

CANDACE Well I hope it yields something for you. I really do.

Gosh, I'm done in!

Pause.

NIA *continues to shine glasses.*

The cleaning lady's actually coming in the morning.

NIA It's no trouble.

CANDACE You'll be wanting to get home.

NIA The bus goes all night.

CANDACE Oh you can't get the bus!

NIA I like the bus.

CANDACE Are you sure you don't want me to call you a cab?

NIA I'll be perfectly fine on the bus.

Pause.

CANDACE Anyway.

Pause.

I wonder if you spoke to my friend, Miles.

You might have spotted him.

Tall, rather leonine.

Noble-looking, I've always thought.

He certainly thinks so!

NIA The barrister.

CANDACE That's him.

NIA Lovely voice.

CANDACE Oh that's Eton for you.

Anyway he's a very old pal.

Used to be married to my friend Evelyn.

My best friend, I suppose you'd say.

Anyway, she died.

Few years ago now.

Ovarian cancer. Quite ghastly.

NIA I'm so sorry.

CANDACE Yes.

She was fun.

She was great fun.

NIA That must be hard.

For both of you.

CANDACE Yes we miss her.

Horribly...

But we soldier on.

Well.

As you'll know.

Beat.

Anyway he mentioned -

I was just chatting to him all about you and what you do, and he was full of admiration, of course.

NIA Where do these go?

CANDACE What?

Oh, that cupboard behind you.

Anyway -

NIA This one?

CANDACE Yes.

Anyway he -

The thing is he mentioned -

He said he'd done a bit of digging.

He's completely *obsessed* with the internet and the problem is he has a tendency to sort of believe absolutely everything he reads.

I've told him so many times, I've said, Miles, half of it is utter nonsense, it really is!

But he's stubborn and anyway the thing is he said that he'd stumbled across a few things that he just wanted to um -

Well, flag up to me, I suppose.

Pause.

Obviously you do all that wonderful work for those children.
And obviously you're opposed to the government that –
That inflicts such unutterable misery.
Which is completely understandable.

Pause.

But he just mentioned a few things to me about well –
Oh dear.
Methods.
Particular methods.

Pause.

Violence.

Pause.

Bombs.

Pause.

And I said –
I said, that can't possibly be true.
This is a reputable charity!
I trust them.
I inherently trust them and deeply believe in everything they do.

Pause.

But he said that perhaps I should just double-check.
Where it is the money –
My money –
Actually, well, *goes.*

NIA *slowly finishes shining a glass.*

You would like to see our accounts?

Pause.

Very well.
Of course.

CANDACE Perhaps I could get Miles round and all three of us could...

I don't know!
Stop his silly flapping!

NIA I can bring them round next time, if you wish.
If you'd like to check.

NIA *starts putting on her coat.*

CANDACE Oh dear.
You see, now I feel like a policeman.

NIA It's perfectly understandable.
You have been generous.
Extremely generous.
You want to know precisely where it is that your money goes.

CANDACE Well he's always been a bit paranoid to be honest.
Used to drive Evelyn utterly bananas.
He was swindled by Lloyds so his antenna is rather 'up' when it comes to anything financial.

NIA It's no trouble.
I'll gather the relevant information and we can go through it together.
If that is what you need.
I am happy to reassure you.

CANDACE Oh dear I don't need reassurance.
It's just Miles.
It's honestly just –

NIA I'll call this week.

Pause.

CANDACE I –
I haven't offended you, have I?

NIA Not in the slightest.

CANDACE I do hope I haven't.

NIA But I need to be sure I have a commitment from you.
For Suli's sake.

CANDACE I'm, I'm committed.
I promise.

NIA Because abandonment at this stage would be
very –
Damaging.
And if abandonment is a possibility then I need to
rethink my position, with regards our
relationship.

CANDACE You don't need to.
Honestly.

I'm –
I would never abandon Suli.

Pause.

NIA Thank you for a very successful evening.
I'll see myself out.

CANDACE Wait!

Pause.

I just don't want to be out of my depth.

NIA That's entirely up to you.
Goodbye.

10

A picks up a microphone.

B has a video camera.

YASMIN – tired, dirty, sleep-deprived – watches them.

A So, it's tense on the streets today as you can
probably see.
People aren't quite sure where's safe and where
isn't and there's quite a bit of confusion and
general uneasiness.
We've been hearing heavy gunfire and there's
been lots of shouting and there are reports
that there have been some, uh, possibly some
fatalities but I should emphasise that these
are, at present, unconfirmed.

B gets a phone call.

B Yeah?

A The protesters are grimly clinging on, as you can
see.

But I've spoken to several who say that they're
beginning to lose faith even as their anger mounts.
The government's response is characteristically
heavy-handed and, even in moments of calm like
this, there's a sense that violence won't be far
behind –

B OK.

Shit.

Sorry, we have to move on.

A What?

B I don't know.

They're just saying we have to go back to the hotel.

A Fuck.

B We've got to pack up and get out of here.

YASMIN BBC?

A Great.
First they cut short our trip and now they're dictating to us when we can and can't film.

YASMIN Excuse me?
BBC.

