home Secretary, we really should....

REPORTER 1 Home Secretary, South London Press, any of our readers could be living next to one of these factories? Home Secretary? When are you going to start cracking down on these places?

WE STAY WITH STEVE, JUST A FEW PACES BEHIND DONOGHUE:

DONOGHUE Good question. Thing is, will a blitz ever work?

STEVE (TO HIMSELF) Please God, take me now.

REPORTER 2 Do you have some other way, Home Secretary?

DONOGHUE For the last forty years we've been doing everything we can to stop the rise of drug abuse. We've even declared war. Nothing we've done has made any difference.

STEVE (TO HIMSELF, AS HE DIALS) Stop now, please. Please?

DONOGHUE We're spending over seventeen billion a year once you add anti-drugs enforcement to the social costs of drug-related crime.

REPORTER 3 We're not spending enough, is that what you're saying?

STEVE (INTO PHONE, OVER THIS) Polly, we've got a situation.
> Of course, Donoghue. At the skunk fire.

DONOGHUE (CONTINUING THROUGH THIS) And seventeen billion is considerably more than the entire Home Office budget.

REPORTER 3 Is this you angling for a budget increase in the spending round?

STEVE (INTO PHONE) She's going to do it.
> You wanted a coalition with the Lib Dems – this is what you get.

DONOGHUE Let's face it. We're declared a war against drugs. I think The War Is Over.

STEVE (INTO PHONE, DREAD) Here it comes.

DONOGHUE And drugs won.

THE REPORTERS EXPLODE:

REPORTER 2 Are you saying you want legalisation?

REPORTER 3 Is this the beginning of legal drugs?

REPORTER 1 Is this Labour Party policy as well, Home Secretary?

STEVE Tin hats on, men. The peace is just beginning.

INTO:

TITLES

SCENE 2. BOLSWELL NORTH CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY
GENERAL COMMITTEE. CHURCH HALL. 10.30AM.

THE LOCAL PARTY COMMITTEE IS IN SESSION

CHAIR Thank you for coming today, Miss Smith.

MONICA It's a pleasure to be here.

CHAIR As you know, you are one of five names on our long-list.

MONICA (SLIGHT SURPRISE) Five?

CHAIR Mister Frasier rang me last night, he has been selected for
Goole and Hull East.

MONICA What did he do wrong?

CHAIR Sorry?

MONICA Just a...you know, Goole...sorry, just a joke. A bit Goolist.

TERRY (COMMITTEE MEMBER, THE TOKEN TROT) There's
something funny about Goole?

MONICA Not at all. (CAN'T STOP TALKING) Lovely place. Thought
I might book a holiday.

CHAIR Right. Tell us, Miss Smith, why do you want to be the MP for
this constituency?

MONICA Firstly, I'd like to pay tribute to the current member and
everything he's –

TERRY We know you can do all the fancy words.

CHAIR (IT'S TERRY AGAIN) Through the Chair, Terry.

TERRY Chair, can we get straight to it? We're all busy comrades.

MONICA Certainly. Any question you'd like to ask. Fire away.
Comrade.

- TERRY You been working for Adam Armstrong for the last six years, right? And you like feel you've contributed to what he's done?
- MONICA The odd speech, the odd....I help out. A humble footsoldier in the -
- TERRY Before you lot came along – I didn't vote for him to be leader, don't mind saying – [CHAIR: (SOTTO) At every meeting] this used to be a Socialist party with a Socialist reform programme. Now what have we got?
- MONICA We've got a party which responds flexibly to the –
- TERRY Fancy Southern words for Who Let The Tory Boy Take Over The Party?
- MONICA Adam Armstrong has had to steer a careful course between -
- TERRY Why else has he got those Lib Dims in his cabinet?
- MONICA When we didn't secure an outright majority, we formed a coalition government.
- TERRY Alright, Comrade Smith, tell me one true Socialist thing you've done then, your lot.
- MONICA One?
- TERRY Go on.
- MONICA Chair, should I....? [*answer this*]
- CHAIR Seems like a perfectly good question. (SOTTO) Sadly.
- MONICA Right. (THINKING) Right...
- TERRY I'm all ears.
- MONICA I'm just...Right. I advocated an amnesty for illegal immigrants.

TERRY 'Advocated'?

MONICA We were unable to proceed with the measure due to....

TERRY Due to?

MONICA Complicated policing reasons.

TERRY Backsliding.

MONICA I endorsed the bill to protect street sex workers.

TERRY Died in Committee Stage, right?

MONICA We withdrew the bill for further – the time wasn't right.

TERRY You caved to the right-wing press if I remember?

MONICA I...Hang on. Um. I know there was....No, there was...umm....

THE MOMENT LENGTHENS. MONICA DIES.

CHAIR (SAVING HER) Thank you for that. Next question?
Anyone? Vivien.

CUT TO:

SCENE 3. ELTHAM, OUTER LONDON. 10.45AM.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE IS IN UPROAR

STEVE There's no international conspiracy here, Mrs. Donoghue was due back in Whitehall.

REPORTER 1 You distinctly said she was doing this Presser after. I got it right here on my –

STEVE Please, save me your latest Ipod gadget. Diary mess up, nothing more. Now how about some questions about this terrible fire? Chantal?

REPORTER 2 Is the Home Secretary's solution the legalisation of drugs?

STEVE (AS IF!) Where did you get that idea?

REPORTER 2 (AS SHE CHECKS HER NOTES, REMEMBERING)
...“We've lost the war against drugs.”

STEVE She did not say that.

REPORTER 2 (OK, FOUND IT) “The War Against Drugs is Over. And Drugs Won.”

STEVE (REPHRASING IT:) Drugs One, Enforcement Two. Result. (NEXT QUESTION) Someone ask me something interesting. Something in the news. Ah, the Tories are choosing a new leader today. Ask me about that. Conrad.

REPORTER 3 It was in the Lib Dem manifesto. “A serious look at the costs and purpose of drug legislation enforcement.”

STEVE Or ask me about Bob Goldie, Leader of the House, taken to hospital last night, suspected heart attack. Anyone?

REPORTER 3 Why did the PM appoint a known legaliser to the job of Home Secretary?

STEVE (GIVING IN) There were complex coalition negotiations. I wasn't part of them. If I had been, I would have got a better office.

REPORTER 3 Are you telling me the Prime Minister was unaware of Gwen Don – ?

STEVE "Are you now or have you ever been a legaliser – is that it?"
No, he didn't ask.

REPORTER 3 Strange coincidence.

STEVE (HAND CLAP) Enough. Thank you, everyone.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE BREAKS UP AND STEVE WALKS AWAY WITH:

STEVE (CALLING OUT) Chief Super, could I have a quick - ?

ACROSS THIS COMES A REPORTER:

LUCY Steve, Steve, quick one.

STEVE Sensible one?

LUCY (HANDING HIM A PHOTO) Who's this?

STEVE That's Mrs. Armstrong. Too easy.

LUCY The man with her. Carrying the boxes. Of her clothes. Out of the constituency home.

STEVE You tell me.

LUCY I want to give them a chance, Steve.

STEVE What are you saying?

LUCY We're on air at seven. She's refused to make a statement.

STEVE You've already been to Mrs. Armstrong?

LUCY What's going on, Steve? Is the marriage over?

STEVE (LUDICROUS) Are you for real?

LUCY This copy's for you. (WALKING AWAY) We trail the lead stories before Hollyoaks at six.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4. DOWNING STREET: PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 11AM.

DONOGHUE HAS STORMED IN AND WANTS BLOOD

- ADAM Bill's my Parliamentary Private Secretary – he's been delegated to handle all negotiations with your party.
- DONOGHUE You lead me to believe that you would handle them yourself.
- ADAM I'd like to but right now I have to fight a shitstorm about legalising drugs.
- DONOGHUE You made me Home Secretary.
- ADAM I thought you understood government office meant a little more than mouthing off every time you fancied.
- DONOGHUE There are some pretty serious voices out there who favour decriminalisation. Polly Toynbee, Simon Jenkins, the Daily Mail and the Secretary General of Interpol.
- ADAM Does your party want to achieve Proportional Representation or not?
- DONOGHUE The question is, do you? Bill Flagg's been against it all his life.
- ADAM I choose my team.
- DONOGHUE Fronting him is a kick in the teeth.
- ADAM So walk out of here. Take PR with you.
- BILL (KNOCKING AND ENTERING) They told me to come straight in, Prime Minister.
- ADAM Any word on how the Tory Leadership election going?
- BILL Harry Denbigh's got it sewn up.
- ADAM Disappointed?

BILL He sounds like one of us, he'll steal our clothes and our thunder.

DONOGHUE Simon Laity's smooth, he scrubs up well, quick on his feet, he'll be good TV.

BILL What does it matter what they look like – what have they got to say?

ADAM You don't say anything in opposition. That's why they sacked Chadwick, too mouthy.

BILL What was it you wanted to - [*see me about?*]

ADAM Gwen here says you're blocking the PR negotiations.

BILL We're going through the options properly. Considering all the methodologies: FPTP, STV, AVP, IRV, RCV and Borda Count.

ADAM Now you're just showing off.

DONOGHUE That's Borda Count - as used in Nauru, Kiribati and the Eurovision Song Contest.

ADAM It has serious questions to answer.

DONOGHUE We know what we want. Alternative Vote Top-Up. Let's cut straight to the chase.

BILL There's what you want and there's what the people want.

DONOGHUE "Bill Flagg, the voice of the people."

BILL I'm a darn sight closer to them than you.

DONOGHUE Closer to your Hovis-Up-The-Grimethorpe-Colliery-Brass-Hill image of them than how they actually want to be. We want to offer them a chance to modernise this country.

ADAM Never underestimate the British desire to leave things unchanged.

DONOGHUE Is that a hint, Adam?

ADAM Get back in there, Bill, and come up with something I can put before the House.

DONOGHUE The Commons? This is going to a public referendum.

ADAM I hate to remind you about the niceties of the constitution, but we do need an Act Of Parliament to commission a referendum.

DONOGHUE If you're delaying me...?

ADAM Just go and talk.

BILL Prime Minister. After you, Mrs. Donoghue.

ADAM Not even on first name terms? Put that top of the agenda.

CUT TO:

SCENE 5. DOWNING STREET. STRATEGY UNIT. 12NOON.

MONICA HAS JUST BEEN TOLD ABOUT WHAT DONOGHUE SAID ABOUT LEGALISATION. SHE'S EXCITED.

MONICA I love this woman. I love her. I want to have her little Lib Dem babies. Or would they be mixed-policy babies? (THEN, REALISING:) Don't tell anyone I said that, you know, about sex with a Liberal Democrat. Woman.

POLLY Breathe in, Monica, breathe out.

MONICA Legalisation is what I've been saying for years. This is my -

POLLY We told her not to announce -

MONICA It's in my study paper - years ago - at least a year - I was the first to attempt a cost-benefit analysis of legalisation and regularisation.

POLLY (SEEING WHERE THIS IS GOING) You are not going to Adam with this.

MONICA Terry the Trot - and his friends in Bolswell Constituency this morning - they roasted me, they stuck me on a spit and turned me slowly over a fire.

POLLY We have to smooth this out, not jump on the no-responsibility bandwagon.

MONICA (CONTINUING) And the fire, you know what they were burning? All Adam's favourite CDs - Now That's What I Call Compromise 2008, Now That's What I Call Flexible Response To The Consensus 2007, Now That's What I Call Give Up And Just Do What The Tories Would Do 2006.

POLLY (ENOUGH) I've got it.

MONICA They asked me what I had done, what I stood for in the socialist programme.

POLLY I should never have let you go north of Gloucester.

MONICA (IF) I get behind this. This legalisation. Back behind it - they'll - I'll have an answer.

POLLY There are plenty more constituencies.

MONICA I am not going to Wales.

POLLY Adam will sort you.

MONICA This is supposed to be my reward, for these years. And as his rating goes down, so do my chances.

POLLY We can have a quiet word somewhere. Get you a parachute.

MONICA (COLLAPSING) I had a really rough time, Polly. All shaggy union banners and shaggy Northern vowels and -

POLLY Then take some drugs, don't legalise them.

MONICA I do believe in legalisation, you know.

POLLY You did some sums. That doesn't mean you bought the T-shirt, drank the Kool-Aid.

MONICA Want to save seventeen billion annually?

POLLY Stop.

MONICA Want to help three hundred thousand children currently growing up with an addicted parent?

POLLY Get behind me.

MONICA One quick chat with Adam? A by-the-way in the corridor?

POLLY Speak to him and you'll have my shaggy northern vowels to handle.

MONICA Aren't you due in the House? The Chancellor?

POLLY (WRISTWATCH) Never time wasted keeping her waiting.

CUT TO:

SCENE 6. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 1215PM

STEVE HAS JUST SHOWN HIM THE PHOTO

ADAM (EXASPERATED) It's her brother.

STEVE Really?

ADAM Jimmy.

STEVE Half-brother.

ADAM That's not how she thinks of him. They grew up together.
What the hell am I doing having to justify my wife's family to
you?

STEVE Sorry, didn't mean to.

ADAM She realised she had too many clothes up in Norwich.

STEVE OK.

A MOMENT

STEVE Don't you have – I mean, aren't there people, staff for that
kind of thing?

ADAM You're doing it again.

STEVE I'm....I'm planning ahead.

ADAM For what?

STEVE They seem to think...Scoop from Channel 4 implied there's a
story here.

ADAM Moving a few outfits.

STEVE Apparently, I'll say that again, "apparently" Hannah refused
to make a statement.

ADAM What have you done with my real Official Spokesman?

STEVE I know. I wouldn't normally but –

ADAM They're fishing. Making something out of nothing. Slow news day.

STEVE That's the point. It isn't slow out there – Bob Goldie's been rushed to hospital, Gwen's signed up with Cheech and Chong.

ADAM Let's make that her story of the day – not this fantasy.

STEVE OK. Her brother. Technically her half-brother.

ADAM That's right.

STEVE Thanks.

AS STEVE GOES

ADAM Thank you, Steve.

WE GO WITH STEVE OUT INTO THE CORRIDOR

STEVE How d'you get on? Bolswell?

MONICA Nasty. Not socialist enough.

STEVE The Armstrong Legacy?

MONICA And now Polly won't let me do drugs.

STEVE That's a bit drastic.

MONICA If I could just leak my report into the cost-benefits of legalisation, it would get them right -

STEVE Don't even dream about it. Look, I'll give you some answers. We'll rehearse. What did they ask you? Give me an easy one.

MONICA Um...."How will you help the citizens of Bolswell Heath through the current economic downturn?"

STEVE And you said?

MONICA “We have a huge platform of fiscal measures which will impact on the financial underpinning of trade substructure and counter-inflationary easing.”

A MOMENT

MONICA Your face.

A MOMENT

MONICA Steve? You alright?

STEVE This needs work. Follow me.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7. HOUSE OF COMMONS TEAROOM. 1PM.

TWO WOMEN ALREADY DANGEROUSLY TENSE WITH EACH OTHER

POLLY We know exactly what you're doing.

HELEN And they say the surveillance state is a myth.

POLLY We don't need CCTV to watch you stir it up. When did you last hang round the tea room?

HELEN Something about these crumpets.

POLLY Helen, you're the least Commons Man Woman in the party.

HELEN But the way the butter melts through the holes.

POLLY Don't push Adam too far.

HELEN He's moved to sack both of us in his time.

POLLY But I've never tried to replace him.

HELEN I can do that from inside or outside the cabinet.

POLLY We both know it's a whole lot harder outside. People forget who you are. The Today Programme doesn't ring, Sunday Politics gets you to do the newspaper round-up.

HELEN I am very happy as Chancellor.

POLLY What have you said to him?

HELEN Adam and I aren't really on speakers.

POLLY What have you said to Laity?

HELEN (BIZARRE) Why would I be talking to a Tory?

POLLY Because today's the Conservative Leadership election. He's behind. Now he can tell waverers that if he gets the job, he has the support of your faction to vote down PR.

A MOMENT
SHE DECIDES NOT TO FIGHT IT:

HELEN Who blabbed?

POLLY Does it matter?

HELEN I think Simon Laity will be the best Tory Leader for the fortunes of the Labour Party.

POLLY He's young, he's dynamic, he's –

HELEN Gay.

POLLY Bizarrely, they don't seem to care about that any more.

HELEN The MPs, sure, most of them have been to Eton. But out there, the average age of a Conservative Party member is 59. Now imagine him, this card-carrying Tory, who cares so deeply about British values and you know what, after thirty years as a party member, for the first time, he just can't get himself out to the Conservative Party Jumble and Bric-a-Brac sale if it's only going to raise money for that queer. He can stuff his own envelopes as far as he's concerned.

POLLY Dream on, Helen. The party faithful love Simon Laity.

HELEN Look at the alternative. Harry Denbigh is bang on the money. He's working class – whatever that means any more – and he'll trump us whenever we talk about social deprivation.

POLLY That doesn't excuse forming a conspiracy to bring down the Prime Minister.

HELEN What is this, *I Claudius*?

POLLY Call it what you like, Helen, we are in coalition with the Lib Dems and we are going to place a PR Referendum Bill before the House –

HELEN And I am going to vote against.

POLLY (DERISIVE) A matter of conscience?

HELEN It will destroy British parliamentary democracy and I am not putting my name to it.

POLLY Instead you're putting your name to a backstairs bid to oust your party leader in time for the next election. Very democracy.

HELEN Unintended consequences, that's the big trouble with politics, don't you think?

CUT TO:

SCENE 8. DOWNING STREET: COMMUNICATIONS SUITE. 1:15PM

STEVE IS IN DESPAIR

STEVE Monica, Monica, Monica, that was a fantastic answer – if you were being viva’ed for a PhD, not for candidacy in Bolswell Heath.

MONICA I cannot be responsible for their ignorance of basic terminology.

STEVE Anything they ask you, you say “I am going out onto the streets to work for the people of Bolswell Heath.”

MONICA But that’s –

STEVE OK, is any part of the constituency Asian?

MONICA About seventeen, eighteen percent.

STEVE (THAT’S COLOSSAL) Eighteen?

MONICA Is that....?

STEVE Change of plan, every question, you answer, “I can connect with these people. I understand their issues and their needs.”

MONICA We moved from Nottingham when I was seven. I grew up in Massachusetts. I’ve never even seen a sweatshop.

STEVE Google it. Learn some vindaloo recipes. They want you for the colour of your skin, Monica.

MONICA (PRINCIPLED) Then I don’t want them.

A MOMENT

MONICA Only kidding. Steve Sahib.

STEVE Right, let’s tackle this ‘not socialist enough’ thing.

MONICA Leave that to me. I've got a plan.

CUT TO:

SCENE 9. HOME OFFICE. 1.15PM

NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERWAY BUT THERE'S LITTLE LOVE

BILL It's not so bloody odd, we actually voted for Single Transferable Vote in 1917. It was the Lords that threw it out.

DONOGHUE So how come, since that tragic moment in the history of parliamentary democracy, only the Irish, the Australians and the New Zealanders have adopted STV?

BILL You want a system that no-one in the world is currently using.

DONOGHUE No-one's had the chance. This is truly progressive politics. Britain's chance to step forward.

BILL Off the edge of the cliff.

DONOGHUE Under Alternative Vote Top-Up, all elected MPs would have the support of the majority. Nearly every citizen ends up casting at least one vote that effects the overall result.

BILL And every party has to campaign everywhere.

DONOGHUE It won't kill us.

BILL If you'd ever run a serious national campaign you'd know it's all about –

DONOGHUE Don't patronise me, Bill.

BILL With this crazy system of yours, you need a university degree to understand the ballot paper.

DONOGHUE You've got such a chip.

BILL I've done alright.

DONOGHUE It's perfectly simple - you count the vote then allot seats in rounds.

- BILL Like a boxing match, is that? Can we have girls in swimsuits going round the Town Hall, holding up cards?
- DONOGHUE (CONTINUING) In the first round, the first seat goes to whichever party got the most votes. In subsequent rounds a seat is awarded to whoever has the most votes -
- BILL But only, it says here, “only after each party's count is divided by the number of seats they've already won, plus one.” You want to explain that to the Great British Failed-Maths-O-Level-Twice Public?
- DONOGHUE They’ll get it.
- BILL So in the second round, correct me if I'm wrong, a party that has already earned a seat will have its vote halved, while in later rounds a party that already has two seats will have its count reduced to a third.
- DONOGHUE It's the D'Hondt method.
- BILL The other famous Belgian.
- DONOGHUE You’re happy with most MPs being elected by about a third of voters? National governments by even less?
- BILL Strong, clear government and nobody gets held hostage by a minority party of cranks.
- DONOGHUE (OFFENDED, HE MEANS LIB DEMS) What exactly does that mean?
- BILL Don’t be so bloody sensitive, I mean Ukip or one of those idiots from Ulster.
- DONOGHUE My party has regularly garnered a fifth of the votes in national elections and the best we’ve ever mustered is a tenth of MPs and a gold star for trying really hard.
- BILL We go ahead with Alternative Vote Top-Up – now I sound like a mobile phone salesman – and every constituency boundary has to be redrawn.

DONOGHUE Half of them get redrawn every parliament, as the party in power tries to rig its way into another term.

BILL Even from you, that's cheap.

DONOGHUE Even me?

BILL The Bitch Of The Backbenches, as you were once known. Now you're on the frontbenches...(MUSING)...what starts with F?

DONOGHUE Are you doing this on purpose?

BILL What?

DONOGHUE Driving me out of these negotiations?

BILL There's an idea.

DONOGHUE (STANDING) It's worked.

BILL Going to the powder room?

DONOGHUE It's like wandering into the Wheeltappers And Shunters'.

BILL Happy days.

DONOGHUE Treasure them, Bill, they've all you got left.

AND SHE WALKS OUT.

CUT TO:

SCENE 10. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY.
1.30PM.

ADAM IS AMAZED BUT INTRIGUED

MONICA Last year they cost us over sixteen billion.

ADAM How do you get that?

MONICA The York University study broke down the actual cost of each problem drug user at thirteen thousand a year. Social knock-ons take that up to 44,320 Euros each.

ADAM Still.

MONICA Prevalence estimates put the rates in England at 8.9 problem drug users per thousand adults, Scotland at 15.39 per thousand. Take that out across the whole country and you're looking at 356,000 drug users. Aka one percent of the adult population.

ADAM One in a hundred people I walk past is a heroin user?

MONICA Probably not in Downing Street. Though there are some Junior Ministers I've had doubts about.

ADAM Why didn't anyone tell me?

MONICA Let's get behind Donoghue on this one - let's open up the debate.

ADAM Gwen Donoghue's as crazy as a box of frogs.

MONICA Switzerland had a referendum, Do They Want Clinics Where Heroin Users Can Go, Any Time, Get Their Hits From Doctors. They voted Yes. Crime's plummeted, insurance costs halved, lawyers sitting round in the courts twiddling their thumbs, nothing to do.

ADAM (DISTASTE) But Switzerland.

- MONICA You'd rather the Italian way?
- ADAM How do they - ?
- MONICA We're using the Italian way. It's called leave it to the mafia. That's who's organising our drugs control policy at the moment.
- ADAM There's a difference between selling and controlling.
- MONICA Not for Scarface, there isn't. We've created an opiate market worth six billion. It's modern alchemy. Prohibition turns a basic agricultural product into something worth literally more than gold, ounce for ounce.
- ADAM You're exaggerating.
- MONICA Afghan heroin – as sold to approved NHS-suppliers – is about five hundred and sixty Euros a kilo. The illegal route, after the Turkish dealers, the Albanian smugglers, the Brixton dealers, you're looking at 94,000 Euros a kilo on the streets of Glasgow. You can buy Krugerrands for well less.
- ADAM Where's the fun in that?
- MONICA And the real tragedy is, price makes no difference. You can crack down (better verb needed), watch the street price double – and demand stays the same. Push it the other way, we've seen the price of ecstasy drop through the floor – from ten Euros a tab down to two-fifty a tab, does usage go up? No, it stays the same. Look out, Adam Smith, this stuff does not obey the laws of capitalist economics.
- ADAM It's not about money, Monica. You can't change laws just to save a few Euros.
- MONICA How about saving a few children? The Advisory Council reckoned well over a hundred thousand children are living with an addict mother. You happy to write them off?
- ADAM Prohibition is helping their mothers stop using –

MONICA You're not. No-one tries to stop anyone any more. All the agencies dealing with addiction have reduced their ambitions to Harm Reduction. No-one's expecting anyone to give up any more. The social workers ask Mummy to 'cut down a bit' and maybe don't send the kids to pick up Mummy's methadone scrip.

ADAM (BEGINNING TO BE TEMPTED) I'm legalising drugs to save children?

MONICA You don't need to say anything. Just keep schtumm and let Liberal Mrs.D run with the ball.

ADAM I'll have Washington straight on the phone to me. This is a G8 thing.

MONICA Every time Joe Junkie takes a hit, he does his bit to destabilise Afghanistan, Colombia, Thailand, the rest - we've got to start talking about it some time.

A MOMENT.

ADAM (CONCEDING) Tell Steve he can pull back. A bit. Policy under review, vague words, keep it in the air.

MONICA Thanks.

ADAM I'm going to need some nice chunky facts for when it blows.

MONICA Sure.

ADAM Peace dividend, community safety. Weeping mothers, if you can manage it. Dead babies, needles sticking out, all that sort of thing.

MONICA (AS SHE GOES OUT THE DOOR) I'll see if I can rustle some up.

CUT TO:

SCENE 11. WHITEHALL. MCDONALDS. 1:40PM.

STEVE IS TRYING TO EAT A QUIET LUNCH IN A BUSY MCDONALDS. HE HAS BEEN FOUND, MOUTH FULL.

STEVE My guilty secret.

LUCY Your only one? Tell me some more.

STEVE A Big Tasty With Bacon never lasts as long as you dream.

LUCY I could stretch to an extra portion of Cheese Melt Dippers?

STEVE Can't a guy eat his artery-stuffing lunch in peace any more?

LUCY Thought you might have a comment for me by now.

STEVE I emailed. You replied. It's Frank Hyland, brother to Hannah Armstrong, née Hyland.

LUCY This much we know.

STEVE Half-brother actually.

LUCY Here's the whole spread of photos. (PUTTING THEM ON THE TABLE IN TURN) Taking out the clothes. Lots of clothes, winter, summer, full wardrobe. That box file there, we blew it up, says bank statements, why's she moving that? Brother Frank's carrying her –

STEVE Classic conspiracy rubbish.

LUCY Just want to know why she wouldn't answer our request for a comment. (ANOTHER PHOTO) Two crates of files from her work.

