

POST-TRAUMATIC STRUCTURE: HOW
DEPICTIONS OF RAPE IMPACT ON FORM

and

ROMAN OCCUPATION

by

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ABSTRACT

The following collected documents comprise an original and complete, full-length work for the stage, and a 5,000-word critical accompaniment.

The latter examines how rape, or depictions thereof, might impact on the structure of a play, whilst reiterating the purpose of structure to convey a play's meaning.

The stage play shares these objectives, but is equally concerned with rape as an existential threat to the Occupy movement.

Dedication:

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NOTES:

- Page numbering for these collected documents restart with the play's first page of spoken text. The play's title page and cast list/notes are not counted.
- The playwrights' details are included at the bottom of every page in the play-text, as is generally requested by UK theatres.
- In the analysis, quotes from the play, as presented within text boxes, have not been included in this thesis' word count. Similarly, a dotted line appears at the point where the play causes these documents to exceed the recommended 20,000-word limit.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRUCTURE: HOW DEPICTIONS OF RAPE IMPACT ON FORM

*A critical accompaniment to *Roman Occupation**

This critical analysis accompanies an original and complete, full-length work for the stage. It is chiefly concerned with the impact that the inclusion of rape has had on the structure (form) of *Roman Occupation*. Here a play's 'structure' is understood to fall into two categories: 'those using linear time and those which disrupt it' (Edgar, 2009, p. 99). During the writing process, the most significant change the play underwent was its move from a linear to a non-linear structure. In examining this change, the analysis also attempts to reiterate how structure can be used to convey meaning. It is here worth noting that whilst in popular usage 'narrative' commonly refers to story, in the playwriting vocabulary developed by this course (Edgar, 2009) (Waters, 2010) (Grace, 2013), it is more closely related to meaning, i.e. 'the story of the story' (Grace, 8 Sep. 2014). As this analysis engages with terms from outside this very specific and technical lexicon, e.g. 'narrative identity' (Sarbin, 1986), 'narrative collapse' (Rushkoff, 2013), and 'narrative substitution' (Sandifer, 2014), I will adopt the populist understanding for the sake of clarity.

Whilst the play engages with the impact of rape on structure – the framing device provided by the film studio scenes (pp. 1-21 and pp. 116-122) is an obvious example – it surpasses this analysis in its preoccupation with rape as an existential threat to the Occupy movement¹. Initially this was to be the play's sole concern – thoughts regarding structure came later – and in order to fully demonstrate the impact rape has had on subsequent drafts, with particular reference to the one included, it is worth offering a brief overview of the play's initial development with this more single-minded focus.

Since its inception, the global protest movement Occupy has been blighted by allegations of rape and sexual assault. These include those made at Occupy Wall Street in New York (Abrahams, 2011) (Gray, 2011), Occupy Baltimore (Shen, 2011) and Occupy Glasgow (BBC News, 2011), as well as the rape of a 19 year-old disabled woman at Occupy Cleveland (Di Fino, 2011), and a 14 year-old runaway at Occupy Dallas (Dfw.cbslocal.com, 2011). The reactions of activists to these survivors have been disappointing. The 19 year-old in Cleveland was accused of being an undercover agent, and her case dismissed (Occupywallst.org, 2011). In Dallas, the camp's organisers neglected to provide the 14 year-old with either medical attention or advice, and, despite coverage in the mainstream press, they failed to condemn the actions of the girl's assailant. In the same year, allegations at Occupy Baltimore resulted in demonstrators issuing pamphlets which 'passively' discouraged survivors from contacting police (Baltimore Sun, 2011). A spokesperson for the camp, Jessica Lewis, denied the allegation, insisting that the pamphlets were intended only to make

¹ 'Occupy' might here be used as an umbrella term for the global surge in political activism since 2011 (Mason, 2013).

clear the camp's commitment to becoming a self-governing, 'self-contained community' (ibid.)².

Whilst the mainstream media might suggest that there are only two available views on the Occupy movement, I hope the play's is more nuanced. First there is the centre-right opinion, as encouraged by Fox News (Fox Nation, 2011) or typified by graphic novelist Frank Miller:

'Occupy' is nothing but a pack of louts, thieves, and rapists, an unruly mob, fed by Woodstock-era nostalgia and putrid false righteousness.
(2011)

Then there is the more progressive view as held by Miller's rival, Alan Moore³:

As far as I can see, the Occupy movement is just ordinary people reclaiming rights which should always have been theirs [. . .] It's a completely justified howl of moral outrage and it seems to be handled in a very intelligent, non-violent way, which is probably another reason why Frank Miller would be less than pleased with it. I'm sure if it had been a bunch of young, sociopathic vigilantes with Batman make-up on their faces, he'd be more in favour of it.
(2011)

² The Baltimore pamphlets encouraged rape survivors to report their cases to the camp's 'Security Committee'. From here organisers would 'supply the abuser [sic.] with counseling resources' (Baltimore Sun, 2011). Assuming we should read 'abused' in place of 'abuser', this still seems hugely insufficient.

³ Miller's widely acclaimed graphic novel, *The Dark Knight Returns* (2006), became the chief source of the multimillion dollar *Dark Knight* franchise, while Moore's *V For Vendetta* (2008) introduced the 'Guy Fawkes' mask which has since become the default image of dissent across the globe (Boston.com, 2014).

My view is that though the movement proposes and enacts a viable alternative to today's society, this has been undermined. As feminist blogger Melissa McEwan has it (paraphrased by Marika in Scene 12, p. 105):

if your revolution doesn't include a rejection of misogyny and other internal marginalizations, then you're not staging a revolution; you're staging a change in management (McEwan, 2011)

As an advocate for the movement and one-time demonstrator, I am concerned that these attacks and responses might pose a serious threat not only to Occupy, but also to the viability of occupation as a platform for dissent. It is difficult to discern how the non-hierarchical (horizontal) power structure⁴ of Occupy might respond without compromising its autonomy⁵. As a playwright it was easier to discern what my tutor Fraser Grace described as the 'dramatic potential' (16 Aug. 2014) this question raised.

I began work on the play with an attitude similar to Occupy, a belief that the question alone was one worth asking, and that the goal of this play should be to find a new way of asking it⁶. This attitude reverberates through the play: 'I like that she asks

⁴ Doyle (2011) goes further, arguing that this '(non) power structure' allows members accustomed to holding power, i.e. straight white males, to assume positions of responsibility and leadership. The model thus 'enables sexism'. This assumption of power is one that the play, through the character of Gianni, attempts to challenge.

⁵ At Occupy Lawrence, for example, an alleged rapist was handed over to the police (Garrison, 2011).

⁶ Compare with Seager's take on the purpose of Occupy: 'to create not just a set of demands, but a set of new ways of demanding' (2011).

the right questions' (p. 10), 'These are the right questions' (p. 17), and 'No, though, thank you for asking' (p. 125).

*

As intimated I had no concerns about placing rape in a fictional context until it began to impact on the play's structure. My view is the same as that of Chuck Wendig:

It's a rough, tough, terrible topic, but to ignore it is all the more sickening – to sweep it under the rug and not shine a line [sic.] in that dark space is basically to deny it in reality, as well. One of fiction's chiefmost [sic.] strengths is that it allows us to bring up these things and make us feel something about them – it's addressing them, making us deal with it, and it's being real about it (2014)

Wendig, however, adds to this that

you should very seriously look at how you handle the topic. Are you handling it with maturity? With care? (ibid.)

The play could therefore use rape neither as a 'plot point' nor 'lazy trope' (motif) (Wendig, 2014), yet in early drafts of the play this is precisely what happened. The first draft, then titled *Breaker*⁷, adhered to what Edgar would call the play's original 'action' (2009): a young woman discovers what she believes to be the perfect

⁷ 'Breaker' is slang for the individual tasked with 'breaking' into a new squat.

community, only to have it betray her. The betrayal itself is initiated when Chora, the young woman, is raped by fellow activist, Val.

It was the rape's position within the narrative sequence that first caused problems. This draft adhered to a conventional three-act structure with the rape closing the second act. By occurring this late in the sequence it forced the play to a conclusion other than that intended. Instead of allowing room to develop a progressive re-reading of the Occupy movement and a representation of rape that empowered its victims, it forced the play to conclude with Chora's rejection of these communities and their values. With regards to Occupy, this conclusion could be interpreted as cynical at best, and at worst 'reactionary' (Grace, 18 Sep. 2014). The immediate solution was one of emplotment, in that emplotment is what expresses a play's action either by ordering its events in time or 'juxtaposing its different strands' in space (Edgar, 2009, p. 28). It is the former that applies here. I rearranged the events within the narrative so that the rape happened first. This changed the story from one about how Chora came to be raped, to one of how she and the community dealt with it. To be clear: the story now progressed from the rape instead of leading to it. A negative implication is that this, presented through a linear structure, meant that scenes subsequent to the rape suffered. Essentially, the most visceral part of the play had passed in its first minutes. Addressing this would be a matter of re-evaluating the play's use of a linear structure.

*

Feminist critic Sharon Marcus was not the first to discuss rape in linguistic terms or in terms of narrative. She was, however, the first to describe rape as specifically being a

‘scripted event’ (2002, p. 391). Marcus argues that ‘To take male violence or female vulnerability as the first and last instances in any explanation of rape, is to make the identities of rapist and raped *pre-exist the rape itself*’ (ibid, my italics). She was suggesting that we re-imagine rape as ‘a scripted interaction in which one person *auditions* for the role of rapist and strives to manoeuvre another person [into] the role of victim’ (ibid, my italics). In doing so these roles are presented not as being pre-cast but as being open to rejection; counter to how it is commonly perceived.

FILMMAKER #1:	And, into camera, the role you’re auditioning for.
ACTRESS:	Chora.
FILMMAKER #1:	The?
ACTRESS:	The?
FILMMAKER #1:	Vuh vuh vuh –
ACTRESS:	Oh. Victim?
FILMMAKER #1:	Right. Fantastic. And uh I’m glad to hear you had a look at the character bio —
ACTRESS:	It’s just I don’t see her as a victim as such —
FILMMAKER #1:	Yeah. Well we’ll talk character later, okay? More importantly, have you had a looked at the audition pieces? Yeah? Excellent, top marks. And um which one you gonna give a go?

In dramatising Marcus’ re-imagining of rape, as above (p. 11) I was looking to represent Wendig’s ‘rough, tough, terrible topic’ (2014) in a way that empowered survivors, as per my original intentions. To begin with this was only intended as an

exercise; this changed when I decided to include the results in the extract of the play performed at the Playwrights' Workshop (2014). These 'audition' scenes (above) (pp. 10-21) were included in the extract together with the rape scene scripted for the original draft (pp. 22-23). The effect of this pairing becomes clear when we examine

*VAL VIOLENTLY RAPES CHORA. CHORA
FIGHTS BACK THROUGHOUT. BOTH
REMAIN CLOTHED.*

the stage direction used in the latter:

The first result of this pairing is to overcome the limited ability of using stage direction alone to ensure the sensitive depiction of rape. By including, in what is now Scene 3 (pp. 15-21), the discussion that needs to be had about the depiction of rape in Scene 4, we avoid the limitations of a stage direction as succinct as Sarah Kane's in *Phaedra's Love* (2001, pp. 64-103). The rape of Strophe by Theseus is, in Kane's text, described merely with the following:

He rapes her. (p. 95)

In an example of a production provided by Lucy Nevitt, this facilitated an inaccurate and reductive depiction:

The choice to place Theseus behind Strophe while she put up no resistance implied possible complicity on her part [. . .] In fact, all the choices made about the woman's part in this image drew on familiar, normalised assumptions to performatively reiterate the sexual oppression of women (Nevitt, 2013, p. 34)

To avoid this one could instead include a series of precise stage directions. However, there is dramatic potential to be explored within the situation that both the ‘film studio’ characters and the ‘real world’ creative team of the play find themselves in. This approach guards against what happened to the rape in the production of *Phaedra’s Love* discussed above while, in keeping with the ethics of Occupy, maintaining the creative team’s autonomy.

Additionally the visual and dialogue cues present in the audition scenes (pp. 10-21) serve to signpost when the rape is due to occur in Scene 4 (pp. 22-23):

Compare, for instance (p. 10):

FILMMAKER #1:	Aaand whenever you’re ready, turn to your left?
ACTRESS:	(<i>TURNING LEFT</i>) So she’s this sort-of kind-of political radical, right? This activist, this um freedom-fighter? No. Freedom-fighter’s too far but uh yeah. Yeah I like her. I like her a lot –
FILMMAKER #1:	And to the right –
ACTRESS:	(<i>TURNING TO THE RIGHT</i>) I just really feel I identify with her. Not that I’m really anything like her, you know, but I feel I’d like to be. I’d like to be Chora. I like that she asks the right questions –
FILMMAKER #1:	Now all the way around –
ACTRESS:	(<i>TURNING ON THE SPOT</i>) Like this?
FILMMAKER #1:	Slower, maybe – ?

With (p. 22):

THE ACTOR, NOW THE REAL VAL, AND CHORA.

CHORA WEARS A BLACK DRESS, IDENTICAL TO THE ACTRESS IN PREVIOUS.

A WASHING MACHINE IN PLACE OF THE FLIP-CHART.

CHORA SPINS.

CHORA: What do you think?

BOTH STARE.

LONG PAUSE.

BOTH START LAUGHING.

Is it really that bad?

VAL: No, it's just uh . . . Turn left?

SHE TURNS TO THE LEFT.

Right?

URNS TO THE RIGHT.

And around?

CHORA: (TURNING) Like this?

Or (p. 16):

ACTOR: Well . . . So . . . So when I get to my line, what's it, the line about the, uh . . . Fuck.

ACTRESS: The chastity belt bit?

ACTOR: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. The chastity belt bit, yeah. I say that bit about the belt, and then I thought I'd . . .

*HE PRETENDS TO TWIST HER ARM
ROUND HER BACK. SLOWLY.*

With (p. 23):

VAL: She wasn't married, she wasn't married when she had me, but she pretended. She would wear a wedding ring to work, to stop the men, you know?

CHORA: What are you saying?

VAL: I am saying I thought Gianni was your chastity belt.

VAL LAUGHS, CHORA DOESN'T.

VAL: (ADVANCING) My mother wore a wedding ring. You? You have Gi.

CHORA: The fuck are you doing, Val? Val. Stop.

The first effect of preparing the audience in such a way should be to dispel any possible erotic association with the rape. Strassberg and Lockerd (1998) are among many to explore the legitimate role of power and force in the sexual fantasies of some women and men. Though valid, the projection of such fantasies in this instance would

undermine the intentions of the scene and its part in the narrative. It is hoped that the audience's role as voyeurs is exaggerated by this signposting and made explicit. The self-consciousness that would otherwise have been the sole property of Chora is forced upon the audience. This is what is similarly intended when the Actress is asked to remove her dress in Scene 2 (p. 11) and obliges (p. 12) I recognise what Grace describes as a 'crackle' (2 Sep. 2014); he is right to question whether or not this moment is 'facilitating or challenging the objectification of the actress' (ibid.). However, the exchange accurately expresses her vulnerability in the scene. It is also too early for her to achieve victory over the Filmmaker. Though only appearing in two scenes, she must, in contrast to the two-dimensional Filmmaker, learn something, and so further the theme of female empowerment. Over the course of her own story the Actress begins to question where previously she had only complied.

In the 'In Yer Face' theatrical tradition, rape is often used as a device to shock an audience into having a feeling or opinion about what they are seeing (Siers, 2001). The device does, however, have the potential to remove the audience from the characters' experience. Instead of being shocked by the *experience* of rape, they are shocked at its *depiction*. They are removed from what, for the characters, is real and lived. The second function of the signposting is then to create a state of Brechtian alienation (Brecht, 1978, p. 91). In this context, and instead of distancing the audience from *what happens to Chora*, the audience are made aware of and so distanced from *the portrayal*. They are, in *Roman Occupation*, encouraged to be hyper-aware of narrative and theatrical convention because it is my belief that Chora's experiences will be better conveyed not through an attempt to shock the audience, but by shocking the narrative. By returning to Marcus' re-imagining of rape as a 'scripted event'

(2002, p. 391) and examining where it segues with the school of thought relating to ‘narrative identity’ (Sarbin, 1986), I might better explain how I reached this conclusion.