A glances at YASMIN.

A Can you...?
I don't understand what she's -
Can we get her out of the way?

YASMIN Yes?
BBC?

B Uh...

A Just tell her we're BBC if it'll make her happy.

B (To YASMIN.) Yes.
Yes, BBC!

YASMIN waves the picture excitedly.

Uh...?

YASMIN You, um...?

She waves the picture.

B Some woman with a scar...

YASMIN points to the camera.

She points to her mouth.

We could give her a few minutes.
Sort of a human-interest thing.

A No offence but she's not really the angle we're going for.

B (To YASMIN.) Um, you want to -?
On the -?

YASMIN nods.

A What are you doing?

B You know, I'm just concerned we're not getting that well-rounded a picture.
We just keep talking to college kids with good haircuts and expensive shoes.

A You're the one who just said we had to leave!

B (To YASMIN.) OK, I'm going to point this at you and -

B trains the camera on YASMIN's face.

YASMIN holds out the picture.

She delivers the following speech - the first few lines are spoken backwards to give the impression that YASMIN is speaking a foreign language. The actor can deliver the whole speech backwards if she likes, otherwise the rest can be spoken as it is written.

Esaelp.

I dlouw ekil enoyreve ot wonk taht siht si ym rehtom, dna taht ehs si gnissim.

I tnevah nees reh, ro draeh morf reh, ni rouf syad.

Please.

I would like everyone to know that this is my mother, and that she is missing.

I haven't seen her, or heard from her, in four days.

Her name's Marion, she's fifty-five and she's got

this scar, here, as you can see, because a dog bit

her a few years ago when she tried to give him

some scraps.

I'm not sure who's watching this and what good it

does me saying all this and I'm not a very

articulate person anyway but I suppose I'm just

hoping that the more people see this, the more

chance there is that I'll -

That I'll find her.

Soon, I hope.

A In case you'd forgotten, our translator got arrested.

- YASMIN And also to say that if she's watching this then I'd be really grateful if she could call me or, or find some way of getting in touch with me. I'm sure she wants to but obviously something very unusual has happened and I... There's a lot of... it's a very unpredictable time, it feels like quite a violent time and I would hate for her to...
- They watch her in incomprehension.*
- A (To B.) Stop filming.
I said stop filming.
- B She's still speaking.
- A It's OK.
We won't tell her we've stopped.
She can get it out of her system.
- B *hesitates, then stops filming – but keeps the camera trained on YASMIN's face.*
- YASMIN Please tell everyone. I know I'm not the only person this is happening to but... I know I'm just a tiny person in the middle of something huge but –
- A OK.
OK, THANK YOU!
That's great.
REALLY great.
YASMIN recognises the finality of her/his tone.
- She lowers the picture.*
- Nods.*
- YASMIN Everyone.
She gestures – 'the whole world'.
Everywhere.
- A Yep.
Yep, absolutely.

- YASMIN Thank you.
- A Don't mention it.
- YASMIN Thank you.
Thank you.
- # 11
- LEYLA and ALI's apartment.
- LEYLA, alone.
- She sits very still.*
- ALI enters.
- ALI There's no bread anywhere.
I could only get these cracker things and I had to walk about three miles –
He notices LEYLA.
- LEYLA? You alright?
- Pause.*
- LEYLA? You said you didn't know her.
- ALI What?
- LEYLA The girl.
Pause.
- 'Never seen her before in my life.'
That's what you said.
- Silence.*
- ALI OK.
OK I knew her a little bit.

ALI No.
Hang on.
Hang on let's just think about who's got the moral high ground here.

LEYLA Your new muse.

ALI If you want to know something, Leyla, you should just confront me.
You shouldn't go rooting around in someone's personal –

LEYLA It wasn't me.

ALI What?

LEYLA It was the men.

ALI What men?

LEYLA The men who were here earlier.
Pause.
The men who did this to the apartment.
ALI looks around and realises the flat is in disarray.
Pause.
They found your computer and they opened it and it took them about five seconds.
Pause.
They said, you're very beautiful.
No wonder your boyfriend has all these pictures and films of you.
Pause.
I said, that's not me.
That's the girl who's nearly dead in hospital.
The girl you shot.
They smiled.
Pause.

LEYLA Yes.

ALI Hardly at all.

LEYLA Right.

ALI We did classes in the same building and I – I saw her a few times.

LEYLA Saw her.

ALI Yes.

LEYLA Right.

ALI OK we spoke a few times.

LEYLA Yes.

ALI Which isn't a crime!
Is, is speaking to another girl a crime?

LEYLA Not as far as I know.
No.
Pause.
The only reason I didn't tell you is –
Is cos I didn't want you to get the wrong idea.

LEYLA OK.

ALI Because there isn't anything.
There's nothing!
Honestly Leyla there's –

LEYLA I went on your computer.

ALI Um.
What?

LEYLA Yes.

ALI Why –
Why would you go on my computer?

LEYLA A whole folder.

ALI You can't just –
Hack into someone's computer, that's –

LEYLA A whole folder devoted to her.

They said, you're an actress, right?
A porn actress.

Pause.