STEVE Now those files, they contain the full facts about what happened at Roswell. Had to shred those.

LUCY They drove away. Then came back for more. Shoes. Her computer - I'm talking desktop.

STEVE That hard drive, that's got the truth about 911. Yes, truly it was Her Majesty's Inland Revenue. Pilots from the VAT Inspection Suicide Squad. The truth will finally be out.

LUCY When did Hannah last do a public event with Adam?

STEVE How am I supposed to know?

LUCY Three months ago. Three months and eight days. The wreath thing for the memorial thing.

STEVE (NOT REMOTELY WORRIED) She has a job. She works for a major multi-national –

LUCY Was slated for the Lord Mayor's banquet – pulled out. Slated for the fund-raiser at –

STEVE (UNSHAKEN) You're fishing in the wrong pool, Luce. Go get yourself some Cod McNuggets.

LUCY Our snappers sit outside Number Ten every day, taking their snaps. It's called democracy. It also creates an in-and-out roster. She's been out, she ain't been back in.

STEVE That's your story? That's what journalism in this country has sunk to?

LUCY Watch it and weep. We trail at six.

STEVE (I KNOW) Before Hollyoaks. My other guilty secret.

LUCY Really? Can I - ? [use that?]

STEVE See? You'll believe anything.

CUT TO:

SCENE 12. DOWNING STREET: PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 2PM.

DONOGHUE HAS JUST STORMED IN

DONOGHUE He's been against PR for decades.

ADAM Like the rest of us

DONOGHUE Bill Flagg is sticking his spanner in the works as deep as it'll go.

ADAM Bill's my link to the backbenches. If anyone knows what we can get through the House, it's him.

DONOGHUE I'm not fooled, Adam. You've put him there as a reactionary, sexist roadblock.

POLLY You haven't been taking him seriously again, have you?

ADAM Ignore him. Come back to me with the best system to put before the House and –

DONOGHUE He mocks them all.

POLLY You keep going until he's got no more jokes and then –

DONOGHUE I am not prepared to debase myself.

ADAM You're in the wrong job.

POLLY The offer's there on the table, you'd be mad to walk away.

DONOGHUE Without us, the government falls.

POLLY We've already got enough problems right now with your suggestion for free heroin giveaways.

DONOGHUE I just suggested we open the policy debate in an adult way.

ADAM (SERIOUS) And I'm willing to do just that.

POLLY (HORRIFIED) What?

DONOGHUE Genuinely?

ADAM We are wasting billions on prohibition –

POLLY “Wasting?”

ADAM And showing no result. It’s time to think about it.

DONOGHUE (AMAZED) You’ll genuinely consider it?

ADAM There’s a huge amount of work. Nothing’s been costed. But we could certainly start looking at clinics, the Swiss model.

DONOGHUE I didn’t realise you’re already on to it.

POLLY Adam!

ADAM I do more than sit here polishing my jokes.

DONOGHUE You’re really consider some form of decriminalisation?

ADAM The arguments are compelling.

DONOGHUE That’s....well, that’s gratifying.

ADAM But I need you back in that negotiating room with Bill.

A MOMENT. THEN:

DONOGHUE How long does it take - till Flagg’s jokes run out?

ADAM Truth be told, you just get so you don’t notice them any more.

DONOGHUE So this is what it means to be a member of the Labour Party.
(MOVING OFF) Thank you, Prime Minister.

ADAM Thank you, Gwen.

SHE GOES OUT THE ROOM.

POLLY There's policy on the hoof, Adam, and then there's the Charge of the Bleeding Light Brigade.

ADAM I shut her up, didn't I?

POLLY Tell me this is just a stunt. Please.

ADAM (NOT ANSWERING) The costs, the children living with drug-addicted mothers.

POLLY You're keeping Gwen sweet, we're not going to legalise anything, are we?

ADAM Monica put a good case.

POLLY You haven't let her loose as well?

ADAM She'll do it perfectly. How did she get on with that Constituency selection meeting?

POLLY Tough, apparently.

ADAM My fault?

POLLY Everything's your fault, Adam.

ADAM I love this job.

POLLY Sadly, you won't have it for much longer. Helen Ridout's working some backstairs deal with Simon Laity.

ADAM Laity?

POLLY She's put it about, if Laity becomes Tory Leader, she'll line up her chums with him to vote down your PR Bill.

ADAM Tea room tattle.

POLLY You have to bring her into line.

ADAM Nothing I have ever said has ever controlled the Chancellor.

POLLY That's if she's Chancellor.

A MOMENT

THEN, LIKING WHAT POLLY MEANS:

ADAM Get her round. I've missed her.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13. DOWNING STREET. 3PM.

STEVE HAS BEEN STOPPED ON THE WAY INTO NUMBER TEN

REPORTER Sorry, Steve, we've got him saying it. Out loud.

STEVE The Strategy Unit is looking at a few figures. That's all. We are not opening an opium den in the Cabinet office.

REPORTER Then why have we got the Secretary of Bolswell Heath CLP saying that –

STEVE Where was that again, Bolswell, that's turn left at Gradgrindshire, go straight on till the collapse of British manufacturing, is that right?

REPORTER Play it to him. (TO TECHIE) Dinesh. (TO STEVE) Our regional opt-out got it.

TAPE WHIZZES WHILE:

STEVE (AS IT WHIZZES) Anyone can dig out some wizened Crypto-Trot UberHippy who –

TERRY *(OVER) That's right. I happened to be speaking with a source close, very close to the Prime Minister. The source says that Adam Armstrong is right behind the Home Secretary's call for decriminalisation of drugs."*

REPORTER *Can you be more precise? Who was your source?*

TERRY *Well, can't, but let's just say, with some certainty, she has talked him round.*

REPORTER *You mean Adam Armstrong – for all his denials – is using the Home Secretary as his stalking horse?*

TERRY *I don't know about who's riding who but I think we're finally seeing genuinely radical policy coming out of Number Ten here.*

CUTTING THE TAPE OFF:

REPORTER (BLITHE) Any comment, Steve?

STEVE The Labour Government has –

REPORTER The Labour-Lib Dem Alliance Government.

STEVE I do keep forgetting. (THEN:) Quote me: Her Majesty's Government has no intention of legalising drugs. The Home Secretary is merely inviting debate on approaches to –

REPORTER (IGNORING THIS) What are we talking LSD, maybe coke, or heroin, the whole shebang?

STEVE We are certainly not legalising shebang.

REPORTER Steve, Bolswell Heath knows more about the PM's intentions than you – would you care to comment on that?

A MOMENT

REPORTER Steve?

STEVE (GOING, TEETH GRITTED) Just need to have a quick word with our Strategy Unit.

CUT TO:

SCENE 14. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 3:15PM.

HELEN HAS JUST ENTERED. SHE'S TENSE.

HELEN Thought you might have redecorated at least.

ADAM I like traditions.

HELEN Like First Past The Post.

ADAM Like loyalty to your party.

HELEN We're in a coalition government. Which party am I supposed to be loyal to first?

ADAM You are Chancellor of the Exchequer.

HELEN You want to talk comprehensive public spending review?

ADAM Talk to me about Simon Laity.

HELEN Think about the damage Harry Denbigh could do to us in the polls. Born on a council estate, self-made, stands for -

ADAM To get Laity elected, you'll make a deal with him? A deal which breaks our party line.

HELEN I don't want PR, you don't want PR, I'm doing you a favour.

ADAM By bringing down my government?

HELEN Sure, the Lib Dems will pull out of the coalition – thank you, God - but we call their bluff.

ADAM You are my Chancellor.

HELEN Is Gwen Donoghue really going to vote against you in a No Confidence? Which can only bring in a Tory minority administration?

ADAM What happens in Cabinet when I've got you sitting opposite her and she knows exactly what you've been doing?

HELEN I'm offering you a win-win.

ADAM I can't have you as my Chancellor without an explicit statement in favour of electoral reform.

A MOMENT OF STAND-OFF: IS HE SACKING HER?

HELEN Do what you have to do, Adam.

ADAM I've already turned down your resignation once.

HELEN And now you have The Golden Window Of Opportunity to sack me.

ADAM And prepare your run at the leadership?

HELEN I'd really rather stay in cabinet.

ADAM I genuinely don't mind losing this job, Helen. I just mind about who does it next.

HELEN Old men, sitting round discussing their legacy. Couldn't you take up golf instead?

ADAM Don't force me to humiliate you.

HELEN I can't imagine a better start to my campaign. I walk out there, all of them, lined up with their cameras, their mics – (SEEING HER) God save us, what's Donoghue spouting off about now?

AND DURING THIS POLLY ENTERS:

POLLY Sorry, I think you should hear this. She's off again.

SHE ZAPS UP THE TELEVISION

DONOGHUE That's right, the Prime Minister and I have spoken about this at great length.

REPORTER *And he's given you his support?*

DONOGHUE *We have to look at this. If we ended prohibition, we would be looking at savings of almost sixteen billion a year. Sixteen billion to spend on rehab, on health care. Not to mention the drop in the crime rate.*

REPORTER *We know this has long been a favourite scheme of yours, why do you think the PM has suddenly swung behind you here?*

HELEN (OVER) Because he's fatally weak and with your fifty-votes MPS, he rolls over and says Rub My Tummy.

DONOGHUE (CONTINUING) *We're in a coalition. We work together, we pool our thoughts.*

HELEN (OVER) Nice deep pool, for you to drown in.

ADAM Turn her off.

POLLY (ZAPPING IT OFF) This is serious, Adam.

ADAM (VERY FLIP) Seven people died last night. Because they're growing cannabis on Acacia Avenue.

POLLY Do you want to lose all national support?

ADAM It's Gwen's policy.

POLLY With your name stamped all over it.

ADAM They'll associate it with her.

HELEN If you say She Made Me Do It, you're a weak leader. If you're strong, it's your policy.

ADAM (GOODBYE) Thank you, Chancellor.

A MOMENT.

HELEN Thank you, Prime Minister.

SHE GOES.

POLLY She's right.

ADAM There are more things on heaven and earth, Polly.

POLLY What are you up to?

CUT TO:

SCENE 15. DOWNING STREET. STRATEGY UNIT. 3:30PM.

STEVE IS ADAMANT. MONICA IS FIGHTING A REARGUARD ACTION.

STEVE Pick up the phone. Tell him to say you are not the source.

MONICA (I CAN'T) He's all over me, he loves me.

STEVE Ring him, tell him you've met someone else.

MONICA The selection committee challenged me to name something radical. Here it is.

STEVE You'll meet a new constituency. You'll forget all about Bolswell North. You'll see him going out with someone else and wonder what you ever saw in him.

MONICA Adam said you could brief "figures review", "paperwork exercise". Keep it vague, keep it open.

STEVE Meanwhile the Fidel Castro of Bolswell says we'll be giving away free heroin to school. Buy one wrap, get a tab free. We're losing control of this.

MONICA It's Donoghue fronting it, she's not one of us.

STEVE Which is why we need a retraction from the Timothy Leary of the North. Ring him. Tell him to

MONICA Give me twenty-four hours.

STEVE Pick up the phone.

MONICA Next week I'll have the nomination.

POLLY (ENTERING) Did you see that?

STEVE What?

POLLY Gwen Donoghue telling the press that Adam's backing her on Legalisation.

STEVE Is he?
MONICA He is?

POLLY (AS IF) Get with the program.

STEVE What is wrong with you people? Do you not like me? Is this a secret conspiracy to destroy what little self-confidence I have left?

POLLY I'm sure, Monica, who Promised Me She Wouldn't Fog Our Leader's Brain With Her Crazy And Politically Destructive Legalisation Ideas, will pay for your therapy.

STEVE Now I'm going to have to talk to the Lib Dem press guy and you know how much I hate that.

MONICA (BUT...WORKING IT OUT) If she's gone public, I don't have to ring Bolswell, do I?

STEVE Twenty-four hours.

MONICA (GOING) I'll remember you in my acceptance speech.

POLLY (HANDING HIM PAPERS) Steve. The internet's crawling with blogs saying there's trouble between Hannah and Adam.

STEVE They'll have it from Channel 4 News – apparently they spotted something and Hannah naturally didn't take Jon Snow's call – who would? - and now there's a full-blown marital. Allegedly.

POLLY (CRAZY) Where did it come from?

STEVE That kind of conspiracy stuff, it's hormonal – goes with the tides.

POLLY This guy writing here – he says “Hannah was seen sitting in the car, weeping.”

STEVE Hay fever.

POLLY “The boot piled with her lifetime’s possessions.”

STEVE A few old files.

POLLY “While her brother comforted her.”

STEVE He passed her some piriton.

POLLY What’s Adam told you to do about it?

STEVE Treat it with the respect it deserves. (HE SCRUMPLES THE PAPER AND FLINGS IT IN THE BIN) Thus.

POLLY (UNFLAPPED, HANDING HIM THE PAPERS) I did you two copies. Speaking as his ‘political wife’, I insist he knows.

CUT TO:

SCENE 16. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 4PM.

ADAM IS READING THE RIOT ACT

ADAM You're going back in that negotiating room and you're settling on a method of proportional representation which we will take to the country.

BILL Donoghue loathes me.

ADAM Mutually assured destruction.

BILL This Alternative Vote Top-Up System, she thinks anyone can do it. It's too complicated.

ADAM No-one knows how a plane flies but we all get on them.

BILL What?

ADAM Up the steps, quick smile from the hostess, snaffle your bag of complimentary nuts and get off the other end, you've got what you paid for. You don't have to do the maths, you just have to believe.

BILL Sometimes they crash.

ADAM But not because everyone on board was suddenly asked to calculate the thrust versus the lift.

BILL (POINTED) Merely because the captain made a fatal error.

ADAM Or because he was let down by his co-pilot.

BILL Do you want me to do this or am I just window-dressing?

ADAM I'd love to know what the shop was selling if they put you in the window.

BILL Socialist honesty, parliamentary democracy and -

KNOCK AND ENTER

STEVE You got a moment?

ADAM Sure. How's the Tory Leadership voting going?

STEVE Sky's reporting a last-minute swing to Laity. Out of nowhere.

ADAM He's got some promise out of Helen.

BILL Ridout?

ADAM I'll deal with her. (TO STEVE) Who do we want to win?

STEVE First out gay leader of a political party? That's a no-brainer where I come from.

ADAM Helen thinks the activists will stay at home.

BILL Plenty of Tory fag hags.

STEVE Sweet of you to say, Bill.

ADAM OK, Bill, I need you back in there with Gwen. Do a deal. You're the man the party trusts.

BILL (GOING) Prime Minister.

ADAM Anything else?

STEVE There's been some internet stuff.

ADAM This Hannah bollocks?

STEVE Bloggers, threads, they're digging out tiny factoids and making them into three-part biographies.

ADAM Couldn't we just close the internet down for the day?

STEVE The world-wide web?

ADAM Must fall under the Royal Prerogative. Her Majesty declares the internet closed.

STEVE We need to react. Calm it down.

ADAM Injunctions, please, Steve.

STEVE You'll stir it up. Legal action becomes the story.

ADAM They have no right to monkey with my private life.

STEVE I was suggesting a simple appearance, you and Hannah, like nothing's happening.

ADAM Issue proceedings, get an injunction, no public interest defence.

STEVE The public are exceptionally interested and this will detonate it. It's like kicking an ants' nest – you take out -

ADAM (COOL FURY) I am not dragging Hannah into this. I will make it clear that they have overstepped the mark.

STEVE Boss, I really don't –

ADAM (IMPLACABLE) You heard me?

STEVE Sure. Right. (GOING) I'll speak to some lawyers.

ADAM Thank you.

STEVE (BY THE DOOR) One other thing. This drug thing...

ADAM Leave it to Donoghue.

STEVE And your position is?

ADAM Leave it to Donoghue.

STEVE (UNSATISFACTORY BUT) Right.

CUT TO:

SCENE 17. DOWNING STREET: STRATEGY UNIT. 4:30PM.

MONICA IS ON THE PHONE

MONICA That's fantastic. How many are you shortlisting?
 > Only me and him?
 > It really was the drugs policy thing?
 > (MOCK BASHFUL) I can't claim all the credit but...you know, humble worker at the coalface.
 > No, I haven't actually ever seen a coal...
 What? Is it about to come on? I'll turn it on.
 > See you next week. Thanks.

SHE HANGS UP.

POLLY Was that Bolswell's very own Motormouth?

MONICA He says they're about to announce the Tory Leadership result.

POLLY Where's the remote?

MONICA Usually under the Hansard.

POLLY Got it.

SHE ZAPS IT UP:

REPORTER Extraordinary goings-on here, against nearly all expectations, Conservative MPS have elected Simon Laity as their new leader by a massive majority of forty-eight.

ANCHOR That's more than any leader since - ?

REPORTER That's right. There seems to have been a late swing in his favour – there were all sorts of rumours sweeping the Westminster village all day.

ANCHOR Yet that's surely not the most extraordinary thing?

REPORTER No, that's right, Kirsty, in his first speech as the new Leader of the Conservative Party, he called for an end to partisan politics, for a need to look at all policies on their merits, regardless of party dogma.

ANCHOR And then he was asked about today's intervention from the Home Secretary, suggesting that we should end the War On Drugs.

REPORTER And he replied, I made a note: "Yes, I think we should look seriously at that."

ANCHOR A Tory leader suggesting decriminalisation of Class A drugs?

REPORTER It's quite incredible. The last time a Tory front bencher suggested that in a book, it was removed for the paperback reprint. Now, we've got their newly elected leader suggesting that – [continuing]

DURING THIS LAST, THE PHONE HAS STARTED RINGING

MONICA (DREAD) I know exactly who that is.

POLLY That's just one of the many amazing skills on your CV.

MONICA I need you to answer it. (BEGGING) Please.

POLLY (ANSWERING IT) Hello? Yes.
 > No, she's left the room. Happy to give her a message.
 > (WRITING IT) "Rethinking the shortlist."
 > Any particular reason why?
 > (WRITING) "Right wing drugs policy."
 > Right, I'll tell her.
 > Thanks.

SHE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN.

MONICA It's not fair.

POLLY They don't want to be associated with Tory ideas.

MONICA It was my idea.

POLLY Should have copyrighted it.

MONICA It's Laity, making a move on Donoghue.

POLLY They're going to get nastily burned.

MONICA What, we're not going ahead with it?

POLLY What do you think Adam's been doing all day?

MONICA What do you mean?

POLLY He was taking his chance to show the electorate what kind of party the Lib Dems are.

MONICA You mean he never - ? *[intended to back legalisation]*

POLLY Come on, Monica, this is politics. And he smoked Laity out as well.

MONICA I've done serious work on this. A whole cost-benefit thing.

POLLY He sets them up, he pulls back, leaves Donoghue and Laity looking like extremists.

MONICA He's used me.

POLLY He's held this government together, Monica. He's kept the Lib Dems onside. He's seen off Helen's plot to oust him. And as a bonus, along the way he's stuffed the Tories. That's what matters.

DURING THIS STEVE ENTERS, ANGRY, FRUSTRATED:

STEVE They should be looking at a new Tory Leader and what have they got themselves crazy about?

MONICA (FORLORN) Not drug decriminalisation by any chance?

STEVE Adam and Hannah.

POLLY Still?

STEVE We've issued an injunction against the Standard.

MONICA (SARCASTIC) That's so going to work.

STEVE (PEAKING) You think I didn't tell him?

POLLY (ADAM'S BEHAVIOUR IS INEXPLICABLE) What's going
on?

STEVE This is going to take some cooling down.

CUT TO:

SCENE 18. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 5PM.

GOING HEAD TO HEAD

ADAM Your remarks about drug legalisation have weakened this government.

DONOGHUE There won't be a government unless I am a part of it.

ADAM I cannot risk being asked, every time I stand up, about drugs legalisation.

DONOGHUE You're sacking me for saying one thing? They said you were a bastard, but even I'm –

ADAM You don't want to be Chancellor?

DONOGHUE I'm sorry?

ADAM There is a vacancy at the Treasury.

DONOGHUE Since when?

ADAM As soon as I tell her I'm reshuffling.

DONOGHUE You are a bastard.

ADAM She made a secret deal with the Conservatives.

DONOGHUE You made a deal with us.

ADAM Do you accept?

DONOGHUE You'll me control of the economy?

ADAM It's my pledge of faith to you.

DONOGHUE What about the PR negotiations?

ADAM What about them?

DONOGHUE I cannot continue with Bill Flagg. You know he's doing everything he can to screw –

ADAM (OVER HER) I'll nominate someone new.

DONOGHUE I want a big hitter, someone with a reputation to lose.

ADAM Cabinet rank?

DONOGHUE For instance.

DURING THIS, POLLY KNOCKS AND ENTERS

POLLY Adam, you asked me to tell you when the Chancellor arrived.

ADAM Polly, will you and Gwen work on something for the press announcement?

POLLY Certainly. This way.

DONOGHUE Thank you, Prime Minister.

POLLY (SOTTO, TO ADAM) I hope you don't regret this.

ADAM She'll do anything to keep that job. It's worth it.

AND THEY ARE GONE
AS HELEN ENTERS

ADAM Helen.

HELEN Adam.

ADAM Helen.

HELEN Do you really want me on the backbenches?

ADAM You could have kept it subtle, a few discreet words.

HELEN It was Laity, he's a blabbermouth.

ADAM (NO) You wanted me to know. You called me on it.

HELEN There are plenty in the party against PR.

ADAM Against PR or against me?

HELEN Against crazies like Gwen Donoghue. God knows what would happen if she had control of a real spending department.

ADAM Actually that's what she needs, a dose of fiscal reality.

HELEN What are you saying?

ADAM Bob Goldie's just gone in for a triple bypass.

HELEN Is he going to be OK?

ADAM I want you to take over as Leader of the House.

HELEN You think I'll turn it down, don't you?

ADAM I need someone of calibre to marshal the Commons.

HELEN You want me to refuse and then you march out there and Steve tells everyone I chose to leave the cabinet and –

ADAM A coalition government needs careful handling.

HELEN If that's the only way I get to stay in cabinet, I accept.

A MOMENT.

ADAM (HE WANTED HER TO RESIGN) I'm delighted. I wouldn't want to lose you.

HELEN It's apparent.

ADAM Polly will prepare something for the Press. Thank you.

HELEN Thank you, Prime Minister.

ADAM (CALLING) Polly?

STEVE (ENTERING) They're ready for you outside, Adam.

ADAM Thank you. (TO HELEN) Will you excuse me? Polly will sort you out.

HE IS ALREADY STRIDING OUT

ADAM Still in a frenzy?

THEY ARE NOW STRIDING THROUGH TO THE FRONT DOOR, AS:

STEVE I get it now. You wanted to knock Laity's big day off the front pages.

ADAM (MODEST) Well...

STEVE First, I thought, you put Donoghue up to it. The day of the Tory Leadership election. Then I thought No, you wouldn't risk that. But then this Hannah conspiracy thing and the injunctions – a masterstroke.

ADAM I have my moments.

DOORMAN (AS HE OPENS THE DOOR FOR THEM) Prime Minister.

THERE IS A SUDDEN RUSH OF CAMERAS CLICKING AND FLASHING, AS, NOW SOTTO VOCE, WAITING FOR HIM:

STEVE Mirror's front extreme right if you want to start with a friend – Danny Potter. Mail's second row left.

ADAM Sabrina?

STEVE Her fellow-coven member Jessica.

ADAM Monica, sorry about Bolswell North.

MONICA The greater good.

ADAM Take a look at Leicester Forest.

MONICA Bob Goldie's constituency?

ADAM Quite. (NOW TO THE JOURNALISTS) Good afternoon, I have several things to say, following the resignation of Bob Goldie as Leader of the House due to ill-health. I have reshuffled my cabinet and Polly will have full details for you as soon as everything's in place. I'll take questions.

ALL REPORTERS Prime Minister, do you think –
We need to ask why –
Prime Minister –

ADAM (PICKING HER OUT) Jessica.

JESSICA Prime Minister, there are many issues to discuss today but I know everyone is asking one question. There have been reports about you and your wife and we were – ?

ADAM Let me stop you there. My wife Hannah and I have been married now for eighteen years. They have been happy and good years. But sadly marriage is far from easy in a job like this and strains have shown. As a result, Hannah and I have decided to separate. I hope you will therefore give us the space and privacy to deal with this in our own way. Thank you. Next?

GOBSMACKED SILENCE.

ADAM Anyone?

end

number 10: episode three

“the visigoths are coming” by jonathan myerson

cast

**ADAM ARMSTRONG, Labour Prime Minister
STEVE, Number 10 Director Of Communications**

and

**GENOVEVA, ANGOLAN AMBASSADOR TO THE COURT OF ST.JAMES
VIRGILIO, ANGOLAN MILITARY ATTACHÉ
PAUL, US DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE
RADIO OPERATOR**

on TV

**JOURNALISTS
ANGOLAN LAWYER
SIMON LAITY**

on radio transmission

**MERLIN HELICOPTER PILOT
COMMAND HQ**

SCENE 1. SWEDISH EMBASSY: BOARD ROOM. 10:14PM.

THIS IS A LARGE POLISHED WOOD-FLOORED ROOM. IN THE MIDDLE IS A BOARD ROOM TABLE WITH CHAIRS AROUND.

THERE ARE TWO DOORS INTO THE ROOM, EACH LEADING ALSO TO BREAKOUT ROOMS FOR EACH DELEGATION. THE TABLE IS SEVERAL PACES FROM THE DOORWAY.

GENOVEVA, THE ANGOLAN AMBASSADOR, STANDS FACING ADAM.

GENOVEVA (TENSE, HOSTILE) Our cars are waiting.

ADAM Sit down. Please.

GENOVEVA I'm sorry, Prime Minister, these negotiations are terminated.

ADAM You and I have been sitting in this room for the last four days. Give or take. How many of us? Looks like about...(COUNTING)... twenty on my side, maybe thirty-five on yours. We've had the Swedish Foreign Minister shuttling between us, trying to -

GENOVEVA We have offered you many solutions –

ADAM Madam Ambassador, your forces have occupied British territory and are refusing to leave.

GENOVEVA Saint Helena is one of your forgotten cast-offs.

ADAM It is still British soil. The people of Britain will never allow –

GENOVEVA We have been over this too many times. Sadly, it is now necessary to call things to a close.

ADAM Neither of us wants the UN barging in and trying to sort this. We have to do it here, face to face.

GENOVEVA I must report to my Ministry and if they authorise –

STEVE (ENTERING THE ROOM AND AS HE WALKS ACROSS THE SPACE) Sorry, Prime Minister, Polly's on her way back to the House, she said you would want to be informed.

ADAM (TETCHY, HIS FLOW INTERRUPTED) Yes?