Marcus’ and others efforts to redefine the role of the survivor in the rape narrative appear to complement, even stem from, the psychological theory of narrative identity. Theodore R. Sarbin, a pioneer in this field, asserts that narrative could be considered ‘the root metaphor of psychology’ (1986). The theory is that human beings shape their experiences into a storied form. Douglas Rushkoff takes this further, applying the idea to cultural theory:

We were sustained economically, politically, and even spiritually, by narrative. We adopted an entirely storylike way of experiencing and talking about the world (Rushkoff, 2013, p. 13)

Naomi Klein (Occupy advocate), meanwhile, examines the effect of shock on these personal and cultural narrative identities. From here we can begin to develop the idea of shocked narratives (above). In *The Shock Doctrine* she draws attention to the work of Ewan Cameron (2008, p. 30) a psychiatrist who, by the early-50s, ‘had rejected the standard Freudian approach of ‘talk therapy’’ (Klein, 2008, p. 30). Instead

His ambition was not to mend or repair his patients but to *recreate* them using a method he invented called ‘psychic driving’ (p. 31, my italics)

Through the use of ‘electroshock’ therapy, Cameron hoped ‘to return the mind to when it was [. . .] a tabula rasa’ (Klein, 2008, p. 30). Klein suggests that this technique can and has been applied by certain ‘closed, fundamental’ ideologies to erase and rebuild cultural narratives on a larger scale:

The world as it is must be erased to make way for their purist invention. Rooted in biblical fantasies of great floods [. . .], *it’s a logic that leads ineluctably towards violence*. The ideologies that long for that impossible clean slate, which can be reached only through some kind of cataclysm, are dangerous ones (ibid, my italics)

Through Klein’s investigation into shock therapy and Sarbin’s idea of narrative identity we might understand Marcus’ ‘scripted event’ (2002, p. 391) as being powered by the same purist fantasy:

A rapist chooses his target because he recognizes her to be a woman, but a rapist also strives to *imprint* the gender identity of “feminine victim” on his target. A rape act thus *imposes* as well as presupposes misogynist inequalities; rape is not only scripted – *it also scripts* (Marcus, 2002, p. 391, my italics)

Read this way, the rape act is not just an attempt by the rapist to impose upon the woman but, like Cameron, ‘to *recreate* them’ (Klein, 2008, p. 31) in this case as a ‘feminine victim’ (Marcus, 2002, p. 391). It is an attempt to enforce a ‘gendered grammar of violence’ (ibid.) on the narrative identity of the woman. This ‘gendered grammar’ also intrudes on the narrative identities of men. The character of Gianni,

dressed as he is in the armour of a Roman Centurion (p. 24 onwards), is intended as an expression of how

a grammatically correct mirror of gender reflects back to men *heroic images* in which they risk death, brave pain and never suffer violence to be done to them without *attempting to pay it back in kind* (Marcus, 2002, p. 393, my italics)

In our broader cultural narrative identity, this reflection promotes stories about rape that, in the words of Philip Sandifer, are

necessarily [. . .] about the objectification of women. The woman in the story is simply a prop – an object to be abused by the villain, and acted on behalf of by the hero [sic.]. She has no agency. In many stories of this ilk she's not even alive for much of the story, serving only as a beautiful thing whose destruction serves as motivation for the hero's tale. She is in every sense the hero's woman – a piece of property. [The] story is about men, and the angst of men (2014)

To borrow screenwriting terminology the rape as it was originally positioned, in the first draft (above), functioned as the play's climax. However, by moving it to the beginning of the narrative sequence as we have done, the rape has become its inciting incident, i.e. the event that instigates the story. Chora is left vulnerable to serving only as 'motivation for the hero's tale'; her rape, a 'plot point' (Wendig, 2014).

As stated earlier, my solution to this, and to the problem of distancing the audience from Chora's experience, was to make the rape behave as a shock or interruption to the narrative sequence instead.

It is Rushkoff's exploration of cultural narrative identity that makes explicit the connection between narrative, shock, and postmodernism. He argues that whilst 'the end of the twentieth-century can be characterised by futurism, the twenty-first can be defined by presentism' (2013, p. 3). This sociological shift has, to Rushkoff, resulted in a world where 'Everything is live, real time, and always on' (ibid.). That this has, in Rushkoff's view, developed so suddenly, is the cause of much of society's failure 'to engage in meaningful dialogue about last month's books and music, much less long-term global issues' and made us intent on 'spending now what one may or may not earn in a lifetime' (pp. 3-4). Rushkoff attributes this state of 'present shock' (p. 4) to 'narrative collapse', i.e. the end of linear storytelling (outlined in 2013, pp. 9-67). This mode of storytelling was, writes Rushkoff, in words that echo Sarbin's (1986), our way of maintaining 'a sense of purpose and meaning' (Rushkoff, 2013, p. 39). The 'discontinuity' this has generated is 'traumatising' (p.17):

What if stories themselves are incompatible with a presentist culture? How then do we maintain a sense of purpose and meaning? Moreover, how do we deal with the trauma of having lost these stories in the first place? (p. 39)

Many stories have responded by abandoning linear progression for the sake of a 'more pressing need for a framework that mirrors the viewing experience (Rushkoff, p. 24)', which is, incidentally, what is required of the audition scenes in *Roman*

Occupation. In a society no longer characterised by its sense of an ending, the structure of a story now has as much a role to play in conveying meaning as content. In theatre this is perhaps best evidenced in the work of post-dramatic playwrights Caryl Churchill and Martin Crimp. Specifically with regard to Churchill, her plays *This is a Chair* (2009, pp. 37-58), *Heart's Desire* (2009, pp. 63-96) and *Blue Kettle* (2009, pp. 97-128) are intended to collapse. 'My main intention', writes Churchill, 'was their destruction' (2009, p. viii):

This is a Chair is a series of impressive subjects that a play might address and the scenes don't address them (ibid.)

Similarly,

Blue Kettle is a play infected with a virus (ibid)

While its companion piece, *Heart's Desire*, is

a play that can't happen, obsessively resetting itself back to the beginning every time it veers off-course (ibid.)

It is of course *Heart's Desire* that had the most influence on *Roman Occupation*. In Scene 6 (pp. 33-55) the play adopts its structural conceit, 'obsessively resetting' (Churchill, 2009, p. vii), in order to convey the impossibility of the decision faced both by Gianni and Dismas, and the real world Occupy camps, when confronted with rape:

THEY RETURN CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS AND TIED TO A CHAIR, A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND BACKS UP. AS HE DOES –

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Stepped in it, didn't I? Look. I fucking cleaned this this morning

GIANNI: Sorry, the floor? Or your shoe?

DISMAS: Both. (TUTS) That is . . . Not nice. (TUTS)

GIANNI: Can we – ?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes, let's do this. Yeah.

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: Yeahhh.

BEAT.

Uh . . . she's alright with this, is she?

GIANNI: Who?

DISMAS: Chora.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Only asking cos this, all this, this? This isn't very her, is it?

GIANNI: No. But neither's getting raped.

DISMAS: No . . .

GIANNI: And there has to be some sort of justice here, doesn't there?
Or what are we about – ?

DISMAS: Right –

GIANNI: He can't get away with this –

DISMAS: No –

GIANNI: We're better than this, what he did, all of us –

DISMAS: Yes.

GIANNI: Right.

DISMAS: Right. Righty righty right. Right.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: Yes. I mean –

GIANNI: I mean this is just to throw some ideas about –

DISMAS: That's all we can do, really –

GIANNI: Exactly. So . . .

DISMAS: So?

GIANNI: That – that was it.

DISMAS: Good. Well, that was an important first step.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: A hundred percent yes.

BEAT.

You?

THEY STOP. PICK VAL UP. EXIT.

RESET TO THE BEGINNING.

THEY RETURN CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS AND TIED TO A CHAIR, A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND BACKS UP. AS HE DOES –

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

Churchill might deny this, but the structures of these plays could be understood as projections, or indeed embodiments, of the characters' narrative identities. In the plays above, they express as much if not more about the characters than their dialogue. The disruption to the narrative in *Heart's Desire* (2009, pp. 63-96), for example, might be understood as an analogue to the characters' familial dysfunction. Similarly the 'blue/kettle' 'virus' (Churchill, 2009, p. viii) in the play of the same name (2009, pp. 97-128), has the effect of destroying the characters' narrative identities just as much as Derek's lying. In turn, *This is a Chair* (2009, pp. 37-58)

could be understood as an expression of what Rushkoff would describe as the characters' failure 'to engage in meaningful dialogue about [. . .] long-term global issues' (2013, p. 3-4).

Roman Occupation attempts this on a small scale with Gianni in Scene 6 (pp. 33-55), expressing his ineptitude as leader better than his dialogue could have done; his ineloquence is in fact part of that. But the play attempts this on a larger scale with Chora, who similarly finds it difficult to express her pain in speech. By the time it came to writing the final draft, I was treating the structure of the play as a projection/embodiment of Chora herself. Everything she feels over the course of the story, including the shock of the rape, impacts upon the narrative via its structure. To be clear: the structure of the play is Chora. Just as Val raping Chora imposes a 'gendered grammar' on her narrative identity, the film studio scenes impress the grammar used in typical depictions of rape upon the narrative of the play. The shock the rape causes Chora is similarly not expressed by the rape's depiction but by its presentation via a disrupted linear structure. The shock is here affected by having Chora's attempted seduction of Gianni in Scene 5 (pp. 24-32) immediately follow the rape in Scene 4 (pp. 22-23). This order is counter to and so shocks the typical cultural narrative of rape. In the order of presentation, Chora is joined by Gianni following the 'real' rape:

VAL VIOLENTLY RAPES CHORA. CHORA FIGHTS BACK THROUGHOUT. BOTH REMAIN CLOTHED.

VAL FINISHES.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 5

THE SQUAT.

CHORA AND GIANNI. GIANNI IS DRESSED AS A ROMAN CENTURION – INCLUDES A HELMET.

CHORA: Let's – let's start that again. Okay?

GIANNI: Yes. Yes, okay –

CHORA: (SMILES) Come here then . . .

GIANNI MOVES TO KISS CHORA. SHE KNOCKS HER HEAD AGAINST THE HELMET.

Ow –

GIANNI: Sorry –

CHORA: Ow ow ow. Ow. Fuck.

GIANNI: Sorry, it's the uh helmet –

CHORA Take it off then you tit –

Here the play attempts what Rushkoff describes as a 'contrast[. . .] through association' (2013, p. 28), i.e. juxtaposition in space (Edgar, 2009, p. 3), instead of 'work[ing its] magic through a linear plot' (Rushkoff, 2013, p. 28)

One of the questions posed by Rushkoff still however remains: ‘how do we deal with the trauma of having lost’ linear structures ‘in the first place?’ (2013, p. 39). The task would seem to be one of transforming collapsed or traumatised structures into structures of healing. Cultural critic Philip Sandifer may have the answer.

In his acclaimed companion to long-running sci-fi series, *Doctor Who* (1963-), he furthers Rushkoff’s terminology by providing an extension to narrative collapse:

Where narrative collapse is based on threatening the basic functioning of a narrative structure so that further storytelling becomes *impossible* [. . .] *narrative substitution* works by initially appearing to tell one type of story, and then rejecting that story, *typically on ethical or ideological grounds*, generally by revealing that the story was in fact an entirely different type of story all along (Sandifer, 2014)

The term exposes the impossibility of the ‘clean slate’ (Klein, 2008, p. 30) that is, in this interpretation, imposed upon the survivor not only by the rapist during the act, but by herself after. If we understand the structure of *Roman Occupation* as an analogue to Chora’s narrative identity, both must, by the play’s conclusion, have reached a state from where the damage inflicted on them can be addressed and repaired. As Occupy teaches us, counter to the teachings of many historical revolutionary movements, repair is not a question of erasing and rebuilding but working with what you have. Narrative substitution recognises narrative collapse just as repair has to recognise the damage done. The substitution of narrative, i.e. the rejection of one story to reveal another, depends on collapse because the substitute directly responds to what

preceded it. In Churchill's *Heart's Desire* (pp. 63-96) the impact of each successive 'restart' builds with the play's (non-linear) progression. In *Roman Occupation* the impact of the substituting squat narrative is affected by the collapse of the studio narrative before. The effect builds when the squat narrative of Scenes 4 to 6 (pp. 22-55) is substituted with what might be understood as a situation comedy instigated by Marika's arrival in Scene 7 (p. 56), and in turn with the interruption of a police procedural in Scene 10 (p. 88) and a revolution narrative in Scene 12 (p. 104). This is not, as collapse indicates, merely a shift in genre, but instead the adoption of successive contrary *structures*. By Scene 12 the true narrative of the play first implied in the development meeting in Scene 1 (p. 1-9) has been reinstated or, in the language of this analysis, repaired.

This should not be considered as being any less 'savagely, furiously angry' (Sandifer, 2014) than the presentation of rape by In Yer Face theatre playwrights like Kane (above) and early Mark Ravenhill. To return to the context from which Sandifer develops his theory of narrative substitution we might see this anger demonstrated in his analysis of the *Doctor Who* episode 'A Good Man Goes to War' (BBC One, 2011). In Sandifer's reading, this episode addresses the rape of the Doctor's travelling companion, Amy:

[this] is a more symbolic sort of sexual violence. But there is, in the end, no mistaking what this story is (Sandifer, 2014)

A pregnant Amy has been kidnapped and interfered with by the episode's antagonists who intend to fashion her unborn baby into a weapon. Here

Amy's bodily autonomy has been egregiously violated, and in a way that is consciously and adamantly sexual. Any hints of ambiguity here [are] thoroughly shattered by the time Amy's baby is taken [. . .], exploding into an all too suggestive milky whiteness (ibid.)

He goes on:

let's not allow the mild sanitizing required to make the story child-appropriate [obscure] what it is. This is a story in which Amy is raped, and *the Doctor does terrible things to avenge her*. (ibid, my italics)

By initially appearing to adhere to the 'typical' rape-precedes-revenge narrative, the episode reveals its writer's anger at such stories through the technique of substitution:

It indulges audience expectations [. . .] before not only frustrating them, but damning them [it is] a trap – one that baldly tries to lure the audience into a specific misreading of the story just to turn around and punish them for doing so. It is angry and cynical [. . .] giving people exactly what they say they want, only to rip it away and condemn them for wanting it (ibid.)

The revenge narrative is made to collapse: It ends with the Doctor's failure and the kidnapping of Amy's newborn baby. This is followed by substitution, which is signposted by the arrival of the character River Song. Acting as a female and, in this

case, better version of the Doctor, the character assists Amy on to the path of narrative healing:

I know you're not all right, but hold tight Amy because you're going to be
(BBC One, 2011)

The episode ends on a cliffhanger substituting the narrative of this episode with the narrative of its concluding part, *Let's Kill Hitler* (BBC One, 2011), which despite its title follows the tropes and structure of a romantic comedy (Sandifer, 'The Universe', 2014). The Doctor is taken from his position as an avenger and placed in one where he is required to be a healer. Because if *Doctor Who*, a children's series, is going to address the topic of rape, 'what do we want the story to be?'

If the Doctor's name means anything, it is that in a story about a woman who is raped he will be the figure who helps her to heal [sic.]. If there is to be a *Doctor Who* story about rape then that story has to be one that is about the victim. It has to be one about her agency and her identity. One in which she is not an object, and more to the point one that rejects the entire ideology that would treat her as one. A *Doctor Who* story about rape isn't about vengeance, but reparation (Sandifer, 'Make Me a Warrior Now', 2014)

In rejecting the treatment of rape typified by In Yer Face theatre, *Roman Occupation* attempts to tell a similar story with all the anger that such a revisionist statement should entail. Marika is to Chora what the Doctor is to Amy. In the context of the play's take on structure, however, this requires that Marika heals or helps Chora to

heal the narrative. Merely by being present in the narrative Marika is able to repair the play's structure. The narrative posited by Scenes 4 to 6, which collapses due to Gianni and Dismas' ineptitude, is in effect rewritten by the introduction of Marika. For example, the revenge story that is played out when the boys, Gianni and Dismas, dominate the stage, where as in Scene 6, following Marika's arrival, this is negated. Similarly it is Marika's words (Scene 8, pp. 68-80) which re-direct Chora's anger from Chora herself and at the disruption of Chora's narrative identity; evidenced in the interview in Scene 10 (pp. 88-100) which reimposes on her the role of victim. It is also Marika who draws Chora's attention to the significance of her dress despite this ultimately being neutralised by Dismas' obsession with a clean slate (Scene 9, pp. 81-87). The narrative becomes then, through the use of a disrupted linear structure not one of male vengeance, but of the power of female relationships to repair the damage inflicted on them by men.

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ROMAN OCCUPATION

An original stage play by

Josh Elliott

ROMAN OCCUPATION

CAST

FILMMAKER #1	working on a film about The Movement
FILMMAKER #2	working on a film about The Movement
FILMMAKER #3	working on a film about The Movement
ACTRESS	auditioning for the role of 'Chora'
ACTOR	auditioning for the role of 'Val'
CHORA	an activist, early-20s
VAL	an activist, mid-30s
GIANNI	an activist and part-time tour guide, late-20s/early-30s
DISMAS	an activist, late teens
MARIKA	Chora's sister, one or two year(s) older
CAVALETTI	Italian state police, mid-50s
CREWMEMBERS	

The following roles might be doubled:

FILMMAKER #1 / CAVALETTI
FILMMAKER #2 / DISMAS
FILMMAKER #3 / GIANNI
ACTRESS / MARIKA

Doubling is only essential in the case of:

ACTOR / VAL

NOTES:

- Minimal set dressing to facilitate smooth transitioning between locations.
- Blackouts only to be used if stated or at the end of play. 'Lights' otherwise indicates change.

SCENE 1

A FILM STUDIO IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

COLD LIGHT.

3 FILMMAKERS, ALL MALE, STANDING.

A FLIP-CHART.

FILMMAKER #1 HAS A PAD AND PEN. MAKES NOTES THROUGH THE FOLLOWING.

FILMMAKER #3 HAS A MARKER. HE WRITES ON THE FLIP-CHART THROUGH THE FOLLOWING – EITHER WHEN INSTRUCTED OR ON IMPULSE.

FILMMAKER #2: A boy. A girl. That's how it starts.

FILMMAKER #1: The boy?

FILMMAKER #2: Black, let's say. Brown. Ethnic. Arab-looking –

FILMMAKER #3: Bearded.

FILMMAKER #2: What? No, not bearded. No. Too much. Shut up.

FILMMAKER #1: The girl?

FILMMAKER #2: (*SMILES*) Oh-ho-ho, we'll come back to the girl.