And your boyfriend.
He makes porn films.

Pause.

They said, why would you make this film?

Pause.

This film, where you writhe so provocatively and
reveal your underwear to the world.

Pause.

They said, obviously you made this film to
discredit us.

Pause.

They said, why don't you go on television, tell
everyone it was just an illusion.
Just a story.

Pause.

Because there is no girl, lying in a hospital bed,
with a tube coming out of her nose.
She doesn't exist.
Does she?

Pause.

Then one of them put his truncheon under my skirt
and lifted it.

Pause.

So I said, no she doesn't.

Pause.

You're right.
It was me.
Me and my boyfriend made the film together.
Pause.

That was very silly and very rash, they said.
I agreed with them.

Pause.

But we're prepared to be lenient, they said.
The one with the truncheon pushed it up a little
further.

Pause.

Because you're going to do a statement, aren't
you?

You and your boyfriend.

That's what you're going to do.

Pause.

I agreed with them.

Pause.

No one got shot, did they?

I agreed with them.

And you're going to tell everyone?

I agreed with them.

And you're going to kiss this nice man now,
aren't you?

I agreed with them.

Silence.

After a while ALI puts his head in his hands.

We're expected at the Broadcasting Centre
tomorrow at nine.

She starts to leave.

Where are you going?

For a walk.

Pause.

I'll be back in half an hour.
An hour.

I don't know.

ALI

LEYLA

ALI Leyla –
She's gone.

12

The hospital waiting room.

The sound of wailing.

A is sitting in front of a computer.

YASMIN – even more sleep-deprived, hot and sweaty – has just given A the photo.

A What is this?

YASMIN It's my mum.

A Yes?

YASMIN I need to find out if she's here.

A Right.
Name?

YASMIN Her name or my –?

A Her name.

YASMIN Marion –

A CAN SOMEONE TELL ME WHY THIS
SCREEN KEEPS FREEZING?

C enters with a tray of implements and pushes
past YASMIN.

C Excuse me.
Out the way!

YASMIN Sorry –

C No, not in there!
STRICTLY prohibited.

YASMIN OK I'm sorry.

C For goodness' sake.
Be careful.

A I can't do my job if even the simplest technology
is going to fail me EVERY time.

C exits.

YASMIN (To A.) Is it true what they're saying?
About all those people?

Under those –

Those big government cars?

Their faces all...

Is that really true?

A's phone rings.

A (Into phone.) Yes?

A sighs.

Just a moment.

Yes I said just a moment.

A taps into the computer.

YASMIN Can you tell that caller to wait?

A (Into phone.) I tried to explain to you before,
madam.

He was taken to the morgue this morning.
Yes, that's what I said.

A holds the phone away from her/his ear.

YASMIN I was in the middle of talking to you.
We'd started a conversation.

A (Into phone.) All I have is the information in the
computer in front of me.

I need to ask you to keep calm.
I know.

I know and I'm sorry –

YASMIN I'm at the front of the queue.
It's my turn.

A (To YASMIN.) Do you think you're the only person here?

YASMIN You can't just -
Act as if it isn't my turn.

A Do you think you're the only person with a missing mother?
Or a missing eye or a missing arm?
Do you think you're more important?

YASMIN I've been waiting since this morning.
Hours and hours and hours.

A People come in here with their fingers in plastic bags.
Did you know that?

YASMIN I'll chop mine off if that's what it takes.

She seizes a pair of scissors from a tray and holds them up.

If that's what's required, then that's what I'll do.
I'm so sick of people telling me to get out the way or to wait my turn or, or, or to take a balloon.
Cos unless that balloon has a tiny mini-version of my mum inside it I'm not interested, OK?

A OK.
Security?

B *approaches* YASMIN.

B *has a cloth clamped to her/his head.*

B Are you a nurse?

YASMIN No.

B Now listen.
I think I've been shot.

I think there's a bullet and I think it's in my head.
I'm scared that if I take this cloth off my head that it will all just -
Flop open.

YASMIN Can someone - ?
I think this man needs some help?

B Like my head is in segments like an orange and this cloth is the only thing keeping the segments together.

A I need you to take a seat over there, sir.
SIR.

B *starts to unwrap the bandage.*

B Could you just give it a glance and tell me how bad it is?

A And can someone get that woman OUT of here?
C *enters carrying bedding.*

YASMIN *pushes past* B.

B Hey, where do you think you're going?

YASMIN *intercepts* C.

YASMIN Hi.
Hello.

YASMIN *bars her way.*

C Excuse me.

YASMIN Nope.
Not moving.

C Can someone get this woman out of my way?

YASMIN Listen to me.
I'm very tired.

I'm very dizzy cos I haven't eaten for two days straight.

C Alright.
Let's just calm down -

YASMIN I've been to every hospital in the city.
I've waited in lines.
I've fallen asleep in waiting-room chairs.

I've got blisters all over my feet and my shoes are full of blood.

C I'll be able to help you in five minutes –

YASMIN

No.
Not five minutes.
Now.

C You're going to have to be a little bit patient.

YASMIN

No.

C Just let me change this bedding and I'll be with you in five –

YASMIN

No I can't let you.