STEVE (SERIOUS NEWS) Harrier GR9 FROM Naval Strike Wing, doing a flyover of the island...

ADAM (KNOWING WHERE THIS IS GOING) How the hell?

STEVE Expeditionary Force Command had confirmed EIG was suppressed. But...

ADAM Pilot?

STEVE Ejected. Transponder shows him on the island.

ADAM Alive?

STEVE He'd keep radio silence.

ADAM Doesn't matter, (TO GENOVEVA) does it?

GENOVEVA Sorry?

ADAM Dead or alive, we're getting him back.

STEVE A Merlin HM1 rescue helicopter is already airborne, off the deck of the Aylesbury. Two Harriers as top cover.

ADAM Right, Madam Ambassador.

STEVE And the Admiral wants your green light to enter the combat zone.

ADAM You're going to silence your anti-aircraft batteries. Allow that rescue helicopter in. Aren't you, Madam Ambassador?

GENOVEVA Prime Minister, I –

ADAM I want my airman back.

GENOVEVA There is no possibility of any of your aircraft entering –

ADAM Right. (BIG, TO EVERYONE) Clear the room.

GENOVEVA Prime Minister?

ADAM You and me. We're going to sit here, without all these people to pass us notes, looking for reasons to say No, and you and me, we're going to find a solution. Because if you don't let me go in and pick up my airman, hostilities will commence.

A MOMENT'S SHOCK AND SILENCE.

ADAM If that man dies, or is taken prisoner, we will launch the military offensive we have been hoping to avoid. We will launch it instantly. No UN-sponsored talks. An immediate state of war.

MORE SILENCE. MAYBE SOME WHISPERING.
THEN, JUST TO STEVE:

ADAM And for God's sake, Steve, go and get us something to eat. That smorgasbord.

LOOKING AROUND.

ADAM (TO EVERYONE) Come on, everyone, all of you, out! We've got proper talking to do. Out!

FIFTY CHAIRS ARE PUSHED BACK AND FIFTY SETS OF PAPERS BUNDLED UP

AS:

TITLES

AND THEN INTO:

SCENE 2. SWEDISH EMBASSY: BOARD ROOM. 10:18PM.

ADAM I have issued the Activation Warning. We are now preparing for a state of Military Commencement at Twenty-Three Hundred GMT. From that moment, missiles may be launched at your country, naval and ground forces may go into action on the island.

GENOVEVA You had it all planned.

ADAM How could we not?

GENOVEVA So much for peace talks.

ADAM We have been negotiating in good faith. Return our airman and we can continue negotiating in equally good faith.

GENOVEVA There is no possibility of any British aircraft entering our airspace without –

ADAM We have less than _____ minutes to resolve this, Madam Ambassador.

GENOVEVA If your forces enter our airspace, it will be taken as a hostile –

ADAM Your airspace? Saint Helena is a British Territory.

GENOVEVA Your electorate shows little taste for another foreign adventure. This poll in today's –

ADAM (BLUNT) The Cruise Missiles are primed.

GENOVEVA And whose missiles are they, Prime Minister? (IMPLYING AMERICA) Do you really have enough of your own or will your rich friends have to - ?

ADAM Shall we sit down?

GENOVEVA If that helicopter enters our airspace –

ADAM Disturb one hair on the head of that airman -

GENOVEVA This is a press stunt, yes? You want to come out of here, down on their ever-so-clean Swedish steps and say you have tried and tried and no stone is unturned and now it so deeply pains you that there is no other way because otherwise the nasty black men will be surrounding our brave pilot with their spears and cooking pots.

ADAM (IF) You've been to war once, you do not lightly go again.

GENOVEVA I have read – the army was the making of you.

ADAM There are occasions when armed forces are necessary. I do not believe this is one.

GENOVEVA I agree.

ADAM It will pain me to see men die for this. But if our airman is not –

GENOVEVA You have no mandate to go to war. Your people did not even know Saint Helena existed until –

ADAM Do you want to find out?

GENOVEVA I do not believe you will risk the casualties.

ADAM (AGAIN, HARD) Do You Want To Find Out?

GENOVEVA Please, these threats, this posturing.

ADAM (ABSOLUTE, IMPLACABLE) Saint Helena is British Sovereign Territory.

GENOVEVA Yet the natives of this bit of Britain do not have the right to settle or work here in actual, real-life Britain. (WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS) As an overseas territory, you do not give them control of their foreign policy, their budget, their defence policy, their security.

ADAM (RIDICULOUS) And the Marxist, allegedly-Marxist, Republic of Angola will give it to them?

- GENOVEVA So these citizens have voted for alliance with my nation. Under our protection, in alliance with us, they will be enabled to –
- ADAM A country ranked a hundred and fifty-eight in the Corruption Perceptions Index. That’s a hundred and fifty-eight out of a hundred and eighty, by the way. But don’t worry, a couple more million-dollar backhanders and you’ll definitely make the Bottom Twenty.
- GENOVEVA And of course British MPs never accept anything in brown envelopes.
- ADAM Your country last held an election in 1992.
- GENOVEVA President dos Santos won forty-nine percent of the national vote in my country. You assumed power with thirty-eight percent, am I right?
- ADAM Our coalition with the Liberal Democrats gives us a total national vote of –
- GENOVEVA If that happened in my country you would call it a coup.
- ADAM Like the one you engineered on Saint Helena.
- GENOVEVA They held elections. Saint Helena’s New Africa Party stood for an alliance with our nation. They gained a majority.
- ADAM This is an advisory council. Executive power rests with the Governor General. The Constitution does not empower the electorate to -
- GENOVEVA They have decided to change their constitution.
- ADAM They are not empowered to –
- GENOVEVA Call it a revolution, if you must.
- ADAM Hear what I am saying: we have planned retaliatory action against the Angolan mainland. I will give the command.

GENOVEVA Then I must warn my –

ADAM Sit down. Talk.

GENOVEVA (OSTENTATIOUSLY PUSHING HER CHAIR BACK) Your
airman will receive every – [possible medical]

ADAM Our first wave of cruise missiles will destroy the city's two
power stations, the Justice Ministry, the Defence Ministry,
Transport. The radio and television transmitters.

GENOVEVA Gunboats to Africa again.

ADAM The Presidential Palace will be reduced to rubble. The MPLA
headquarters, the –

GENOVEVA Our marines on Saint Helena are protecting the citizens who
voted for the New Africa Party, who gave them a mandate to
call on our nation for mutual aid and alliance.

ADAM For Christ's sake, how many times? Saint Helena is less than
seven hundred miles from the US forward airbase on
Ascension Island. You really think we're going to let you – ?

GENOVEVA We make no claim over Ascension.

ADAM You won't need a claim. You'll be within missile range of the
key NATO airbase in the Southern Atlantic. It's a clear
military encroachment.

GENOVEVA Why would we wish to launch a strike against an island in
the middle of – ?

ADAM Moscow didn't go to Cuba for the cigars. Cuba put the
Soviets in range of vital US interests. Saint Helena puts you
in our back yard, just the same. This is as provocative as
Cuba.

GENOVEVA (STANDING) I am sorry, Mister Armstrong, my
Government is waiting to hear from me. There are many
things to be arranged. After all, we now have a
bombardment to prepare for.

ADAM (URGENT, IMPLACABLE) We have to stay here.

GENOVEVA You make the same imperialist demand, the same old white man's –

STEVE (BURSTING IN OVER THIS) Right, I've got cod, plaice or pollock. In my day, we gave pollock to the cat but now we all have to respect the little fishies and so what's it to be?

A MOMENT

STEVE (UNLOADING THE BAGS) Mushy peas in here, Sarson's, tartare and ketchup in those bloody sachets you can never open without it spraying all over your - and that's – well, obviously that's salt.

ANOTHER MOMENT, STEVE LOOKS AROUND

STEVE Not hungry?

ADAM I am starving. Madam Ambassador?

GENOVEVA I need to report to my government.

STEVE Not so easy to find fish and chips in Belgravia. Still, Close Protection knew the man – all-night cabbie place, persuaded him to open up and get frying.

ADAM (AS HE UNWRAPS THE PACKAGES) Cod or plaice? Can't honestly recommend the pollock. Sludgy.

GENOVEVA My nation is under threat. Tonight Angolan women and children will be murdered.

ADAM Sit. Eat. One chip.

STEVE There's salt.

ADAM AND STEVE EAT FOR A MOMENT.

ADAM It's really good.

GENOVEVA This is too difficult for me.

ADAM It's hard for all of us. There are matters of national pride.
Loss of face.

GENOVEVA I'm not hungry.

ADAM (EATING) We pick him up. He's safe back on the HMS
Heygate. (THEN) We go on talking.

GENOVEVA We cannot permit any incursion into what is now –

STEVE And there's this.

HE PASSES HIM A NOTE AND HE UNFOLDS IT

ADAM Thank you. I see.

STEVE (DISTRACTING GENOVEVA) Ketchup? Tartare?

GENOVEVA I'd rather know what was in that note.

A MOMENT AND THEN HE DECIDES TO TELL HER:

ADAM Our pilot, he's alive.

GENOVEVA Thank God.

ADAM (TO GENOVEVA) Really?

GENOVEVA He has surrendered?

ADAM He's changed the transponder signal. They have different
settings apparently. This one means he is in some distress.

GENOVEVA Tell us where he is and he will receive all possible medical
assistance.

ADAM So we're moving the HMS Heygate up into territorial waters.

GENOVEVA That will have to be seen as a provocative act.

STEVE Then look away.

ADAM You're already triangulating his transponder signal.

GENOVEVA As though we have the equipment for that kind of –

STEVE Beijing didn't give it to you?

GENOVEVA This is ridiculous.

ADAM Steve.

STEVE Last year China lent –

ADAM (TO STEVE) Steve, we agreed not to mention the C-word.

STEVE It's not working. Is it? This is all about China. Angola can't threaten the airbase on Ascension, China can.

GENOVEVA Angola won't.

STEVE We're here, we're suddenly on the verge of military action because China is spreading into the Atlantic. Using bankrupt African states as cover.

GENOVEVA We have made a territorial claim in our national waters, China has nothing - [*to do with it*]

STEVE (CONTINUING) In 2004, China's Eximbank approved a two billion dollar line of credit to Angola. Since, that has risen to something closer to twelve billion dollars. They don't do that for love.

GENOVEVA They buy some of our oil.

STEVE You make it sound like a Sunday car boot sale – you're China's largest single supplier of crude.

GENOVEVA We need foreign income to rebuild our nation.

STEVE And who exactly comes round to do the repairs?

GENOVEVA (CONCEDING) That is the nature of the loans.

- STEVE Seventy per cent of tenders have to go to China – Angola is crawling with Chinese workers.
- ADAM Since when does public works include the new defence systems?
- GENOVEVA Almost nothing is spent on military.
- STEVE Buy a bridge, get a missile system free, is it?
- ADAM We have picked up considerable electronic jamming round Luanda, not to mention the tracking and launching equipment used by your marines now dug in on Saint Helena.
- GENOVEVA We fought a civil war for twenty-seven years, of course our military is equipped.
- ADAM This is new stuff. Brand new. Some of it has even surprised our people.
- GENOVEVA Surprised the Americans, you mean.
- ADAM As fellow-members of the North Atlant - [*ic Treaty Organisation*]
- GENOVEVA Please, this silliness, this pretend-game that the Americans have nothing to do with any of this.
- ADAM Saint Helena is a British territory.
- GENOVEVA The United States saw off the Soviets and now it hopes to see off the Chinese.
- STEVE So you admit China poses a threat?
- GENOVEVA Son, you don't need to threaten an American for him to want to see you crushed.
- STEVE Please, God, enough.
- ADAM Steve.

STEVE (CONTINUING) Sure, the Americans have got their faults. Commercialism, self-interest, cultural dominance, and a wholly irrational fear of socialism – so, yes, they have their faults. But you ask any peasant “Pol-Pot or Nixon?”, ask any factory worker “Stalin or Eisenhower?”, I know who they’re choosing. It isn’t about voting or jury trials or a free press – that’s...that’s cake decoration. It’s about Will My Child Live Longer Than Me?, Will There Be Food, Warmth, A Future?. Any human being, in a field, in a factory, father or mother, they’re all going to choose the American way. Every single time. Because it works, it really does create the possibility of living a whole life. We have to give up whipping ourselves. We have to drop this bollocks that America is some terrible monster that destroys people. It’s childish. And it’s cruel – because it’s only thrown about by people with a roof over their head, and money for a doctor and a teacher and enough to eat and enough spare time to kvetch about the problems other people don’t have. Them, the everyone else – the hungry, the working bodies of the world – they’re taking the American way every single bloody time.

HE REACHES A PEAK.

ADAM Steve.

STEVE (CALMER) I get so sick of this. You know.

GENOVEVA Must the whole world be Americanised?

ADAM You were happy to spend two years at Yale.

GENOVEVA I speak of which I know. This is – there are values which America will never comprehend.

STEVE Tell that to the seventy-three percent of your population who live below the poverty line.

GENOVEVA Tell that to the people flooded out of New Orleans, left to drown. Tell that to the forty-eight million Americans with no access to medical care. Look closely at all those people, notice anything? That’s right, nearly all of them are Afro-Americans – it’s the black people they’re happy to leave behind.

STEVE You're missing the point. We all know about Katrina, Guantanamo. There's no news blackout, everyone gets to see it, talk about it.

GENOVEVA You spin it.

STEVE My God, I try. But politicians still lose their jobs because of it. And so the rest know they have to do better next time.

GENOVEVA And the six hundred thousand children you promised to bring out of poverty, Adam Armstrong? Look at the money swilling round this city – men in cars that cost as much as a house and still you have children eating from the garbage.

ADAM I've got a wounded airman to evacuate, Madam Ambassador. Perhaps we could postpo –

GENOVEVA (CONTINUING) Last year – it was only a few weeks after I was posted here. My driver, he's Angolan but a British citizen for some years now, he invited me to his house. A courtesy. A courtesy for me to go also. An estate in South London. The Buckingham.

STEVE We're knocking that down.

GENOVEVA If it doesn't fall down first.

ADAM Is this really – ?

GENOVEVA (DETERMINED) My driver, he is well paid. His neighbours, he wanted me to see, to ask if I could do anything for them, he likes them, he thinks I have contacts, I am the one with power. A flat, yes, this family had a flat, it's true. Inside, they have one bed, no table, one chair, I think. A family of five. No father, of course, you allow that kind of thing here. A woman, four children. They sit on the carpet to eat, what they eat is – (DISGUST) it's.... The walls, damp, no, wet, dripping, somehow you can see the water sliding down. The mother, she could not stop coughing, no surprise. The youngest boy, maybe eighteen months, his nappy – it was very very sad.

- STEVE That's a recognised zone of multiple deprivation. We have action pla – [*ns and regeneration targets*]
- GENOVEVA You give it a name. But what do you do? In Angola, it is not surprising our people live in poverty but you, you, you have no excuse. You have money enough, all over this city, and still there is real poverty, people living in terrible places.
- ADAM And the twenty members of your government who have Swiss bank accounts containing over a hundred million dollars?
- GENOVEVA How you love this kind of information. You cannot believe that poverty comes your imperialism, from your capitalists, your asset-stripping. No, that will never create poverty – because that always creates wealth, you say, look we are wealthy, it always works. And so you must believe that our poverty comes only from theft, because we steal from each other. It is funny. It is very funny.
- STEVE You've got diamonds, you've got oil, where is it all going?
- GENOVEVA We are rebuilding. It is not cheap. It is two steps forward, one -
- ADAM Then why the bloody hell are you wasting money on helicopters and marines and patrol boats and anti-aircraft defences?
- OVER THIS, KNOCKING AND ENTERING
- VIRGILIO Madam Ambassador?
- GENOVEVA Virgilio?
- VIRGILIO We are waiting for you. The cars are -
- GENOVEVA The Prime Minister asked me to continue negotiations.
- VIRGILIO The Ministry would like us to –
- ADAM We have a wounded airman. Maybe dying. We intend to evacuate him. Within the next _____ minutes.

VIRGILIO Any aircraft entering our exclusion zone will be –

ADAM Then we will be at war.

GENOVEVA (TO VIRGILIO) Don't listen to him.

ADAM I say again, do you want to find out?

VIRGILIO (OK) I'll ask the staff to come back –

ADAM We'll handle it alone.

VIRGILIO (BAFFLED, STEVE IS HERE) ...Madam?

STEVE I only really came to bring the...the food.

ADAM (TO VIRGILIO) Was there anything else?

VIRGILIO We have – a British warship has just entered the exclusion zone.

GENOVEVA The Prime Minister kindly informed me.

VIRGILIO We need to brief the –

ADAM We need to stay right here and prevent needless bloodshed.

VIRGILIO Your warship has just sailed within range of our – (HE STOPS HIMSELF) – forgive me, Madam Ambassador.

GENOVEVA Exactly what I told the Prime Minister.

ADAM It's what happens when you seize British territory.

VIRGILIO It is Angolan, sir. We have not seized one millimetre of sovereign British soil.

GENOVEVA (OF VIRGILIO) As you have heard, the Military Attaché feels this matter very strongly.

ADAM It has been British since –

VIRGILIO Because you suppressed the treaty.

STEVE Possession is nine-tenths.

VIRGILIO (TURNING ON HIM) Easy for you, when you already possess everything. It makes that little saying very handy. You stole everything, now you possess everything, so clearly that is the only law that matters to you.

ADAM Saint Helena was formally granted to the East India Company in 16-seventy-something - the Royal Navy captured the island from the Dutch, not the Portuguese.

VIRGILIO (PAPERS) And this treaty – I will explain again - signed by your Captain Keigwin, Acting Governor, in recompense for assistance following the mutiny of settlers and sailors. And he granted this treaty to the people of what is now Angola.

ADAM He had no mandate for such action.

GENOVEVA You accept it's genuine?

STEVE A scrap of parchment, scribbled in a crisis.

ADAM And you blackmailed him into giving up the island when the only alternative was a lynch mob.

GENOVEVA Again, you accept its veracity.

ADAM I know you wouldn't stoop to a forgery.

GENOVEVA Thank you. So we must talk sovereignty.

ADAM The Republic of Angola did not even exist then.

VIRGILIO The United Kingdom did not exist when the Treaty of Utrecht was signed but you are happy to call on that for your possession of Gibraltar.

GENOVEVA And why did a British Navy Captain call on us? Because we are the nation nearest to the island.

- STEVE The people of Saint Helena are British. What have they got to do with a – ?
- ADAM I concede that there should be tighter links between the two nations. That was offered three days ago in our memorandum headed –
- GENOVEVA They didn't vote for "trade delegations", for "bi-partite talks". Last month, the citizens voted for full integration. And your Governor blocked it.
- STEVE You bought every single one of those votes.
- GENOVEVA And of course no British political party offers tax cuts at the time of election.
- STEVE We hardly go out and tell them Vote For Us And You'll Each Get –
- ADAM (CUTTING ACROSS THIS) Of course we do.
- STEVE What?
- ADAM Grants, subsidies, regeneration zones, we do it every time. The new docks, new runway, the new ringroad, that surge in local employment, contracts for local businesses. The big local factory that's about to go belly-up, we save it, we find a credit line. Want a job for life? Live in a marginal constituency.
- GENOVEVA Thank you for your honesty, Prime Minister.
- ADAM I might send men to die but I'm not going to lie while doing it.
- STEVE Adam, it wasn't a genuine political party. They simply offered to front up with Angola to take Chinese money. It's fake.
- ADAM They weren't going to get the airport any other way. Not after we cancelled it.
- STEVE I still wouldn't ask the bloody Chinese to build it for me.

VIRGILIO (HACKLES UP) It will be paid for and built by Angolan Construction. I have the contracts –

ADAM I won't lie. You shouldn't.

AT THIS POINT, STEVE'S MOBILE RINGS AND HE PULLS ASIDE AND ANSWERS IT [*TEXT TO FOLLOW*]

VIRGILIO It is a Angolan-Chinese consortium. Incorporated in Luanda.

ADAM Why would Angola, with three-quarters of its people living in poverty, why the hell would you want to spend money building an airport for the Saints?

VIRGILIO Trade. Just like the East India Company taught us.

ADAM It's forty-eight square miles of volcanic rock. You put money in there, it doesn't come out. Why do you think we cancelled the airport?

VIRGILIO We believe there are considerable mineral deposits under the –

ADAM (ANGRY) There are no mineral deposits. There is little or no agriculture. It's a bleak, volcanic staging post. It does nothing but cost us.

VIRGILIO You have failed to exploit –

ADAM It just happens to be in range to threaten NATO's airbase at -

GENOVEVA (SHOUTING OVER ADAM'S SPEECH) Coffee grown there won the Gold Prize at your Great Exhibition and –

STEVE COMES OVER THIS, SHOUTING THEM DOWN WITH:

STEVE (AS HE WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM TO THE TV SCREEN) Forgive me for interrupting your history lesson but we've got a bit of something happening in the here and bloody now.

STEVE IS NOW TURNING THE TV ON AND ZAPPING THROUGH DURING ALL THE FOLLOWING:

STEVE (BUSINESSLIKE) That was Monica, apparently there's something we need to see.

ADAM The latest diktat from Angolan Public Television?

STEVE Strangely not. This is being beamed in straight from Tripoli, from Al-Maswani, our Islamic TV friends.

ADAM I never get to watch that enough.

STEVE Great beheadings. And a whole new meaning to Blind Date.

VIRGILIO This bigotry.

STEVE (BRIEFING) It's a fundamentalist news outlet, broadcasting to mainly Muslim sub-Saharan Africa.

ADAM They make a living?

STEVE Good question. Majority shareholder...? Anyone? Starter for ten? Come on, come on.

ADAM Acme TV Company Beijing.

STEVE Ten points to the man from Downing Street. Eighty-three percent Chinese owned. (HE HAS NOW TUNED IT IN) Here we go.

AND INTO THE NEWS CONFERENCE:

JOURNO *And you're sure, are you, that MI5 officers were fully aware of what was happening to you?*

STEVE Everyone's there, all the major outlets – this guy's from CNN unless I'm very much.

MEANWHILE:

ANGOLAN LAWYER *My client was held by persons unknown. What he was able to recognise was their accents and the concerns of*

their questioning. [BACKGROUND TEXT TO FOLLOW]

ADAM (OVER THIS) What's going on? Please.

VIRGILIO That one, in the T-shirt, he was held under extraordinary rendition, he doesn't know where.

STEVE Like you're going to know which shithole dungeon in which shithole country they've dropped you in.

GENOVEVA Held by our democratic American friends, the universal self-appointed guardians of human rights.

VIRGILIO The one on the right, he's just been repatriated to Luanda.

ADAM They're both Angolans suspected of terrorist involvement?

STEVE And that's their lawyer, telling the world that they were both tortured.

GENOVEVA By local security forces?

STEVE But while a couple of gents from British Secret Intelligence Services folded their arms and watched.

ADAM (CALM) This will not divert us. We will evacuate our serviceman.

GENOVEVA (TO STEVE) British agents "watched"?

STEVE No, that's putting it too strongly, I suppose. They walked out of the room, left the Pakistanis or Saudis or the Boy Scouts For International Christian Freedom or whoever else is taking the CIA's money to tear these guys' nails out – see there, that one, the one who needs a shave, well, he also needs three new fingernails as well – and then, when our two happy bombers had been suitably softened up, the conscientious, rule-obeying Brits came back in and popped a few germane questions. Which of course these two knew nothing about because they were specialist lead-panel glaziers who had been contracted to a Dubai construction firm to work on a mosque.

ADAM They allege.

STEVE And this plucky pair of glaziers, they didn't let their complete ignorance of Al-Qaeda hold them back. No, no, no, double gold star for effort: I mean they worked at it, they really really tried. Still, with ten thousand volts running through your gonads, you'll find whole new eagerness to join the war on Terror.

ADAM Steve.

STEVE (EXASPERATED) Well, really, it's...I'm happy to fight fires but....when do we stop thinking we're always right?

ADAM (FIRM) Not here, not now.

STEVE Just because they put bombs on buses, trains, because they're heartless shits, because they rejoice in destruction, doesn't mean that we're allowed to do whatever we want.

ADAM Steve.

STEVE And when are we going to realise that something like this totally screws up our right to say anything to anyone about anything in the whole bloody world? Maybe it works, I don't know – thing is, it just totally wrecks our argument. And it's me gets left looking like I can't tell the difference between....no moral centre.

VIRGILIO Quite.

ADAM Thank you.

STEVE (SOTTO, MOVING AWAY) Forget it.

ADAM They've been released.

STEVE (FROM ACROSS THE ROOM) After that. Look. All that. Look at his hands. Look at them. What used to be.

ADAM At least he won't be wiring any bombs in a hurry.

GENOVEVA You laugh about torture?

ADAM How about we all live in the real world? Where they'll send autistic boys in as suicide bombers. That's not the glorious and merciful love of Allah.

VIRGILIO (CONTINUING, POINTED) You laugh about this man? Look at his hands. Did you do that to him?

ADAM 'Course not.

VIRGILIO Did you tell someone to do it?

GENOVEVA Listen to him, listen. That's his lawyer, reading the man's statement:

PICK UP WITH:

LAWYER *"The British man comes over to me. He said he did not understand why this was being done to me. But he had the power to ask them to stop."*

JOURNO *Did you feel the British agent was acting under orders?*

LAWYER *Again, from my client's deposition: "It was obvious. The two men, they go out of the room when the torture starts, they arrive when it is over and they start with their questions."*

STEVE (AS IF) Uh-huh.

LAWYER *I shall now read to you this. This is instruction to British Secret Intelligence officers, this is what the British Government has told them: "Given that they are not within our custody or control, the law does not require you to intervene to prevent torture." So it seems Mister Armstrong is happy to let others torture people for him.*

THE PRESS CONFERENCE GOES INTO UPROAR: QUESTIONS FROM EVERYONE: DID THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER APPROVE TORTURE?

AND IN THE ROOM, EVERYONE TALKS AT ONCE:

ADAM Total forgery. Total.

STEVE (TO ADAM) Did you?

VIRGILIO Madam, we must take instruction from the Ministry.

GENOVEVA I can handle this.

VIRGILIO (A TOUCH FIRMER) Madam.

ADAM Turn it off.

STEVE We need to hear it.

ADAM We know what they're saying.

STEVE DOESN'T SWITCH IT OFF.

IT CONTINUES IN THE BACKGROUND, DURING ALL OF:

GENOVEVA (WALKING ACROSS TO THE DOOR) I am going to take instruction.

ADAM My medevac helicopter is going in at twenty-three hundred, in (CHECKING) _____ minutes.