FILMMAKER #1: (*SMILES*) Okay. The boy?

FILMMAKER #2: The boy. I *cannot* wait to tell you about the boy . . .

FILMMAKER #1: How old is he?

FILMMAKER #3: Sixteen?

FILMMAKER #2: Twenty-nine. He's twenty-nine. Exterior, street, day. A car pulls up — a cab. In the back seat? The boy. Stay with him stay with him stay with him. Cut to other side of the street. Two policemen, one talking into radio. The other? Catches sight of the boy, getting out the cab. Motions to partner. 'Look'. A snippet from radio. 'Unidentified black-brown ethnic Arab-looking male'. Cut back. The boy getting out, reaching into

pocket for — What? We see a boy pay for a cab. They see a man with a gun . . .

BEAT.

Nailed it.

FILMMAKER #1: (*SHARP INTAKE OF BREATH*)

FILMMAKER #2: What?

FILMMAKER #1: (*SHARP INTAKE OF BREATH*)

FILMMAKER #2: *What?*

FILMMAKER #1: Younger?

FILMMAKER #2: Okay uh okay uh . . . Twenty-six? He's twenty-six and a street vendor. He's been beaten. Humiliated. A corrupt official, say. His goods taken from him. Confiscated. No reason, rhyme, whys –

FILMMAKER #3: His wares –

FILMMAKER #2: His wares, exactly. He's had enough. He can't take it, not anymore – Why should he? Exterior. Street. Day. The sound of engines, horns, shouting — A scream? We follow the boy through traffic, carrying a can of gas.

FILMMAKER #1: Younger.

FILMMAKER #2: Uh . . . Twenty-three. Shot – shot dead attending a demonstration.

FILMMAKER #1: Younger.

FILMMAKER #2: Sixteen. A student?

FILMMAKER #1: Younger.

FILMMAKER #3: Fifteen?

FILMMAKER #2: Fourteen?

FILMMAKER #1: Wait wait wait. Wait. Fifteen. Good. Yeah. Fifteen, that's good. Love it. I like fifteen. . . Go – go back to the street vendor.

- FILMMAKER #2: (TO #3) This guy? Am I right? (TO #1) Okay, alright, okay. A fifteen year-old street vendor. Walking through traffic –
- FILMMAKER #1: Walking through traffic where?
- FILMMAKER #2: Where is *key* –
- FILMMAKER #3: A city.
- FILMMAKER #2: Obviously a city. But what kind of a city? Hm? A panoramic kind of city. Know what I mean? Skyscrapers. Temples . . . (TO #3) Brainstorm that. (TO #1) A city of cultural and historical importance.
- FILMMAKER #1: A city by the sea.
- FILMMAKER #2: Yes, a city – What? Huh?
- FILMMAKER #1: By the sea, yeah. Problem? I'm thinking thematically here, I'm just trying to jump on your uh . . . Wavelength?
- FILMMAKER #3: Yeah. Yeah, thematically that's good. (TO #2) Isn't it? Thematically that's um interesting . . .
- FILMMAKER #2: Very. Yes. Very. That's very interesting because, because . . . Because?
- FILMMAKER #3: Ebb.
- FILMMAKER #2: Ebb, that's right. Ebb?
- FILMMAKER #3: As in flow, currents, cycles.
- FILMMAKER #2: Cycles, yeah.
- FILMMAKER #1: Like it?
- FILMMAKER #3: Love it.
- FILMMAKER #2: Well, I am sold. So long as it's somewhere uh capital-R Romantic. Get me? But real. There's a tension there. Real but romantic. (TO #3) Write that down. (TO #1) Exotic. Foreign –
- FILMMAKER #1: Not too foreign.

FILMMAKER #2: Not too foreign, no. It – it has to be closer to us than to the boy. But at the same time, romantic and foreign, exotic enough for us to want to be there with him. It's vital, isn't it, that we understand he *wants* to be there. It's vital we understand he *loves* it, that he loves this city —
Wherever it is –

FILMMAKER #3: Rome?

FILMMAKER #2: Later –

FILMMAKER #3: It starts with a capital-R –

FILMMAKER #2: *Later*. We need to understand that this city has let him down. We need to share his um . . . What's the word?

FILMMAKER #3: Disillusionment –

FILMMAKER #2: Disappointment, yeah.

FILMMAKER #3: That's not what I said –

FILMMAKER #1: Disillusionment.

FILMMAKER #2: What?

FILMMAKER #1: What's uh what's his name, this boy?

FILMMAKER #3: Let's – let's call him Mohamed.

FILMMAKER #1: Of course. (*WRITING IT DOWN*) Mo-ha-med. Is that uh one 'm' or?

FILMMAKER #3: Wait. Wait wait wait. Let me see I've got this . . . Mohamed. Fifteen.
Street vendor. Walking through traffic.

FILMMAKER #2: Forget traffic.

FILMMAKER #3: I thought –

FILMMAKER #2: Mohamed. Fifteen. Street vendor. Immigrant? Putting that out there? Yes? No? Later? On a – Wait for it . . . Exterior. Beach. Day. Sounds – laughter, the sea. Screams? Happy screams. . . Wide shot. Mohamed, making his way past holidaymakers, making his way to the sea, right?

Behind him? A panoramic view of the city. Modern eyesores, skyscrapers. Temples. Ancient monuments. Urban decay. Culture, history – we’re painting a picture here, yeah? Close up on the boy’s face. It’s bloody. It’s black and blue. Bruised —

FILMMAKER #3: Bearded —

FILMMAKER #2: Shut up. Cut to blue.

FILMMAKER #3: You mean black, right?

FILMMAKER #1: Who beats him? The corrupt official?

FILMMAKER #2: Yes. Yes, or uh . . . The police.

FILMMAKER #1: (*SMILES*) The police. Nice —

FILMMAKER #3: Why?

FILMMAKER #1: That’s – that’s a fantastic question. Why, this is key, *why* is he beaten?

FILMMAKER #2: Well . . . Well maybe this um black-brown ethnic-looking Arab guy, did something bad, here, in this city. Before any of this even happened —

FILMMAKER #1: Before Mohamed?

FILMMAKER #2: Before even Mohamed. Someone who maybe uh very closely resembles him? He’s mistaken for this other guy, from before. I mean, black people do bad things too. Right? (*TO #3*) Write that down.

FILMMAKER #3: I’m not gonna write that down —

FILMMAKER #2: Cut to blue —

FILMMAKER #3: Black —

FILMMAKER #2: (*SMILES*) Blue. The sea and the sky so blue. Mohamed steps into frame. Camera doesn’t move, doesn’t follow. Stays on him. We just watch. We can *only* watch. We watch Mohamed walk slowly into the sea. Down to his ankles. Down to his knees. Down to his waist . . . Eventually all we can see is the top of his head. After that? Nothing.

FILMMAKER #1: (*INTAKE OF BREATH, IMPRESSED*)

FILMMAKER #2: You feeling this?

FILMMAKER #1: Oh-ho-ho. I'm feeling this. This – this is . . . (*TO #3*) What about you, what do you think?

FILMMAKER #3: Me? Me? Oh uh . . . Yeah. Yeah absolutely. Mohamed, fifteen, street vendor. Disappearing into the sea . . . What happens next?

FILMMAKER #2: (*SMILES*)

FILMMAKER #1: (*SMILES*)

FILMMAKER #2: Cue voiceover.

FILMMAKER #3: Whose voiceover?

FILMMAKER #2: *Mohamed's.*

FILMMAKER #3: You've lost me.

FILMMAKER #1: He's winging it now. Watch this . . .

FILMMAKER #2: 'Look Mom, no hands.'

FILMMAKER #1: This'll be genius this —

FILMMAKER #2: (*TO #3*) This guy? (*TO #1*) You sexy man you. (*TO #3*) *This* is why I love working with him. Didn't I say? Didn't I say that — ?

FILMMAKER #1: Don't ruin it now, mate, I'm hooked. Hooked. (*TO #3*) You hooked?

FILMMAKER #3: What about the can of gasoline?

FILMMAKER #1: (*TO #2*) What about the can of gasoline?

FILMMAKER #2: Forget about the can of gasoline.

FILMMAKER #3: I liked the can of gasoline —

FILMMAKER #1: I liked it too.

FILMMAKER #2: Forget the can of gasoline.

FILMMAKER #3: But —

FILMMAKER #2: On a beach? Really? No. Forget the can of gasoline. He drowns. In the sea. In the current, in the ebb, the flow. Voiceover.

FILMMAKER #1: This is it . . .

FILMMAKER #2: This is how it starts . . .

BEAT.

CLEARs THROAT.

My name is Mohamed Sheab.

FILMMAKER #3: (*WRITING IT DOWN*) She-ab?

FILMMAKER #2: Sheab, yes. Sheab. His name is Mohamed Sheab, but he's changed it. Because he loves this country, yeah, this city? He's wanted to live here his entire life. He's had postcards above the little straw bed he shared with six brothers and six sisters, back in . . . Wherever. He wants to fit in here. So if we're talking New York it's, I dunno, Mark. If it's Paris, it's Marcel —

FILMMAKER #3: If Rome, Marcello —

FILMMAKER #1: Right, Rome. Rome, was it? I like Marcello. Rome. Hm . . . And then?

FILMMAKER #2: And then . . .

FILMMAKER #1: We can come back to this. Let's —

FILMMAKER #2: No no no. No. I've got — I've got something. Listen. The voiceover. So he tells us his name, Mohamed, how he changed it. How he's descended from black nomadic emirs back in wherever, yeah? He tells us how his body washed up on the beach — he's dead, this stage. The packed beach, right? Wherever this is, it's the height of summer, tourist season. That's obvious. He tells us how his skin cracked in the Sun. How his stomach gave in, staining the sand. He was impossible to ignore, he tells us, but they tried. All those locals, those tourists. He tells us how, eventually, a

man threw a towel over his body, then returned to his family of four. This wasn't a gesture of respect, right, this was disgust. They couldn't stand to look at him while they picnicked. No-one called the authorities. No-one cared, okay? His skin meant, I dunno, Somali? Roma? Flogging sunglasses. Begging, busking, that kind of thing. He tells all this and as he does this this this voiceover changes. There's no break in what's being said, got it? It's just that Mohamed's *voice* changes. Fades into that of the girl's.

FILMMAKER #1: A girl's? The girl? I'd almost forgotten the girl.

FILMMAKER #2: (*SMILES*) That's how it starts, you see, with the girl.

PAUSE.

#3 CLEARS THROAT.

(*TO #3*) What?

FILMMAKER #3: It's just – just one thing. The thing about the can of gasoline, remember? Is that that actually happened. For real.

FILMMAKER #1: Is that right?

FILMMAKER #3: Yep. (*SEARCHING POCKETS*) I've um . . . got an . . . article . . . here.

HE HANDS IT TO #1.

That's, just there, that's the uh photo. You see?

FILMMAKER #1: That is what we call a strong visual.

FILMMAKER #3: Right?

FILMMAKER #1: (*TO #2*) You seen this?

FILMMAKER #2: What about the – ?

FILMMAKER #3: 'Based on a true story'.

FILMMAKER #1: That. That is how it starts.

FILMMAKER #2: What about the girl?

FILMMAKER #1: Hm? Oh. Oh yes the uh girl. Go on about the girl.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 2

THE STUDIO.

FILMMAKER #1 AND AN ACTRESS.

THE FILMMAKER HAS A SCRIPT. THE ACTRESS WEARS A BLACK DRESS.

A STUDIO CAMERA, AT A DISTANCE, ON ACTRESS.

FILMMAKER #1: Aaand whenever you're ready, turn to your left?

ACTRESS: (*TURNING LEFT*) So she's this sort-of kind-of political radical, right? This activist, this um freedom-fighter? No. Freedom-fighter's too far but uh yeah. Yeah I like her. I like her a lot –

FILMMAKER #1: And to the right –

ACTRESS: (*TURNING TO THE RIGHT*) I just really feel I identify with her. Not that I'm really anything like her, you know, but I feel I'd like to be. I'd like to be Chora. I like that she asks the right questions –

FILMMAKER #1: Now all the way around –

ACTRESS: (*TURNING ON THE SPOT*) Like this?

FILMMAKER #1: Slower, maybe – ?

ACTRESS: (*SLOWING DOWN*) I think you, that is you and the story department, have got her spot on. I like that she's a bit, well, a bit of a dick really. She's on the right side, but she's no princess. Yeah. I feel I'm in safe —

FILMMAKER #1: Hands?

RAISES HER HANDS, PALMS OUT. WIGGLES FINGERS.

ACTRESS: She's not who you'd normally expect for this sort-of thing to happen to? That sounds really really bad, but she isn't, is she?

FILMMAKER #1: Turn –

TURNS HANDS, BACKS OUT.

ACTRESS: I like that. I like that it challenges that a bit? Honestly, I haven't connected to a part, like this, in a really really long time –

FILMMAKER #1: And, into camera, the role you're auditioning for.

ACTRESS: Chora.

FILMMAKER #1: The?

ACTRESS: The?

FILMMAKER #1: Vuh vuh vuh –

ACTRESS: Oh. Victim?

FILMMAKER #1: Right. Fantastic. And uh I'm glad to hear you had a look at the character bio —

ACTRESS: It's just I don't see her as a victim as such —

FILMMAKER #1: Yeah. Well we'll talk character later, okay? More importantly, have you had a looked at the audition pieces? Yeah? Excellent, top marks. And um which one you gonna give a go?

ACTRESS: Well, I was thinking the video speech?

FILMMAKER #1: Popular choice.

ACTRESS: Oh. So, I could do the other one if —

FILMMAKER #1: No no no. No, you stick with that. How did you find it?

ACTRESS: I loved it. I really really . . . Yeah. It was really uh affecting, actually –

FILMMAKER #1: Great. Another look before we start? No? Okay, let's uh crack on then. If you could . . . start by . . . removing . . . your dress?

PAUSE.

ACTRESS: Sorry. What?

FILMMAKER #1: The uh dress? Off? Whenever you're ready – no, no rush.

ACTRESS: Um . . .

FILMMAKER #1: Hm. Look. She, that is the victim, would have recorded the video topless. She wanted as many hits as she could get? That with the balaclava . . . It was a brand image then, in a way. A display of . . . soli soli soli – friendship, with others. She was aligning her cause with that of the international protest community. There’s a note, I think, (*SKIMMING*) yes, in the script. (*REFERRING TO HIS SCRIPT*) Groups like um Femen. Pussy Riot. SlutWalk? That can’t be right . . . Here.

HE SHOWS HER THE SCRIPT.

ACTRESS: Where?

FILMMAKER #1: Just there. Look. See?

ACTRESS: Oh. Yeah. Yes um I guess I must’ve missed it. I got the bit about the balaclava. Do you want me to do it with a balaclava cos I brought my own. Well it’s my housemate’s . . . hat . . . but . . .

SHE PRODUCES A BALACLAVA.

FILMMAKER #1: Nobody’s *forcing* you to do anything you’re not a hundred percent willing to do. Okay? But, if you are successful, the part will require nudity.

PAUSE.

SHE TAKES OFF HER DRESS.

Good. Thank you.

SHE’S UNSURE WHERE TO PUT IT . . .

You can pop it on the floor just there.

ACTRESS: Here?

FILMMAKER #1: That’s right. There.

SHE PUTS IT DOWN.

And again. Hands?

PAUSE.

SHE RAISES HER HANDS, PALMS OUT.

Turn.

TURNS HANDS, BACKS OUT.

Lower hands. And to the left?

LOWERS HANDS, TURNS LEFT.

Right.

TURNS RIGHT.

Aaand all the way around?

STARTS TURNING —

Whoops. Slower?

SLOWS DOWN . . .

FILMMAKER #2 ENTERS, CARRYING A BOX FULL OF PAPERS, BINDERS, AND A POT PLANT.

THE ACTRESS STOPS. COVERS HERSELF —

FILMMAKER #2: (TO #1) Hi. (TO ACTRESS) Hey. Sorry. Uh . . . (TO #1) I'm just um I'm just on my way out now, so uh, so you'll let me know about that drink, yeah?

NO RESPONSE.

Love to um Barb, okay? And the girls? Cassie and um . . . I haven't seen them since . . . Well. *(TO ACTRESS)* Good luck. *(TO #1)* And I'll see you soon, you –

FILMMAKER #1: If not soon mate, then later.

FILMMAKER #2: Oh. Oh right, yeah . . .

PAUSE.

FILMMAKER #2 EXITS OPPOSITE FROM WHERE HE CAME.

Sorry. Sorry sorry sorry. Former colleague . . . Well that was um fantastic, actually. Absolutely spot on

ACTRESS: I'm um gonna put the balaclava on now, okay?

FILMMAKER #1: After that performance, do whatever makes you feel comfortable.

SHE PUTS ON THE BALACLAVA.

And, as before, whenever you're ready.

SHE BREATHES IN, HOLDS IT.

BREATHES OUT.

ACTRESS-CHORA: My name is Mohamed Sheab.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 3

THE STUDIO.

THE ACTRESS, FILMMAKER #1, AND AN ACTOR.

THE ACTRESS IS NO LONGER TOPLESS. THE ACTOR CARRIES TWO COPIES OF THE SCRIPT.

ACTRESS: Sorry I will probably need to see a script for this . . .

ACTOR: Oh not to worry. (*HANDING HER A SCRIPT*) I picked up two.

ACTRESS: (*TAKING IT*) Thanks.