I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't...

She runs out of words.

She stumbles.

C catches her.

Please.

Look at it.

Look at her.

Please.

Slowly C takes the piece of paper and studies it.

C Who is this, love?

YASMIN

My mother.
Her name's Marion.

Pause.

It's the thought that she might think I'm not looking for her.

That I don't care.

That's what's killing me.

Pause.

C I... I think I might have...

YASMIN You... you actually recognise her?

YASMIN *throws her arms around C.*

After a while you start to think you're going mad or something!

C allows him/herself to be hugged for a moment then gently disentangles from YASMIN.

Why are you looking at me like that?

Pause.

C You might want to try the coroner's office.

YASMIN

Who?

C The coroner, sweetheart.

YASMIN What do you mean the coroner?

C

I'm –

I'm sorry, love.

YASMIN Why are you sorry?

What do you mean?

B approaches YASMIN again and tugs at her arm.

B How bad is it?

Please can you tell me?

C *(To YASMIN.)* I'm sorry.

I've got to get on.

C moves away from YASMIN.

B TELL me.

YASMIN There's nothing there, you stupid idiot.

B

I –

I've been shot!

YASMIN No you haven't.

B I can feel it in there!

- A Sir!
I really need to ask you to sit down and wait your turn.
- B You're a disgrace to your profession.
Call yourself a nurse?
You can't even be bothered to brush your hair?!
WHORE.
YASMIN exits.

13

CANDACE, alone, late at night.

She is drinking a solitary glass of wine.

Listening to the World Service.

Her phone rings – an unknown number.

She tuts and lets it ring out.

A few moments later it starts ringing again.

She tuts again and picks it up.

CANDACE Yes?

Silence.

Well if you're not going to say anything then I'm going to hang up.
Goodbye.

A strange sound can be heard, tinnily, from the phone.

A sort of gasping and sighing.

It could possibly be sexual.

CANDACE shifts uncomfortably.

The noise resolves itself into the sound of someone in intense pain.

They are screaming and begging in a language CANDACE can't understand.

She drops the phone hastily.

The sound continues.

She stares at the phone.

Eventually and abruptly it goes dead.

CANDACE continues to stare at her phone.

Gingerly she picks it up.

She is about to switch it off when it rings again.

She answers it.

What you just heard, Candace.

Is happening now.

Right now.

He is a young man.

Only twenty.

He has dark-brown hair and a gap between his front teeth.

Pause.

His fingernails are being slowly removed.

When they have finished with his fingernails they will begin on his fingers.

They will remove them, one by one, knuckle by knuckle, with a jagged knife.

It will take a long time, and it will be very painful.

Pause.

CANDACE Why –

Why are you telling me this?

Pause.

Because this is happening.

It is happening.

NIA

CANDACE I don't know what to -
What do you want me to - ?

NIA You must know how grateful we are, Candace.
You are such a good friend to us.
To Suli.

Pause.

Friends don't judge one another.
Friends don't leave any room for doubt.
Friends don't tiptoe away when things get messy,
or frightening -

CANDACE But I -
I haven't tiptoed away.
I promise -

NIA There is still so much that has to happen, Candace.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA And I have to be sure that you're aware of that.

CANDACE But I am.
All those poor children -

NIA It isn't just children, Candace.

CANDACE No.

NIA It's a whole, a whole *nation*.
A whole nation suffering.
A whole nation persecuted.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA It needs to be completely ripped up.
It needs to start again.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA And when you rip something up -
It might not always be -
Palatable.

CANDACE No.

NIA It can't always be a girl in a yellow dress.
A girl who does nothing but rather, something is
done to her.

Do you think there would even be a video,
Candace, if she wasn't so completely passive?

CANDACE I, I don't know -

NIA If she was dressed all in black, with teeth missing,
holding a Kalashnikov?

Would there have been a video then?

What if she was holding up a nail bomb and
spitting?

Her hair falling out in clumps, her skin
pockmarked?

What if there was blood and scalp and flesh
beneath her nails?

Actual human flesh.

CANDACE I don't know -

NIA Would he have trained his camera on her then?
Or would he just have turned and run.
And never looked back?

Pause.

Sometimes it can't be peaceful.

Because we don't feel peaceful.

Sometimes we want to turn on the man who has
systematically beaten and abused us.

We want to put explosives in the kitchens of the
restaurants he dines in, in the urinals he pisses into.

We want to rip him to pieces.

We want to leave him disfigured and maimed on
the courtroom floor.

Because doesn't he deserve it?

Wouldn't you like to do that?

To your husband?

CANDACE I don't know.

NIA What I'm trying to make clear to you, Candace, is
that we don't have a choice.

We are compelled to do this.
It is inevitable.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA I just need to be sure that you fully and completely understand that.
Because this is so important.
It is so –
Enormous.

CANDACE I know.

Pause.

What can I do?

Pause.

Tell me.

Please.

What can I do?

Silence.

NIA *is trying to compose herself.*

Nia.

Are you alright?

Pause.

Sometimes...
It feels hopeless.

NIA

CANDACE *Is isn't hopeless!*
It isn't!