VIRGILIO (AT THE DOOR) The Ambassador needs to consult the Ministry.

ADAM Hostile fire will mean we are at war.

VIRGILIO (COLD) The Ambassador will be with you shortly.

THEY GO OUT THE DOOR.

STEVE Forgery, right?

ADAM We need to tell the Admiral. Green light the evacuation at Twenty-three hundred hours.

STEVE Adam? That document he read out, a forgery, yes?

ADAM If they fire on us, we will be at war, didn't you hear me?

STEVE Tell me about this document. Put-up nonsense, right?

ADAM (VERY CALM) The guidance was unclear.

STEVE Meaning?

ADAM Until a year or so ago, the guidance to SIS officers was unclear.

STEVE I have to know if you knew.

ADAM It was beautifully written, you've got to hand it to the Civil Service lawyers.... "Any activity yourself that involves inhumane or degrading treatment of prisoners".

STEVE But if they saw torture, they were to stop it?

ADAM They were not under any obligation. "Given that they are not within our custody or control." A masterpiece of evasive understatement.

STEVE (SHOCK) Boss?

ADAM Few years back, we wanted help with a couple of wars against the Germans and our American allies stepped up. Now they want our help in a War Against Terror. It's our turn to muck in.

STEVE I have to know if you knew. I have to be able to talk without knowing I'm lying.

ADAM So don't ask me, Steve.

STEVE Then I know you're not telling me –

ADAM You Don't Know Anything. You are my official spokesman and we are about to announce a state of war with –

STEVE That's over now, right?

ADAM What?

STEVE This bluff. This pushing them to the brink.

ADAM Every word I have spoken is –

STEVE How can we tell anyone our cause is just? How do I stand up there and – ?

THEY ARE DISTRACTED DURING THIS BY *THE SUDDEN ENGLISH BEING SPOKEN ON THE TELEVISION*

ANCHOR *We're going to leave the press conference for a moment because I have with me now, the Conservative Leader, Simon Laity. What do you make of this development?*

ADAM (OVER) That's all we need.

LAITY *It is exceptionally worrying. As you know, we have supported the Government throughout this crisis, believing that Adam Armstrong could offer this country the necessary moral leadership. The trouble is this throws it all into doubt.*

JOURNO *You mean your support is under consideration?*

LAITY *I'm going to meet with my front bench team and take a sounding.*

JOURNO *Force a vote in the House?*

LAITY *Before we heard this. Torture. Ordered from the very top. We hadn't seen these documents. That was before his fitness to lead was cast into doubt.*

ADAM (ANGRY) If he wants a vote, let him have one.

STEVE Please don't tell me you're doing this why I think you're doing this.

ADAM I will protect British territory for as long as Her Majesty –

STEVE (HARD FACT) We've got a coalition government barely hanging on, we've got key legislation which is about to go belly-up and you reckon a little foreign war is just what you need to shut them all up.

ADAM I invaded Saint Helena?

STEVE These were exploratory talks. They've eaten up days and you have rejected every compromise position. Now we've got a pilot downed on the island and you're using that –

ADAM I should leave him there?

STEVE (CONTINUING) – as a reason to start a war.

ADAM It's the last thing I want.

STEVE But bloody handy.

ADAM Medevac launches at twenty-three hundred.

STEVE That gives is less than _____ minutes to sort it.

ADAM Laity is baiting me, telling the world he doesn't think I would command a vote of the House.

STEVE He's scared of your military background.

ADAM A British sovereign territory has been occupied. Our jet has been brought down. Our pilot may be dying of his wounds.

STEVE (OVER THIS) What's he saying now?

ON TV:

LAITY We're calling for an emergency debate. We cannot enter into military hostilities with a leader who may be guilty of complicity in acts of such seriousness.

JOURNO Surely it was SIS operatives not – ?

LAITY Does this go all the way up? Seventy years ago, MI5 asked Winston Churchill about torture of captured Gestapo officers. In that circumstance, when the fall of this nation was, let's face it, a genuine possibility, our Prime Minister turned his back on torture. Are we really saying that now –

ADAM SWITCHES IT OFF

- ADAM Get Polly over to the House, she and Bill need to start talking, kill this.
- STEVE The Lib Dems are going to run round like headless ants. Nothing they like more than a good human rights fiasco.
- ADAM Then it's wake-up time for them. Government means getting your hands dirty.
- STEVE Are you saying - ?
- ADAM (CUTTING STEVE OFF) Write me a statement.
(SCRIBBLING) And have this put through the Admiral. I'll pull the Heygate back out of the exclusion zone.
- STEVE (SOME RELIEF) Thank you.
- ADAM No-one who has fought a battle ever wants to do it again.
- STEVE Keep that quiet, makes you sound weak.
- ADAM There are young men's lives at stake, don't ask me to do everything on the basis of media acceptability.
- HE STOPS DEAD AS GENOVEVA COMES BACK IN:
- ADAM (OFF YOU GO) Thank you.
- STEVE MAKES HIS WAY OUT, AS:
- GENOVEVA You can't do this to people. You can't talk about standards and principles and then -
- ADAM Let's talk about people, Madam Ambassador. The people who get blown up. Those people detonate their bombs in London and ninety people dead, forty-one of them weren't British, eleven were Muslims, for God's - We're supposed to let this continue? Indefinitely?
- GENOVEVA There are ways to bring it to a close.

- ADAM Really? What are those? What's required for an Islamic Fundamentalist victory? What does it look like? Tell me, please. The crescent moon flies over Whitehall? The Queen wears a niqab? What do they want? What does their win look like?, I haven't a clue. I don't know what they want from us.
- GENOVEVA There are issues.
- ADAM Please, Palestine? Let's take a quick look at how much the Saudis have sent to Palestine. Last time we checked, it was about 1.1 billion US dollars. Not bad, not ungenerous. Now let's look around. Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, minor Saudi royalty, he orders his very own Airbus A380, guts it, puts in five master bedrooms, a steam room, concert room with baby grand – final cost: 485 million dollars. Call it half a billion, and for that they threw in computer-generated prayer mats – so you can be sure you're facing Mecca as you fly over to Monte Carlo or Los Angeles or wherever it is you go to fritter a few more million. (HARDER, THE POINT:) They spend more on their private planes than they give to Independent Palestine but it's fine to bomb us because we, with no obvious fraternity to fellow Muslims, we only donate 865 million US dollars. That's last year's EU subsidy to the West Bank and, you know what, I feel a little taken for granted.
- GENOVEVA Money doesn't solve everything.
- ADAM If you've got to invent a state from scratch, it goes one hell of a long way. We give Palestine a higher percentage of our GDP than the oil-rich Saudis, than the oil-glutted Libyans, than the oily – But we're the ones who get bombed.
- GENOVEVA You also support Israel.
- ADAM The only functioning democracy between Athens and Delhi.
- GENOVEVA And so everything it does is good?
- ADAM So everything it does is open to scrutiny.

- GENOVEVA I have certainly enjoyed scrutinising their bombing raids on the Lebanon. I have fully scrutinised their bulldozers burying Palestinian children in their own homes.
- ADAM (ACROSS THIS) Why is there no such thing as a Muslim democracy? Why? I don't get it. What's the fatal combination of Islamic belief and freedom of thought, freedom to choose? What's so frightening about our willingness to let people think what they want to think?
- GENOVEVA As long as we think the sort of thoughts you like us to think – shopping, selling, buying, ogling, screwing, getting.
- ADAM We're not the only ones.
- GENOVEVA It's the price you pay for imperialism.
- ADAM And now you're swapping a new colonial master for old.
- GENOVEVA With China, it's a meeting of equals, it's pragmatic. We work together, equal basis.
- STEVE (FROM THE DOORWAY) It's nasty out there. I need you to issue a statement.
- GENOVEVA (CONTINUING) It is a trading relationship. China asks nothing of us, wants nothing in return.
- ADAM Wake up, woman. Wake up.
- GENOVEVA They lend against our oil exports and ask for nothing they aren't paying for.
- ADAM No transparency, no investigation. Between 97 and 2002, four point two billion dollars went missing. Twelve percent of your GDP was stolen.
- GENOVEVA This is hardly -
- ADAM (SLAPPING DOWN THE PAPERS) In the UN Development Index, you rank 166 out of 177. Life expectancy is thirty-six. You're not expected to see your thirty-seventh birthday. And infant mortality? One in five dead by the age of two.

A MOMENT

ADAM China – isn't it wonderful, the way they just don't interfere?

GENOVEVA Better than the British or the French or the Portuguese - stripping the fields, stripping the minerals. You people didn't come to Africa because you loved the countryside.

ADAM Building roads, railways, courts, hospitals.

GENOVEVA Please, not the benign imperialist monologue.

STEVE You have to make a statement soon, Prime Minister.

GENOVEVA You cannot force our hand like this.

ADAM My people are flying in to pick up our airman in _____ minutes' time. If there is hostile fire, we will be at war. We have made it clear that we consider Luanda to be a legitimate target.

A SILENCE

ADAM Steve, please go and tell the Admiral I'll be in the war room as soon as.

STEVE (PLAYING ALONG) Right.

HE GOES. THEN:

ADAM So what are we going to do?

GENOVEVA SLOWLY DRAWS BACK A CHAIR.

ADAM You've brought down a Harrier, let's call that a rush of electronic blood. We must not make it worse.

GENOVEVA Our defences are primed.

ADAM (IMPLACABLE) The rescue 'copter is entering the airspace. It will land and pick up our man. Then it will leave again.

GENOVEVA How do we know this isn't the first wave of – ?

ADAM A Merlin HC3 is hardly the vehicle to - [*launch an airborne assault*]

ADAM IS TALKING WHEN THE DOOR OPENS

DEP.SEC You and I need to talk.

ADAM Deputy Secretary.

DEP.SEC I wonder if....?

ADAM We are in the middle of –

DEP.SEC That's exactly what I – (HE STOPS HIMSELF) – Prime Minister.

ADAM Will you excuse me?

GENOVEVA His Master's Voice.

ADAM Perhaps you might see the Ambassador to some secure communications?

GENOVEVA I really –

ADAM Please, Steve?

GENOVEVA I'm fine. I have my own people.

GENOVEVA WALKS OUT.

ADAM (TO STEVE) I need comms equipment in here.

STEVE She's not going to do it.

ADAM Tell the Admiral to continue holding back. I want direct comms to the command centre. In here.

HE IS MEANWHILE STRIDING OUT.

ADAM This way, please, Deputy Secretary of State.

DEP.SEC FOLLOWS HIM INTO THE SIDE ROOM.

ONCE THE DOOR IS CLOSED:

DEP.SEC We have received a transmission that your warship is withdrawing –

ADAM (FURY, RIGHT ACROSS THIS) I know we need you more than you need us. I know that without your spy satellites and global tracking and electronic flagging, we'd be landing on that island with little more advance intelligence than we went into the Battle of Waterloo, I know that your aircraft carriers are going to restock us if these idiots are bloody stupid enough to attempt a defence, I know that most of hardware and software has been built by you and sold to us at knock-down rates so we couldn't even compete without your connivance but at least have the decency when you walk into my negotiations in my country when I am bargaining for the safe release of four thousand of my citizens and forty-eight square miles of my territory to treat me like an elected head of state.

DEP.SEC Prime Minister.

ADAM Good. That's better.

THEN:

DEP.SEC We are, in fact, on Swedish soil.

ADAM Sorry?

DEP.SEC Right now, right here, we're not in your country.

ADAM (TERSE) Do you wish me to dignify that with an answer?

DEP.SEC Sir.

ADAM Right.

DEP.SEC We picked up signals.

ADAM Mmmm.

DEP.SEC Your ships are pulling back.

ADAM These are our negotiations.

DEP.SEC As you so eloquently just put it, you are dependent on our knowhow.

ADAM Payhow, Deputy Secretary. Not knowhow. We know how to do it. In fact, we do it very well. We just can't afford to do it.

DEP.SEC Whatever.

ADAM Shall we try not to talk like teenagers?

DEP.SEC You've retreated.

ADAM I believe you call it wiggle room.

DEP.SEC Doesn't work with these people. They fought a twenty-seven year civil war. They fought till last man standing.

ADAM We are developing a rapport.

DEP.SEC You've been locked in this embassy for the last three weeks. You have made zero progress. You have out us on Activation Warning, placing us _____ minutes from launching cruise missile strikes. And suddenly you've got rapport.

ADAM They want an out.

DEP.SEC What makes you think this all of a sudden?

ADAM I believe in people's innate goodness.

DEP.SEC Innate goodness won't see the Chinese out of the Atlantic.

ADAM We've never tried before.

DEP.SEC You want to be the guy who invited them in? Shifted world geopolitics for the next century?

ADAM If they're coming in, Paul, they're coming in. Maybe not today, via Angola and Saint Helena, maybe tomorrow via Namibia, or the week after via Sierra Leone or Liberia. But if the Chinese want to come, they're coming. They've got the knowhow and they've got more payhow than you and me put together.

DEP.SEC So throw in the towel, like you threw it in from India to Hong Kong and back?

ADAM I admire my predecessors who understood and accepted the change of history with good grace.

DEP.SEC They were bankrupt, they were broken.

ADAM And what makes you think you aren't? The days of the American Empire are now over. The Visigoths are in the South Atlantic, Deputy Secretary of State. You haven't got the defences any more.

A MOMENT.

DEP.SEC We don't intend to let our allies open the door to anyone.

ADAM I am escorting them off British Territory.

DEP.SEC They all told me, since your wife walked out, you've lost it. I didn't believe them.

ADAM (ENOUGH) Would you excuse me?

DEP.SEC No.

ADAM Sorry?

DEP.SEC I'm not leaving until I can give my President the assurance that Chinese forces will be removed from Saint Helēna.
(THREE SHORT SYLLABLES)

ADAM Helēna. (MIDDLE SYLLABLE LONG)

DEP.SEC Sorry?

ADAM Helēna. Saint Helēna. I have been listening to you get it wrong for the last three weeks and I don't think I can take it any more.

DEP.SEC What the hell difference does it make?

ADAM Everything, Deputy Secretary, everything.

AND HE WALKS AWAY.
AND INTO THE ROOM.

GENOVEVA AND VIRGILIO ARE IN THERE.

DEP.SEC Madam Ambassador.

GENOVEVA Deputy Secretary of State.

COMMS EQUIPMENT IS BUBBLING, RELAYING RADIO TRAFFIC BETWEEN THE MERLIN AND THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY HQ.

MERLIN PILOT Have visual of the island. Repeat: have visual of the Saint Helena. Approaching from North West. Twenty-seven degrees. Height nine hundred feet. Have ID of Sugarloaf Point.

GENOVEVA I spoke to my ministry. They have already evacuated.

ADAM That's good. We do not wish for casualties.

GENOVEVA You intend to launch a Tomahawk Cruise Missile strike, each with a WDU-36 warhead and enough PBXN explosive to demolish a street and you hope there will be no casualties?

A MOMENT, THEN:

DEP.SEC You have to tell Beijing you cannot do this.

GENOVEVA It is a matter for Angola and only for Angola.

DEP.SEC You've established a ring of anti-aircraft positions on the island. They're Type 95 self-propelled surface-to-air missiles, originally known as the Type 90-III. Manufactured by China North Industries Corporation.

GENOVEVA We have purchased weapons systems.

DEP.SEC Your marines disembarked from Type 62C Shanghai-II Class Gun Patrol Boats.

GENOVEVA Decommissioned ships, we need to buy cheap.

DEP.SEC This is a Chinese military adventure and you're the front man. And the fall guy.

GENOVEVA I don't know whether to laugh or not.

ADAM You have to pick up the phone and tell them it's not going to work. Not this time.

GENOVEVA There is no-one I need to ring.

ADAM In _____ minutes, our helicopter will enter your missile range. Without orders there will be hostile fire. And we enter a state of war and I leave this room. There will be no more negotiation.

GENOVEVA We have rights over Saint Helena. The territory belongs with the -

DEP.SEC Screw claims. You'll be within missile range of the key NATO forward airbase in the Southern Atlantic.

GENOVEVA Why would we wish to launch a strike against an island in the middle of - ?

DEP.SEC Ask the Communist Party of China.

GENOVEVA You are living in the ancient world, Mister Deputy Secretary - Roman Empire, Chinese Empire, Soviet Empire. Empires went out along with spears and bayonets. That's not how it plays any more. People trade, people sell, advertising, promotion, marketing. America taught that to the world. That's how empires are made in 2009. McDonald's, Chrysler, Apple Mac, Britney Spears, that's how empires are made now. You don't need guns, you sell your way in, you put your billboards all over their streets and your episodes of

CSI all over their screens. And once they're all dying their hair blonde and drinking coke and pumping up their breasts, the country's yours, you move on to the next.

ADAM (IMPLACABLE) Go phone someone, Genoveva.

GENOVEVA I do not need to make any phone calls.

ADAM This is the last moment. You must tell them to allow the Medevac.

GENOVEVA (WAVERING) We will find and treat your serviceman.

ADAM You must advise them that there will be no turning back from here.

GENOVEVA We have no intention of –

ADAM You have every intention of taking him and slapping him in front of every television camera from here to Beijing.

GENOVEVA He will be treated according to the Geneva –

ADAM I will not have you make him a public spectacle.

GENOVEVA We do not torture our captives.

ADAM Are you saying - ?

GENOVEVA No, you get other people to do it for you.

ADAM I think you need to speak to Luanda.

GENOVEVA I have full authority.

ADAM You need to tell them to stand down electronic guidance.

GENOVEVA If you're entering the exclusion zone, we have to defend ourselves.

MEANWHILE BACKGROUND REPLIES FROM COMMAND [TO BE SUPPLIED]

DEP.SEC Are your EIG Systems down?

VIRGILIO Our ground forces are quite willing to locate your pilot and return him to you.

ADAM Madam Ambassador, are they intending to fire upon my helicopter?

GENOVEVA I have spoken to the Ministry in Luanda and they are not willing to –

DEP.SEC You need to speak to the right people.

VIRGILIO They are the command link to the forces on the island.

OVER THIS LAST:

MERLIN (RADIO) We have radar locked on to us. Require orders. Evasive action or continuance?

HQ (URGENT) Launch flares. Maximise EIG jamming.

MERLIN That'll give us two minutes. Await instruction.

ADAM Tell them to keep going. (TO GENOVEVA) Are you going to stand them down?

STEVE (TO ADAM) You need to pull him out of there, we cannot risk another casualty.

ADAM You heard him.

GENOVEVA (PRESSURED) My Ministry cannot –

DEP.SEC You're not phoning the right people.

GENOVEVA The Ministry –

ADAM Give me a phone. Steve, someone. I want the Chinese Ambassador. She's speaking to him right now.

DEP.SEC Now? Here? Unsecured line?

ADAM (JUST) Get him. Someone.

GENOVEVA (TINGE OF PANIC-FEAR) I am not empowered to –

STEVE I can't get a signal. What's wrong with this place?

DEP.SEC I'll get him.

ADAM You have him on speed dial?

DEP.SEC We served in Riyadh together.

ADAM One of us is speaking to him, Genoveva. If it isn't you, it's me. And you know it's going to come a whole lot better from you.

GENOVEVA I need to take instruction from my –

ADAM You're fully empowered to -

GENOVEVA There are limits to my –

SUDDENLY LOUDER, OVER THE RADIO:

MERLIN (UNDER FIRE) Incoming. Rocket. Launching flares. Evade to starboard. Starboard heeling. Starboard ninety degrees. Starboard.

AND A ROCKET FLARES PAST THE MERLIN, THE TRAIL AUDIBLE.

A MOMENT OF RADIO SILENCE, JUST THE ROTOR BLADES. THEN:

MERLIN Sidewinder off starboard. Successful evasion. Do we continue towards transponder? Instructions required.

ADAM Tell them to continue.

RADIO OPERATOR Continue.

MEANWHILE DEP.SEC HAS BEEN ON THE PHONE TO THE CHINESE EMBASSY

DEP.SEC (INTO PHONE) I have her here for you, Ambassador. (TO GENOVEVA) Madam Ambassador.

ADAM Genoveva, I need you to speak to the Chinese Ambassador.

GENOVEVA (ALMOST TEARFUL, CORNERED) I am not empowered.

ADAM (THRUSTING THE PHONE AT HER) Speak to him. You have a chance to stop this. You, only you.

GENOVEVA This phone isn't secure.

ADAM As though that makes any difference at - [*this stage*]

VIRGILIO (TO GENOVEVA, CALM, AUTHORITATIVE) Speak to him.

GENOVEVA You want me to?

VIRGILIO We need to tell Beijing.

GENOVEVA I should?

VIRGILIO I'm telling you to speak to him.

GENOVEVA (TAKING THE PHONE) Hello, Ambassador?
 > Yes.
 > It is not negotiable. He insists.
 > Yes.
 > Maybe two minutes.
 > Yes.
 > Thank you.

SHE SWITCHES THE PHONE OFF.

GENOVEVA He is speaking to the right people. Give him two minutes.

ADAM Tell the Merlin to lift out of EIG range.

RADIO OP (INTO RADIO) The Prime Minister requests holding pattern out of EIG range until further instruction.

ADAM Do you trust him?

VIRGILIO He has no reason to lie.

DEP.SEC Unless Beijing over-rule.

ADAM (TO DEP.SEC) Do they want conflict?

DEP.SEC (WHY NOT?) When you're this close. When the axis is about to shift your way. And it's not your men in the firing line.

STEVE Adam, I've got Bill on the – They're about to call for a vote. Laity's pushing the Speaker to -

ADAM (IGNORING THIS) Tell the Merlin to go in.

STEVE You need to give them longer.

ADAM They know what they're doing.

RADIO OP (INTO RADIO) Prime Minister requests rescue mission to proceed.

COMMAND HQ *Aylesbury to Merlin, Aylesbury to Merlin, request continue mission. Report status.*

MERLIN *Over Half-Tree Hollow Range. Detecting no lock-on.*

ADAM See? They know.

COMMAND HQ *Continue. Report pilot transponder location.*

MERLIN *Have response. Transponder located two miles south of current position.*

COMMAND HQ *Continue approach. Report weapons status.*

MERLIN *Satisfactory. No attempt to lock-on. Repeat: no lock-on.*

THIS RADIO TRAFFIC CONTINUES IN THE BACKGROUND, UNDER:

ADAM I do like they way the Chinese don't interfere.

VIRGILIO We listen to their advice.

ADAM And do they listen to yours?

VIRGILIO When we have advice to give.

ADAM Right, we need to advise them that we're going to sort this.

GENOVEVA I do not –

ADAM Madam Ambassador, your First Secretary and I are going to sit down at this table. We're going to work out an orderly withdrawal from the island.

GENOVEVA We will not surrender our claim to –

ADAM Following which, Madam Ambassador, you will be able to announce that we will accept tenders from Angolan companies to build the new airport. We will accept tenders to operate the airport and the air shuttle service between Jamestown and the African mainland –

DEP.SEC You cannot possibly allow them into the –

ADAM (DRIVING OVER) presumably the nearest point, Luanda International Airport. We create a bi-lateral trade framework so that Angola-Chinese companies occupy a preferential status.

DEP.SEC This will leave us vulnerable.

ADAM It's just trade, Deputy Secretary. Just capitalism.

GENOVEVA (SURPRISED) This was never on the table before.

ADAM Do you want it?

SILENCE.

ADAM Do you want to start talking? First Secretary?

A MOMENT

VIRGILIO It is a basis for negotiations.

DEP.SEC. (WALKING OUT) I need to consult Washington.

THEY WAIT FOR HIM TO GO.

ADAM Right, if someone can just get these cold chips off the table,
we can get down to work.

END

number 10: episode 4

“a failed state”

by jonathan myerson

cast

ADAM ARMSTRONG, Labour Prime Minister

MONICA, his speechwriter

BILL, his Parliamentary Private Secretary

POLLY, Number 10 Chief Of Staff

STEVE, Number 10 Director Of Communications

and

GWEN DONOGHUE

BIYOT ABDULLE, constituent

HANNAH ARMSTRONG

TERRY GRUBER, union leader, doubling with WORSLEY

COPPLE, housing manager

HOUSING OFFICER doubling with TREVITHICK

on TV/RADIO only

SIMON LAITY

SCENE 1. DOWNING STREET. ENTRANCE HALL. 8:30AM.

ADAM IS GETTING READY TO GO.

POLLY A power workers' strike, a make-or-break vote in the House tonight, your cabinet assembling signatures for a leadership challenge but no, you're going to unveil a statue in Norwich.

ADAM It's a war memorial. In my constituency. Confirmed over a year ago.

STEVE (TO POLLY) I offered him video link to the town square.
(TO ADAM) Big screen, just like Springsteen.

ADAM The Royal Norfolk – I sent thirty-seven of them to their deaths.

POLLY But no constituency surgery, agreed, you come straight back?

ADAM (TO STEVE, WE'VE GOT TO) We've trailed it, right?
Posters all round town.

POLLY (DESPAIR) One of your own cabinet is plotting against you.

ADAM Helen should have resigned. Instead she took her demotion like that boy at school who likes to be bullied.

POLLY She likes it inside, pissing gently on your carpet – why be outside, pissing against the wall and watching it splash back on her espadrilles?

STEVE (YUK) Nice.

POLLY (CUTTING ACROSS) What's going on, Adam?

ADAM (IF) I cancel my trip and the commentariat spend eleven hours talking about Panic in Number Ten.

POLLY What does that matter?

STEVE We need proportional representation, Adam, it'll keep the centre-left in power for decades.

POLLY (DISMISSIVE) The limp-wristed wannabe left overwhelmed by centrist compromised mismanagement.

BILL (ENTERING DURING THIS) Get me a rope, get me a lamp-post.

ADAM Negotiations going well?

STEVE More power cuts?

BILL South Thames Region are planning a wildcat strike tonight – the Power Workers Union are doing nothing to stop it.

POLLY We have to offer them something.

ADAM We will not go back on our carbon-reduction commitments.

BILL I'm part of the problem. Terry Gruber loathes me.

STEVE I hope it's mutual.

ADAM (POLITE REQUEST) Polly, looks like it's your turn – see what Gruber wants for his members.

BILL Nothing we can offer him.

POLLY Can I say you'll intervene? That's all he really wants.

ADAM (AVOIDING THIS) Time to go, I believe, Steve.
(CHECKING) Everyone ready, car's here?

POLLY Born to run, Adam?

OVER THIS, FROM ALONG THE SIDE CORRIDOR:

DONOGHUE (CALLING, URGENT) Prime Minister, Prime Minister.

ADAM That close.

DONOGHUE My Whips are saying – tonight's vote –

ADAM We'll do what we can.

DONOGHUE In Norwich?