SHE STARTS READING.

ACTOR: So this is it then, yeah?

ACTRESS: (*NOT LOOKING UP*) Yup.

ACTOR: The big one.

ACTRESS: The rape scene.

ACTOR: Yeah.

PAUSE.

It's uh it's a toughie. Isn't it?

ACTRESS: (*LOOKING UP*) Hm? Oh. Totally. Totally yeah. Really really really tough.

ACTOR: (*TO FILMMAKER*) Do you mind if we take a minute, mate? Talk it through.

FILMMAKER #1: Oh sure. Sure. By all means guys, just um, I'll just . . .

ACTOR: It's a tricky one –

FILMMAKER #1: (*LAUGHING*) Oh that – that is for certain. Go right ahead. Don't mind me I'll um . . . Ignore me. Pretend I'm not here.

ACTRESS: (*LOW*) You alright?

ACTOR: Yeah. Yeah I'm fine, just, um . . . Just how *physical* do you want me to get?

ACTRESS: How d'you mean?

ACTOR: Well I was thinking of, you know, just sort of going for it . . .

ACTRESS: Right.

ACTOR: You know what? It would actually be, would it be, easier if I just uh showed you? Walked you through what I was thinking? Is that . . . cool?

ACTRESS: Yeah. Fine. Yeah, that's fine.

ACTOR: Cool.

ACTRESS: Good.

ACTOR: Well . . . So . . . So when I get to my line, what's it, the line about the, uh . . . Fuck.

ACTRESS: The chastity belt bit?

ACTOR: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. The chastity belt bit, yeah. I say that bit about the belt, and then I thought I'd . . .

HE PRETENDS TO TWIST HER ARM ROUND HER BACK. SLOWLY.

And then . . .

GRABS A HANDFUL OF HER HAIR. GENTLY.

And then maybe if you, um . . .

ACTRESS: Down . . . ?

ACTOR: Down, yeah.

ACTRESS: Okay.

BOTH KNEEL, SLOWLY, HIM HOLDING HER HAIR.

ACTOR: And then from here I can sort of, well . . . bend you over.

ACTRESS: Bend me over?

BOTH GET UP.

ACTOR: I guess? Yeah. You know . . . No?

ACTRESS: Hm. Uh . . . I mean, that's *fine* —

ACTOR: No no no. If you've got something in mind we can totally try that? Or, I dunno, I could force you to the floor, hold you down —

ACTRESS: Going back to the first one . . . If that's really what you want to go with, then that's . . . fine. Really. Absolutely fine. It's just . . . it's just there's something sort of pornographic about that whole thing, isn't there? The whole bent-over, doggy . . . thing. It's sort of unavoidable.

ACTOR: (LAUGHING) I think you're being a bit, well, prudish, actually. Sorry.

ACTRESS: But that's . . . that's exactly my point. It's . . . it's, what's the word, charged. That image isn't specific to rape. It's erotic. People shouldn't be turned on by this —

ACTOR: I think we can take that for granted —

ACTRESS: I'm sorry, but I don't think we can.

ACTOR: Okay.

ACTRESS: Sorry.

ACTOR: No it's um it's good. These are the right questions. It's good that we're talking this through. It's creative. (LOW) He'll want to see that . . .

ACTRESS: Yeah. Yeah totally, you're right.

ACTOR: So we'll go with the second one?

ACTRESS: What second one?

ACTOR: My second suggestion . . .

ACTRESS: Remind me?

ACTOR: I force you to the floor, hold you down. You're the right way up, naturally —

ACTRESS: Mm-no.

ACTOR: No?

ACTRESS: No. I think doing it that way implies your character is um stronger than her . . . More powerful, even.

ACTOR: Well he is.

ACTRESS: Sorry what?

ACTOR: I mean, I am. He's male, she's female. He's a guy, she's a girl, so he's stronger, isn't he?

ACTRESS: That isn't necessarily true —

ACTOR: Right. Sure. But —

ACTRESS: And even if he is, he's made weaker by doing this. He's demeaned, diminished in some way. If we could somehow demonstrate that through how we represent the actual act of . . . then, well, that would be uh cool.

ACTOR: Do you have something in mind?

ACTRESS: No. No I don't, but like you said, I think these are the right questions. I just think we need to be careful not to empower him.

FILMMAKER #1: Interesting. This is *very* interesting. But —

ACTRESS: Whilst obviously we, sorry, (*EXTENDING 'WE' TO INCLUDE FILMMAKER*) we have a responsibility to accuracy, it's him *thinking* he's stronger and her *thinking* she's weaker that actually allows what happens to happen. It's not got much to do with physical strength at all.

FILMMAKER #1: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. This is all absolutely something we can talk about . . . eventually. Let's just do it his way for now. Okay?

PAUSE.

ACTRESS: The first or —

FILMMAKER #1: The first. Thank you.

THE ACTRESS DROPS HER SCRIPT. SHE CROUCHES ON ALL FOURS, DELIBERATELY FACING AWAY FROM THE FILMMAKER.

Sorry. Would you mind facing me for this?

SHE SHUFFLES ROUND TO FACE HIM. MOVES HER SCRIPT. ARCHES HER BACK.

Excellent, thank you. And, uh . . .

THE ACTOR KNEELS BEHIND THE ACTRESS, BODY UPRIGHT.

PUTS HIS SCRIPT DOWN BESIDE HIM. HE UNBUCKLES HIS BELT, UNZIPS HIS FLIES.

ACTOR: (TO FILMMAKER) I was uh I was thinking angry? Do you think he'd be angry for this bit?

FILMMAKER #1: Do whatever comes naturally.

ACTOR: I'll try angry for now then and um if not . . . Yeah. Right.

HE LIFTS UP THE ACTRESS' DRESS. HOLDS HER HIPS. STARTS THRUSTING.

FILMMAKER #1: Um, mate? Mate?

ACTOR: (STILL THRUSTING) Yep?

FILMMAKER #1: Don't forget your lines.

HE STOPS.

ACTOR: Shit. Yeah. Sorry.

FILMMAKER #1: That's okay.

*HE RESTS HIS SCRIPT ON THE ACTRESS' BACK.
TURNS PAGES, SEARCHING.*

ACTOR: Um . . .

FILMMAKER #1: I think it's page forty-two? Forty-three?

ACTOR: Yep. Got it. Thanks.

RESUMES THRUSTING.

ACTOR-VAL: You bitch . . . You stupid fucking . . . Err . . .

ACTRESS: Cunt.

ACTOR: What?

ACTRESS: It says cunt. You stupid fucking cunt.

ACTOR: Right. Yes. Thank you.

THE ACTRESS RAISES HER HAND.

FILMMAKER #1: Yes?

ACTRESS: It's just I'm uh struggling to believe she wouldn't fight back. There's no lines, she doesn't even say anything. It just isn't her.

PAUSE.

FILMMAKER #1: Stop stop stop. Right, let's . . . Um, mate, you can stop . . . Let's uh do this again. From the top. Okay?

BOTH GET TO THEIR FEET.

*THE ACTRESS STRAIGHTENS HER DRESS. THE
ACTOR BUCKLES HIS BELT, ZIPS HIS FLIES.*

BOTH PICK UP SCRIPTS.

ACTRESS: Which line?

FILMMAKER #1: The top of the action. Forget the dialogue for now . . . Mate, this time, would you mind removing her dress?

ACTOR: *(ADVANCING)* Sure. Sorry. Yeah sure. Now or —?

ACTRESS: Wait wait wait. Um, sorry, but, why would she be naked? I thought she *had* to wear the dress. Isn't that the point? It's important, later on in the script. Isn't it? *(CONSULTING THE SCRIPT)* Yes. Here. *(HANDING THE FILMMAKER THE SCRIPT)* Look. She has to be wearing the dress . . .

FILMMAKER #1: *(NOT TAKING IT)* Okay. Listen . . . This recall was as much about testing your chemistry, seeing how you got on, as it was about the err ability. With that in mind . . . Mate, we'd like to try you with some other girls.

BEAT.

ACTOR: What? Sorry. Really? That's . . . That's amazing. Thank you. *Thank* you.

BEAT.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 4

A SQUAT IN PRESENT-DAY ROME.

WARM LIGHT.

THE ACTOR, NOW THE REAL VAL, AND CHORA.

CHORA WEARS A BLACK DRESS, IDENTICAL TO THE ACTRESS IN PREVIOUS.

A WASHING MACHINE IN PLACE OF THE FLIP-CHART.

CHORA SPINS.

CHORA: What do you think?

BOTH STARE.

LONG PAUSE.

BOTH START LAUGHING.

Is it really that bad?

VAL: No, it's just uh . . . Turn left?

SHE TURNS TO THE LEFT.

Right?

TURNS TO THE RIGHT.

And around?

CHORA: (*TURNING*) Like this?

VAL: Yeah –

CHORA: I feel like a TWAT.

VAL: When you first got here you refused to shave your legs

CHORA: (*LAUGHING*) Right. Yeah. I was in that phase.

VAL: You've changed.

PAUSE.

CHORA: It's not for me anyway, it's for Gianni. I'm meeting his mum.

VAL: Huh.

CHORA: What?

VAL: Nothing, I just never realised that was serious.

CHORA: Well. It is.

VAL: I thought he was gay, actually. You know. With the veganism and –

CHORA: Half the people here are vegan –

VAL: My mum was a secretary at Cinecittà, in the seventies.

CHORA: Really? Fuck. Wow. That's . . . Have you told Gianni that?

VAL: She wasn't married, she wasn't married when she had me, but she pretended. She would wear a wedding ring to work, to stop the men, you know?

CHORA: What are you saying?

VAL: I am saying I thought Gianni was your chastity belt.

VAL LAUGHS, CHORA DOESN'T.

VAL: (*ADVANCING*) My mother wore a wedding ring. You? You have Gi.

CHORA: The fuck are you doing, Val? Val. Stop.

VAL VIOLENTLY RAPES CHORA. CHORA FIGHTS BACK THROUGHOUT. BOTH REMAIN CLOTHED.

VAL FINISHES.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 5

THE SQUAT.

CHORA AND GIANNI. GIANNI IS DRESSED AS A ROMAN CENTURION – INCLUDES A HELMET.

CHORA: Let's – let's start that again. Okay?

GIANNI: Yes. Yes, okay –

CHORA: (SMILES) Come here then . . .

GIANNI MOVES TO KISS CHORA. SHE KNOCKS HER HEAD AGAINST THE HELMET.

Ow –

GIANNI: Sorry –

CHORA: Ow ow ow. Ow. Fuck.

GIANNI: Sorry, it's the uh helmet –

CHORA: Take it off then you tit –

GIANNI: Yes. Yeah. Sorry.

GIANNI TAKES OFF THE HELMET. UNDERNEATH, A PUNK HAIRSTYLE.

Better now or?

CHORA LAUGHS.

What?

CHORA: Nothing.

SHE KISSES HIM. HE WINCES. SHE DOESN'T NOTICE. HE PULLS AWAY.

GIANNI: I look like an idiot, don't I?

CHORA: What? No. Nooo. You look good. Really.

GIANNI: I do. My God, Chora, this job, it is killing me. Walking around like this. Talking about history, architecture. I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know what to say. I'm just making up rubbish –

CHORA: Do you wanna practice?

GIANNI: Ha. No.

CHORA: It'll be fun, I'd like to see –

GIANNI: Come on the tour then. No. No no no. Don't. Don't actually do that. Don't. Don't come on the tour, that was –

CHORA: Do You Want to Practice?

GIANNI: No. Yes. No. No no no. Yes. I – yes – I don't know.

CHORA: Let's do it. Go over there, the washing machine.

GIANNI: I'm awful, really –

CHORA: Just stand over there –

GIANNI: Where?

CHORA: There. Pretend it's the Trevi fountain or something.

BEAT.

GIANNI: Do I have to?

CHORA: Yes. It's this or I come on the tour.

GIANNI: (SIGHS) (INDICATING THE WASHER-DRYER) And here we have the . . . Trevi . . . fountain. Seriously, we're doing this?

CHORA: Yes.

HE BREATHES IN, HOLDS IT.

BREATHES OUT.

GIANNI: (MONOTONE) The fountain was of course made world-famous by the film, *La Dolce Vita*. (SIGHS.) The film by Fellini – no doubt one of

Italy's greatest directors – includes a scene in which actors Anita Ekberg and Marcello Mastroianni wade through its waters, infatuated. After Mastroianni's death in 1996, the fountain was turned off and draped in black –

CHORA: Bit . . . Bit more enthusiasm? Maybe? At the minute you sound a bit like, well, a prick, actually.

GIANNI: (SING-SONG) Today, the Trevi is again turned off! Only this time it's draped in yellow construction tape! This follows damage to the central figure of Triton during recent rioting –

CHORA: Just . . . Just be yourself.

GIANNI: Myself? In this outfit?

CHORA: Try –

GIANNI: Talking about Fellini?

CHORA: You love Fellini. Try.

GIANNI: This follows damage to the central figure of Triton during recent rioting. (IMAGINING A CROWD) Anyone? No? Nobody heard? The race riots? No? Mohamed Sheab, police brutality? Or maybe you all forgot?

CHORA: You're not actually gonna say this, are you?

GIANNI: You might have even seen the YouTube video featuring that young woman there. There? Behind you? No? She was wearing a balaclava at the time and uh not much else –

CHORA: Shut. Up.

GIANNI: Contractors anticipate that restoration will continue until early next year. In the meantime, they kindly request that you *do not* throw coins in the fountain, as is tradition –

CHORA: Well that's crap –

GIANNI: This has unfortunately led to the closure of the nearest local supermarket. For a few years now, the supermarket was subsidised by the thousands collected from the fountain each night. These collections allowed it to offer the district's poorest families essential items for free. Given that contractors share an umbrella company with the new megastore opening in Trevi in two weeks' time –

CHORA: Shit. Really? Fuck. We should do something –

GIANNI: Maybe when you're better.

CHORA: Better?

GIANNI: Rested. Recovered –

CHORA: Excuse me – ?

GIANNI: Sorry, what's that madam? Yes. Yes I think it did have something to do with Audrey Hepburn. It featured, I believe, in Roman Holiday. Now at this point in the tour we generally stop for lunch. For those of you who brought uh packed-lunches? Is it? Yes. Packed-lunches. For you lunch-packers, I would normally suggest making use of the steps surrounding the fountain, or even the rim itself. Unfortunately, it was deemed necessary to install the concrete spikes you see now . . . What's that? No. No, no, it's not to discourage pigeons. Any guesses? Kids? No-one? It's to discourage tramps. Tramps. Hobos? Whilst an inconvenience for lunch-packers, the spikes make it impossible for the city's homeless to sleep there. (SING-SONG) Fortunately there's a Starbucks round the corner, with ample seating! Though you will, I'm afraid, have to buy something.

CHORA: See? You know something about architecture.

GIANNI: Yes. Yes.

CHORA: Come here.

PAUSE.

Come. Here.

SHE HUGS HIM.

I'm proud of you. Really. This is – it's a good thing you're doing. Unnecessary, given you've two sisters with pretty, I'd say, sizeable incomes. But –

GIANNI: It's my mother, Chora. I'm the eldest. The son. It's my job.

CHORA: Yeah I know. I know you think that, but –

GIANNI: Ch –

CHORA: I know. We've done this to death, it's fine. Really. I won't – I'm still gonna get to meet her, though? Right? Just, we didn't get to see her that weekend cos of . . .

GIANNI: Because of –

CHORA: Yeah.

BEAT.

I mean if she doesn't mind your haircut she's not gonna mind me, is she. Is she? My Italian, by the way, is so so so much better now so . . .

GIANNI: Chora –

CHORA: Yeah? Ohmygod we could visit *her*, couldn't we? Save her coming all the way down to Rome. Now you've got this job? You don't have to give it all to her, right? And I can always ask home for money, ask *my* sister. We could stay there a bit. Just a bit. I'd actually really properly like to take a break, you know? From here? See more of Italy maybe and uh, I dunno, get back on Mohamed stuff after. After like a week or . . .

That'd be good, wouldn't? The others can keep things going, it's not like they're dependent on us or anything. We'll get a babysitter in for Dismas.

BEAT.

That was a joke.

GIANNI: Chora –

CHORA: She wouldn't have a problem with us sharing a bed, would she? I mean you said she's old-fashioned, but I mean . . . Come on. Right? Come on? You're like nearly thirty and I'm . . . a bit younger, yeah, but . . . Oh shit. That won't be a problem, will it?

BEAT.

What? Seriously, what? Every time I talk to you you avoid looking at me. I wait for you to say something and you just just just stand there like a dick –

GIANNI: Chora, you don't. You don't wait for me to say anything. I try saying something and you . . .

CHORA: What?

GIANNI: Nothing.

CHORA: Really?

GIANNI: We both do this. Discussing what happened. We're avoiding it.

CHORA: What? The riots?

GIANNI: No –

CHORA: I know what you mean, but can we . . . just . . . not . . . now . . . ?

GIANNI: When?

CHORA: I dunno, just not now. If we talk about it now I won't wanna . . .

GIANNI: What?
CHORA: You know.
GIANNI: No. What?

BEAT.