NIA Sometimes it feels as if I am achieving nothing.
That I am just...

Alone.

Futile.

Exiled.

Pause.

Sometimes that makes me feel very small.

CANDACE You're not alone.
You're not.

NIA Perhaps.

CANDACE Look.
Come over tomorrow.
We can talk properly then.
I'm sorry about all that stupid stuff before.
It's just bloody Miles and his...

NIA I should let you go to sleep.

CANDACE Oh I never go to bed this early.

NIA It's after midnight.

CANDACE You're still up.

NIA Yes.

That's true.

Pause.

What were you doing?

Before I called.

CANDACE I was drinking a glass of red wine.
Just a cheapie one from M&S.
And I was reading.

NIA What were you reading?

CANDACE One of my old favourites.
The Portrait of a Lady.

Lots of people find this one tricky.

NIA I love Henry James...

CANDACE Yes, I do too...

Pause.

What...

What will happen?

To the young man?

Silence.

- NIA Goodnight.
- CANDACE I feel so –
Hemmed in sometimes.
Because I'm just an old woman.
That's all I am.
- NIA No.
You're not just an old woman.
- CANDACE I'm expected to act in a certain way.
Speak in a certain way.
I'm expected to say – of course!
Of course you must run along and be with her and
the two young girls you've been secretly
supplying with sweets and potties and picture
books for the last four years without my
knowledge.
Of course!
Of course it is perfectly natural that you would fail
to find me anything other than entirely repulsive
now that I'm so faded and fat and completely
invisible!
Of course you would want to be with that young,
lovely, *young* woman with her thick dark hair
and her swan's neck and her elastic cunt!
- NIA I'm sorry.
- CANDACE Oh that felt good!
- NIA Yes.
- CANDACE You see sometimes I feel so completely stifled
by –
By politeness.
- NIA Yes.
- CANDACE I feel very angry quite a lot of the time.
- NIA I know.
- CANDACE I am quite often uncomfortably furious.
- NIA Yes.

- CANDACE When Evelyn died, do you know?
I had fantasies about running people over in my car.
Really crunching over their bones.
- NIA Do you still want to do that?
- CANDACE Oh no.
Well sometimes.
On bad days.
Pause.
I've been asking myself.
Could I do something dreadful?
If it mattered enough?
- NIA Well.
It would depend how much it mattered.
- CANDACE Could I blow things up?
Things and people?
Pause.
The things that have happened to you.
If it had happened to me...
Pause.
I might be capable.
Pause.
- NIA Goodnight, Candace.
- CANDACE Goodnight, Nia.
Sweet dreams.

14

YASMIN and A are waiting for a bus.

It's taking a long time.

A has a shopping bag and is eating something from a paper bag.

YASMIN watches A.

A notices her gaze and smiles at her.

A Do you want one?

Pause.

YASMIN shakes her head.

Go on.

I've had enough anyway.

I'm on a diet, supposedly.

A hands YASMIN the paper bag.

YASMIN holds it but doesn't eat.

I'm starting to think this bus will never come.

YASMIN Yes.

A My daughter will be worrying.

She's a worrier.

YASMIN Yes.

Pause.

A Don't you want any of those?

Pause.

Well.

You save them for later.

Pause.

Have you got somewhere to go?

Love?

Are you alright?

You'd tell me if you didn't have anywhere to go, wouldn't you?

Pause.

YASMIN Don't be nice to me.

A What –

YASMIN Cos if you start being nice I'll just... Please.

YASMIN hands back the paper bag.

I need money.

A Sorry?

YASMIN Sorry it's just –

I have to ask you for money.

A Um.

YASMIN I need as much as you have. Everything in your wallet.

A Um.

YASMIN And your phone.

A Well wait a –

Wait a minute.

YASMIN Sorry and I really don't want to have to do this but –

She shows A that she has scissors.

I'm sorry.

But if you could give me your phone and, and all your money that would be –

That would be very helpful.

I'm really sorry.

Pause.

I don't want to have to do anything to you but if you don't give me what I ask for then I will, I will have to...

I will have to hurt you.

Slowly A hands over her/his phone, and a few notes.

YASMIN *is still holding the scissors.*

Is that everything?

A I'm, I'm sorry.
This is everything –

YASMIN That's all you've got?

A I've been shopping so –
I'm sorry.

YASMIN *looks at the money in her hand.*

YASMIN I'm not really this kind of person.

A OK.

YASMIN You see I'm in this queue, for information.
And they told me that if I had money they'd
accelerate my request.

A OK.

YASMIN And you do anything, don't you?
When it matters?

A Yes.

Pause.

YASMIN I hope the bus comes soon.
You've been waiting so long...
I'm, I'm really sorry.

They look at each other.

YASMIN *exits.*

15

ALI, *talking into a camera.*

He has rope around his ankles.

A, B and C, *all now in yellow dresses, watch him.*

ALI I would like to –
Publicly –
Admit to my –
My deceit.

Pause.

The video of the girl in the yellow dress.
The girl who appeared to be shot and then bleed,
copiously.

Pause.

That video was in fact fabricated –
By me.
I am a...