POLLY See?

ADAM It's time your party stepped up and called in some favours.

DONOGHUE We're just the coalition partners, you're still the Prime Minister.

ADAM You want me to stay here and twist arms?

DONOGHUE Good start.

ADAM I've been doing it all week. There's barely a shoulder in the entire Parliamentary Labour Party still in its socket. Monica's on the case now, she's been ringing round for the last...(WRISTWATCH)...forty-nine hours. (TO BILL) How's she doing?

BILL I give her another twelve hours before she starts comfort sucking and calling for her favourite cuddly toy.

ADAM (TO DONOGHUE) See? My crack team's on it.

HE STARTS WALKING AWAY, AND OUT THE DOOR, DURING:

DONOGHUE If the Referendum Bill falls tonight, our coalition's over.

POLLY Steve, go with him.

STEVE I need to brief the –

POLLY I'll deal with the press. You stick next to him and get him back here by two.

STEVE (AS HE MOVES AWAY, RATTLING THROUGH HIS LIST) The Guardian are promised an inside story for their blog.

POLLY I'll think of something sardonic yet committed.

STEVE (GOING OUT THE DOOR) And The Telegraph need a cabinet-level interview.

DONOGHUE (TO POLLY) How do I get him to like me?

POLLY Get to the back of the queue.

AND INTO:

TITLES

SCENE 2.THE TODAY PROGRAMME.*LAITY**Look, Sally, these men, they may be sworn disciples of Karl Marx – not exactly my best friend – but, let's face it, they are doing us all a favour.**SALLY**So the Conservative Party is backing the power station strikers?**LAITY**You're right, this strike is stupid and dangerous and downright pernicious, but the power workers are reminding us just how fragile our energy security is. And for that, I'm grateful.**SALLY**Power cuts, people going without electricity?**LAITY**Good question - old people's homes, sheltered housing, intensive care – they all lose their power along with everyone else. How many people will die because Adam Armstrong has lost control over this situation?*CUT TO:

SCENE 3. WHITEHALL. 9:20AM.

THEY ARE WALKING ALONG WHITEHALL.

- GRUBER Bill used to be hard. You've neutered him in that place.
- POLLY The Prime Minister asked me to have one last word with –
- GRUBER Great. Adam and I sit down, thrash it out, job done.
- POLLY The Prime Minister is not willing to intervene personally.
- GRUBER Willing or able?
- POLLY He's not sticking his head in that noose.
- GRUBER Not when there are so many other hangmen waiting for him.
- POLLY Why do you want to bring down a Labour Government?
- GRUBER Even the Leader of the Conservative Party reckons I'm doing the country a favour.
- POLLY So you do want power?
- GRUBER I want electrical power, Polly. I want the UK to be able to generate electricity on our own, without the French's cabling, without the Ukrainians' gas, without the –
- POLLY British volts for British workers.
- GRUBER That's good. I might use that.
- POLLY Drop the power cuts and it's - [*yours*]
- GRUBER This strike is all about warning the people of Britain that we are becoming fatally dependent on foreign electricity.
- POLLY Face it, Terry, your members play the starring role in global warming.

- GRUBER My members were lined up for redeployment to nuclear. Now you even take that away from us.
- POLLY Remember a place called Thorpefell? Bit of a radioactive leak? Inevitable result: planning inquiries on all three new nuclear stations – and they won't report this side of Second Coming.
- GRUBER You're picking this fight, we don't need it.
- POLLY You think the Tories are going to let you have it your way? Simon Laity can't get through the day without boasting about his solar roof, growing his own muesli. He'll shut down your coal-fired, gas-fired stations without a second look.
- GRUBER Which is why I need your boss to see sense.
- POLLY Back him into a corner, he has to fight.
- GRUBER Then South of the Thames loses three hours of electricity tonight.
- POLLY Why give the Lib Dems a reason to pull out of the coalition?
- GRUBER It's just a few chavs down the Walworth Road.
- POLLY Which ends in Dulwich, where half the national newspaper editors live these days.
- GRUBER When the Lib Dems lose their precious referendum bill tonight, they're pulling out anyway.
- POLLY (NOT NECESSARILY) Gwen Donoghue's enjoying her moment in the sun. We can keep her talking.
- GRUBER Her party'll walk.
- POLLY Only because you're giving them an easy out. "Armstrong's Government can't even keep the lights on."
- GRUBER So settle with us. Give me a meet with the man.
- POLLY I can talk to Npower, to EDF, see if there's any money for -

GRUBER We don't want money.

POLLY I can't offer you sex.

GRUBER (AMUSED) I've always liked you, Polly.

POLLY Another night of power cuts and Labour's finished.

GRUBER Break my heart.

POLLY You are not coming anywhere near Number Ten.

GRUBER Stock up on candles, Polly, could be a long night.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4. DOWNING STREET. STRATEGY UNIT. 10:05AM.

MONICA IS ON THE PHONE, EDGE OF DESPERATE

MONICA > The PM is counting on your vote to support the Referendum Bill.
 > (DUHH) Because you're a Labour MP.
 > You don't really care whether it's STV or AVP or HMV, do you?
 > That one was a joke. You know, little dog sitting next to a gramophone thing.
 > It's a Jack Russell!
 > For the record, I have never heard describe you as anyone's poodle.
 > So you're going to bring down the Labour coalition government just to prove you can?
 > You're right, I think this call is over.

MONICA PUTS THE PHONE DOWN

MONICA (SHOUTING AT HIM/THE PHONE) You've got a majority of less than six hundred, you moron.

BILL (CALM) They can't hear you once you've put the phone down.

MONICA Come to help? Or are we selling tickets now?

BILL I thought I'd do the Commons Tea Rooms. Have you got a list?

MONICA They have food there, don't they?

BILL I'll get you something.

MONICA Nothing fresh – I only eat things that come in foil-topped containers.

BILL Who am I looking for?

MONICA (FROM MEMORY, EFFORTLESSLY) Adams, Cole, Daneman, Fernando, Joyce, Kingsome, Leadyard, Pollicott, Ruthven, Sumpter, Tyler G, Tyler M, Wellings, Yeadman.

BILL (SCARY) That was in alphabetical order.

MONICA It's just how they stick.

BILL All definitely rebels?

MONICA All definitively named in at least one national publication as probably thinking about the possibility of talking to someone about the notional idea of rebelling.

BILL They've got to break cover some time.

THE PHONE RINGS. MONICA PICKS IT UP.

MONICA Strategy Unit.
 > Yes?
 (TO BILL, HAND OVER RECEIVER) Anything as long as it's Tandoori.
 > Of course the Prime Minister'll see you.
 (TO BILL) It's Mary Pollicott.
 > You say when. He'll move round -
 > Ah...He's in Norwich until -
 (TO BILL) Or Szechuan.
 > You can't come in any later?
 > Of course, we want your vote. We love your vote, it's one of our favourite votes.
 (TO BILL) And anything to drink that's fizzy or green.
 > It's a war memorial actually.
 > I know you voted against the Security Intervention Force and it was mildly stupid to remind you of our military incursion into....

SHE STOPS AS SHE REALISES:

MONICA She's hung up. (SHOUTING AT THE PHONE:) That's very rude, you know. Your Mummy would smack your botty for that.

BILL Do you think – maybe – one E-number too many?

MONICA (DANGEROUS) Do not try coming back here without some genuinely fast food.

CUT TO:

SCENE 5. ST.PETER'S HALL, NORWICH. 11:50AM.

STEVE IS USHERING THE MAN OUT OF THE SURGERY DOOR

CONSTITUENT I'm not paying it. I'll tell you that for nothing.

STEVE We'll see to it, Mister...(HE CAN'T REMEMBER)

CONSTITUENT You don't even remember my name, see?

ADAM (FROM THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM) I've got it all here, Mister Hallett.

CONSTITUENT See? He knows. That's why he's Prime Minister and you're...you're...

STEVE Incredibly busy.

AND HE SHUTS THE DOOR.

ADAM He wants his Member of Parliament to arbitrate a forty quid parking ticket from the Waitrose Pay-And-Display.

STEVE That's democracy. Talking of which, how about we set off back to the home of it? Work the old Armstrong magic round the Westminster Village before - ?

ADAM Surgery ends at noon.

STEVE There's no-one out there.

ADAM It's nine minutes to twelve.

STEVE Aka the eleventh hour.

ADAM I'm the MP for Norwich Easterby. I sit here until –

A KNOCK AND HEAD ROUND THE DOOR

BIYOT (EAST AFRICAN) You still...can I?

ADAM (TO STEVE) See? (TO BIYOT) How can I help you? Come in.

STEVE (DESPAIR) Boss!

ADAM Come in, come in. This is my assistant, Steve McKie.

BIYOT (AND NOW SHE REALISES) You're...you're...Prime...

ADAM That's just in my spare time.

STEVE (UNDER HIS BREATH) And not for much longer if we –

ADAM Steve.

BIYOT They say Surgery With Local MP. Notice in Costcutter.

ADAM I am your MP.

BIYOT But you're the...you cannot...

STEVE Shall we skip British Constitution 101 and get down to the issue?

ADAM Sit, please, tell me how I can help.

BIYOT You see....I live only me...I have nice flat....on the Franklin Estate...nice view over market square, I see them do that memorial thing this morning....(REALISING) That was you!

STEVE SIGHS

ADAM Go on. Please.

BIYOT I want adopt my nieces, two of girls, in this refugee camp in Somalia... (MINOR TEARS COMING)... almost Kenya...it is terrible camp, Dadaab...now adoption agency say I must have two-bedroom flat before they allow me....I have nice one-bedroom at this time....nice flat, it's on –

STEVE The Franklin. View of the memorial.

ADAM (STEADY) Steve.

BIYOT So I go Council and I write apply two-bedroom. That is two year ago. The girls are in this camp much much long. Terrible place. And my Grandmother looking after them but now she have malaria and they say she will not –

STEVE (IMPATIENCE) How can we help you?

BIYOT Last month, here, I get letter – (PRODUCING THE LETTER) – top of list, they are give me two-bedroom. So I tell adoption agency. And they say it is going to be good. And then last week – (THE OTHER LETTER) – the Council do new....new “assessment”, say if it is only me, they take offer back. They say I can not have two-bedroom if there only one me.

ADAM But you told them about the adoption?

BIYOT The agency will not allow adopt two girls with only one-bedroom.

STEVE But you told the Council about the adoption?

BIYOT They say there is only just one me so I can never have two-bedroom.

ADAM And you can’t bring your nieces over here until you have a two-bedroom?

BIYOT (DESPAIR) I do not know what do.

STEVE Well, that’s very unfortunate. (STANDING, END OF MEETING) Still, looks like this one can’t be cracked. All parties are within their rights. Shame but –

ADAM Sit down, Steve.

HE SITS.

ADAM Right. Let’s start with your name and address. Steve here’s going to take notes. Lid off pen, Steve.

CUT TO:

SCENE 6. THE SKY POLITICS SHOW.

LAITY *Of course, Proportional Representation has many vocal supporters. Several of the nations of Europe are very adequately –*

TIM *But you don't think the people of Britain should be given a chance to choose?*

LAITY *Tonight the House votes on whether we should have a referendum and as much as I'd like to support it, the Conservative Party is against it.*

TIM *Again, I'll ask, the people shouldn't be allowed to decide for themselves?*

LAITY *Does Adam Armstrong really want PR or is it merely the price of his coalition with the Liberal Democrats?*

TIM *We did ask him or a member of his cabinet onto the programme but –*

LAITY *Of course not, we're looking at a government in the last stages of collapse and I for one will do everything I can to hasten its peaceful end. Frankly, Tim, if this government was a horse – well, you know what they do to horses, don't you?*

CUT TO:

SCENE 7. NORTH NORFOLK ADOPTION AGENCY. 12:10PM.

STEVE IS ANSWERING HIS PHONE

STEVE It's the North Norfolk Adoption Agency.
 > There's this Somali woman who needs help with –
 > He looks alrightish, a bit of a glint but – no, he just wants
 to settle this before -

ADAM It's very rude to talk about people when you're standing right
 next to them, you know.

STEVE (TO ADAM) It's Polly. She needs an up - [*date*]

ADAM Hasn't she got enough to do?

STEVE (INTO PHONE) Got to go.
 > You think I'm not trying?
 (TO ADAM) She wants to talk to you.

ADAM That would be even ruder.

STEVE (INTO PHONE) Later, Poll.

HE CLOSSES THE PHONE.

STEVE She's suggesting, I mean now that I think this, perhaps
 you're a little overwrought....possibly maybe?

ADAM Tell her to come and help.

STEVE Why don't we ring the local office and ask them to handle it?

ADAM Biyot came to her MP for help. So I shall help her.

WORSLEY (CASEWORKER, APPROACHING) Here it is. Found the
 whole file.

ADAM Thank you.

- WORSLEY (SKIMMING THROUGH IT) Yes, yes, I remember. We simply can't approve an adoption of two seven year-olds into a one-bedroom flat.
- ADAM They are her nieces though – blood family – doesn't that make a difference?
- WORSLEY Trouble is we have no proof of relations.
- BIYOT They are children of my brother. He is killed. His wife also – many terrible things happen.
- WORSLEY No paperwork, no proof of familial connection.
- ADAM You're right, no water, no roads, no hospitals in Somalia but I really don't see any good reason why they can't get on and issue birth certificates in triplicate.
- WORSLEY (POINTED) I don't make the rules.
- STEVE What about a simple DNA test?
- WORSLEY In Somalia not so simple.
- A MOMENT
- ADAM Why would she want to adopt someone else's - ?
- WORSLEY The reasons we have encountered to date include blackmail, tribal loyalty, religious –
- ADAM She is willing to take these children out of an overcrowded refugee camp where their grandmother, their sole carer, is dying of malaria, isn't that good enough?
- WORSLEY Are you saying it is? I mean, if the Prime Minister gives me the go-ahead, then –
- STEVE (URGENT) We are not rewriting immigration legislation for one woman.
- WORSLEY Why are you here, Pri – Mister Armstrong?

STEVE (SOTTOISH) Now this I want to hear.

ADAM (WORKING IT OUT) You don't like me.

WORSLEY I don't like your immigration laws, no. I don't like your –

ADAM I am this woman's MP and I need to get her the correct accommodation.

WORSLEY Welcome to your own legislation, Prime Minister.

ADAM I see. (STANDING) We'll go and see the housing people then. Steve? Now what are you doing?

STEVE (INTO PHONE) It's an adoption agency.
> I am well aware.
(TO ADAM) Sorry, it's Bill.

ADAM Turn it off.

STEVE (TO ADAM) I put it on silent. Isn't that enough?

CONTINUE INTO:

SCENE 8. DOWNING STREET: STRATEGY UNIT 12:15PM.

BILL IS WALKING ALONG A CORRIDOR AS HE TALKS - ULTIMATELY WALKING INTO THE STRATEGY UNIT

BILL (INTO PHONE) I don't care what kind of look you're getting. Tell him his presence is required here in the metropolis.
> You're a big girl's blouse, Steve. A big girl's big frilly lacey blousey thing –

OVER THIS:

MONICA (SHE IS ON THE PHONE) Shhh. Phone.

BILL (INTO PHONE, QUIETER) You could also tell him he's a coward. (AND HE HANGS UP)

MONICA (INTO PHONE) Yes, it's Bill.
> I know he was just in the Tea Rooms.
> (HER PLAN SCUPPERED) He already offered you that?
> And you didn't...I mean, OK, OK, what about if we fast-tracked the feasibility study so that well before the next election –
(TO BILL) Call this sushi?
> The point is they'll be employing people by then. Huge job –
BILL: (OVER) Best they had. Sorry about the chopsticks.
> Feasibility studies never say No. We only do them to shut the protestors up.
(TO BILL) The wasabi. Where is it? (GRITTED TEETH, DANGEROUS) You can't eat this without wasabi.
> (ALMOST SHOUTING) I don't care if your Constituency Chair thinks we should dismantle the entire motorway infrastructure of Great Britain – get yourself a new Chair.
> OK, OK. (SORRY) How about...how about Lord...Lord....Lord Dunton. We'll get him to do the Inquiry. He loves building things.
(TO BILL, AS SHE TRIES TO PICK UP A SUSHI AND FAILS) Chopsticks – is this some kind of sick joke?

> OK, here it is: Dunton on the job in six weeks. Reports in four months. You've got employment up in six. What do you say?

> The Prime Minister won't forget this.

> I'll make sure he doesn't.

> Thanks.

MONICA I Am The Man!

BILL Ledyard?

MONICA (AS SHE STARTS TO BEAT OUT A RHYTHM ON THE DESK FURNITURE WITH THE CHOPSTICKS) Signed, sealed and -

BILL (SIMPLE) Dunton has just accepted High Commissioner to New Zealand.

MONICA (DISMISSIVE) Detail.

BILL No way can you do a Motorway Planning in less than twelve months.

MONICA Records are made to be broken.

BILL Ring him back.

MONICA Where's my fizzy green drink, Flagg?

AS SHE WALKS STRAIGHT IN:

DONOGHUE He still in Norwich?

BILL Not due back till -

DONOGHUE Get this circulated, will you?

BILL Can't you ask the....(AS HE SKIMS IT)....A spending freeze?

MONICA (READING OVER HIS SHOULDER) All public spending commitments?

DONOGHUE You know these money people. One day, it's spend spend spend, the next it's –

MONICA I just green lit an M27 extension as far as Hereford Riverside.

DONOGHUE Switch that light to red, love. The money tap's off.
(WALKING OFF) Get it circulated, will you, Bill?

AND SHE'S GONE

MONICA (APPALLED) She must know what we're doing today?

BILL So, ask yourself, why the hell does the Lib Dem Leader want us to lose this vote?

MONICA Get me wasabi, get me cutlery, I've got calls to make.

CUT TO:

SCENE 9. NORWICH COUNCIL: HOUSING ONE-STOP-SHOP.
WAITING AREA. 12.45PM.

A BUSY WAITING AREA: CHILDREN, BULL TERRIERS, FRACTIOUS ARGUMENT.

STEVE (CAN'T WE JUST?) Just move into this room...?

ADAM We're fine here. Public space for public business.

STEVE Close Protection are going hyper.

ADAM This is Norwich. Not the Hindu Kush.

STEVE Opinion is divided.

ADAM You took a number ticket thing, right?

COPPLE (RUSHING UP, PANICKING, DESPERATE TO DO ANYTHING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER) Prime Minister, I'm so sorry, forgive me, there was some kind of diary mess. I had no idea you were –

ADAM (FLAT) We're not.

COPPLE (BROUGHT UP SHORT) Sorry?

ADAM Just here on behalf of a constituent.

STEVE Didn't actually make an appointment but if it would be possible for you to expe – [*dite matters*]

ADAM (NO, NO) We'll wait our turn.

COPPLE (BAFFLED) Prime Minister?

ADAM No special favours. Can't believe we need to bother senior management. Happy to see the Housing Officer in question.

COPPLE (TENTATIVE) And....if I could possibly just enquire....the constituent?

STEVE (VERY FAST) Biyot Abdulle.

ADAM (DISAPPOINTED) Steve!

COPPLE ...Address?

STEVE Franklin.

ADAM (TO STEVE) Enough.

COPPLE I'll get her file.

ADAM (TO COPPLE) The Housing Officer.

COPPLE I'll send him.

ADAM Or her.

COPPLE He-she-he'll be right down.

ADAM We'll wait our turn.

COPPLE I'm sure it's convenient pretty soon right now.

COPPLE IS GONE

STEVE The man doesn't know what you're playing at.

ADAM It's wrong to treat me any different.

STEVE (CONTINUING) I don't know what you're playing at.

CUT TO:

SCENE 10. H.M.TREASURY: THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE 1PM.

POLLY IS CONFRONTING HER

DONOGHUE I have to prove I can do this job responsibly.

POLLY You've been doing that for months.

DONOGHUE Stand-in. Until Labour can get a working majority. Then back along the opposition benches, Gwen, off you go, you and your little Liberal friends had a nice little go in the grown-ups' room, now it's a cup of hot milk and off to bed with you.

POLLY Can I get you a porter?

DONOGHUE Sorry?

POLLY That's a whole lot of baggage you're carrying there.

DONOGHUE My party is about to enter government on a permanent basis. This is precisely when I need to show that we can do this responsibly.

POLLY It's only the bill to instigate the referendum. You've got to win that too.

DONOGHUE The people are so sick of the two big players tying up the whole game.

POLLY This coalition won't survive a power-station workers' strike.

DONOGHUE So the government falls, we can do the referendum on the same day as the general election.

POLLY This is "doing the job responsibly"?

BILL (ENTERING) We're a good twenty, twenty-five votes short.

DONOGHUE And you want me to buy them off? Hands in the pork-barrel?

- BILL (NO, BUT) A freeze on all expenditure?
- DONOGHUE How's that going to look? I announce a freeze – because we're completely bloody broke, by the way – and the next day I'm signing off harbour dredging in obscure Scottish ports and eco-subsidies for the greenest spots in Britain.
- POLLY It's what Contingency Funds are for.
- BILL Do you truly want this referendum, Gwen?
- DONOGHUE (ALMOST OFFENDED) My party has campaigned for over fifty years to change the British electoral system.
- POLLY And that's why people vote for you.
- BILL So what will they vote for once there is PR?
- DONOGHUE That's precisely why we have to show them what sort of party we are.
- BILL You're terrified. You're a single-issue party that's about to win its issue. Your bucket's empty. And you're looking for a refill at our expense.
- DONOGHUE You're going to have to tell Terry Gruber there is no special money for redeployment. The power workers take the hit like anyone else.
- POLLY Power Workers aren't anyone else. They turn off our heaters, our computers, our operating theatres, our –
- DONOGHUE There is no money.
- POLLY This morning, you were telling Adam to bribe people.
- DONOGHUE I meant be political: favours, advancement, re-strategising.
- BILL I can get us two votes with a small fisheries support programme. Coastal MPs.
- DONOGHUE (ADAMANT) There. Is. No. Money.

POLLY (TO BILL) You want to tell that to the Prime Minister?

DONOGHUE I would. But he's not here. Is he?

CUT TO:

SCENE 11. NORWICH HOUSING ONE-STOP-SHOP. MANAGER'S OFFICE. 1:15PM.

COPPLE IS JUST SHOWING THE HOUSING OFFICER, INTO HIS OFFICE, ENCOURAGING THEM TO USE IT FOR THE MEETING.

COPPLE No, no, no, I understand, no, no, we often do this. Hot desk, hot office, hot, hot. Don't we, um....?

H/OFFICER Philip.

ADAM As long as you're not inconvenienced.

COPPLE Far from it. Everything's fine and dandy.

ADAM But you're staying?

COPPLE Don't mind me. I'll just...sit here and...read a few files. Go right ahead. Just flicking through paperwork. Pretend I'm not even...just hot desking....

ADAM (TO HOUSING OFFICER) I'd like to discuss the issue of -

COPPLE (CONTINUING, OVER THIS) Go right right ahead, please.

ADAM Issue of Miss Biyot Abdulle. I believe she is part of your caseload.

H/OFFICER (OLD PROBLEM) Yes.

ADAM This offer, that was withdrawn.

H/OFFICER She made a false declaration on her form. Said she had two daughters.

ADAM She will.

H/OFFICER She doesn't.

STEVE Her soon-to-be adopted daughters can't join her unless she gets this flat.

H/OFFICER I can't give a two-bedroom to a one-person.

ADAM She's about to –

H/OFFICER (FLAT) She isn't. I don't make the rules.

STEVE (DREAD) Please, please don't ask who does.

ADAM I'm merely asking for a little common sense.

COPPLE Everything going alright?

ADAM Thank you.

H/OFFICER I would dearly like to make an exception for you.

STEVE Why don't you?

COPPLE That's right, why don't you? (REALISING) Sorry.

ADAM I want us to find a solution to this within the rules.

H/OFFICER I've been trying for the last three weeks. Mister Prime Minister.

ADAM Adam's fine.

H/OFFICER Miss Abdulle has shown considerable persistence.

STEVE That alone deserves a reward, doesn't it?

COPPLE Nobody need actually know...I mean, would they?

ADAM I'd know.

COPPLE I think we can trust you. I mean, if we can't trust the –

STEVE This flat, the two-bedroom, it's still empty?

H/OFFICER (CHECKING) ...Yes. We were about to allocate it but -

STEVE Right, let's imagine there are two Biyots. Go with me here, I'm cooking with gas. One lives alone, on the Franklin, view of the new memorial. The other one has two children, adopted, and the three of them are arriving in just a few weeks.

H/OFFICER (WHERE'S THIS GOING?) Mm-huh...?

STEVE And you're happy to allocate the bigger flat to this Family-Sized Biyot?

ADAM (GOT IT) After all, she's been on the waiting list for three years.

H/OFFICER (STILL WARY) O...K...

STEVE So what does Family-Sized Biyot need to do to secure this flat
-

ADAM Ready for her arrival with her family?

H/OFFICER & COPPLE (SIMULTANEOUSLY) Pay rent for it.

ADAM You'll hold it?

H/OFFICER (IF) She's paying rent, it's hers.

ADAM Single-person Biyot's got to go on paying for the other one though, where she is now, right?

H/OFFICER I can't have a void on my books, no rent coming in. It's the rules.

ADAM I know, I know – "Who Makes The Rules?"

STEVE I'll get Biyot.

CUT TO:

SCENE 12.THE WORLD AT ONE.*LAITY*

That's not the question, Martha. The only real question is Where's The Prime Minister? His official diary says he's in Norwich until 11.30. It's almost one thirty – where is he? The Commons is debating his Referendum Bill but he's nowhere near the debating chamber. You've tried to get him to speak to you - not available for comment. So the country is facing a wave of power cuts, the coalition is tottering, but no-one can find the Prime Minister. Is there anyone at the helm of this ship?

CUT TO:

SCENE 13. NORWICH HOUSING ONE-STOP-SHOP. WAITING AREA.
2:15PM.

IN THE BUSY WAITING AREA

BIYOT Mister Armstrong, I am so grateful, you work so hard - I do not have enough of that money.

ADAM It's the perfect way to solve it.

STEVE The only way.

ADAM Pay the rent and they'll hold the flat for you until the girls arrive.

BIYOT (DESPAIR) I want this so much.

ADAM We tell the Adoption Agency the flat is yours – you'll sign the tenancy agreement this afternoon – and Oxfam will put the girls on the plane Friday. Monday latest.

BIYOT An extra hundred and thirty a week? How can I possibly?

ADAM Overtime?

BIYOT (AS IF) In this economy?

ADAM Sorry. (ABOUT THE ECONOMY:) I'm doing my best.