What?
CHORA: I won't feel like – you know.
GIANNI: No I honestly do not know what you're trying to say. What?
CHORA: Feel like being the . . .
GIANNI: The what?
CHORA: To your . . .
GIANNI: Huh?
CHORA: Thingy to your thing. I dunno. I was trying to think of an Ancient Roman way of saying that I really really really want to have sex. But my head's all like Nero and fiddling and just no. Just. No. Anyway. I do. Really. Like now.
GIANNI: Uh . . .
CHORA: What?
GIANNI: Chora.
CHORA: Yes . . .
GIANNI: You were raped.
CHORA: Yes. Yes I was.
GIANNI: So should you really be doing that? Even thinking about that?
CHORA: I thought that's what you meant by resting –
GIANNI: No. No no no. It really was not, it was –
CHORA: Look. I promise you? I want this. Okay? I really really need this.
GIANNI: We had that . . . We had that problem. Before. Didn't we?

CHORA: Oh. That. No. No. I didn't mean to . . . No. Forget that. Even if we just. You know. I just want to –

GIANNI: Chora you were –

CHORA: Raped. Yes. Yes. Yes, I was. Did this bit. We had him tied to a chair and you let him go –

GIANNI: I'm sorry –

CHORA: It's okay. Just do this for me. I didn't ask for revenge, did I? Actually though, did I? I'm asking for this. You can do this. This'll fix it –

GIANNI: You're not broken –

CHORA: Nope. Never thought I was. I meant sex. This'll fix sex for me.

BEAT.

GIANNI: I know . . . I know I should be able to – to do this. But I – I – I – I can't. I can't. It's too difficult.

CHORA: Would – would uh talking about it make it easier?

GIANNI: Huh?

CHORA: You said you wanted to discuss it. Would that – that would help, right?

GIANNI: Yeah. Yes. Thank you, yes. Yes it would.

PAUSE.

CHORA: Do you wanna maybe ask a question or something? Cos otherwise . . .

GIANNI: Yeah uh yeah. Sure. Err . . . Sure. So so so so um when – when what happened, happened . . . Was it safe?

CHORA: Safe?

GIANNI: Stupid. Sorry that was . . . Stupid. Was it violent?

CHORA: Yes. Yes it was violent.

GIANNI: I mean how violent.

CHORA: I was raped.

GIANNI: That's – that's all you've said, but to what – to what . . . level? Is that the word? Degree?

CHORA: It was pretty violent, Gi. I was raped.

GIANNI: Right. Right. Another . . . Stupid. Yeah. Okay, um – did you –

CHORA: Maybe we should –

GIANNI: enjoy it?

CHORA: What?

BEAT.

Sorry what?

GIANNI: When what happened, happened. Was there any part of you that –

CHORA EXITS.

Chora? Chora. Chora, wait –

LIGHTS.

SCENE 6

THE SQUAT.

GIANNI AND DISMAS.

DISMAS: Ready?

PAUSE.

GIANNI: Yes.

BOTH EXIT.

THEY RETURN CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS AND TIED TO A CHAIR, A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND BACKS UP. AS HE DOES –

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Stepped in it, didn't I? Look. I fucking cleaned this this morning

GIANNI: Sorry, the floor? Or your shoe?

DISMAS: Both. (TUTS) That is . . . Not nice. (TUTS)

GIANNI: Can we – ?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes, let's do this. Yeah.

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: Yeahhh.

BEAT.

Uh . . . she's alright with this, is she?

GIANNI: Who?

DISMAS: Chora.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Only asking cos this, all this, this? This isn't very her, is it?

GIANNI: No. But neither's getting raped.

DISMAS: No . . .

GIANNI: And there has to be some sort of justice here, doesn't there? Or what are we about – ?

DISMAS: Right –

GIANNI: He can't get away with this –

DISMAS: No –

GIANNI: We're better than this, what he did, all of us –

DISMAS: Yes.

GIANNI: Right.

DISMAS: Right. Righty righty right. Right.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: Yes. I mean –

GIANNI: I mean this is just to throw some ideas about –

DISMAS: That's all we can do, really –

GIANNI: Exactly. So . . .

DISMAS: So?

GIANNI: That – that was it.

DISMAS: Good. Well, that was an important first step.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: A hundred percent yes.

BEAT.

You?

THEY STOP. PICK VAL UP. EXIT.

RESET TO THE BEGINNING.

THEY RETURN CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS AND TIED TO A CHAIR, A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND BACKS UP. AS HE DOES –

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Stepped in it, didn't I? Look. I fucking cleaned this this morning

GIANNI: Sorry, the floor? Or your shoe?

DISMAS: Both. (TUTS) That is . . . Not nice. (TUTS)

GIANNI: Can we – ?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes, let's do this. Yeah.

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: Yeahhh.

BEAT.

Uh . . . she's alright with this, is she?

GIANNI: Who?

DISMAS: Chora.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Only asking cos this, all this, this? This isn't very her, is it?

GIANNI: No. But neither's getting raped.

DISMAS: No . . .

GIANNI: And there has to be some sort of justice here, doesn't there? Or what are we about – ?

DISMAS: Right –

GIANNI: He can't get away with this –

DISMAS: No –

GIANNI: We're better than this, what he did, all of us –

DISMAS: Yes.

GIANNI: Right.

DISMAS: Right. Righty righty right. Right.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: Yes. I mean –

GIANNI: I mean this is just to throw some ideas about –

DISMAS: That's all we can do, really –

GIANNI: Exactly. So . . .

DISMAS: So?

GIANNI: That – that was it.

DISMAS: Good. Well, that was an important first step.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: A hundred percent yes.

BEAT.

You?

DISMAS: A hundred percent. Sorry. We already did that bit –

GIANNI: Yes we did. We're going in circles.

DISMAS: Yeah, sorry, my fault. Let's –

GIANNI: Let's . . . just . . . throw those ideas about. Yes?

DISMAS: Good idea.

GIANNI: You start.

DISMAS: Cool. Um –

GIANNI: The crazier the better –

DISMAS: Oh? Okay. Um –

GIANNI: Don't hold back –

DISMAS: Well, okay, look . . . Look I know we fucking hate them and that, but uh
maybe this one is one for the police?

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: That was my crazy one.

GIANNI: Yes. And you might be right.

DISMAS: I was joking.

GIANNI: Well me too.

DISMAS: Yeah?

GIANNI: Yeah.

DISMAS: We obviously can't go to the police –

GIANNI: Obviously –

DISMAS: It's unethical. Right?

GIANNI: Um –

DISMAS: But we can't just leave him here, can we.

GIANNI: No.

BEAT.

Can't we?

THEY STOP. PICK VAL UP. EXIT.

RESET TO THE BEGINNING.

THEY STOP. PICK VAL UP. EXIT.

RESET TO THE BEGINNING.

THEY RETURN CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS AND TIED TO A CHAIR, A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

THEY EXIT, LEAVING VAL.

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

LONG PAUSE.

DISMAS AND GIANNI ENTER.

RESET TO JUST AFTER PUTTING VAL DOWN.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

*DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND
BACKS UP. AS HE DOES –*

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Stepped in it, didn't I? Look. I fucking cleaned this this morning

GIANNI: Sorry, the floor? Or your shoe?

DISMAS: Both. (TUTS) That is . . . Not nice. (TUTS)

GIANNI: Can we – ?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes, let's do this. Yeah.

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: Yeahhh.

BEAT.

Uh . . . she's alright with this, is she?

GIANNI: Who?

DISMAS: Chora.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Only asking cos this, all this, this? This isn't very her, is it?

GIANNI: No. But neither's getting raped.

DISMAS: No . . .

GIANNI: And there has to be some sort of justice here, doesn't there? Or what are we about – ?

DISMAS: Right –

GIANNI: He can't get away with this –

DISMAS: No –

GIANNI: We're better than this, what he did, all of us –

DISMAS: Yes.

GIANNI: Right.
DISMAS: Right. Righty righty right. Right.

BEAT.

You ready then?
GIANNI: Yes. You?
DISMAS: Yes. I mean –
GIANNI: I mean this is just to throw some ideas about –
DISMAS: That’s all we can do, really –
GIANNI: Exactly. So . . .
DISMAS: So?
GIANNI: That – that was it.
DISMAS: Good. Well, that was an important first step.

BEAT.

You ready then?
GIANNI: Yes. You?
DISMAS: A hundred percent yes.

BEAT.

You?
DISMAS: A hundred percent. Sorry. We already did that bit –
GIANNI: Yes we did. We’re going in circles.
DISMAS: Yeah, sorry, my fault. Let’s –
GIANNI: Let’s . . . just . . . throw those ideas about. Yes?
DISMAS: Good idea.
GIANNI: You start.
DISMAS: Cool. Um –

GIANNI: The crazier the better –

DISMAS: Oh? Okay. Um –

GIANNI: Don't hold back –

DISMAS: Well, okay, look . . . Look I know we fucking hate them and that, but uh maybe this one is one for the police?

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: That was my crazy one.

GIANNI: Yes. And you might be right.

DISMAS: I was joking.

GIANNI: Well me too.

DISMAS: Yeah?

GIANNI: Yeah.

DISMAS: We obviously can't go to the police –

GIANNI: Obviously –

DISMAS: It's unethical. Right?

GIANNI: Um –

DISMAS: But we can't just leave him here, can we.

GIANNI: No. It's too good for him.

DISMAS: We should fucking kill him.

GIANNI: We should.

DISMAS: We can't, can we?

GIANNI: Huh? No. No of course not

DISMAS: We could *castrate* him, though, couldn't we? Without actually killing him.

GIANNI: Yes, cos that's ethically sound.

DISMAS: You said crazy ideas.

GIANNI: You had your crazy idea.

BEAT.

DISMAS: I found a gun in his bag.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: If you did want to kill him, I mean.

GIANNI: Wait. What – what were you doing in his bag?

DISMAS: Laundry –

GIANNI: Okay –

DISMAS: Can I keep it?

GIANNI: No. He's black bloc, isn't he? Of course he has a gun. Come on. Don't get distracted. Just say the first thing that comes into your head. Apart from the police.

DISMAS: Castration.

GIANNI: Yep. Apart from that too.

DISMAS: Honestly. Punishment fits the crime.

GIANNI: I can see where you're coming from, but, tempting as it may be, no. Never never ever. We can't cut off his fucking . . . That's . . . No. Disgusting.

DISMAS: No. Not cut, no. Not cut. There are chemicals.

GIANNI: Chemicals?

DISMAS: Aren't there? I met this guy, right, at the Branca. Complete crackhead, but, somehow, he's got a job at a vet's. A *vet's*. I know, right? Just, like, stacking stuff and that. Deliveries. But he's got access to all this . . . stuff. Think he does it for ket. It's a horse tranquilizer, right?

GIANNI: And he'd be able to . . . ?

DISMAS: I could ask . . . He'd probably need paying.

GIANNI: Would he do it for ket? I'm thinking whatshername from the last place.

DISMAS: Cracky Emma?

GIANNI: That wasn't her name. It wasn't even Emma.

DISMAS: She got asked to leave, didn't she?

GIANNI: Yeah, but it wasn't enforced.

BEAT.

Would he do it for ket?

DISMAS: Hm. Would he do it for ket. Hm. Maybe. Dunno. I'd have to ask. I could ask. D'you want me to ask?

GIANNI: Okay.

DISMAS: Okay.

PAUSE.

You sure?

RESET TO JUST AFTER 'YOU SAID CRAZY IDEAS' / 'YOU HAD YOUR CRAZY IDEA'.

DISMAS: I found a gun in his bag.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: If you did want to kill him, I mean.

GIANNI: Wait. What – what were you doing in his bag?

DISMAS: Laundry –

GIANNI: Okay –

DISMAS: Can I keep it?

GIANNI: No. He's black bloc, isn't he? Of course he has a gun. Come on. Don't get distracted. Just say the first thing that comes into your head. Apart from the police.

DISMAS: Castration.

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DISMAS: I could ask . . . He'd probably need paying.

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DISMAS: Cracky Emma?

GIANNI: That wasn't her name. It wasn't even Emma.

DISMAS: She got asked to leave, didn't she?

GIANNI: Yeah, but it wasn't enforced.

BEAT.

Would he do it for ket?

DISMAS: Hm. Would he do it for ket. Hm. Maybe. Dunno. I'd have to ask. I could ask. D'you want me to ask?

GIANNI: Okay.

DISMAS: Okay.

PAUSE.

You sure?

GIANNI: She's a wreck. Chora. She's a fucking mess.

DISMAS: I know.

PAUSE.

So shall I ask the vet then, or . . . ?

GIANNI: No. Go get the gun.

DISMAS: Okay. Wow. Okay. Wow . . . You sure?

GIANNI: He's tied unconscious to a chair. We're talking about chemically dissolving his testes. We can't ask him to leave cos we can't keep him out. We can't go to the police, just, cos, well, they'd laugh at us. Wouldn't they? Or they'd use it as an excuse to shut us down.

DISMAS: What? Would they?

GIANNI: Absolutely they would. Breeding ground for rapists? Perfect excuse.

DISMAS: That can't happen. Seriously, mate, that *can't* happen.

GIANNI: No. It can't. It would damage the Movement.

DISMAS: Plus, Gianni, this is home. Some of us don't have anywhere else.

GIANNI: So go, get the gun, quick, before I pussy out.

PAUSE.

DISMAS: Look, don't get angry with me, but . . .

GIANNI: But what?

DISMAS PRODUCES THE GUN.

DISMAS: I just thought, well, you know, maybe we'll need it. Maybe he'll struggle.

GIANNI: Just give it here.

GIANNI TAKES THE GUN, AIMS AT VAL.

PAUSE.

DISMAS: Do you want me to do it?

GIANNI: No.

BANG! HE SHOOTS VAL IN THE CHEST.

RESET TO JUST AFTER 'OKAY'/'OKAY'/'YOU SURE?'

GIANNI: She's a wreck. Chora. She's a fucking mess.

DISMAS: I know.

PAUSE.

So shall I ask the vet then, or . . . ?

GIANNI: No. Go get the gun.

DISMAS: Okay. Wow. Okay. Wow . . . You sure?

GIANNI: He's tied unconscious to a chair. We're talking about chemically dissolving his testes. We can't ask him to leave cos we can't keep him out. We can't go to the police, just, cos, well, they'd laugh at us. Wouldn't they? Or they'd use it as an excuse to shut us down.

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DISMAS: That can't happen. Seriously, mate, that *can't* happen.

GIANNI: No. It can't. It would damage the Movement.

DISMAS: Plus this is home. Some of us don't have anywhere else.

GIANNI: So go, get the gun, quick, before I pussy out.

PAUSE.

DISMAS: Look, don't get angry with me, but . . .

GIANNI: But what?

DISMAS PRODUCES THE GUN.

DISMAS: I just thought, well, you know, maybe we'll need it. Maybe he'll struggle.

GIANNI: Just give it here.

GIANNI TAKES THE GUN, AIMS AT VAL.

PAUSE.

DISMAS: Do you want me to do it?

PAUSE.

GIANNI: Um, yeah, actually. Would you mind? (HANDING THE GUN TO DISMAS) It's just I'm a pacifist, and, um . . .

DISMAS: (TAKING IT) And a vegetarian.

DISMAS AIMS AT VAL.

GIANNI: That . . . That has um absolutely nothing to –

BANG! DISMAS FIRES, MISSES.

DISMAS: Fuck.

DISMAS AGAIN AIMS AT VAL.

BANG! DISMAS SHOOTS VAL IN THE CROTCH.

VAL'S SCREAMS CONTINUE UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

GIANNI: Oh God God. Fuck fuck fucking hell. Dismas.

DISMAS DROPS THE GUN.

Dis?

DISMAS VOMITS.

THEY STOP. PICK VAL UP. EXIT.

RESET TO THE BEGINNING.

HERE, EMPHASIS IS ON SPEED BEFORE CLARITY UP UNTIL 'SHE'S A WRECK –'

THEY RETURN CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS AND TIED TO A CHAIR, A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND BACKS UP. AS HE DOES HE STEPS IN HIS VOMIT FROM PREVIOUSLY.

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Stepped in it, didn't I? Look. I fucking cleaned this this morning

GIANNI: Sorry, the floor? Or your shoe?

DISMAS: Both. (TUTS) That is . . . Not nice. (TUTS)

GIANNI: Can we – ?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes, let's do this. Yeah.

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: Yeahhh.

BEAT.

Uh . . . she's alright with this, is she?

GIANNI: Who?

DISMAS: Chora.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Only asking cos this, all this, this? This isn't very her, is it?

GIANNI: No. But neither's getting raped.

DISMAS: No . . .

GIANNI: And there has to be some sort of justice here, doesn't there? Or what are we about – ?

DISMAS: Right –

GIANNI: He can't get away with this –

DISMAS: No –

GIANNI: We're better than this, what he did, all of us –

DISMAS: Yes.

GIANNI: Right.

DISMAS: Right. Righty righty right. Right.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: Yes. I mean –

GIANNI: I mean this is just to throw some ideas about –

DISMAS: That's all we can do, really –

GIANNI: Exactly. So . . .

DISMAS: So?

GIANNI: That – that was it.

DISMAS: Good. Well, that was an important first step.

BEAT.

You ready then?

GIANNI: Yes. You?

DISMAS: A hundred percent yes.

BEAT.

You?

DISMAS: A hundred percent. Sorry. We already did that bit –

GIANNI: Yes we did. We're going in circles.

DISMAS: Yeah, sorry, my fault. Let's –

GIANNI: Let's . . . just . . . throw those ideas about. Yes?

DISMAS: Good idea.

GIANNI: You start.

DISMAS: Cool. Um –

GIANNI: The crazier the better –

DISMAS: Oh? Okay. Um –

GIANNI: Don't hold back –

DISMAS: Well, okay, look . . . Look I know we fucking hate them and that, but uh
maybe this one is one for the police?