Pause.

I am a film director.
I am a film director who also makes –
Porn films.

Pause.

My girlfriend...
Is an actress.

A...

A prostitute and, and a porn star.

Pause.

We concocted the film together.
In order to discredit and humiliate the
government.
Because we are traitors and –
And perverts.

Pause.

No one was shot that day.
 No one is lying in a hospital bed with a tube in
 their nose and a drip in their wrist.

Pause.

That is fiction.

Pause.

A fiction of our own making that we now –

Pause.

Bitterly regret.

Pause.

He removes his microphone from his shirt.

No.

I'm not doing this.

He starts to walk away from them.

A, B and C look at each other.

They shrug.

They pull on the ropes so he can't leave.

OK.

Very funny.

He tries again to leave but he can't.

So it's starting, is it?

Fine.

What's first?

C pops one of the yellow balloons.

OK.

OK I get it.

C pops another yellow balloon.

You can get on with...

With whatever you're going to get on with just as
 soon as you tell me where she is –

C pops another balloon.

She had nothing to do with it.
 I need you to understand that.

Can you just –

Nod, or say something, to tell me that you
 understand that?

Nothing.

Is she next door?

Down the corridor?

Leyla?

LEYLA?

They pull on the ropes again.

He falls to his knees.

C pins the microphone back onto his shirt.

Smiles in a businesslike manner.

Points to the camera.

Smiles.

No.

I can't.

C nods to B.

B hands C a mobile phone.

C shows ALL the mobile phone.

He reacts violently.

He struggles to stand up.

They pull on the ropes.

He falls to the ground.

They make him look at the mobile phone.

He screws his eyes tightly shut.

They force his eyelids open.

He gasps.

Silence.

That –
 That could be anyone.
Silence.
 It's just...
 It's just images...
 How do I know you haven't –
He reacts to something on the phone.
He starts to weep.
 C points to the camera.
 Nods.
Taps the microphone on ALI's shirt.
 Wearily ALI stands.
They help him.
Pat his arms and smooth down his hair.
 I would like.
 To publicly admit to my deceit –

16

YASMIN has a mobile phone.
 She dials a number.
 Waits.
 The line goes dead.
 She breathes deeply then dials the number again.
 A enters with a large bag.
 She/he is still for a moment and then begins to unpack what is inside – pieces of cardboard and tape.
 A lays it out on the ground and looks at it.

YASMIN watches A as she waits.
 Finally somebody answers.
 YASMIN Hello?
 I need to ask if there's been a registration of someone.
 A, a woman.
 Someone gave me your number, I paid him and –
Pause.
 Wait please don't –
The line goes dead.
 Hello?
 Nothing.
 YASMIN slowly lowers the phone.
 C and B enter.
 They watch A unfolding the cardboard.
 B and C look at each other.
 (Handing them cardboard.) Here.
 Silence.
 B What's that for?
 A It helps.
 A If they, you know...
 A mimes a soldier with a truncheon.
 B How do I – ?
 A I'll help you.
 A starts taping cardboard to B's arms and legs.
 C watches.
 YASMIN dials a number again.
 C My sister she –
 She's got this bump on her head.
Pause.

We think she got hit with something, something heavy, but she's not awake long enough to – She just keeps sleeping.

I mean she wakes up for a bit and then, boom, she's asleep again.

My mum is...

Pause.

She stood in front of the door, like a barricade, and she –

She kind of begged me.

Not to go.

Pause.

She said, I don't know if it's worth it.

If I'm going to lose both of you.

YASMIN (*Into phone.*) I think we just got cut off.

Yes, I told you, I paid.

I just need to know if she's been registered as –

Yes, I paid.

YASMIN *holds.*

C I told her it is worth it.

It is.

It has to be.

Right?

A If you don't want to come it's alright.

C Because it's working, isn't it?

It's really working!

A You should think of your mother.

We understand.

Don't we?

B *shrugs.*

C I wasn't frightened yesterday.

YASMIN Hello?

Yes her name's Marion.

She's fifty-five and she has a scar on her –

No please don't put me on hold again –

B (*Holding out cardboard.*) Here. Come on.

YASMIN (*Into phone.*) Yes.

Yes I'm still here.

C I just wish –

I just wish she'd stop falling asleep.

YASMIN N–

No.

That can't be right.

B Are you coming or aren't you?

YASMIN Can you check again?

Please.

C Yeah of course I am.

Check again.

Check again.

She reacts to something she hears.

She lets the phone fall out of her hands, squeezes her eyes tightly shut.

Stands there.

C starts wrapping yellow ribbon around her/his wrist.

YASMIN looks at A, B and C.

She looks at the ribbon they are winding around their wrists.

B becomes aware of her gaze.

Hello.

Pause.

Do you want one?

YASMIN *nods.*

Let me tie it on for you. Here.

YASMIN I can manage.

Pause.

YASMIN *looks at the ribbon for a long time.*

B It's easy to forget isn't it?

Pause.

I mean, that scrap of cloth...
It could mean anything.

Pause.

But I feel like I know her.

YASMIN You don't know her.

B What?

YASMIN You don't know her.