STEVE (IN HIS EAR) Boss, haven't we gone far enough?

ADAM Without the tenancy signed, we've done nothing.

STEVE The House divides on the first reading at seven.

ADAM We are talking to Ms Abdulle.

STEVE (TO BIYOT) Would your boss not – ?

COPPLE (APPROACHING) I think I have the solution.

ADAM Mister Copple?

COPPLE I spoke to my Executive Director and we all agreed these were outstandingly exceptional unique circumstances and we have been able to approve, on a no-precedent basis, an emergency loan.

ADAM Emergency?

COPPLE From the Social Fund.

STEVE (SNATCHING THE DOCUMENT) Outstanding. Sign there, Miss K, and there, and it's done. Right?

ADAM What exactly were the terms of this emergency, as you saw it, Mister Copple?

COPPLE Well. Ms Abdulle needs this money. And the girls are...you know, they really need Ms Abdulle's care. And there's truly dire need.

ADAM The Social Fund is for a cooker so you don't starve. Heating so you don't freeze.

COPPLE The conditions in that refugee camp are far from –

ADAM I'm sorry, you think the emergency is me. (SO SAYING, HE SNATCHES THE EMERGENCY LOAN DOCUMENT OFF STEVE AND SLOWLY TEARS IT UP) I wrote these rules – I know she doesn't qualify.

STEVE (HE'S CRAZY) Adam? Adam!

ADAM Biyot, I'm sorry, but you cannot accept this loan.

STEVE (APPALLED) Adam, one way or another we need to get back to -

BIYOT (CRUSHED, HUMBLE ACCEPTANCE) I see.

ADAM Sorry, Mister Copple, I know you were only trying to – I will not accept any special treatment on behalf of my constituents.

STEVE Any normal MP would be glad to –

ADAM Sadly, a Prime Minister can't.

COPPLE Right. Just trying to....

STEVE How much is a month's rent, Mister Copple?

COPPLE A hundred and thirty a week is five six three per calendar month.

STEVE I'm writing you a cheque.

ADAM Steve?

STEVE (TO BIYOT, AS HE WRITES) It's a loan. From me to you.

ADAM Stop now, Steve.

STEVE Because this is an emergency. Not about lost girls or hunger or malaria, it's about saving a government. Trivial, I know, but it's my job and yours, Adam, and I'm not going to let you do this to yourself.

BIYOT Mister McKie, thank you so much.

ADAM TO STEVE) Put the cheque book away, Steve.

ADAM What are you going to do, Steve, lend to everyone who's got a problem to solve?

STEVE We're twenty-seven votes down, Adam. (THRUSTING HIS MOBILE AT ADAM) Look at this text, latest from Monica. Kevin and Andy have flipped, they've joined the rebellion. That's two members of your cabinet voting against you.

ADAM I'll sack them.

STEVE You won't have a cabinet to sack them from because you won't be a Prime Minister. We're on the verge of becoming a failed state ourselves.

HANNAH (APPROACHING) Adam? Adam? What the hell are you doing here?

ADAM (REALISING) Hannah? Oh my God, Hannah, I forgot.

HANNAH I've been sitting there for over an hour.

ADAM I got distracted.

STEVE Hello, Mrs.Armstrong.

HANNAH (TO STEVE) Couldn't you have steered him in the right direction?

ADAM I didn't tell them I was meeting you.

HANNAH Just as well Close Protection knew where you were.

ADAM OK...OK...lunch, shall we?

HANNAH I've got fifteen minutes.

ADAM I'll take it.

STEVE Adam!

ADAM (AS HE MOVES OFF) Back in a sec, everyone.

STEVE HOWLS IN FRUSTRATION

COPPLE Is he always like this?

STEVE Biyot, we've got to think of something. We've got fourteen minutes.

CUT TO:

SCENE 14. HOUSE OF COMMONS. TEA ROOM. 2:30PM.

TREVITHICK HAS STOPPED MONICA IN MID-SEARCH

MONICA If you'd just let me -

TREVITHICK You're thirty-one votes down.

MONICA It'll take more than that to make me do a deal with an MP
who stands for xenophobia, racist legislation and everything
I desp -

TREVITHICK The vote's four and half hours away.

MONICA (TESTING) What are you saying?

TREVITHICK I'm saying I'm standing here and we could talk.

MONICA You loathe Adam.

TREVITHICK I like PR.

MONICA Adam loathes you.

TREVITHICK I do miss the Party.

MONICA Some of us still toast your expulsion annually.

TREVITHICK I am glad to be the source of such joy on Milbank. One day
you'll understand - levels have to be set. There's limited
space on this island.

MONICA We're not falling off the edges yet.

TREVITHICK We have to protect our values.

MONICA You wouldn't've let me or my Pakistani parents onto your
precious island.

TREVITHICK This isn't the moment for theoretical debate, Monica.

MONICA What are you calling yourself this week? British Socialist People's Party? British National Socialist -

TREVITHICK You know I don't have any whips to listen to. I vote according to conscience.

MONICA When did you develop one of those?

TREVITHICK (HOLDING IT IN) Do you want me to walk through your Lobby?

MONICA (ALSO, REALISING SHE MAY HAVE TO) I'd have to talk to the Prime Minister.

TREVITHICK (WALKING AWAY) He knows where to find me.

TREVITHICK WALKS AWAY AND MONICA BREATHESES THEN:

MONICA (EFFECTIVELY TO HERSELF) Except we don't know where to find him.

BILL (APPROACHING, HAVING WAITED) What the hell are you doing talking to Trevithick?

MONICA Thanks for helping me out there.

BILL You want to hobnob with Lincolnshire's very own Doctor Goebbels, you're on your own.

MONICA He talked to me. I didn't talk to him. Much.

BILL Don't tell me he was saying what I think he was saying?

MONICA We're at least twenty-something votes down.

BILL Thirty-something. The Tylers just flipped back.

MONICA Both of them?

BILL They're twins. It's a miracle they don't wear matching clothes.

MONICA That's why we need Dennis Trevithick.

BILL You're going to take it to the Prime Minister? The man we expelled for racism?

MONICA He's an elected Member of Parliament. He's voting tonight. And I'm going to do my job.

CUT TO:

SCENE 15. THE KING'S ARMS, NORWICH. 2.35PM.

THEY ARE SETTLED IN A SNUG

HANNAH You really think that's what this is about?

ADAM I thought it was what you....I misread the signs.

HANNAH We both work, we both have jobs.

ADAM Maybe mine is a little...

HANNAH Doesn't stop you hiding in this pub.

ADAM No-one?

HANNAH (THEY HAVE ALREADY NOTICED THIS) Not a single person has clocked you.

ADAM I need a better publicist.

HANNAH Or are things slipping?

ADAM It's one endless slide, these days.

HANNAH For God's sake.

ADAM Every single step has to be negotiated. We're not governing, we're....it's survival for survival's sake.

HANNAH I don't like you like this.

ADAM You didn't like me before.

HANNAH (AVOIDING THIS) You look better than your photographs.

ADAM It's the photos the papers choose to run. That's how you know it's slipping – they run the ones from the archive when you're rubbing your face because you had three brandies too many the night before or when you've just burped and you're hoping no-one got that shot.

HANNAH Still getting it? (DYSPEPSIA)

ADAM You know what I mean.

HANNAH You know what, Adam, I have never once known what you mean.

ADAM Words of one then: I'll do anything to get you back.

HANNAH And you think resigning is what it'll take?

ADAM Who talked about resigning?

HANNAH You're letting the tide in, you're not playing to win any more – I can see that, Steve can see that, every single national newspaper can see it.

A MOMENT

HANNAH Tell me you're not doing it just for me? For "us"?

CUT TO:

SCENE 16. HOUSE OF COMMONS. CENTRAL LOBBY. 2:45PM.

A VERY FEBRILE LOBBY

POLLY What's your count?

BILL Kevin and Andrew are definitely crossing. We're still without Fernando, Kingsome, Leadyard, Pollicott –

POLLY Mary Pollicott?

BILL Adam sacked her. She won't rest until Adam's still-beating heart is displayed to the howling mob outside.

POLLY We did eight years in Opposition. Eight and a half years of total powerlessness. We get re-elected, they all get their red boxes and a shiny black government car. After two years they discover that executive power ain't so easy and they screw up their shiny ministerial jobs and Adam tells them it's time for the guys who've actually thought about how to do it as well as why. But not a word of gratitude, no, they hunker down on the backbenches, sniping at their own front bench, like marble-hewn principle is the only thing standing between them and a return to government office when the real story's so much simpler: They Could Not Hack It.

BILL May I?

POLLY You carry right on.

BILL (CONTINUING THE LIST) Ruthven, Sumpter, the Tyler Twins, Wellings.

POLLY These are abstentions, right?

BILL All voting against, mingling joyfully in the lobbies with Tories.

POLLY So how many down?

BILL Twenty-nine, minimum.

MONICA (APPROACHING) Pendry's gone.

BILL (AMAZED) Tony Pendry?

MONICA But there is an upside.

BILL Don't mention Trevithick.

POLLY (SHOCK) You've exchanged words with Dennis Trevithick?

MONICA A vote is a vote is a vote.

POLLY (ARE YOU CRAZY?) Last week, he's in Poland, talking to the crazy Polish neo-Nazi burn-a-gay-a-day party.

MONICA He's going to do that anyway. Tonight he can bolster –
[*our vote*]

BILL Give him PR and his one-man party's suddenly got a shot at re-election.

MONICA So he's going to vote with us anyway.

BILL Except you spoke to him.

MONICA No-one saw.

BILL Half the tea room were watching, jaws dropping into their scones.

POLLY You spoke to the poor man's Oswald Mosley in the Commons Tea Room?

BILL That's an insult to poor men everywhere.

MONICA He approached me.

BILL And just why do you think he chose that location for his tête-à-tête?

POLLY You've been set up, Monica.

MONICA (CUTTING OVER THIS) What time's Adam supposed to get here?

BILL Don't change the subject.

POLLY Apparently the former Mrs A. turned up.

MONICA How long's that going to take?

CUT TO:

SCENE 17. KING’S ARMS, NORWICH. 2:50PM.

HE IS JUST FINISHING TELLING HER BIYOT’S STORY:

ADAM (IT’S RIDICULOUS) She’s completely stymied - she can’t apply for a big enough flat without the kids and she can’t get the kids unless she’s living in a bigger flat.

HANNAH So you bang some heads together and –

ADAM I’m not going to break my own rules.

HANNAH You’ve just discovered that your rules are crap.

ADAM We’re not supposed to be talking about my constituent.

HANNAH I’m done with talking about us, Adam. (SHE IS RUMMAGING IN HER HANDBAG) We sat up in that god-awful flat on that miserable bloody street for hours and hours and days talking about us. It didn’t change anything.

ADAM What are you doing?

HANNAH I’m looking for my chequebook.

ADAM (JOKEY) You can’t buy me off.

HANNAH No, but I can help your constituent.

ADAM That’s not – I wouldn’t let Steve so I can’t –

HANNAH Why are we in this, Adam?

ADAM Are we still in it?

HANNAH I’m still a member of the party, I still get up every morning and want to see a fairer society, a more loving and generous society where people share things and go to each other’s aid.

ADAM Who wouldn’t sign up to that?

HANNAH There's signing and there's doing. How much does she need?

ADAM I can't let you do this.

HANNAH How much?

ADAM Say four weeks, at a hundred and thirty a week.

HANNAH (AS SHE WRITES) Abdulle, you said?

ADAM Or straight to Norwich Housing Revenue Account.

HANNAH That seems a little untrusting. Four threes are...

ADAM How do I explain this?

HANNAH (ALMOST DISAPPOINTED) Adam.

ADAM What?

HANNAH Don't you realise? It's not about rules and playing it all-above-board – you see something, you do something. (AS SHE TEARS THE CHEQUE OUT) This will get two girls out of a camp in a failed state. I can walk away feeling a whole lot better and so can you.

ADAM Are you really walking away?

HANNAH I've just been at the house. They've packed everything up. Everything of mine. Everything you won't need.

ADAM Any press?

HANNAH Not that I saw.

ADAM I thought maybe if I...?

HANNAH As though I would ever ask you to give up something you love for me. Please.

ADAM Do I? I don't know if I still -

HANNAH You're still good at it. You're still better than most of them,
more honest.

ADAM These last few weeks. I'm lying every day, I'm conniving, I'm
dishonest.

HANNAH That you need to think about. That makes a difference.
(THEN SEEING) OK, those regulars by the cigarette
machine, they've clocked us. Time to go.

ADAM Definitely time to go.

CUT TO:

SCENE 18.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. 3PM.

LAITY

The country is being held to ransom. A minority party is getting its way because Adam Armstrong refuses to stand up for his principles. We know the Labour Party has no desire for proportional representation. But, with fewer MPs than us, he is trying to impose this on everyone else. Just so he can cling on to power. And he doesn't even have the nerve to come and face me at the despatch box. Where is the Prime Minister hiding? I think tonight – I think tonight he might just discover that the House Of Commons has a more reliable sense of democracy and honour and he might just get his nose badly bloodied.

CUT TO:

SCENE 19. NORWICH HOUSING ONE-STOP-SHOP. WAITING AREA.
3PM.

AS BEFORE:

BIYOT Thank you so much, Mister Armstrong.

STEVE Why's Hannah allowed to lend it but I'm – ?

ADAM (TO STEVE) One day you'll understand. (TO BIYOT) OK,
do you need me to help with the housing office now?

BIYOT I sort it.

ADAM Sure?

STEVE She's sure.

ADAM (STEADY) Steve.

BIYOT I can do it.

ADAM OK.

STEVE Get the cars? London? Save the government?

ADAM Get the cars.

STEVE GOES.

BIYOT I will sign tenancy tomorrow morning.

ADAM I'll ask Mister Copple to send me a confirmation.

BIYOT Thank you.

ADAM (HE ALMOST DOESN'T WANT TO GO) OK. I need to go.
Now.

BIYOT I can do everything now.

ADAM OK.

HE TURNS AND STRIDES AWAY, CALLING OUT:

ADAM Right, Steve, where's this car of yours?

STEVE (APPROACHING) They're just bringing them up round the -

ADAM (ALL ENERGY) Right, first ring Helen. Ring Kevin and Andy. And Daneman. And Cole. And Sumpter. I need to ring them. In person, I want see Gwen Donoghue. And Gruber, get him in too, he'll love that. What are you waiting for?

STEVE (TRYING TO GET HIM TO FOCUS) Who do you want to see first? I'll get the staff to schedule -

ADAM (ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?) I'm going to see them all at once. You know I hate repeating myself. Come on. Keep up. I need the full list of ingrates who've turned against me. I want names and addresses. I want to know their darkest fears. I want to know their children's darkest fears.

CUT TO:

SCENE 20. THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. 4PM.

IT IS VERY RAUCOUS
JEERING AND COUNTER-JEERING THROUGHOUT

LAITY (TRYING TO BE HEARD) Yes, this may seem like a game.
But it isn't. This referendum would constitute a major
change to the British way of life and the Conservative Party
stands firmly against it.

SHOUTING MOMENTARILY DROWNS HIM OUT
THEN:

LAITY I ask the government, only one question. If you are so
certain, where is your leader, why will he not come to the
despatch box and speak in favour of this bill? Where is he? I
ask you now? Where?

CUT TO:

SCENE 21. HOUSE OF COMMONS: PRIME MINISTER'S ROOMS.
5:05PM.

THEY ARE NOW ALL IN HIS ROOMS, POLITICIANS IN THE CENTRE,
 ADVISORS ROUND THE EDGE

- DONOGHUE It's less than two hours to the vote.
- ADAM Why do you think I've asked you all to be here?
- POLLY Now he's Miss Marple.
- MONICA I'm sorry, Adam, the fact is, the party isn't behind you on this one.
- ADAM Behind me or behind PR?
- DONOGHUE Are we really letting the biggest change to the British constitution be decided by petty leadership struggles?
- ADAM Before or after tonight's vote, PR or no PR, it's always going to be a struggle.
- DONOGHUE We're trying to find a way through to a period of governance without this kind of factionalism.
- BILL Are you joking, love? PR will usher in nothing but coalition governments – look at Holland, look at Germany, constant factionalism. Everyone gets a say –
- DONOGHUE That's good.
- BILL But one little spat and anyone gets to take their ball home. Which mean the game ends. But at the same time, nobody really wants that. So everyone watches their back, watches their flanks, positioning, repositioning, nobody ever bloody stands for bloody anything.
- DONOGHUE You prefer minority rule?
- ADAM Actually I count all the non-voters as mine.

DONOGHUE What?

ADAM They obviously didn't care enough so they're clearly happy for me to continue.

POLLY (TO STEVE) Has he been drinking?

MONICA He's right. If an individual doesn't care enough to vote, they're obviously happy with any party in power so every party has a right to count their vote towards a mandate.

DONOGHUE (CRAZY) You people have been in power too long.

GRUBER (ACROSS THIS) This is all wonderfully interesting – what am I doing here, Prime Minister?

ADAM Power, Terry, you hold the power, in every sense.

GRUBER Wish it felt like that.

ADAM You turn it off tonight, this government's finished.

GRUBER You're exaggerating.

ADAM Keep the lights on and the trains running. That's my job description. Everything else is...struggles.

GRUBER So let's stop struggling. Settle the issue.

ADAM I don't intend to talk about the issues.

GRUBER (REACHING FOR HIS CASE) You know where to find me when you want to.

ADAM You're not going anywhere.

GRUBER My members will want to know what –

ADAM You don't give a tuppenny toss for your members.

GRUBER We're not your playthings.

ADAM They elected me to direct government energy policy, not you.

GRUBER They didn't elect you. We just heard.

ADAM And while the Labour Party decides –

DONOGHUE In coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

GRUBER In hock.

ADAM And if we decide that we want to buy into the European Supergrid for solar power, that's what will happen.

GRUBER Why the hell would I want to support a Labour Prime Minister who's willing to screw the ordinary working man?

ADAM When we all know that's your job. (TO POLLY) How long's this vote been scheduled for today?

HELEN About seven, eight weeks.

ADAM And knock-me-down-with-the-proverbial, this is the week you start your wave of strikes?

GRUBER You think the whole world revolves round you.

STEVE Why did you trigger the issue now, Terry?

GRUBER It was management sent out the redundancy notices.

STEVE You really waited for the letters on the doormats?

ADAM You wanted your place in the history books. The man who brought down –

GRUBER History's the word, Adam.

ADAM You want to be it, I want to make it.

GRUBER (BRISK, PREPARING TO LEAVE) I need to report to my members.

ADAM Don't forget your tablets of stone.

GRUBER Thank you, Prime Minister.

AND HE WALKS OUT OF THE ROOM AND OUT.

POLLY Can I just say?, I think you handled that with diplomacy and exceptional tactfulness.

ADAM We've got nothing to give him that will stop these strikes.

DONOGHUE It makes it very hard for me. The referendum vote's one thing, the plug sockets are another.

ADAM That's all nothing.

POLLY Uh-huh?

ADAM It's simple now. Do you want to support this government so we can get on and do things, do things that are worth doing, or do you all just want your slice? Like Terry Gruber. It's time to decide

DONOGHUE Support you, you mean, your premiership?

ADAM It's the only one currently on offer.

STEVE We can work it strong, not backing down to the unions. That always plays well for us.

DONOGHUE They still haven't got their cup of PG. And the Sky Box is off.

MONICA You think we should abandon the Supergrid, go back to heavy carbon electricity?

DONOGHUE The voters don't give a "tuppenny toss" where their electricity comes from.

MONICA The carbon allowance scheme –

POLLY Gets right up their noses.

MONICA Laity won't repeal it.

POLLY Of course not, they just hope he will.

MONICA We can nail him, ask him direct. Then they'll know there's no real alt – [*ernative*]

ADAM (DISMISSIVE) That makes no bloody difference. People vote for the hope of change. Look at America – every president gets elected on it. It doesn't matter whether it ever actually comes. It very rarely does. Elections, they're one big Christmas Eve, when we hope for something so good that's coming tomorrow. And it never really comes, does it? That Scalextric set or the special doll that cries real tears, it's great Christmas Day morning, maybe even the whole of that afternoon the world does feel different, but by the evening, certainly by Boxing Day, the world is back to how it always was. Elections, we all write our Christmas Lists – it's our list that counts, the things we want to believe in – and we go along and vote and hope. But Father Christmas doesn't exist.

DONOGHUE You need to get out of this job, Adam.

ADAM The realism a bit shocking?

DONOGHUE It's not the realism. It's the bitterness.

ADAM But you, you'll be different, you'll make things different, you'll change the nation.

DONOGHUE Haven't you changed anything?

ADAM Barely begun.

DONOGHUE So why the hell are you giving up on it now?

ADAM You want me to go out and do a deal with Dennis Trevithick?

MONICA How did you know about him?

ADAM Historical inevitability.

MONICA He just wants a chance to talk.

ADAM Should I do that, Gwen?

DONOGHUE He's a Nazi.

ADAM It's a vote closer to victory.

DONOGHUE (I SUPPOSE) ...If he just wants to talk.

ADAM (SUDDEN, ALMOST ANGRY) If we start putting him first, then what? Give him his signed photo? He's not worth the shit on my shoe. Wellings isn't getting his red box, Mary Pollicott's not getting her review. This isn't Walk All Over The Prime Minister Week. This is something important.

DONOGHUE So start banging some – [heads together]

ADAM Look at this. (TAKING A PHOTO OUT OF HIS JACKET POCKET) Look at them.

DONOGHUE Who's this?

ADAM Aminatta and...God, I've forgotten her name.

STEVE (PROMPT) Teresa.

ADAM Teresa.

DONOGHUE Adam, the vote is in less than – and I have to make my closing speech –

ADAM They're in a refugee camp in Somalia, well, just over the Kenyan border. Their grandmother's looking after them, except she's got malaria and they're saying she's not going to see out the season.

POLLY Adam, we really do need a strategy.

ADAM But their Aunt Biyot – slight problem, can't prove her family connection, paperwork not being the Islamic Courts' favourite method of governance – is willing to adopt them. Except Norwich Council wouldn't give her the right flat –

POLLY Can we cut to the point, please?

ADAM We sorted it, didn't we, Steve?

STEVE I wouldn't take the credit, really.

ADAM The girls are on a flight Friday.

POLLY A Prime Minister can do anything.

ADAM No special favours, just an MP doing his job. Being her voice in the middle of a God-awful system.

DONOGHUE Then change the system.

ADAM There'll always be God-awful systems. There'll always be two girls stuck in a refugee camp and some stupid set of rules keeping them there. And they're why I came into politics. The big changes – if they even exist – that's great. But it's individuals that count. And our ability and willingness to help them. These two girls. And their aunt. They're going to be together. That's how I spent today.

A SILENCE.

DONOGHUE (DRY) That's incredibly moving.

ADAM You'll come to it one day.

POLLY There's a few slightly more pressing things before then.

DONOGHUE Exactly.

ADAM (INSTRUCTIONS) Polly.

POLLY At last. A decision, thank you God.

ADAM Call the Palace, will you?

POLLY Sorry?

ADAM Call Sir Cosmo, warn him the Queen needs to look for a new First Minister.

BILL You're giving up?

DONOGHUE Adam, no, stop, you can't do this, we are too close to the most significant change in British politics since the –

MONICA Leave him alone, Gwen.

DONOGHUE What?

MONICA He's right. What he did today, better than anything he's done for the last –

ADAM (LIGHT) Steady on.

MONICA It was right, Adam. We were going crazy here, wondering what you were doing up there. I get it now.

ADAM Thank you.

DONOGHUE You really are a busted flush, aren't you?

ADAM On the contrary. I shall be standing for re-election in Norwich Easterby, I intend to work for the people of Norwich.

DONOGHUE (STALKING OUT) I'm going to talk to my whips.

SHE GOES.
A MOMENT OF SILENT REALISATION

STEVE (BREATHING) OK. OK. How do you want me to do this, boss?

ADAM What do you mean?

STEVE Return To Grassroots Activism? Or Time To Step Aside For The Next Generation? Or We Always Said We Would –

ADAM No spin, please God, Steve, let's just do the real me for once.

STEVE Yes, yes, yes, but which real you do you want me to put out there?

A TINY MOMENT
THEN, WITH ALMOST A SIGH A DESPAIR

ADAM Polly?

POLLY Yes, Adam.

ADAM Call the Palace, please.

END

number 10: episode five

“immortality at last” by jonathan myerson

cast

ADAM ARMSTRONG, Labour Prime Minister

MONICA, his speechwriter

POLLY, Number 10 Chief Of Staff

STEVE, Number 10 Director Of Communications

throughout

SIMON LAITY, Leader of the Conservative Party

NATHAN TOLTZ, Laity’s Chief of Staff (Australian)

DOCTOR CRAWSTON, entomologist

MISS (JANEY) TWINING, Head Garden Girl

SUSAN O’REILLY, from the FCO

doubling with

GARDEN GIRLS

ASSISTANT, in Number 10

REPORTERS

SCENE 1. HOUSE OF COMMONS: PRIME MINISTER'S ROOMS.
10:25AM.

TWO MEN STANDING IN THE ROOM, LOOKING ROUND, WONDERING WHAT TO DO...

TOLTZ Not much bloody light.

LAITY (WORRYING) Perhaps we should have waited outside.

TOLTZ They told us to come in, make ourselves at home.

LAITY Don't want to offend the God of Hubris. Get struck down by Catharsis or Synthesis or whatever it's called.

TOLTZ (CONTINUING) If you're going to have a window, why not have a bloody window? All this stone-carving getting in the way.

LAITY Trefoils.

TOLTZ So it's got a posh name, they're still blocking half the light.

LAITY It's the Mother of Parliaments, Nate.

TOLTZ Mother of Up-Its-Own Kitsch.

AT WHICH POINT, ADAM COMES STEAMING IN, ALL ENERGETIC BONHOMIE; A LESS-THAN-JOLLY POLLY IN HIS WAKE.

ADAM Sorry to keep you waiting.

LAITY (TENTATIVE) They told us to come in.

ADAM Quite right. More use to you than me.

LAITY Have you met Nathan Toltz, my Chief of – ?

ADAM Heard a lot about you.

TOLTZ All bad, I hope.

ADAM Scourge of Australian Socialists.

TOLTZ I did my bit.

ADAM Polly, you'll show him the ropes, yes?

POLLY Are there ropes?

ADAM You know, the secret passageways and things.

LAITY There are?

POLLY Straight down to the Bat Cave.

LAITY (REALISING) Ah.

ADAM (LOOKING ROUND) Right, what do you need to know about this place? Secretaries sit out that side, complaining. Special Advisors usually cluster at the other side of that door, complaining. And everyone else comes through that door already complaining.