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: That was my crazy one.

GIANNI: Yes. And you might be right.

DISMAS: I was joking.

GIANNI: Well me too.

DISMAS: Yeah?

GIANNI: Yeah.

DISMAS: We obviously can't go to the police –

GIANNI: Obviously –

DISMAS: It's unethical. Right?

GIANNI: Um –

DISMAS: But we can't just leave him here, can we.

GIANNI: No. It's too good for him.

DISMAS: We should fucking kill him.

GIANNI: We should.

DISMAS: We can't, can we?

GIANNI: Huh? No. No of course not

DISMAS: We could *castrate* him, though, couldn't we? Without actually killing him.

GIANNI: Yes, cos that's ethically sound.

DISMAS: You said crazy ideas.

GIANNI: You had your crazy idea.

BEAT.

DISMAS: I found a gun in his bag.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: If you did want to kill him, I mean.

GIANNI: Wait. What – what were you doing in his bag?

DISMAS: Laundry –

GIANNI: Okay –

DISMAS: Can I keep it?

GIANNI: No. He's black bloc, isn't he? Of course he has a gun. Come on. Don't get distracted. Just say the first thing that comes into your head. Apart from the police.

DISMAS: Castration.

GIANNI: Yep. Apart from that too.

DISMAS: Honestly. Punishment fits the crime.

GIANNI: I can see where you're coming from, but, tempting as it may be, no. Never never ever. We can't cut off his fucking . . . That's . . . No. Disgusting.

DISMAS: No. Not cut, no. Not cut. There are chemicals.

GIANNI: Chemicals?

DISMAS: Aren't there? I met this guy, right, at the Branca. Complete crackhead, but, somehow, he's got a job at a vet's. A *vet's*. I know, right? Just, like, stacking stuff and that. Deliveries. But he's got access to all this . . . stuff. Think he does it for ket. It's a horse tranquilizer, right?

GIANNI: And he'd be able to . . . ?

DISMAS: I could ask . . . He'd probably need paying.

GIANNI: Would he do it for ket? I'm thinking whatshername from the last place.

DISMAS: Cracky Emma?

GIANNI: That wasn't her name. It wasn't even Emma.

DISMAS: She got asked to leave, didn't she?

GIANNI: Yeah, but it wasn't enforced.

BEAT.

Would he do it for ket?

DISMAS: Hm. Would he do it for ket. Hm. Maybe. Dunno. I'd have to ask. I could ask. D'you want me to ask?

GIANNI: Okay.

DISMAS: Okay.

PAUSE.

You sure?

GIANNI: She's a wreck. Chora. She's a fucking mess.

DISMAS: I know.

PAUSE.

So shall I ask the vet then, or . . . ?

GIANNI: No. Go get the gun.

DISMAS: Okay. Wow. Okay. Wow . . . You sure?

GIANNI: He's tied unconscious to a chair. We're talking about chemically dissolving his testes. We can't ask him to leave cos we can't keep him out. We can't go to the police, just, cos, well, they'd laugh at us. Wouldn't they? Or they'd use it as an excuse to shut us down.

DISMAS: What? Would they?

GIANNI: Absolutely they would. Breeding ground for rapists? Perfect excuse.

DISMAS: That can't happen. Seriously, mate, that *can't* happen.

GIANNI: No. It can't. It would damage the Movement.

DISMAS: Plus, Gianni, this is home. Some of us don't have anywhere else.

GIANNI: So go, get the gun, quick, before I pussy out.

PAUSE.

DISMAS: Look, don't get angry with me, but . . .

GIANNI: But what?

DISMAS REACHES FOR THE GUN.

DISMAS: I just thought, well, you know, maybe – shit.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: The gun, Val's gun. I can't fucking find it. I must've left it in the –

CHORA ENTERS WITH THE GUN.

BANG!

BANG! SHE SHOOTS VAL TWICE IN THE CHEST.

SHE MOVES CLOSER.

BANG!

BANG! AND TWICE IN THE HEAD.

SHE EXITS.

GIANNI AND DISMAS STOP. PICK VAL UP. EXIT.

RESET TO THE BEGINNING.

THEY RETURN CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS AND TIED TO A CHAIR, A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND BACKS UP. AS HE DOES HE STEPS IN HIS VOMIT FROM PREVIOUSLY.

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Stepped in it, didn't I? Look. I fucking cleaned this this morning

GIANNI: Sorry, the floor? Or your shoe?

DISMAS: Both. (TUTS) That is . . . Not nice. (TUTS)

GIANNI: Can we – ?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes, let's do this. Yeah.

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: Yeahhh.

BEAT.

Uh . . . she's alright with this, is she?

GIANNI: Who?

DISMAS: Chora.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Only asking cos this, all this, this? This isn't very her, is it?

GIANNI: No. But neither's getting raped.

DISMAS: No . . .

GIANNI: And there has to be some sort of justice here, doesn't there? Or what are we about – ?

DISMAS: Right –

GIANNI: He can't get away with this –

DISMAS: No –

GIANNI: We're better than this, what he did, all of us –

DISMAS: Yes.

GIANNI: Right.

DISMAS: Right. Righty righty right. Right.

BEAT.

You ready then?

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 7

*THE SQUAT.**DISMAS ENTERS WITH MARIKA, CARRYING A TABLE. ON TOP OF THE TABLE, A MATTRESS.**DISMAS' VOICE STRAINS UNDER THE WEIGHT.*

DISMAS: Did you come for the demonstration?

MARIKA: Uh. Yeah. Yes. Course.

DISMAS: You're late.

MARIKA: Yeah well . . . You know.

DISMAS: No worries, there'll be another. There's always another. Welcome to Rome.

They put down the table.

MARIKA: Thanks.

DISMAS: Still you get to see us set up. See how it's done. On which note, first rule: table, bed, chair. Furniture's key. Crucial.

MARIKA: Sorry, did you want me to write this down or what?

DISMAS: Shit, this isn't right, is it?

MARIKA: Isn't it?

DISMAS: One... Two... Three... Huup!

*THEY LIFT UP THE TABLE, MOVE IT A BARELY PERCEPTIBLE FEW INCHES IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.**PUT IT DOWN.*

DISMAS: Better. Much better. Right?

MARIKA: Um. Is it?

DISMAS: Good table this... Nice lines.

PAUSE.

D’you know much about feng shui? Suppose it’s messed up in a place like this, right? Freaks me out. Still, there’s a working uh what do you call where the priest lives?

MARIKA: Um... Pres-by-tery?

DISMAS: Nah, that’s not it. Anyway, it’s through there. Running water, electrics, all that. All that’s free, you know. Legally, like... Yeah, we’ll make it work. It’s gonna be sick. There was a church conversion on To Buy or Not to Buy. Looked amazing.

BEAT.

MARIKA: What?
To Buy or Not to Buy? Really?

DISMAS: Love it. Not even ashamed. That, Location Location Location. Fucking essential for the first-time squatter. Tells you everything. Plus I kind of wanna shag Kirsty Allsop. Kind of.

BEAT.

Bed?

SHE NODS. THEY PICK UP THE MATTRESS.

One... Two... Three... That’s it, this way. Gonna put you next to Chora.

SHE GROANS.

(EXITING) Is that... Is that not ok?

THEY EXIT WITH THE MATTRESS.

GIANNI ENTERS IN HIS ROMAN GEAR, TAKING OFF HIS HELMET. HE CARRIES A LAPTOP.

*HE PLUGS THE LAPTOP INTO ITS CHARGER AND
THE CHARGER INTO THE MAINS.*

HE OPENS THE LAPTOP, TRIES THE INTERNET.

Dismas returns with Marika.

GIANNI: Who's this?

DISMAS: The sister.

GIANNI: Come for the demonstration?

MARIKA: Yeah.

GIANNI: You missed it.

MARIKA: Yeah.

DISMAS: There'll be another though, won't there. Gi? (TO MARIKA) Fucking
loved the last one. My first.

GIANNI: (TO MARIKA) Cigarette?

DISMAS: Not in here, Gi —

MARIKA: (TAKING ONE) Cheers —

DISMAS: Just use an ashtray, that's all I ask —

*GIANNI LOOKS AT DISMAS AS IF TO SAY, 'WHAT
ASHTRAY, WHERE?'*

I'll get you one.

DISMAS EXITS.

MARIKA: You're dressed like a Roman.

GIANNI: Yeah.

MARIKA: Okay. You are Roman?

GIANNI: Italian. Sicily. You know Sicily, in the South?

MARIKA: Sure. Godfather and that.

GIANNI: (SIGHS) And you're Chora's sister.

MARIKA: Yeah.

GIANNI: I didn't know she had one.

MARIKA: Perfect.

DISMAS RETURNS WITH AN 'ASHTRAY'.

GIANNI: Fuck off, I'm not using that.

DISMAS: Why not?

GIANNI: Do you know what that is? You serve communion in that.

DISMAS: Oh fuck off

GIANNI: You fuck off

MARIKA FLICKS ASH INTO THE COMMUNION-PLATE.

MARIKA: Superstitious?

GIANNI: No —

DISMAS: Let's uh let's grab those chairs.

MARIKA HANDS BACK THE CIGARETTE.

SHE EXITS WITH DISMAS.

LONG,

LONG PAUSE.

*DISMAS AND MARIKA RETURN CARRYING CHAIRS.
THEY POSITION THE CHAIRS ROUND THE TABLE.*

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS MARIKA'S CHAIRS.

DISMAS: You see when you get the bed, table, chair — evidence people are actually living in the actual building — you're set. They can't touch you. It's legal. The only *illegal* bit is the breaking-in part. That's my job. I'm the breaker. Right Gi? Breakers break the door down. Break quick and break Sundays. That's Rules Two and Three. You break Sundays cos

there's less people about and you've got more of a chance getting a group round you. They sort of act like this sort of human wall while you're breaking in.

MARIKA: Is that the same in England? The not-actually-illegal bit?

GIANNI: Not any more.

DISMAS: (OF THE LAPTOP) That's a lot of tabs.

GIANNI: Huh?

DISMAS: What's that you're watching there?

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: What were you watching? That tab there

GIANNI: What are you talking about?

DISMAS: That tab, there, Jesus.

GIANNI: Oh. A documentary

DISMAS: What about?

GIANNI: Pussy Riot

DISMAS: I fucking *love* them. (TO MARIKA) Do you like them? I love them. (TO GIANNI) Hey what's the name of the fit one?

GIANNI: Fit?

DISMAS: His English isn't too great. (TO GIANNI) Fit. Means extremely good-looking.

GIANNI: Nadia?

DISMAS: Nadia, that's it. Nadia. Show her a picture, Gi. Google it. We've got a Russian. We've got people from all over. Naples, Sardinia, Milan, Turin. A few Greeks. That's thanks to your sister. That video. You know about the video, right?

MARIKA: I uh heard about it, yeah.

DISMAS: You mean you haven't *seen* it? Show her the video Gianni, she hasn't seen it — her own sister. Maybe they would've come anyway, but now? Forget it. Everyone's coming now. Aren't they, Gi? Err, Gianni, the video. It's a fucking war. Right Gianni? The video, Gi, come on. He's always like this. Gianni?

GIANNI: Sh sh sh sh, it's us. We're on the news.

DISMAS: What's that?

GIANNI: Dismas, shut the fuck up

DISMAS: He's always like this. Italian. Hot-headed. It's all those man-made carbohydrates. Let's go see how the food's doing —

GIANNI: Dismas... Wait what? Who's making food? Now? *Really?*

DISMAS: It wasn't actually my suggestion this time, it was one of the others. Chill. Just watch your videos and be nice to the new girl.

DISMAS EXITS.

CHORA ENTERS.

CHORA: Fuck, is that *me*?

MARIKA: Hey —

CHORA: Shit —

MARIKA: Let's try that again: Hey —

CHORA: Shit shit shit, I forgot. Sorry.

MARIKA: Standard... Wait, is that *you*?

CHORA: You're not supposed to be here. Not now —

MARIKA: That *is* you. Chora!

DISMAS ENTERS.

DISMAS: Food's done. What's 'Spag Bol' in Italian?

GIANNI: Unbelievable

DISMAS: We've got to eat, Gi. Chora?

GIANNI: That wasn't... / That's not...

CHORA: (TO MARIKA) Take one

MARIKA: What?

CHORA: A bowl

MARIKA: I'm alright thanks —

CHORA: Take one —

MARIKA: I'm *fine* —

CHORA HANDS MARIKA A BOWL.

MARIKA: Jesus —

DISMAS: Chora, is that *you*? (BEAT) It *is*! (SNIGGERS) I don't remember that happening. Was it after the tear gas?

GIANNI OFFERS MARIKA THE CIGARETTE.

MARIKA: (TAKING IT) Thanks

CHORA: You smoke now?

DISMAS: Can you get subtitles on it?

MARIKA: D'you think Dad's getting this?

CHORA: Oh god oh god —

DISMAS: Look, there, click on the little wheel-thing. Subtitles

CHORA: I can't watch, I can't —

GIANNI: (TO MARIKA) They're calling us psychopaths. This is why no-one in Italy has a fucking TV.

DISMAS: Psychopaths? It's not like we killed anyone.

GIANNI: Dismas...

DISMAS: Yes boss

GIANNI: Once we start streaming we've probably got about half an hour before they come kick the door down.

DISMAS: What?

GIANNI: We've got to look super-legit. Is everything in place?

DISMAS: Bed, table, chairs; a whole set. Kick the door down?

GIANNI: Let's bring him in.

DISMAS: Right. Marika?

CHORA: Best not.

DISMAS: Oh. Yeah.

GIANNI AND DISMAS EXIT.

PAUSE.

MARIKA: What was that about?

CHORA: How was the journey?

MARIKA: We're not gonna, like, hug or anything?

CHORA: When do we ever hug?

MARIKA: In the last few years, you mean? With you fuck-knows-where and me —

CHORA: We've emailed

MARIKA: Not recently. We haven't recently. What happened?

CHORA: Nothing

MARIKA: Rubbish. Something's happened

CHORA: Nothing's happened

MARIKA: Are you and Gianni...?

CHORA: No.

MARIKA: Good, cos...

CHORA: Don't you dare

MARIKA: So you are then?

CHORA: No, it's...

THEY RETURN, CARRYING VAL. VAL IS UNCONSCIOUS, TIED TO A CHAIR. HE HAS A PAPER BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

THEY PUT VAL DOWN.

MARIKA: What the fuck?

MARIKA DROPS THE BOWL.

What the fuck.

DISMAS: I just swept that —

GIANNI: You didn't *tell* her?

CHORA: I thought *you* did?

GIANNI: Dismas?

MARIKA: Oh my God oh my God oh my God

DISMAS: Huh? Uh, I didn't get that far

CHORA: She's fine. She's cool. Marika?

MARIKA: Ohhh God

CHORA: Gianni, give her a cigarette.

HE CHUCKS CHORA THE PACKET.

Marika, we're gonna go outside for a smoke, yeh?

MARIKA: Okay.

CHORA: I want you to calm down. Okay?

MARIKA: Okay.

CHORA EXITS WITH MARIKA.

PAUSE.

DISMAS: She's alright, isn't she. The sister.

GIANNI: Huh?

DISMAS: The sister. I said she's alright.

GIANNI: I guess? Yes. Great. Fine. Shall we?

HIS HEAD SLUMPS FORWARD.

DISMAS STRAIGHTENS VAL'S HEAD, REMOVING THE PAPER BAG.

VAL'S MOUTH IS TAPED.

DISMAS SCRUNCHES THE BAG INTO A BALL AND BACKS UP. AS HE DOES –

DISMAS: Shit. Shit shit shit –

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Stepped in it, didn't I? Look. I fucking cleaned this this morning

GIANNI: Sorry, the floor? Or your shoe?

DISMAS: Both. (TUTS) That is . . . Not nice. (TUTS)

GIANNI: Can we – ?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes, let's do this. Yeah.

GIANNI: Yes.

DISMAS: Yeahhh.

BEAT.

Uh . . . she's alright with this, is she?

GIANNI: Who?

DISMAS: Chora.

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: Only asking cos this, all this, this? This isn't very her, is it?

GIANNI: No. But neither's getting raped.

DISMAS: No . . .

GIANNI: And there has to be some sort of justice here, doesn't there? Or what are we about – ?

DISMAS: Right –

GIANNI: He can't get away with this –

DISMAS: No –

GIANNI: We're better than this, what he did, all of us –

DISMAS: Yes.

GIANNI: Right.

DISMAS: Right. Righty righty right. Right.

BEAT.

You ready then?

LIGHTS.

SCENE 8

THE SQUAT.

CHORA AND MARIKA WITH A SPLIFF, FACING OUT.

*THEY LOOK THROUGH AN OFF-STAGE WINDOW.
NEXT TO CHORA, THE 'ASHTRAY'.*

CHORA INHALES, SLOWLY. HOLDS IT.

SHE EXHALES, SLOWLY.

PASSES IT TO MARIKA. SHE TAKES IT.

MARIKA: Is this what you do all day?

*DISMAS ENTERS CARRYING A LAUNDRY BASKET
FULL OF DARKS –*

DISMAS: Sorry . . . Nearly forgot. Gotta get it done before the sun goes.

HE CROUCHES. LOADS THE WASHING MACHINE –

Won't be a sec . . .