Pause.

YASMIN *digs in her pocket, finds something.*

She waits for a moment, then holds it up – it's a lighter.

She sets fire to the edge of the cloth.

B Wait, what –

What are you doing?

YASMIN *watches it burn.*

Stop that!

YASMIN *holds the burning ribbon up high.*

A What the – ?

C Oh my God she isn't – ?

A She is.

She IS.

C No – ?

B How could you – ?
What?

A Who *are* you?

C My God.

B I don't understand.
How could someone, how could anyone – ?

A How dare you?

C Stop it.
STOP it.

A People are dying.
Do you understand?

C Make her stop!

A *She's dying, do you get it?*
That girl is dying and this is the thanks you give her?

C Wait.

Give me your phone.

B Huh?

C People need to see this.

B I don't know if that's –

C Just give it to me.

C *snatches B's phone.*

Starts filming YASMIN.

A Are you one of *them*?
Are you?

C OK.
OK I'm filming.

B Don't.

A It's people like you that are holding back this fucking country, do you understand me?

B Just let her go.

Everyone scatters, leaving YASMIN alone on the ground.
 She touches her face, which is covered in blood.
 She curls up and waits.

17

CANDACE with A and B.

Outside a school.

CANDACE That's right, girls.
 You're coming with me today.

A OK!

B No we aren't.

CANDACE Didn't Daddy tell you?

B No.

A D'you have any crisps?

CANDACE Yes I've got LOTS of crisps actually.

B But Daddy didn't tell us.

CANDACE Tsk, SILLY Daddy!
 Now, come along, that's it.

A Silly Daddy!

CANDACE Your poor mummy's not feeling very well so she's gone to stay with a friend for a few days.

B How many days?

CANDACE Oh just a few.

B Has she got cancer?

CANDACE Of course not!

She's got a little sniffle that's all.

94 IMAGE OF AN UNKNOWN YOUNG WOMAN

A I don't understand you fucking people.
 Seriously.

Why are you so afraid of progress?

B It's not her fault.

C Don't you WANT choices?

A Why do we fucking bother?

C Say something.

Why don't you SAY something?

A It might as well have been you.

You with the gun.

You that aimed it at her.

You that pulled the trigger.

You.

B What are you doing?

A Get hold of her, can you?

YASMIN Get off me.

YASMIN *lashes out.*

A You disgusting, foul, pungent piece of SHIT.

C Now hold her down.

A That's it.

C Got her?

A We've got her.

YASMIN *fighters back with all her strength.*

It's a piece of cloth.

Do you hear me?

It's a piece of yellow cloth.

C And now we SPIT on her.

They spit on her.

The sound of a huge explosion.

- A I had a sniffle at the weekend.
- CANDACE Now I've got salt and vinegar AND I've got bacon!
But chop-chop!
- A Salt and vinegar, salt and vinegar,
SALT AND VINEGAR!!!
- B *puts her/his hands over her/his ears.*
- B Zoe, DON'T do that!
- CANDACE Now are you going to share with your sister?
- A NO!
- B We've only met you once.
You kept crying.
- CANDACE What did you do at school today?
Was it exciting?
- B No.
It was school.
- A I did icebergs with Barnaby!
- CANDACE Icebergs!
My word.
- B Why would school ever be exciting?
- A The *Titanic* hit an iceberg.
- CANDACE Yes it did.
It certainly did.
That's very clever.
- B You're walking too fast.
- A Lots of people drowned in the sea.
Tiffany CRIED about it!
- CANDACE Oh dear, poor Tiffany!
- B You don't know who Tiffany is!
- A You're much older than our mummy.
How old are you?

- CANDACE Ooh now that's a bit of a cheeky question!
- A Are you seventy?
- CANDACE No.
- A Our mummy is the prettiest mummy in my class!
- CANDACE Now, just a bit further, and we can hop into my car
and be off.
- B Are you a good driver?
- CANDACE I'm an excellent driver.
- B But you wear glasses.
- A I want glasses!
I want glasses and braces and I want to be a bit fat
too!
- B She watched a cartoon where the main character
was fat and had glasses and braces and now she's
obsessed with it.
- CANDACE How refreshing.
- A Do you have any children?
- B She doesn't.
I remember.
- CANDACE That's true.
I don't have any children of my own.
- A But all ladies have children!
- CANDACE There's a little boy called Suli who's going to
come and live with me soon.
- B Suli?
- CANDACE In fact I'm going to invite lots and lots of children
to come and live with me.
- A How many?
- CANDACE I don't know.
But lots.

- A I WANT TO COME!
 CANDACE Their country's in the middle of a sort of civil war at the moment, you see.
- B How far's your car?
 CANDACE Oh nearly there!
 B Mummy normally drives it right up to the school gates.
 CANDACE But the goodies might be starting to win, you see!
 A Are there baddies?
 CANDACE Yes.
 But a lot of them got blown up.
 B BLOWN UP??
 CANDACE Did I say that?
 A Did they get blown up into bits of tiny pieces?
 CANDACE I mean they got sent to sit on the naughty step.
 B We're not *babies*.
 The naughty step is SO STUPID.
 A Can I have the bacon crisps now?
 CANDACE Alright.
 Here we are!
 Now come along.
 B Your car's very dirty.
 You should have it professionally cleaned.
 CANDACE We can go through a car wash on the way if you like?
 They're always lots of fun!
 B Where are we actually going?
 A I want to sit in the front.
 CANDACE Uh-hh.
 Yes you can sit in the front if you like.
 B Um, that is NOT allowed.