TOLTZ You sound almost glad to be out of it.

ADAM (IGNORING THIS) Anything else we need to tell them, Polly?

POLLY You work it out as you go.

ADAM (TO LAITY) I think that's a No.

POLLY Everyone does it differently. There aren't rules. Just a few traditions.

TOLTZ I'm not really a traditions kind of guy.

POLLY You amaze me.

ADAM What time are you seeing HMQ?

TOLTZ Two-thirty.

ADAM (BAD NEWS:) After lunch.

LAITY Is that...?

ADAM The Royal Post-Prandial dip. Suggest a walk in the garden or something.

LAITY I didn't think one could suggest – [*anything to the*]

ADAM The dogs. Just mention they look like they need a walk. Don't let her sit still or you'll be there till tomorrow.

LAITY I don't like dogs.

ADAM And the Jamaican PM's due at what time, Polly?

POLLY Six. Photo op outside Number Ten, pool photographers inside by the fireplace. Substantive talks tomorrow.

TOLTZ (SURPRISED) He's not been cancelled?

POLLY Not possible.

ADAM Seemed cruel. He's been so looking forward to it. Not his fault there's been a change of personnel at this end.

TOLTZ (TO LAITY) We'll get you fully briefed.

LAITY I don't even know what he's here to talk about.

ADAM You'll learn.

LAITY What?

ADAM You never do know. This job's all about making it up as you go along.

LAITY (ALMOST SHOCKED) What?

ADAM I do so hope you enjoy being Prime Minister.

AND INTO:

TITLES

SCENE 2. DOWNING STREET: STRATEGY UNIT. 11:30AM.

MONICA IS CONFUSED.

CRAWSTON IS MID-THIRTIES, NERDISHLY SELF-CONFIDENT

CRAWSTON That's right, I have to wait in the hide most nights.

MONICA Pretty cold, damp, I suppose?

CRAWSTON I get tucked up, my wife lends me her rubber suit, goggles.

MONICA (TRYING NOT TO BE SURPRISED) You're married?

CRAWSTON She specialises in pre-pubertal earthworm endocrines.
(ALMOST DISPARAGING:) But they're diurnal, of course.

MONICA (MOVE ON, MONICA) I don't understand, these moths,
couldn't you just catch them in a net or something?

CRAWSTON Tried that. (TINGE OF REGRET) Tried that for over three
years.

MONICA Maybe you need to work a little on your netting technique?

CRAWSTON Wasn't wasted. Learned a huge amount about the peri-
mating habits of the nocturnal slit-faced bat.

MONICA But –

CRAWSTON And that was the key. Catch the bat, you catch the moth.

MONICA Ah.

CRAWSTON One of those breakthroughs you hear about. Sort they make
films about.

MONICA (LET'S GET BACK TO THE POINT) Mister Crawst –

CRAWSTON Doctor.

MONICA Of course.

- CRAWSTON My doctoral thesis concerned the digestive tract of the *Blaberus Discoidalis*, the False Death's Head Cockroach.
- MONICA (HOW DO I REPLY TO THIS?) It's....an interesting digestive tract?
- CRAWSTON Unbelievable. Apart from the obligate mutualistic endosymbiont bacterium, it can metabolise eight different species of excrement simultaneously.
- MONICA Maybe it should work here.
- CRAWSTON Its biochemical multi-tasking is unique.
- MONICA You should see our Head of Communications.
- CRAWSTON But then I didn't discover that species.
- MONICA So this moth, with the special snout –
- CRAWSTON Proboscis.
- MONICA And the special wing-patterns –
- CRAWSTON Diffusion.
- MONICA You reckon this is your discovery?
- CRAWSTON My paper is about to be published. Of course if someone else says they have, then.... But I have to say I'm pretty confident.
- MONICA And you're here because...?
- CRAWSTON The Diffused-Wing Long-Billed Moth needs a Latin name. You know, the Linnaean system. *Homo sapiens*, *Rattus rattus*. This is genus *Antheraea*. And, as my own little moment of homage to the outgoing Prime Minister, a man we all hugely admire, I would like to name it *Antheraea Armstrongiensa*.
- MONICA You can do that, just call it what you want?

CRAWSTON My species, my discovery, my name.

MONICA And you'd like to honour the Prime Minister?

CRAWSTON I'd like his permission, but...

MONICA I think he'd be honoured.

CRAWSTON This way, his name will live on forever.

MONICA (GENUINELY MOVED) That is....I think he's going to be very touched.

CRAWSTON Thing is - the Institute needs to go straight to press.

MONICA I can do the paperwork right now. Get it couriered round.

CRAWSTON I'll ring them, tell them to expect it.

CUT TO:

SCENE 3. HOUSE OF COMMONS: PRIME MINISTER'S ROOMS.
10:45AM.

LAITY IS DETERMINED NOT TO SEE THE JAMAICAN PM, TOLTZ IS DETERMINED HE SHOULD.

LAITY I'm not ready for a state visit.

TOLTZ These are not votes you can play fast and loose with.

LAITY I don't see that –

TOLTZ The Jamaican community. Crucial in several inner-city constituencies.

LAITY (IRONIC) They always rush to vote for me.

TOLTZ It's on the turn, Simon. Afro-Caribbeans have always voted Labour – but after fifty years of voting for them and getting sod all, they're looking to shop around.

LAITY Except they walk straight past the Conservative Party store.

TOLTZ Upwardly mobile, aspirational. We can answer those concerns. The Labour Party just wants to keep them in their under-privileged hole – that's where they like them, makes them comfortable. The ones who want to leave that behind, they're our people.

LAITY All the more reason, if I somehow get it wrong with Ridgeon - can't we suggest a slight postponement?

TOLTZ We'll get in a wonk from FCO and in half an hour, you'll know more about Jamaica than a stonked-out Rasta. If that isn't a tautology.

LAITY That sort of attitude.

TOLTZ Know your enemy.

LAITY What's he want anyway?

- TOLTZ (FLIPPING THROUGH PAPERS) EU banana tariffs, bauxite mining rights, extradition arrangements.
- LAITY (EXACTLY) Banana skins.
- TOLTZ And to play to his voters. Almost a third of Jamaican-born Brits return to the island by the age of sixty-five. And that's when they turn back into his voters.
- LAITY Does anybody do anything because they think it's right? Because they want to.
- TOLTZ Simon, Simon.
- LAITY Corgis have to go for a walk, Ridgeon wants his grip-and-grin shot for the Caribbean Times, what's the point?
- TOLTZ No sweat, when she asks if you'd like to form a government, just tell her No.
- LAITY (ADMITTING) We're the largest single party, we have a duty.
- TOLTZ Finish the corgis by three. Into Downing Street at ten past, quick few lines on the doorstep - have they scribbled you something?
- LAITY Honour, humbling, work to do, honourable tradition.
- TOLTZ And a joke?
- LAITY Serious, hard work, economic hardship. We decided no time for jokes.
- TOLTZ A few questions from the press pack and in.
- LAITY So what do I do when they ask me?
- TOLTZ They're not going to.
- LAITY (COME ON) It's irresistible.

TOLTZ The Gay Times doesn't get a Press Pass to Downing Street.

LAITY The Guardian.

TOLTZ Of all papers, they're not going to.

LAITY The Mirror then.

TOLTZ (CONCEDING) ...Maybe.

LAITY What do you want me to say?

TOLTZ Very comfortable flat but it's the work that counts. With a smile. And walk away.

LAITY If they ask me outright?

TOLTZ (THEY'RE GOING TO ASK YOU:) "Prime Minister, can I ask who you're living with?"

LAITY It hasn't mattered in Camberwell. Private residence, yesterday's news.

TOLTZ Then it doesn't matter in Downing –

LAITY Official residence, Nate. Public interest in who is occupying the publicly-owned property.

TOLTZ You're worrying too much.

LAITY Do we take it head-on or do we avoid?

TOLTZ I wish I bloody knew, mate, I wish I knew.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4. DOWNING STREET: GARDEN ROOM. 11AM.

WOMEN ARE BUSILY OPENING LETTERS AND PRINTING OFF EMAILS.
MUTTERING:

GARDEN GIRL (AS SHE OPENS AND SKIMS IT) Oh dear, another nasty one.

TWINING GR or DD?

GARDEN GIRL “Time for a man of substance – “

TWINING GR.

GARDEN GIRL “Who won’t spoil all that’s good about Britain.”

TWINING Put it on the DD pile.

GARDEN GIRL Not that he put it that politely. It didn’t exactly say “spoil”.

TWINING Just file it under Good Riddance and get on with -

INTO WHICH, STRIDING:

ADAM Busy days, ladies.

EVERYONE STANDS, AS:

TWINING (SURPRISED) Prime Minister.

ADAM “Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it.”

TWINING Can I help you?

ADAM Why do they all wait to write now?

TWINING They know how much they’ll miss you, Prime Minister.

ADAM Couldn’t they have worked that out before the last election?

TWINING We'll – if might speak for all of us girls – we will really miss you too.

ADAM Except this evening, you'll be typing Simon Laity's letters and giving him that I-Wouldn't-Quite-Put-It-Like-That-If-I-Were-You look.

TWINING As though...We do place a value on exactitude.

ADAM (REACHING FOR A HANDFUL) Let's see some of these letters then.

TWINING (SNATCHING BACK) We'll sort them all for your staff first. They'll present you with a selection.

ADAM Let me help. How are you filing them?

TWINING Surely, this day, you have other things you need to....not that it's for me to....

ADAM You'd be amazed. Suddenly it's like a rainy Sunday afternoon in Hartlepool.

TWINING Let me just show you a few over here then.

ADAM What's wrong with this box? "GR", what's that stand for?

TWINING (THINK FAST)...“Goodbye.”

ADAM And the “R”?

TWINING “Really.”

ADAM Really?

TWINING Yes, really. Goodbye Really.

ADAM (PICKING ONE UP BEFORE SHE CAN STOP HIM) “Adam Armstrong – “ not even Dear Prime Minister – “I will be opening a bottle of champagne tonight.”

TWINING (BUSKING) To toast your memory.

ADAM "And I don't even drink. You've driven me to it."

TWINING Everyone likes a taste of champagne.

ADAM GR. GR... "Good Riddance" possibly?

TWINING (HE'S RIGHT) Well...

ADAM OK, so...you've got five boxes. Over there, the ones you wanted me to see "WMY".

TWINING "We'll Miss You."

ADAM "GL"?

TWINING "Good Luck."

GARDEN GIRL 1 Neutral, can't quite tell if they're for or against.

ADAM "GR, Good Riddance." Then "DD"?

TWINING "Drop Dead."

ADAM (TAKES IT ON THE CHIN) And "GC"?

TWINING (ASHAMED) "Get Cancer."

ADAM Quite a few in there.

TWINING The crazies. The green ink. The pages torn from the phone book, showing coincidences, counting the letters in verses from the Bible.

ADAM Prime Ministers shouldn't really come in here, should they?

TWINING There are quite a few in the WMY pile.

ADAM Plenty more in the others.

TWINING (GENUINE) We really will miss you, Prime Minister.

ADAM Call me Adam.

TWINING Alright.

ADAM (PROMPT) Adam.

TWINING (AGONY) Adam.

ADAM Thank you, Miss Twining.

CUT TO:

SCENE 5. DOWNING STREET: STRATEGY UNIT. 11:15AM.

MONICA IS VERY FULL OF HERSELF AS SHE DANCES BACK INTO THE ROOM.

MONICA (SLAPPING DOWN THE PAPERS) Read it and weep, small fry.

STEVE This is supposed to be a sad and reflective day, Monica.

MONICA What do you get as a leaving present for the Prime Minister Who Has Everything?

STEVE Five more years in office?

MONICA Immortality in the Halls of Science.

STEVE Uh-huh?

MONICA Look, here, proof copy, he gave it to me, this scientist guy, straight out of St.Nerd's College, Oxford – he's found this new species and yes – you may need to sit down here - he's naming it after Adam. As a mark of respect.

STEVE You got him to do that?

MONICA You might say that. He sort of came to me and asked for permission.

STEVE (SARCASTIC) You're a hard working girl - haven't you got a by-election to fight?

MONICA It's still my parting gift. What have you got him?

STEVE (READING) Some new moth, not a very good-looking one.

MONICA It's beautiful.

STEVE Antheraea Armstrongiensia.

MONICA It's got a ring to it, don't you think?

STEVE (BEGINNING TO RECOGNISE) This larva, this type of larva –

MONICA It's a moth. A beautiful, diffused-wing, slightly snub-nosed, admittedly, we can get that seen to –

STEVE They all start as larvae, right, Monica, remember, pupate, come out as moths.

MONICA We all have to start somewhere.

STEVE I know this sort. We used to use them for fishing.

MONICA Please God, not another Halibut Broke My Elbow story from your crazy youth.

STEVE (STILL READING) That's right, genus *Antheraea*, easy to find and the fish love them.

MONICA See? Not any old insect, a famous and useful one.

STEVE Dead easy to find, that's why we liked them. You just go to the nearest cow turd and pull them out. Handfuls of the wriggly bastards.

MONICA TMI, please.

STEVE (PLAIN FACT) They're shit-eaters, Monica.

MONICA The insect world, it's got its own customs - not for us to judge.

STEVE (FACE IT) He's named a bug that thrives in excrement after the Prime Minister.

MONICA It grows into this beautiful, diffuse-wing –

STEVE You've been had, Monica.

MONICA (TRYING TO BELIEVE) It's an honour. His place in the Halls of –

STEVE Every time someone pulls one out, they're going to say "Got Me Another Armstrong, Deep In The Doo-Doo As Usual".

MONICA You're exaggerating.

STEVE For ever. And ever.

MONICA (OMG) Please God, take me now.

STEVE Has he published?

MONICA I just gave him the go-ahead. By special courier so it was signed and sealed by two o'clock. My big present for Adam.

STEVE Do something, Monica, before the Prime Minister is forever immortalised as a jobby-muncher.

CUT TO:

SCENE 6. DOWNING STREET: GARDEN ROOM. 11:20AM.

POLLY AND TOLTZ ARE WALKING ALONG THE CORRIDORS.
SHE IS GIVING HIM THE FULL TOUR.

POLLY (POINTING) Foreign Office guys sit on the other side of that door.

TOLTZ Who has the key?

POLLY You, if you're clever.

TOLTZ Anyone else?

POLLY (CERTAIN) Do not let the Prime Minister get his hands on it.

TOLTZ What's so dangerous about the Foreign Office?

POLLY They have no morality.

TOLTZ Foreign Office?

POLLY Sent to lie abroad. Except they tell lies here too. And everywhere in between. Anything to keep things sweet. Latest count: forty-six British citizens facing the death penalty in overseas jails.

TOLTZ They're not trying to get them back?

POLLY They are, that's the problem. They want thieves and murderers released and brought back here. Just because they're British. No morality at all. (AS THEY ARRIVE) Right, here's the Garden Room, so named for obvious reasons, home of correspondence, secretarial services and Cheltenham Ladies College Old Girls' Association.

TWINING Lady Cairns, what a pleasure to see you down here among the workers.

POLLY The pleasure's all mine. May I introduce Nathan Toltz, the incoming Chief of Staff. Miss Twining, unofficial Head Garden Girl.

TOLTZ Delighted to meet you.

SILENCE. MISS TWINING SAYS NOTHING.
TOLTZ IS MILDLY BAFFLED:

TOLTZ Miss Twining, right?

TWINING Are you....are you from – you're from another...you're not from this hemisphere?

TOLTZ No flies on you.

TWINING Oh dear.

POLLY “Oh dear”?

TWINING Forgive me. It's just...we've never....no, never mind. I suppose you pulled your weight at Gallipoli....no, never mind. Maybe I should introduce you to the others? That's Flora. (“HELLO” FROM EACH IN TURN) Tamsin. Bea. Toria. Of course, Candida's off, having a baby or something.

TOLTZ (WHO HAS BEEN LOOKING AROUND) Perhaps we need to modernise the systems a bit here.

TWINING Sorry?

TOLTZ These boxes. All this paper. Not very Twenty-First Century, is it?

POLLY There are many traditions about the Garden Room which are...traditional.

TWINING We offer an invaluable service, Mister Toltz. At all times of day and night, here and overseas. My girls are -

TOLTZ (THINKING ALOUD) Maybe we should break this up, allocate you individually to each department (HORRIFIED INTAKES OF BREATH FROM THE GIRLS), no need to

handle correspondence centrally. Each unit can have its own typist.

TWINING (APPALLED) “Typist”?

TOLTZ What else do you do?

POLLY Shorthand.

TWINING Pitman method.

TOLTZ Back in Central Office, everyone does their own typing.

TWINING What about the Prime Minister? I mean, Mister Laity?

TOLTZ Simon’s never without his netbook - hasn’t touched a pen in decades.

TWINING (DISGUST) “Netbook?”

TOLTZ I think this room, lovely view of the garden, I might use this as my office.

POLLY (HALF SOTTO) Many have so dreamed.

TOLTZ Need to get those roses pulled out. Get some wattle in, maybe plant a gum tree or two.

FROM HERE TO THE END, TWINING IS CONSTANTLY TRYING TO CUT IN WITH “Lady Cairns?” AND BEING ENTIRELY IGNORED BY POLLY. TWINING IS HORRIFIED BUT TOO APPALLED TO CUT IN WITH ANY CONVICTION.

TOLTZ Right, where to next?

POLLY Let me take you along to the Communications Unit. Steve McKie’s domain of darkness, he can show you round from there. Do you know Steve?

TOLTZ Only by reputation – the great wizard.

POLLY Follow me, Frodo.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7. CONSERVATIVE CENTRAL OFFICE. LEADER'S ROOMS.
NOON.

SUSAN O'REILLY IS AN EAGER YOUNG (NORTHERN IRISH) ADVISOR SENT OVER FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE

- LAITY We want this round of World Trade Talks, don't we?
- O'REILLY We do very much.
- LAITY And you're saying the Americans are pulling out if we don't do this banana deal?
- O'REILLY There is no doubt, we operate discriminatory quotas in favour of Caribbean bananas.
- LAITY So what's the problem?
- O'REILLY Her Majesty is very keen that we support our friends in the Commonwealth.
- LAITY Did Her Majesty get elected Prime Minister?
- O'REILLY That's not how it – (STOPPING HERSELF) - that was a rhetorical question, wasn't it?
- LAITY Any other good reasons?
- O'REILLY We like the way the bananas are grown. Fair trade, owner-farmers, virtually pesticide free.
- LAITY (BLUNT) Are we discriminating?
- O'REILLY Yes.
- LAITY What else does he want to talk about?
- O'REILLY HIV prevention. We encourage pharmaceuticals to release medication at a more market-relative –
- LAITY That would also be discriminatory?

- O'REILLY We wrap them up as humanitarian aid.
- LAITY Anything else?
- O'REILLY That's everything his team has tabled for the talks.
- LAITY Nothing...? Along the lines of discrimination?
- O'REILLY (RUMMAGING PAPERS, WORRIED) Unless I've managed to....miss something which....he needs help with....
- LAITY What about homophobia?
- O'REILLY I don't think he needs help with that. (THEN REALISING WHAT SHE HAS SAID:) I mean, I don't think he needs to raise that.
- LAITY Have we? Has our side tabled it?
- O'REILLY There didn't seem to be any need –
- LAITY Seems to me, if he wants us to subsidise HIV treatments, he needs to talk about openness and about sexual practice.
- O'REILLY There are information programmes which we have distributed –
- LAITY (READING FROM DOCUMENT) “Shoot gays with Uzis and burn their skin with acid like an old tyre wheel.”
- O'REILLY (CONFUSED) That's not our literature, is it?
- LAITY That's from 'Boom Bye-Bye' by Buju Banton, Jamaican reggae star. A song – for want of a better word - devoted to the fact that gay men “haffi dead.”
- O'REILLY It is a very conservative culture.
- LAITY “Two women in bed, That's two Sodomites who should be dead.” One of Tiger Man's finer couplets.

- O'REILLY I don't think we can hold Prime Minister Ridgeon responsible for the cultural drift of –
- LAITY Montego Bay, February, Tiger Man played a fund-raiser for Jerry Ridgeon's re-election campaign.
- O'REILLY I'm sure he didn't sing that particular –
- LAITY Are you sure? Can you be?
- O'REILLY Pri - (SHE STOPS HERSELF) [*me Minister*]
- LAITY Not till about ten to three.
- O'REILLY Mister Laity, if we bring up these issues, it will be exceptionally difficult to –
- LAITY I was just wondering what you think?
- O'REILLY Sorry?
- LAITY What do you think?
- O'REILLY The guidance says that we need to complete the World Trade Round and the US won't come back to the table unless we allow their banana corporations in, so if we can possibly placate the Caribbean Banana Industry by giving their Prime Minister a win with regard to anti-retrovirals –
- LAITY You're happy to shaft the banana growers and burn the gays if it keeps Washington quiet?
- O'REILLY "Shaft" is not a very Foreign Office word.
- LAITY Thank you, you'll leave the full papers with me, yes?
- O'REILLY The Under-Secretary had hoped I would be with you when...(CONCEDING) Sir.
- CUT TO:

SCENE 8. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY.
12:30PM.

POLLY AND ADAM ARE GOING THROUGH HIS PAPERS.

ADAM Look at these, all these photos, how many world leaders did I smile next to? I can't even remember half their names.

POLLY (A LITTLE SPIKY) Maybe it's mutual.

ADAM (RIGHT, THAT'S IT) Come on, Cairns, enough - what's the problem?

POLLY (AVOIDANCE) It's a difficult day, Adam. Sorry.

ADAM It's a bloody easy day. We're sitting here looking through photo albums.

POLLY Except – that's the thing, isn't it?

ADAM What is The Thing?

POLLY You're not doing anything. You're giving up. You're not fighting it.

ADAM We came second in the election. Even so, I managed to form a coalition government. Inevitably, that fell apart. What else can I do?

POLLY Make life difficult.

ADAM For who?

POLLY The Opposition.

ADAM We're about to become Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

POLLY You know what I mean.

ADAM They wheel out their Queen's Speech, the boys'll go to work. Right now, they've got every right to form a government.

- POLLY All this fair play, fair cricket, time for his innings, oh lovely shot, “have we lost again?” never mind, he deserved to win.
- ADAM I quite like Simon Laity.
- POLLY See? See!? For God’s sake, you’ve lost all your fight, all your....
- ADAM What?
- POLLY Anger.
- ADAM What’s to be angry about? I changed a few things. I made a few decisions. A few good statutes. A handful of crises averted. A few more precipitated. One good war, one bad. Poverty gap narrowed, more school-leavers going into further education, some cancer survival rates improved -
- POLLY (FURY INCREASING) You can’t let the Tories undo everything you've achieved.
- ADAM I very much doubt they want to repeal any of the –
- POLLY (NOW SHOUTING) Harass them, attack them, shout it from the rooftops, make it impossible for them to –
- ADAM (ACROSS THIS, CALMLY) What’s wrong?
- POLLY (STILL SHOUTING) I don’t know what the hell I’m going to do tomorrow.
- A MOMENT
- POLLY (HOLDING IN THE TEARS) It’s a huge bloody enormous empty house in the middle of an enormous empty street and if there’s nothing to do and there’s no-one there and I don’t know if I can handle this.
- ANOTHER MOMENT
- ADAM I see.

- POLLY Ian died. You were all so good about that. The party did all its tribute stuff. And it never felt like he was my husband. He was the party elder, the former cabinet member, the respected statesman. He didn't belong to me, he was yours.
- ADAM I'm sorry, I never realised that we were making things -
[*worse*]
- POLLY No, that was good. That helped. I came back to work, then the election, the coalition, the negotiations, and somehow we lasted longer than I ever thought you could wing it.
- ADAM Like you said.
- POLLY And when I go home this afternoon, Ian really won't be there. No-one will ask me anything.
- ADAM His sons, where are they?
- POLLY What, they're supposed to come running? Because your government has fallen?
- ADAM I meant because –
- POLLY We're here twelve, fourteen hours a day. I didn't need a home.
- ADAM The party's crying out for people of your experience.
- POLLY Whoever wins the party leadership next month, they're not going to want Adam Armstrong's fixer lurking round the filing cabinets.
- ADAM Somewhat more than 'fixer'.
- POLLY Doesn't make tomorrow any better. Or the day after that.
- ADAM I....
- BUT THIS FADES AWAY INTO A SILENCE.
THEN:
- POLLY I hate self-pity.

ADAM Because it's weak?

POLLY Because it's about the only time I'm ever honest with you.

ALLOW THIS TO HANG FOR A MOMENT AND THEN

CUT TO:

SCENE 9.DOWNING STREET: STRATEGY UNIT. 12:50PM.

MONICA IS ON THE PHONE AND ONLY JUST HOLDING IN HER ANGER/FRUSTRATION

MONICA

As though this government would ever dream of interfering with scientific freedom.

- I am fully aware that this government has a mere (WRISTWATCH) two hours and ten minutes of life left. (WAVING A PIECE OF PAPER) Hear that? That's my P45.
- I'm not looking for your sympathy.
- I merely rang for a chat and some friendly advice not to let Doctor Crawston, currently employed as your Head of Mothical Research, make a decision which will last, well, forever.
- I am well aware it is only the larval stage. Somehow, I don't see the Daily Telegraph bothering to make a big point of that. I see photo spreads of turds, wriggling worm-things and Adam's smiling face alongside.
- I am well aware that anglers feel threatened by this government's stance on killing things for fun.
- That's funny, that's very funny, because I did call up the figures and your institute's research unit receives a grant in excess of eight million per annum and I couldn't help noticing that it is up for reconsideration next month.
- (COLD) Let me assure you, Professor, you'll know exactly when I threaten you with something.
- That's your last word? Galileo and Erasmus and Copernicus all went to the stake for the cause of scientific integrity and now their descendants are going to call on that noble self-sacrifice to throw cack at a democratically-elected -
- (BUILDING TO A PITCH:.) OK, they didn't burn Erasmus.
- Or Copernicus.
- Or Galileo. But they bloody wanted to. And where I come from, it's the homicidal thought that counts.

SHE SLAMS DOWN THE PHONE.

AND HOWLS

CUT TO:

SCENE 10. DOWNING STREET: TOP FLOOR. 1PM.

STEVE IS SHOWING TOLTZ AROUND THE ESTABLISHMENT.
CRATES ARE BEING PACKED, FURNITURE BEING SHIFTED ALL AROUND.

STEVE (POINTING) That way to the PM's flat. This way to the –

TOLTZ They're still packing up?

STEVE If you'd rather the PM hung on for another few days, we're quite happy to go on running the country, make a few laws, abolish a few -

TOLTZ We're good, thanks.