*ADDS DETERGENT. SELECTS CYCLE. PRESSES
START.*

*THE MACHINE BEGINS ITS CYCLE. CONTINUES
UNDER THE FOLLOWING SCENE.*

There.

*RISES. HE MOVES THE ASHTRAY FROM NEXT TO
CHORA TO MARIKA.*

Gonna meet Gi and go skipping. If the thingy starts beeping before I'm
back would you mind . . . ?

BEAT.

Cheers.

HE EXITS WITH THE BASKET.

PAUSE.

CHORA: Where'd he say he was going?

MARIKA: I *think* he said he was going skipping. Which is sort of feminine even for him. He was meeting Gianni. I guess they're skipping together?

CHORA: Cool.

MARIKA: So long as Gi's wearing his Roman thing. Mm. Suspiciously short, isn't it?

CHORA: Don't you dare.

*MARIKA INHALES, SLOWLY. STARTS CHOKING.
PASSES IT BACK TO CHORA –*

(TAKING IT) Karma.

CHORA INHALES, AGAIN, SLOWLY. HOLDS IT.

SHE EXHALES, SLOWLY. PASSES TO MARIKA –

MARIKA: (TAKING IT) Is it?

CHORA: What?

MARIKA: What you do all day?

CHORA: No.

MARIKA: Oh. What you looking at?

CHORA: The Sun.

MARIKA: The Sun?

CHORA: Yeah. The Sun.

MARIKA: And?

CHORA: I'm thinking about it.

MARIKA: The Sun?

CHORA: The Sun.

MARIKA: Thinking what?

CHORA: That the Moon revolves around the Earth. The Earth revolves around the Sun.

MARIKA: Yes.

CHORA: So who's to say the Sun isn't itself revolving, spinning, circling something bigger.

MARIKA: Um . . . Don't think it is.

CHORA: Look at it. Look outside. Look up. What colour is it?

MARIKA: The Sun?

CHORA: The Sun, yeah.

MARIKA: You're kidding, right? The Sun?

CHORA: The Sun –

MARIKA: It's yellow. It's . . . the Sun.

CHORA: Except it's not. Except look at it. Look. Look at the Sun. Look as long as you can –

SHE DOES.

Not too long –

SHE BLINKS MADLY –

MARIKA: Ahhh –

CHORA: It's white. Not yellow. White. Look –

MARIKA: No. No, you nut-job –

CHORA: It's white though, isn't it? Why is it white? Was it always white? How long? When did it change? This year? Last year? Before? Is that a new Sun? New like a new moon. Is the light different now? Is it brighter? Can we see clearer? Is that why Tunisia? Egypt? Madrid? Everything?

MARIKA: It's yellow. But cheers for scorching my retinas.

CHORA: Sorry.

MARIKA: This is meant to be our big catch-up sesh.

CHORA: Yes.

MARIKA: You wanna maybe stop then?

BEAT.

CHORA: Sorry.

MARIKA STUBS OUT THE SPLIFF –

DISMAS ENTERS –

DISMAS: See you then. Oh um d'you want, need anything special or . . . ?

CHORA: Just make sure we have bread.

DISMAS: Will do. Marika?

MARIKA: Huh? Um. I'm fine. Thanks. Thank you.

DISMAS: Cool. And um washing. If it beeps. Yeah? Cool.

DISMAS EXITS. MARIKA RISES.

MARIKA: Tea?

CHORA: Yeah.

SHE EXITS.

LIGHTS.

CHORA AND MARIKA WITH TEA –

Woah. When did you give me this?

MARIKA: What?

CHORA: The tea –

MARIKA: The tea? Like uh . . . just now? Literally just now. Is it okay?

CHORA: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. Good, yeah. It's just I don't remember what I did while you were making it.

MARIKA: Okay . . .

BEAT.

So.

CHORA: So?

MARIKA: So they let him go.

CHORA: Yes.

MARIKA: You're alright with that.

CHORA: What the fuck else were they supposed to do –

MARIKA: Alright –

CHORA: Yes. It is. He's gone. Free. Free as the wind blows –

MARIKA: Free to do it again –

CHORA: Not to me. Not ever. Not happening.

BEAT.

MARIKA: Were you drunk?

CHORA: What?

MARIKA: When what happened happened . . . Just there was this girl at a party at college. She was doing my course. Says her drink got spiked, no-one believed her. She'd been drinking hours. She was drunk so . . . I guess she was asking for it. Right?

CHORA: Asking to be raped?

MARIKA: I don't mean *you*. Obviously. Jesus. *She*. She was. She was like completely and utterly fucking hammered. You should've seen her. Gone. Totally . . . Seriously. Vomit all down her dress. She'd vomited

down her dress? You? You're not like that. You don't even own a dress. You? I dunno. You haven't told me exactly what happened, but there's no way it happened like that. Nu-uh. Not to you. Not ever.

NO RESPONSE.

Right?

NO RESPONSE.

Right?

CHORA: Then what?

MARIKA: Then what what –

CHORA: Then what happened ?

MARIKA: Um . . . I think . . . she took it to the police? The dress. The vom'd-on dress? They say to do that, don't they? They got him. I mean they didn't charge him. They couldn't. She'd washed the dress, so, no evidence. But he did get a proper telling off. From his Mum.

BEAT.

What?

CHORA: You don't have to act tough, you know.

MARIKA: Sorry?

CHORA: With me. You don't have to act tough. This isn't home. Here? I'm a grown-up. Okay? I've been around this stuff ages, I know you were scared.

MARIKA: Scared? Scared when? What?

CHORA: Yesterday. Him. Tied to a chair. That.

MARIKA: That? Scared? Don't patronise me. Scared? I am older and wiser and prettier than you –

CHORA: By like nothing –

MARIKA: I was not scared. Surprised? Yes. But scared? Don't p –

CHORA: Patronise you? This coming from 'not you not ever' and the girl off your course? You think I'm stupid? You think I'm anything like your stupid bitch friend? I don't need the police. That's not how it works, not here. I can take care of myself –

MARIKA: That's not what it looked like.

CHORA: Excuse me?

MARIKA: Yesterday. When they chose letting him go. You weren't even in the room. They made that decision for you –

CHORA: We decide things by consensus –

MARIKA: Not yesterday. Yesterday you didn't –

CHORA: I'd've made the same decision. Probably.

MARIKA: Maybe. But you didn't. You weren't given it.

BEAT.

I was a little bit scared, actually.

CHORA: I know.

MARIKA: I just didn't think you tied people to chairs.

CHORA: We don't –

MARIKA: You did –

CHORA: As a rule, I mean.

MARIKA: You know I told you that story how I told it to get you angry. Get you riled up –

CHORA: Why?

MARIKA: Because that's how you deal with your shit. You get angry. I make tea. And that's fine. That's how you get things done. That's how you did all

this, right? But this time? Your anger's misdirected. You're angry with yourself when you shouldn't be, and, for the record, that girl wasn't asking for it. She wasn't stupid. She got wasted. She was having fun. Maybe yeah she did over do it a bit? So what? Since when was testing your limits an invitation to attack, take the piss? Need love. Need anger. Need anarchy. That's what you said in that video –

CHORA: You knew it was me –

MARIKA: Yes of course I knew it was you, Stupid. It'll take more than putting a tea cosy over your face for me to not recognise you.

CHORA: I don't recognise me.

MARIKA: Chora –

CHORA: I don't though. I used to sort of be the main character? Does that make sense? All this, I know this sounds bad, kind of used to be The Chora Show. Now? I walk out the room, off camera, and I'm not even sure I carry on existing. It's like I need people around to play this.

MARIKA: Play what?

CHORA: This victim-thing. This new role. It doesn't fit, but that's who I am now. Of course I'm angry at myself.

MARIKA: You shouldn't be –

CHORA: Who else? Need anger, right? Need someone to be angry *at*. Who?

MARIKA: Well – and I Am extending your metaphor far further than it should to be – the people who wrote it, this role. That means *him*. That means those boys making that decision for you. That means society at large –

CHORA: Now you sound like me. Wanna take over?

MARIKA: I'm serious.

CHORA: Me too.

MARIKA: You're not. I'd make a crap you, I'd actually wash . . . Look this is what you do. You're used to this. I remember we acted out The Lion King once. You crazy insisted the Dad didn't die.

CHORA: Oh come on we were little –

MARIKA: Yes. Yes. But now? A black boy gets harassment from a bunch of white policemen. Needlessly. How many times have we heard that story? You tried to rewrite it. Changing it –

CHORA: I can't do that to what happened to me. I was raped.

MARIKA: No, but you can when it comes to what's next. You can control what happens next. Who you end up being. Could be that's the old you, could be new. Whoever she is, she doesn't have to be a victim. No wonder it doesn't fit. You don't look like a victim to me –

CHORA: No?

MARIKA: No. You look like a survivor.

CHORA: Like Mufasa.

MARIKA: No. No no no. Mufasa does die –

CHORA: Not in my version.

MARIKA: Don't fuck with Disney –

CHORA: You said –

MARIKA: I'm not having it.

CHORA: He was a Nazi –

MARIKA: No he wasn't, that's a myth.

CHORA: Snow White –

MARIKA: And the Seven Dwarves. Dwarves. Nazis don't like dwarves.

CHORA: Dumbo's blackbirds.

MARIKA: Shut up.

CHORA: Bambi's Mum.

MARIKA: That has nothing to do with anything –

CHORA: No. But it's not very nice, is it?

MARIKA: I take everything back. You're a complete idiot –

CHORA: Oi –

MARIKA: That girl . . .

CHORA: What girl? The girl on your course?

MARIKA: Yeah. He did it again.

CHORA: The same guy?

MARIKA: Yeah.

CHORA: Wait, to her?

MARIKA: No, a different girl. A fresher. Me and my friend found out, went to the police. Again. Surely this time . . . right? They said as this wasn't the first complaint they just needed the fresher to come in and make a formal statement. They might not have enough to charge him on that, but they'd have enough to make an arrest –

CHORA: I hate the police. What happened?

MARIKA: The fresher wouldn't come in.

CHORA: Why?

MARIKA: She didn't want Dad finding out. Basically, Chora, you've got work to do.

CHORA: Maybe I don't wanna do that anymore. Maybe it asking for trouble –

GIANNI ENTERS WITH DISMAS. GIANNI WEARS HIS ROMAN OUTFIT PLUS HELMET. BOTH CARRY WHAT LOOKS LIKE SHOPPING.

MARIKA: (TO BOYS) Dismas. Gianni. Oh look, you're wearing your tunic. There is a God.

GIANNI: I uh came straight from work.

MARIKA: Aren't you hot in that.

GIANNI: No?

MARIKA: That wasn't a question –

DISMAS: (LIFTING HIS BAGS) We've been skipping.

MARIKA: With shopping bags? Okay.

CHORA: It means that they went to get food –

DISMAS: From skips. Got loads of bread.

CHORA: You took food like that? Looking like that?

GIANNI: Yes –

MARIKA: Wait. What?

CHORA: You're meant to be inconspicuous.

GIANNI: Inconspicuous?

CHORA: It's midday and you're dressed like a gladiator –

DISMAS: Centurion –

CHORA: Centurion.

MARIKA: Can we go back to this food/skip thing?

DISMAS: Skips. Bins. More bins, really. Industrial bins. Restaurants and that.

There's one across the street –

MARIKA: Oh my God that's disgusting –

DISMAS: It's fiiine –

MARIKA: Oh my God oh my God –

DISMAS: The amount people chuck –

MARIKA: (TO CHORA) Where's this milk from?

CHORA: I don't know.

MARIKA: Tell me, tell me honestly –

NO RESPONSE.

Oh my god I can't believe I drank that –

CHORA: It was fine before you knew –

MARIKA: Yes, but now I know –

CHORA: D'you mind helping Dis with the bags?

MARIKA: Yes . . . Yes okay. And then a cigarette to get this taste from my mouth.

Dis, you want one?

DISMAS: Yes. Yes please you babe. I will have to listen out for the washing –

MARIKA: Cool –

DISMAS: And uh not in here, obviously –

MARIKA: Obviously. Gi? I'll take those –

GIANNI: No. Please, I will uh –

MARIKA: I'll take those.

SHE TAKES GIANNI'S BAGS.

Grim grim grim grim –

*MARIKA EXITS WITH DISMAS.**PAUSE.*

CHORA: Sorry. I'm sorry. It's obviously not a big deal. I'm just –

GIANNI: Angry.

CHORA: Yes.

GIANNI: You've been angry a lot since –

CHORA: Yes . . . Wait. No. I was angry before. A lot, I remember –

GIANNI: No . . .

NO RESPONSE.

Yes? No? Do you want me to agree or disagree?

CHORA: Sorry, I don't know. Sorry sorry, I'm doing it again –

SCENE ENDS AS SCENE 5 BEGAN:

CHORA: Let's – let's start that again. Okay?

GIANNI: Yes. Yes, okay –

CHORA: (SMILES) Come here then . . .

GIANNI MOVES TO KISS CHORA. SHE KNOCKS HER HEAD AGAINST THE HELMET.

Ow –

GIANNI: Sorry –

CHORA: Ow ow ow. Ow. Fuck.

GIANNI: Sorry, it's the uh helmet –

CHORA Take it off then you tit –

GIANNI: Yes. Yeah. Sorry.

GIANNI TAKES OFF THE HELMET. UNDERNEATH, A PUNK HAIRSTYLE.

Better now or?

CHORA LAUGHS.

What?

CHORA: Nothing.

SHE KISSES HIM. HE WINCES.

SHE NOTICES. SHE PULLS AWAY.

LIGHTS.

THE WASHING MACHINE REMAINS LIT/IN FOCUS, ITS CYCLE CONTINUES THROUGH TRANSITION AND UNDER SCENE 9.

SCENE 9

THE SQUAT.

MARKIA, GIANNI, AND DISMAS.

MARIKA MAKES PLACARDS. GIANNI HAS HEADPHONES ON, WATCHES SOMETHING ON HIS LAPTOP.

DISMAS: (*NODDING TO GIANNI*) Internet?

MARIKA NODS.

Finally.

BEAT.

That's a lot of tabs.

NO RESPONSE.

(*TO MARIKA*) What's he watching?

NO RESPONSE.

DISMAS GETS GIANNI'S ATTENTION. GIANNI REMOVES HIS HEADPHONES.

DISMAS: (*OF THE LAPTOP*) That's a lot of tabs.

GIANNI: Huh?

DISMAS: What's that you're watching there?

GIANNI: What?

DISMAS: What were you watching? That tab there

GIANNI: What are you talking about?

DISMAS: That tab, there. Jesus.

GIANNI: Oh. A documentary

DISMAS: What about?

GIANNI: Pussy Riot

DISMAS: I fucking *love* them. (*TO MARIKA*) Do you like them? I love them. (*TO GIANNI*) Hey what's the name of the fit one?

GIANNI: Fit?

DISMAS: Fit. Means extremely good-looking.

GIANNI: Um . . . Nadia?

DISMAS: Nadia, that's it. Nadia. Show Marika a picture, Gi. Google it.

THE WASHING MACHINE REACHES THE END OF ITS CYCLE.

BEEP BEEP.

BEEP BEEP.

CONTINUES UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

GIANNI: (*PUTTING HIS HEADPHONES BACK ON*) You should probably get that.

DISMAS: I should, yeah, probably get that. (*RISES*) You know that smell it gets. D'you know that smell it gets, when it gets damp? When it's left too long. It's everyone's so . . .

DISMAS EXITS.

NOISES OFF: CHORA, IN HER ROOM, CRASHING AND SWEARING.

MARIKA: It didn't go well then, I'm guessing?

NO RESPONSE.

Gianni?

MARIKA GETS GIANNI'S ATTENTION. GIANNI REMOVES HIS HEADPHONES.

GIANNI: Sorry?

MARIKA: It didn't go well, I take it?

GIANNI: Not even slightly.

CHORA ENTERS CARRYING HER RUCKSACK –

MARIKA: Chora?

CHORA: *(TO GIANNI)* Where is it?

GIANNI: Where's what?

SHE EMPTIES THE CONTENTS OF HER RUCKSACK ON THE TABLE AND LAPTOP IN FRONT OF GIANNI.

GIANNI: Hey!

CHORA: Where is it?

BEEP BEEP.

BEEP BEEP.

MARIKA: Chora, I'm um a hundred percent on your side, but I don't think he knows what you're talking about. And neither do I –

BEEP BEEP.

BEEP BEEP.

CHORA, REALISING.

DISMAS ENTERS CARRYING A LAUNDRY BASKET.

DISMAS: *(SEEING CHORA'S THINGS ON THE TABLE)* Is that washing? Cos if it is, don't worry, I'm nearly done.

HE CROUCHES BESIDE WASHING MACHINE, OPENS DOOR. THE BEEPING STOPS. HE PULLS CLOTHES OUT AND INTO THE BASKET.

CHORA JOINS HIM, LOOKING FOR THE DRESS.

That man in the dress. That tramp. You know? The one who seemed like he wanted in here? We said no . . . He just sits there. Doesn't speak,

doesn't, doesn't do anything. Disappeared, didn't he? Remember? Thought he was dead, didn't we, but he's not. He's, er, there, standing out there, Summer sun, in that dress.

CHORA: The dress.

DISMAS: Yeh, the dress, yes. The tramp. The man in the dress. In there with that (*WHISPER*) dickhead... I mean we had to, didn't we, we had to let him in. But even still. I don't know / I guess

CHORA: My dress

DISMAS: I'm not entirely comfortable with, er, what? Sorry, what?