- A SHUDDUP!
 CANDACE Oh gosh.
 You'd probably better go in the back actually.
- A BUT YOU SAID I COULD GO IN THE FRONT.
 CANDACE Well that was a mistake.
 I shouldn't have said that.
 Of course children shouldn't go in the front.
- B Everyone knows that.
 CANDACE So can you please both just –
 Hop in, please.
 Quickly!
- A NO.
 B Oh dear.
 She's going to have a tantrum.
- CANDACE Now look.
 Little girls are NOT allowed to sit in the front,
 Zoe!
 Alright?
- A But you S-A-I-D.
 CANDACE It was just a joke!
- B I could have told you this was going to happen.
 A I want my –
 I want my M-U-U-UH-UH-M-Y-Y.
 CANDACE Zoe!
 Stop this nonsense and GET in the car.
 A NoooooOOOOO.
 B She won't move now.
 Look, she's gone rigid.
 A I want my MUMMY.
 B I'll get in if that helps.
 Shall I?
 Would that help?

CANDACE grabs A by the wrist and tries to manhandle her/him into the car.

A No!

B You're hurting her!

CANDACE She's FINE.

A screams.

B starts to cry.

I've had just about enough of this. Just get in the car.

A and B sniff.

GET in the car.

They refuse to move.

CANDACE looks at them.

They continue sniffing.

Something in her sags.

You're right.

I'm actually going to -

I'm actually going to take both of you back to the playground OK?

B You are?

CANDACE Yes.

You see, I forgot.

B What did you forget?

CANDACE I made a silly mistake.

B A mistake - ?

CANDACE Your mummy's feeling much better and I, I, I got my days a bit muddled up so -

A Mummy?

CANDACE So hold my hand and we'll just -

A MUMMY!!!!

CANDACE freezes.

She can't move for a moment then -

She runs.

18

The GIRL is in a hospital bed.

YASMIN, bruised and battered, sits in the chair beside her.

The GIRL stirs.

She opens her eyes.

GIRL

Oh.

Hello.

YASMIN

Hi.

GIRL

You're not a nurse.

YASMIN

No.

Sorry.

GIRL

Do I know you?

YASMIN

I'm in the ward opposite I just -

I shouldn't be here, I'll go -

GIRL

It's OK.

Stay.

Pause.

The GIRL licks her lips.

Got any lip stuff?

YASMIN

Um.

There's some here.

Want me to - ?

GIRL Thanks.
 YASMIN *puts lip balm on her lips.*
Pause.
 What's all this?
She shakes her wrist.
 YASMIN There's medicine in there, I guess.
 GIRL Right.
 Would explain why I feel a bit –
 Wooo!
 YASMIN Yes.
 GIRL Bit cumbersome though.
 YASMIN Yeah.
 GIRL Oh well.
Pause.
 What happened to you?
 YASMIN I had an accident.
 GIRL Looks painful.
 YASMIN Yeah it is a bit.
 GIRL We're in the wars.
 YASMIN Yes.
 GIRL We should be a bit more careful.
 YASMIN Yes.
 GIRL A boy hasn't been in here has he?
 YASMIN No...?
 GIRL No.
 Hey ho.
Pause.
 You know, I just wandered out.

YASMIN Sorry?
 GIRL The day I got...
 YASMIN Oh.
 GIRL I was curious.
 I wanted to see what all the fuss was about.
Pause.
 Some of my friends, they were all wrapped up in it.
 They said, this is our chance!
 They said, everyone needs to take to the streets
 and fight for change!
 They were so –
 They were lit up by it.
 I felt envious of all that –
 Conviction.
Pause.
 But I also felt like they were –
 Acting?
 Like I didn't quite believe their passion.
 Does that make sense?
Pause.
 Did lots of people die?
 YASMIN *nods.*
 Thought so.
 You can hear in the corridors.
 Screaming.
 YASMIN My mum did.
Beat.
 GIRL I'm sorry.
Pause.
 Was she protesting?
Beat.

YASMIN

Yes.

She was.

GIRL

That's so brave.

YASMIN

Yes.

She was very brave.

GIRL

I just —

I just went along to see.

A crowd is starting to gather.

What's that?

YASMIN

What?

GIRL

That noise.

YASMIN

Oh.

Pause.

People outside.

GIRL

What are they cheering for?

YASMIN

You actually.

GIRL

Oh.

*Pause.**The GIRL closes her eyes.*

YASMIN spots something under the bed.

*She tugs at it.**It's the yellow dress.**It is cracked and sticky with dried blood.**She studies it.**She pulls the dress over her head.**She goes to the window.**She opens it.**She waves.**The sound of the crowd cheering.**The cheering becomes ecstatic.**The End.*