STEVE They'll be done in time. They get used to swift exits.

TOLTZ And there is only one of him to pack up for. Now.

STEVE (SEMI-FISHING) And your boss, he'll be moving in alone or....?

TOLTZ Simon Laity's not married.

STEVE It's a surprisingly big flat.

TOLTZ He's single.

STEVE (GOING FOR IT) He lives with someone.

TOLTZ I don't believe any Prime Minister has moved a –
[girlfriend in here]

STEVE Him and Alan have lived together for eight years.

TOLTZ The Leader of the Conservative Party is not married.

STEVE So Alan stays living in Camberwell?

TOLTZ He owns the house.

STEVE Joint mortgage - the modern marriage ceremony, as performed in front of solicitor and bank manager.

TOLTZ Steve, I fully understand why you would want to see the first gay couple in Downing Street but –

STEVE (CUTTING ACROSS THIS) Shall we continue the tour?

TOLTZ Thanks. Great.

AS THEY WALK ALONG:

STEVE Along here, these rooms, all the Crown Appointments people.

TOLTZ A whole floor?

STEVE It's not that easy appointing a bishop, you know. No end of Canons and deacons to sort through, you need just the right sort of prevarication.

TOLTZ What a way to run a country.

STEVE It's the whole floor except for this little room.

HE DRUMS HIS FINGERS ON THE STEEL DOOR

TOLTZ Which is?

STEVE Locked. Obviously. Combination known only to the Prime Minister. And maybe his wife and children.

TOLTZ (WEIRD) His family? (GUESSING) Spare loo?

STEVE Sort of what they call, in America, a panic room.

TOLTZ There isn't Close Protection up here? Can't see why the PM would ever need a –

STEVE This one has 'special facilities'.

TOLTZ I'm not with you?

STEVE In the event of invasion. By a foreign power. If the Prime Minister, this building, is surrounded. If there is no possibility of escape.

STEVE STOPS OMINOUSLY

TOLTZ I still don't get it.

STEVE The family can lock themselves in there. And not let themselves be captured.

TOLTZ (STILL TRYING TO WORK IT OUT) It's quite a door but....They'd just get starved out or something –

STEVE (EXASPERATED THAT HE'S NOT GETTING IT) It's a suicide room.

TOLTZ What?

STEVE Imagine if any enemy captured the Prime Minister, or worse his wife - if he had one but let's not go there again – imagine his children held hostage.

TOLTZ They have to kill themselves?

STEVE The facility is here.

TOLTZ That's.... (LOST FOR WORDS)

STEVE Yes?

TOLTZ Not very Fight Them On The Beaches, is it?

STEVE The welfare of the nation. Queen and Country stuff.

TOLTZ Bit bloody drastic.

STEVE Like I say, if you want us to stay on, we're happy to –

TOLTZ (SHAKEN) Let's go on with the tour. God knows what else you people have got up here.

CUT TO:

SCENE 11. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 1:30PM.

THE PM IS BEING BRIEFED

ASSISTANT Mister Laity sets off for the Palace from Smith Square at two twenty. He enters by the Raglan Staircase at two-twenty-five. Your car pulls up outside here at two-forty-five. No press questions unless you want to, nothing formal, no mics. You depart.

ADAM Thank you.

ASSISTANT We just need to know...

ADAM Yes?

ASSISTANT Forgive me, Prime Minister, there seems to be some doubt....Where is the car taking you?

ADAM I wish I knew.

ASSISTANT (NOT THE ANSWER SHE WAS EXPECTING/NEEDED)
Will you....shall I....?

ADAM (GOODBYE) Thank you.

ASSISTANT Miss Smith asked if she can have a moment.

ADAM Nothing else to do.

ASSISTANT Prime Minister?

ADAM Send her in.

ASSISTANT Prime Minister.

SHE WALKS ACROSS AND OPENS THE DOOR.

ASSISTANT Monica?

ADAM When do you think they'll table the writ for your by-election?

MONICA First thing tomorrow, they're saying.

ADAM Six weeks' campaigning?

MONICA They want polling to fall before the bank holiday. It's five and a half.

ADAM Want me to come and canvass with you?

MONICA (NO!) That would be...

ADAM Just joking. I know I'm yesterday's man.

MONICA It's not that –

ADAM Think the new leadership will get behind you?

MONICA That's another question. Helen might, if Kevin wins... [*he won't*]

ADAM OK, what did you want to....?

MONICA (PRODUCING PAPERS) Just a quick Order in Council.

ADAM Is that right, an hour and a half before leaving office?

MONICA It's administrative. Tedious.

ADAM Am I pardoning a mass fraudster who donated funds to the party and later offered me a – ?

MONICA It's something about museum funding, it's something we've been meaning to do and –

ADAM You don't want that to go before the House?

MONICA (PUTTING THE PAPERS IN FRONT OF HIM) Purely a funding issue.

ADAM Shouldn't the Arts and Libraries Select Committee - ?

MONICA You sign it there. And date.

ADAM I have done this before.

MONICA Sorry.

ADAM (SKIMMING IT) But if they have to have our signed approval for all new research before it's published...

MONICA It's more one of those copyright things, it means that UK PLC holds the copyright patent-thing and it means that if anyone later exploits it –

ADAM (ONLY FAINTLY RAT SMELLING) Why do you suddenly need me to do this now?

MONICA It's very complicated. I don't really have time to explain.

ADAM Nothing else in the in-tray. Fire away.

MONICA (PLAYING FOR TIME) It's about research and discovery and naming things and really we need to keep a check on that kind of thing and –

ENTERING AT FULL SPEED, ACROSS THE LAST OF THIS:

POLLY They're in existential meltdown out there, Adam.

ADAM My work here is done.

MONICA (SLIPPING IN) If you could just quickly sign it there.

POLLY Apparently you haven't deigned to tell them where the car's going.

ADAM That's right.

MONICA (SOTTO) I mean, just a scribbled initial.

POLLY You can't tell him to drive round the block and secretly slip back in here when no-one's watching.

ADAM (BLUNT) I don't know where I'm going.

POLLY Can't you go home?

ADAM Hannah.

POLLY Haven't you...?

ADAM She decided. It wouldn't be right, moving back in.

MONICA Just temporarily, I thought you said, that basement flat.

ADAM Too disruptive, she decided.

POLLY (JUST) One night, a week. Would it kill her?

ADAM Things were said. Voices were raised.

POLLY Christ.

MONICA Maybe you should arrange a hotel or something.

ADAM Thing is, I had another idea.

HE LETS IT HANG.

ADAM Big empty house. Someone with a huge bloody enormous empty house.

POLLY (REALISING HE MEANS HER HOUSE) What the hell's that going to look like?

ADAM (SHRUG) Who cares?

MONICA (BAFFLED) Where are we talking about? Sorry?

ADAM We're both alone now. You said your house is – you don't know how to fill it.

MONICA (HORROR) My God, you can't.

POLLY Not quite what I meant.

MONICA (GOING) I'm getting Steve. (CALLING AS SHE GOES:) Steve, move it!

POLLY I could advertise for lodgers if I needed to share the bathroom with someone.

ADAM How much you asking? I've got references. Bank statements. OK, haven't got a job at the moment but I've got some interviews and I'm hopeful.

STEVE (ENTERING) The Press will go – it's what they've been wanting to hint at for the last I-don't-know-how-many years.

ADAM Let's prove them right then, shall we?

STEVE Never. I'd rather - [*die*]

POLLY (TO ADAM) What are you saying?

ADAM Sorry, that wasn't – (FOR ONCE HE'S EMBARRASSED) - I mean – I don't mean 'move in' like that. I didn't mean to suggest. Not prove them right like that.

STEVE Do you want me to go?

ADAM Yes.

POLLY No.

STEVE OK.

A MOMENT

POLLY Steve's right. They'll make something massive out of it.

ADAM I'm yesterday's man.

STEVE They'll make something massive out of it on Page Five.

ADAM (THE FACTS) My ex won't let me into the former marital home. You have a large empty house. We are very old friends. You rent me a room.

STEVE Don't ask me to spin that, please, I beg you.

POLLY I won't take your money.

STEVE It might be better if you did.

STEVE They'll make something of that too.

POLLY This is....this is just.....

ADAM So you're...yes?

A MOMENT

POLLY (TURNING AND MAKING HER WAY OUT, RESIGNED) I'll
tell the drivers.

STEVE (WITH DREAD) This isn't fair.

POLLY (TURNING BACK) One month maximum.

ADAM Payable in advance.

CUT TO:

SCENE 12. CONSERVATIVE CENTRAL OFFICE. LEADER'S ROOMS.
1:45PM.

TOLTZ IS ANGRY AND AMAZED.

TOLTZ Jeez, I knew you Poms can't see a towel without throwing it in, but mass suicide?

LAITY There's a certain honour in it - You'll Never Take Me Alive. Masada, the Alamo –

TOLTZ And suicide bombers.

LAITY You can see the constitutional crisis, if the Prime Minister's wife, children are held hostage.

TOLTZ We have to get rid of it. If the Press found out, we'd look like total losers.

LAITY Presumably it's a Security Protection issue. They won't want you to –

TOLTZ I'll talk to a general, I'll talk to the Chief of General Staff, tell him to change his yellow-streak policy.

LAITY You get on with it then, if you think it's worth the effort. I've got a cabinet to form. Who do you think for Agriculture? Can you see Eleanor in wellies? Bottle-feeding an abandoned calf?

TOLTZ (CONTINUING) It's totemic, Si. We've got to put you on the map, Day One.

LAITY And Defence – I can't see any of these wannabes handling Defence properly. Not one of them's got the balls.

TOLTZ (RELENTLESS) Armstrong's got his medals and his Goose Green shoot-outs –

LAITY And I'm a limp-wristed, draft-dodging –

- TOLTZ (QUITE) Except you don't throw in the towel. This mud's going to stick to Armstrong. You're the one who faces the music, the one who doesn't flinch from the fight.
- LAITY Then I really shouldn't avoid it with Jerry Ridgeon, right?
- TOLTZ (HE KNEW THIS WAS COMING) Like I haven't been waiting for this.
- LAITY Jamaica, Winner of the Most Homophobic Nation on Earth Award 2007, 2008 and they've stopped taking bets for 2009.
- TOLTZ It's a state visit. Your first as Prime Minister.
- LAITY It's totemic.
- TOLTZ Don't make sexuality your totem.
- LAITY That sentence could be misinterpreted.
- TOLTZ JFK didn't want to be the first Catholic President, he wanted to be a Democratic President who happened also to be Catholic. You've got to be a Conservative Prime Minister who happens also to be gay.
- LAITY If only Lord Rosebery had found the nerve to come out. Not to mention Ed –
- TOLTZ We don't mention him.
- LAITY All those yachts, all those young men winding up his windlass or whatever it's called.
- TOLTZ Stand for something, just never let it be anything to do with sex.
- LAITY What is that, old bushwhacker wisdom?
- TOLTZ Do we need to bring nationality into this as well?
- LAITY Who called whom a towel-throwing Pom?
- TOLTZ It's Jamaica. They have different traditions.

LAITY I agree, we have Morris Dancers, they have mobs of men shouting “Batty Boy”, chasing a young man through the streets of Kingston till his only choice is to jump off a pier into the bay. Nokia Cowan then enjoyed the fine Caribbean tradition of drowning. Not for us to interfere, right?

TOLTZ Don’t make this the story of your premiership.

LAITY We offer political asylum to gay rights activists from the Caribbean – it’s that dangerous.

TOLTZ You want to kick up the termites, be my guest – they’re going to ask about Alan.

LAITY Do your Suicide Room thing, that’ll take the headlines – no-one’s going to notice a few coded references about Jamaica.

TOLTZ We can’t let Armstrong take all the Tough Guy headlines.

LAITY (WORKING IT OUT) I think there might be other ways to neutralise him.

TOLTZ I’ll speak to the Security people. May need you to weigh in there. Show you’re not afraid.

LAITY Get right to work, Davy Crockett.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13. DOWNING STREET: STRATEGY UNIT. 2PM.

MONICA IS HALF-CRYING, HALF-DESK-HAMMERING

MONICA Not fair. Just not fair. An hour and a half. I am not going to
—

AS SHE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR

TWINING Miss Smith?

MONICA Miss Twining?

TWINING Didn't mean to intrude...

MONICA That's alright. (TRYING TO BE BUSINESSLIKE,
THROUGH SNUFFLES) Come in. What can I do for you?

TWINING (PROFFERING) Tissue?

MONICA Thank you.

TWINING These are always difficult days. A sense of regret, so many
things left undone.

MONICA I was quite looking forward to it. Actually. Funny kind of
way.

TWINING I suppose you're off to fight your by-election.

MONICA It's like the end of term. You're going to miss everyone but
you're also glad to be starting the next phase.

TWINING But...?

MONICA I had this really special thing lined up for Adam.

TWINING Always so hard to know what to get them.

MONICA We were going to name a whole new species after him. His very own place in the Halls of Science. Every time people thought of this beautiful moth, they'd –

TWINING Moth?

MONICA OK, there aren't that many species left to discover. Moths isn't bad. And every time someone saw one, they'd remember Adam and his contribution –

TWINING So you gave them written permission?

MONICA Dictated it this morning. Letter to the Natural History Institute. Insisted on special courier.

TWINING So that it could all be signed and sealed by two?

MONICA If only I'd waited. It was all a trap.

TWINING (SHOWING IT) This letter, was it?

MONICA Yes. Look. That's where I signed it. And now the Prime Minister's going to be a crap-eating – (THEN SHE REALISES) – how come you've got it there?

TWINING (SHE HAS BEEN PLAYING MONICA ALONG ALL THIS TIME) I have been handling Downing Street correspondence for almost thirty years, Miss Smith.

MONICA Special courier. Immediate despatch, I insisted.

TWINING You get a sense. You know when things are right and when things are -

MISS TWINING IS INTERRUPTED BY MONICA GIVING HER A HUGE HUG

MONICA I love you, Miss Twining.

TWINING Well, I don't know if, it's quite alright –

MONICA And I always thought you lot down there –

TWINING “You lot”?

MONICA In the Garden Room, I always thought, you didn't really like us lot. You know, the Labour Party.

TWINING It's not for me to like or dislike, Miss Smith. It's about respect for the Office of Prime Minister.

MONICA (GENUINE APOLOGY) I'm sorry.

TWINING I was wondering, meanwhile, if you might do something for me.

MONICA Anything.

TWINING It's about some changes Mister Toltz wants to make. I thought a quiet word from you might just do the trick.

CUT TO:

SCENE 14. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 2:15PM.

THE PM IS ON THE PHONE

ADAM I do realise that but as far as I'm aware, they won't actually vote down legislation for the sake of it.

- You've been saying some pretty strong things about coalitions.
- I see...not a coalition.
- And I am one of the best and brightest? It's not what you said last week.
- Surely there are others who could - ?
- No-one.
- Certainly I will consider it. Give me half an hour. Definite decision.
- Thank you.

HE HANGS UP

ADAM (CALLING OUT) Polly! Polly!

POLLY What's it now, you require full English breakfast as well?

ADAM You told me not to give up – should I take any chance of staying in government?

POLLY Of course.

ADAM Laity's just offered me a job as Defence Secretary.

POLLY In a Tory Cabinet?

ADAM Minority government, he wants to assemble the best and brightest. Apparently that's me.

POLLY The party will flay you alive.

ADAM The party will ignore me from this day henceforth.

POLLY You'd work for a Tory Prime Minister?

ADAM You told me not to give up.

POLLY I told you not to....Christ, you're really thinking about it.
Monica! Steve! He's doing it again!

CUT TO:

SCENE 15. CONSERVATIVE CENTRAL OFFICE. LEADER'S ROOMS.
2:20pm.

TOLTZ IS ON THE PHONE

TOLTZ You're getting me wrong, General, I want your support for the removal of this yellow-bellied –

- In (WRISTWATCH) thirty-two minutes I will be speaking for the Prime Minister.
- I thought we could get ahead.
- I was shown the room, I saw it with my own eyes, steel door, special combination, for him and family to -
- On the third floor, fourth – hard to tell, the place is a warren.
- No, we have no plans to demolish and start again. We just want this Suicide Room thing removed.
- OK. Thank you.

CUT TO:

SCENE 16. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY.
2:30PM.

ADAM IS DANGEROUSLY CALM – HE WANTS THIS JOB (BUT IS , IN FACT, WINDING THEM UP)

POLLY You tell him to calm down, will you?

STEVE Laity's triangulating you, they won't be able to vote down anything with your name on it.

POLLY They'll throw you out the party.

ADAM I am not telling anyone to vote Tory.

POLLY You'll be voting with them yourself.

MONICA Collective cabinet responsibility.

ADAM It's not like I'm going to demand –

STEVE What happened to the thing about going back and working for your constituency?

ADAM Still be plenty of time for that.

POLLY You can't let go, can you?

ADAM You're the one who was telling me to keep fighting.

POLLY For the party, for principle, for what you want to achieve.

ADAM There's so much I want to do in Defence. A real review, a real reorganisation, all those things we wanted to do. For the squaddies.

MONICA With a Tory budget.

STEVE With a Tory junior minister.

POLLY With their global priorities. Say goodbye to a European Defence Force.

MONICA The only European Defence Force they want is to defend themselves against Europe.

SINCE *** STEVE'S MOBILE HAS BEEN RINGING. HE ANSWERS IT AND STARTS THIS CONVERSATION UNDER THE PRECEDING:

STEVE (FIRST TO OTHERS) Sorry, I've got to take this.

- How's life in Media Hell?
- You don't know the meaning of demob.
- (RIDICULOUS) Of course there isn't.
- He told you? Well, you know what Major-Generals are like. All that port at lunchtime.
- Wires have got seriously crossed, my friend. Everyone's onto it but it's nonsense. Take my word for it, no such room has ever existed.
- OK.
- I'm going to miss you too. Like a dose of –

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE DOOR, TOLTZ APPROACHES, YELLING FURIOUS:

TOLTZ (OUTSIDE BUT BELLOWING) Where are you, McKie? Come out here and fight me, you bastard. Come on, let's settle it.

STEVE (TO OTHERS) Excuse me, I think this is for me as well.

WE GO WITH STEVE, THROUGH THE DOOR AND OUT TO:

SCENE 17. DOWNING STREET: COMMUNICATIONS SUITE. 2:45PM

TOLTZ IS STILL YELLING AS STEVE COMES THROUGH THE DOOR:

TOLTZ You bastard, you set me up, you total mother –

STEVE (INTO PHONE, AS TOLTZ CONTINUES) Got to go. See you in the next life. (HE HANGS UP; TO TOLTZ) Hi, Nate. What's up?

TOLTZ You second-hand arsewipe.

STEVE What's this about a Major-General talking to the Mirror?

TOLTZ And they're supposed to be on our side, the military. Instead he grasses me up.

STEVE They're flighty things, no predicting who they're going to side with next.

TOLTZ And now I've got half of Fleet Street making fun of me. Thanks to you.

STEVE There won't be anything.

TOLTZ "New PM's Press Spokesman reckons - "

STEVE (IMPLACABLE) There won't be anything.

TOLTZ You're already on it?

STEVE Killed it dead.

TOLTZ How?

STEVE Called in a few favours. Turns out they quite like me.

TOLTZ (RELIEF) Thanks.

STEVE Call it my house warming present.

TOLTZ (NO:) Why did you set me up and then just let it go?

STEVE It's a lesson. Steve's First And Only Lesson In Downing Street Press Relations.

TOLTZ Yes?

STEVE Trust No-One. Not even the Chief of General Staff. Trust nothing, every document, every fact. This place doesn't run on trust, it works on leverage and everything else is just advertising. But if you don't do what you believe is right, if you try and second guess everything, you'll always get it wrong. I don't mean get caught – though it happens - I mean end up somewhere you don't want to be.

A MOMENT

TOLTZ Thanks.

STEVE Aren't you going to tell me I'm jaundiced, defeatist, cynical?

TOLTZ No, I believe you.

STEVE (GOT YOU) What did I just tell you?

TOLTZ OK.

STEVE Right, the rest of the tour, down here we have the Communications Unit. Water cooler – never let the PM catch you there. Toilets through there, don't try putting shredded documents down it, won't take it, as Monica discovered and then had to find a cleaner with full security clearance – not many of them in the yellow pages. Down here, there's the archive section, everything you could possibly want to know about parliamentary procedure but were too afraid to ask.

FADE OUT TO:

SCENE 18. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY.
2:45PM.

ADAM IS ON THE PHONE:

ADAM (INTO PHONE) It's a generous offer. Very broad-minded.
 But it's not possible.

- No, your secret is safe with me.
- Aren't you supposed to be at the Palace in - ?
- Yes, I can hear the helicopters.
- I'd better let you go in. Remember, those Corgis need a walk.
- Good luck.

HE HANGS UP

ADAM (STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HE FOOLED THEM) Did you really think I was going to?

MONICA We all did.

POLLY Some might say it reflects more on you than us.

ADAM Can't take a joke, none of you. (AS IF) A Tory cabinet?

MONICA Time to go?

ADAM Her Majesty is about to ask him to form a government. I don't think the country really needs two of us.

POLLY You almost tried it.

ADAM I turned him down, right?

STEVE KNOCKS AND ENTERS

STEVE They're all lined up out there.

ADAM (OF TOLTZ) Little local difficulty?

STEVE Just a parting...just something for the new bugs.

MONICA I can imagine.

STEVE And I warned them not to put shredded documents down the
—

MONICA (HOW MANY TIMES?) That was six years ago.

POLLY Seems like yesterday.

MONICA The US Embassy in Iran, they sat down and stuck all the shredded documents back together. I had to be sure.

STEVE I saw those shreds, Monica, I can confirm they were definitely not going to be reconstituted.

MONICA Enough. Alright? Just trying to do my job well.

ADAM Have we?

STEVE What?

ADAM Done it well?

POLLY How will we ever know?

STEVE No such thing as legacy.

ADAM I don't mean legacy, I mean...Did we do any good?

POLLY Please, let's not get maudlin and religious and...

ADAM Alright. Shall we go then? Out there? Say our goodbyes.

MONICA After you, sir.

HE STRIDES ACROSS AND OPENS THE DOOR INTO THE HALL.

STEVE (IN ADAM'S EAR) They're all lined up at the foot of the stairs. Every member of staff.

ADAM Traditional?

STEVE Traditional.

ADAM Everyone?

STEVE Messengers, garden girls, canteen, everyone.

ADAM Follow me, men.

THEY WALK DOWN THE STAIRS AND THE APPLAUSE AND TEARS STARTS.

MIX INTO TO:

SCENE 19. DOWNING STREET. PRIME MINISTER'S STUDY. 3.15PM.

THE STAFF ARE APPLAUDING LAITY INTO THE BUILDING.

LAITY Thank you, thank you.

O'REILLY (IN HIS EAR) And these are the Garden Girls, Prime Minister.

TWINING Prime Minister, my heartiest congratulations.

LAITY You do the gardening, did I hear right?

TWINING (A MOMENT OF DIGNITY) We handle all the typing and correspondence.

LAITY Ah.

TOLTZ We thought we might disband the –

LAITY I'm sure you're invaluable.

TOLTZ Yes, I seem to have had several emails from a Miss Smith.

O'REILLY And these are the messengers.

MESSENGER Welcome to Downing Street, Prime Minister.

TOLTZ We really do need to do a few words to the Press, Si.

LAITY Out front?

TOLTZ Follow me.

THEY WALK OUT THE FRONT DOOR AND THERE IS A BLIZZARD OF SIMULTANEOUS CAMERAS AND QUESTIONS:

REPORTER 1 Prime Minister, when are you going to announce your cabinet?

REPORTER 2 Prime Minister, over here, over here.

REPORTER 3 Prime Minister, Prime Minister.

REPORTER 4 Prime Minister, we've been hearing rumours about a coalition cabinet? Is this true?

REPORTER 5 Prime Minister, what did the Queen say to you?

REPORTER 6 Prime Minister, will you be moving in to the flat? You and your....

AND WITH THIS, THE BIG QUESTION, ALL THE REPORTERS HAVE NOW FALLEN SILENT.

LAITY Dennis? You had a question?

REPORTER 6 My newspaper was wondering. Sir. The flat. At the top of Number Ten, what are your intentions?

LAITY You sound like a Victorian father speaking to a would-be son-in-law.

REPORTER 6 Are you and Alan moving in?

LAITY Let's talk about the real issues here. My living arrangements are nothing – talk about them if you really must, but the point is I can choose. I can choose where I live and with whom and that's a wonderful thing. I can't stop you choosing to write about it and that's the price I choose to pay. But what's at the bottom of all this? It's simple - human rights. I believe passionately in our human rights and I believe in making the world a safer and more humane place. Later this afternoon, I will be receiving Prime Minister Ridgeon from Jamaica, a long-arranged visit. We have agendaed talks about discussing banana exports and support for various health programmes. But I'm putting something new as Item One of that agenda. We're going to talk human rights, we're going to talk about diversity and every person's right to be and believe what he or she wants. So Mister Ridgeon and I won't even start talking about subsidies and development funds until we've first discussed draconian legislation directed at one section of his community.

REPORTER 3 And if he doesn't want to talk about this?

SIMON Then we won't be talking about anything else. (MOVING OFF) Thank you, everyone, busy day, need to get on.

HE TURNS AND WALKS IN
AS A MILLION QUESTIONS EXPLODE BEHIND HIM

TOLTZ Thanks a bundle.

SIMON That's the job, get used to it.

HE IS NOW IN THE HALL

O'REILLY Prime Minister, traditionally there is a first task we need to ask of you.

SIMON Yes?

O'REILLY As you presumably know, there are three British nuclear submarines on patrol at all times. Should HMG be wiped out in a nuclear strike, the three captains need orders as to what they are supposed to do. Surrender, make for the nearest friendly port or launch a missile counter-attack on the hostile power. (PRODUCING PAPERS) We have three versions here, you need to decide which letter you'd like to sign.

TOLTZ (SNATCHING THEM) Thank you, that's enough.

AND HE IS RIPPING THE (THICK) SHEETS OF PAPER IN TWO.

TOLTZ Enough jokes for one day.

AFTER A SECOND'S AMAZEMENT

O'REILLY Mister Toltz, this isn't - The Foreign Office doesn't find this kind of thing funny. It is very serious.

TOLTZ (HE REALISES SHE IS SERIOUS) Oh. Right. OK. We can get another copy, right?

O'REILLY I have second copies here. In case of...

LAITY Thank you. (TO TOLTZ) Right, Nathan, let's get to work. Like the lady says, this is serious.

END