CHORA: My dress, the black one, did you wash it?

DISMAS: Your dress?

CHORA: Yes.

DISMAS: The Audrey Hepburn one.

CHORA: What?

DISMAS: The one you wear that makes you look like Audrey Hepburn. You know. No? It's a compliment, honestly. (*RISING*) I'll get the laptop. I'll play you a trailer, wait. Gi?

CHORA: Stop.

DISMAS STOPS.

My dress, the bla- My only dress. Did you - ?

DISMAS: Yes. If that's your only dress, then yes. I think, yes, cos, yeh. Yeh. (*LOOKING*) The black one? (*FINDS IT*) Yes! Here!

CHORA TAKES IT.

Did you, er, did you want to wear it today? Is that why you – what you . . . ? If you do I'll, I'll iron it. It will dry quick. I'll iron it for you, if you like, if you can wait till after it's dry?

CHORA: Where did you find it?

DISMAS: The dress?

CHORA: Yes.

DISMAS: It was, er, I think, yeh, cos, yes, it was, er, at the bottom of your backpack. You know. All, like, crumpled and that.

CHORA: Why did you wash it?

DISMAS: Well it was, er, crumpled. Like I said. And it kind of needed washing. It kind of needed washing badly so . . . I was doing a dark wash. I was doing everyone's . . . You've got to do them separately, whites, colours, darks... It's sunny today too, so... I was doing darks, so, I thought you'd want it done, that's all . . . Why's everyone being weird?

CHORA: I didn't want it done

DISMAS: Right. Yeh. Yeh I'm, uh, getting that. In fairness you should've said

CHORA: It was in my bag

DISMAS: Yeh.

CHORA: At the bottom of my bag

DISMAS: Yeh fair, but . . . A note. Maybe leave a note next time, so I'm sure? Coz this is the first chance I've had to sort your room. You've been stuck in there since . . . (*REALISING*) Ohhh shit.

CHORA STARTS EXAMINING EVERY INCH OF THE DRESS, LOOKING, SNIFFING.

Is that what you were wearing the night Val . . . You know.

PAUSE.

CHORA: Chuck it

DISMAS: The dress?

CHORA: Yeh. Chuck it

DISMAS: Yeh but, it's a good dress. We should freecycle it. Give it to one of the girls. Marika? You'd look good in this I reckon –

CHORA: Chuck it out.

DISMAS: She'd look good in it I reckon. Can understand why *you* wouldn't want to wear it, necessarily. Bad memories and that, but you can't just chuck things . . .

CHORA: Get out.

DISMAS: I'm going to leave it here. Okay? Folded. Top of the washing machine. If you change your mind, it's there.

GIANNI: Dis?

DISMAS: Yeah?

GIANNI: Not now, okay?

MARIKA: Chora?

NO RESPONSE.

Chora, babe, it's okay. It's alright.

NO RESPONSE.

(*TO THE OTHERS*) Let's give her a minute, okay? (*TO CHORA*) I'm going to be just outside, if you need me. Okay?

NO RESPONSE.

Guys?

THEY EXIT.

LONG PAUSE.

*CHORA LIFTS THE DRESS, SHAKES IT, HOLDS IT TO
HER, AS IF CHECKING THE LENGTH.*

SHE FOLDS IT. PLACES IT ON THE TABLE.

SHE SITS.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 10

AN ITALIAN STATE (CIVIL) POLICE STATION, ROME.

COLD LIGHT.

*CHORA, AS BEFORE, SITTING AT THE TABLE,
DRESS FOLDED IN FRONT OF HER.*

*A FILING CABINET TAKES THE PLACE OF THE
WASHING MACHINE.*

*CAVALETTI ENTERS, BEGINNING THE SCENE. HE
WEARS CIVILIAN CLOTHING AND CARRIES A FILE.*

HE SITS.

CAVALETTI: *(READING)* British teenager, currently residing in Rome. Chora is a self-described ‘full-time’ activist. She was identified as being one of the major players in the riots following the suicide of Mohamed Sheab, an illegal Ethiopian immigrant and street vendor. See file K-S-63-34-48-E. The riots went on for a number of weeks, resulting in several serious injuries, damage to both private and public property, and *(LOOKING UP)* my being called back from sabbatical six weeks early. I am dying to know what you’re doing here.

CHORA: I’m not a teenager, I’m twenty-two.

CAVALETTI: Yes. I know that. The suggestion in my calling you a teenager was that you grow up and go home. I have my own children to babysit.

CHORA: Emilia. She’s seventeen? And Nicci. Twelve.

CAVALETTI: How do you know their names?

CHORA: Google.

CAVALETTI: And that’s suppose to impress me –?

CHORA: Emilia was raped. She was sixteen. Some arse-wipe followed her home off the bus and raped her. Brutally. She’s traumatized. She needs round the clock attention, but that’s not why you can’t sleep. You can’t sleep

cos you're convinced the same thing's gonna happen to Nicci. I didn't come here to drop someone in it, give you information. Whatever. I'm not acting out some war fantasy you and maybe people back at the squat might have, I'm here to report a rape. My rape. I never thought anything would make me come to you people for help after what happened to Marcello – Marcello, by the way, was his name – but you know what? You might not endorse the form my activism takes? But this time, you're not gonna disagree with its content. You've got your girls.

CAVALETTI STANDS, GOES TO THE FILING CABINET. PRODUCES A SHEET OF PAPER.

HE CONSULTS THE PAPER THROUGH THE FOLLOWING.

CHORA: What's that?

CAVALETTI: The correct form. (*SITTING BACK DOWN*) There's a difference. Between you and my daughter. My daughter wasn't asking for it –

CHORA: I didn't ask to be raped -

CAVALETTI: You might as well have done. A place like that –

CHORA: A social centre.

CAVALETTI: A squat. You see it in the news, happens all the time.

CHORA: Rape? Yes. Yes it does –

CAVALETTI: Do you recognise my authority?

CHORA: Huh?

CAVALETTI: Do you recognise my authority? Did you, prior to what happened, recognise the authority of the police? The state? The grown-ups? You believe you're special. You believe you're an exception to certain rules, to the law. So did he.

CHORA: Who?

CAVALETTI: The man who allegedly raped you.

CHORA: Right. (*RISING*) So you're not gonna help then.

CAVALETTI: I didn't say that – sit down. I don't want to. I don't see why I should. But my views don't come into it. That man may have broken the law and, if I can, I'll help. The emotional blackmail wasn't necessary. That's my job.

CHORA: I'm sorry.

SHE SITS.

CAVALETTI: What's that in the bag?

CHORA: A dress and some other stuff.

CAVALETTI: The clothes you were wearing –

CHORA: Yeah –

CAVALETTI: the night of the incident?

CHORA: Yes.

CAVALETTI: Google?

CHORA: My sister told me.

CAVALETTI: And have they been washed?

PAUSE.

CHORA: Yes.

CAVALETTI: It's possible there's still a trace. Some residue. If there is . . . When did the attack happen?

CHORA: Almost a week ago now.

CAVALETTI: That's far from ideal. You should have come here immediately, you realise that?

CHORA: Yup.

CAVALETTI: Do you know where the suspect is currently living?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: His name?

CHORA: Val. Valentino.

CAVALETTI: No surname?

CHORA: No. Some of us don't use them.

CAVALETTI: Valentino. Common. Very. That makes it harder, but we'll try. We have men in every squat in Rome.

BEAT.

Does this surprise you?

CHORA: Not even a bit.

CAVALETTI: What were you doing prior to the attack?

CHORA: I was trying that dress on, there.

CAVALETTI: Had you been drinking?

CHORA: A little –

CAVALETTI: You were drunk –

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Drugs?

CHORA: No. And why do I feel like I'm being interrogated?

CAVALETTI: The dress in the bag. Could it be described as provocative?

CHORA: Excuse me?

CAVALETTI: Could what you were wearing at the time of the attack be considered as being provocative?

CHORA: You have a look and let me know.

CAVALETTI: Had you ever been intimate with the suspect prior the attack?

CHORA: I think there might've been a kiss. Once. Massive stupid mistake.
Irrelevant.

CAVALETTI: Describe your relationship to the suspect prior the attack.

CHORA: We were – we were friends.

CAVALETTI: How did initial contact between you and the suspect occur?

CHORA: He came in to see the dress. Give his opinion.

CAVALETTI: What specific attack was committed?

CHORA: Rape.

CAVALETTI: Specifically.

CHORA: Specifically?

CAVALETTI: Penile-vaginal intercourse sodomy oral copulation foreign objects –

CHORA: The first.

PAUSE. CAVALETTI WANTS CLARITY.

Penile-vaginal intercourse.

CAVALETTI: Was a condom used?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Lubricant?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Did it hurt?

CHORA: I could get a foreign object and show you?

CAVALETTI: Did the suspect ejaculate?

PAUSE.

Did the suspect ejaculate?

CHORA: Yes.

CAVALETTI: Where?

CHORA: Where do you think?

CAVALETTI: Might you be pregnant?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Describe him to me.

CHORA: You'd approve actually, yeah. Fits totally with the stereotype I'm sure you have.

CAVALETTI: Of a rapist?

CHORA: Activist. Wore black. Funky haircut. Earring.

CAVALETTI: How tall is he?

CHORA: Tallish.

CAVALETTI: How big is he?

CHORA: Big enough.

CAVALETTI: And the length and girth of his penis?

CHORA: That's a question?

CAVALETTI: Yes.

CHORA: Seriously, that's – that's actually a question?

CAVALETTI: Yes, it's on the form. As best as you can remember.

CHORA: I don't know, I don't remember.

CAVALETTI: I would advise you to try. If this goes to court and your description matches the actuality –

CHORA: Average?

CAVALETTI: Did the suspect experience any difficulty in getting or maintaining an erection?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Was physical force used?

CHORA: Yes.

CAVALETTI: Were weapons used?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Did the suspect use artificial means to restrain you, or simply his body?

CHORA: Yes.

CAVALETTI: Which?

CHORA: His body.

CAVALETTI: What was the suspect's physical position in relation to you?

CHORA: What?

CAVALETTI: What was the suspect's physical position in relation to you?

CHORA: You mean?

CAVALETTI: Yes.

CHORA: He was on top.

CAVALETTI: When did you last have consensual sex?

CHORA: Sorry what? No. No you don't need to know that.

CAVALETTI: It's on the form. When did you last have consensual sex?

CHORA: No, really, you don't need to know that.

CAVALETTI: As it happens, I do. The form. You're going to need to cooperate.

CHORA: A couple of weeks ago.

CAVALETTI: And with whom?

CHORA: Really?

CAVALETTI: And with whom?

CHORA: A guy. A friend – boyfriend. Whatever.

CAVALETTI: His name?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: I need to know his name.

PAUSE.

CHORA: Gianni.
CAVALETTI: No surname?
CHORA: You tell me.

BEAT.

CAVALETTI: Did you tell Gianni Abrazzi about the attack?
CHORA: Thought so. Yes.
CAVALETTI: Who else knows?
CHORA: All of them.
CAVALETTI: All of them?
CHORA: The squat.
CAVALETTI: Everyone in that church knows?
CHORA: Yes.
CAVALETTI: Why?

PAUSE.

Why was that necessary?
CHORA: We decide things by consensus.
CAVALETTI: You were deciding what? What to do with him?
CHORA: Yes.
CAVALETTI: That was not your decision to make.
CHORA: No it wasn't.
CAVALETTI: And they let him go.
CHORA: Yes.
CAVALETTI: They discouraged you from reporting the attack –
CHORA: Yes.
CAVALETTI: And they don't know that you're here –

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Were there any witnesses?

CHORA: No.

CAVALETTI: Could anyone have heard?

CHORA: Possibly.

CAVALETTI: You didn't ask?

CHORA: Didn't think.

CAVALETTI: Evidently. The church you're in, San Gioacchino da Fiore, it's relatively new, as a squat?

CHORA: Yes.

CAVALETTI: We've had some complaints.

CHORA: We did our research. It was derelict.

CAVALETTI: Google again. Usual procedure?

CHORA: What?

CAVALETTI: In breaking it.

CHORA: Yes. Once the siege had ended – thanks for that – yeah.

CAVALETTI: And you called one of us?

CHORA: No, actually.

CAVALETTI: Why?

CHORA: We've been distracted.

CAVALETTI: I'll make a visit. Corroborate what you've –

CHORA: No, they'll know I –

CAVALETTI: I will be discreet. I'll pretend I'm there to check the property. You will wait here while I'm gone.

CHORA: Am I being arrested now?

CAVALETTI: No. But as I'm doing you a favour, perhaps you can answer a few of my colleague's questions. (*RISING*) He will be looking after you while I'm gone. He's recently been promoted. A specialist. You'll be in safe hands. You might even have met? (*CALLING OFF*) Romano! (*TO CHORA*) Perhaps you guessed, since you weren't surprised . . .

CHORA: Did they find him?

CAVALETTI: Who?

CHORA: The man who raped your daughter.

CAVALETTI: Yes. They found him. But he drowned himself before we could press charges. He was an immigrant. He'd have been deported if we had.

CHORA: Did it help?

PAUSE.

CAVALETTI: No. And then a naïve little girl, way way out of her depth, made a video. Making him a hero. My uh sources tell me I should be thanking you for that.

CHORA: Marcello?

CAVALETTI: Mohamed. Yes. Google has its limits, doesn't it? (*CALLING OFF*) Romano!

CHORA: That's not what he was about. Marcello. He wouldn't have raped your daughter.

CAVALETTI: And you'd know would you? You met?

CHORA: No. No, we didn't but it was – it was your fault, your people's fault, they beat him half to death.

CAVALETTI: And why did that happen, do you think?

CHORA: It happened because that's what happens all over the world. The people with power think they have a right to indiscriminately exercise it on

others. More often they're not, they're straight, white, male, and very good at lying –

VAL ENTERS. HE IS IN THE UNIFORM OF THE STATE POLICE.

CHORA STANDS.

VAL: Sorry I'm late, Sir, I was upstairs with Chief –

CAVALETTI: Yes. Yes, you usually are, it seems. *(TO CHORA)* This is Agente scelto Romano, you'll be in safe hands. *(TO VAL)* I will be gone for an hour. I have to pay a visit to San Gioacchino's. I need you to cross-examine the girl and post that *(INDICATING THE DRESS)* to the labs. Clear?

VAL: Yes Sir.

CAVALETTI: Good. *(TO CHORA)* Please try and cooperate.

CAVALETTI EXITS.

VAL SITS. SKIMS THE FORM.

PAUSE.

VAL: Hello Chora.

CHORA: Is that true, what he said, about Marcello?

VAL: What? That Marcello fucked-up his daughter?

CHORA: Yes.

VAL: Who knows. Perhaps? Perhaps not. Wouldn't know. She wasn't even that good-looking, to be honest. Perhaps that's just what he believes? You know the stories people tell themselves. Speaking of which, you're coming across as the damsel-in-distress in this. You knew that, right?

CHORA: What?

VAL: This form. *(RISING)* Oh and this'll be your little black dress.

*HE LIFTS THE DRESS FROM THE BAG, SHAKES IT.
TAKES A LONG SNIFF –*

Ah. I do miss that detergent. Dismas. Bless that little dude. Whilst this is, I'm sure, exceptionally clean, Chora, it's not usually considered a good idea to put the only evidence you have on a spin-cycle.

HE CHUCKS HER THE DRESS.

SITS.

*CONSULTS THE FORM THROUGH THE
FOLLOWING, MAKES AMMENDMENTS.*

CAVALETTI: Let's go through it again, shall we, together, given we were both there? 'Do you know where the suspect is currently living?' Well, I can give you my address if you like . . . My name? It is Val. Valentino Romano. We're advised to keep our first names when undercover . . . Drinking? Boxed red wine, wasn't it? Same wine we were drinking when we first met. I remember these things . . . 'Would you describe what you were wearing at the time as being provocative?' That dress? You've never looked more like . . . (*CLICKS*) I know who it is you reminded me of now. Audrey Hepburn, Breakfast at Tiffany's. Remember? You're a film student. Audrey Hepburn, right? The exact . . . Yes. That is it. I will finally finally be able to sleep at night. . . What's this? Oh yes, there was that kiss, wasn't there? We were always more than friends Chora . . . These are some very personal questions, aren't they? Oh. Whoops. Nope. No condom. We were both just too eager, weren't we? You looking like Audrey Hepburn and you? You've been gagging for it since – Average? Average? Chora. Now we both know that's not true.

HE SCRUNCHES THE FORM INTO A BALL.

CHORA: Sorry, who are you?

VAL: You know who I am, Chora, don't be dumb.

CHORA: No. No I don't. And I'm guessing you don't either. I'm guessing you wake up at night sometimes wondering where you are and who you are. Who am I? Who am I meant to be? You split yourself in two betraying us like that. Police slash activist. And again. Another split. Rapist slash decent human. Do I mean decent? Or do I mean normal? You're a freak now, you're barely human. Your manhood was warped, twisted, shrunk, every time you betrayed it.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 11

THE SQUAT.

CAVELETTI, GIANNI, AND MARIKA.

DISMAS ENTERS, SITS.

DISMAS: Soup's on. What did I miss?

GIANNI: Well, the toilets are now fully functional. Marika suggested that, and you'll be interested in this, that we organise a team system. One team for sauce prep, two on salads, two on cooked meals. This way you don't end up shouldering all the responsibility, as was the case in the last place

DISMAS: Yes. Yeh, cos, yeh, cos then we can start training some of the younger ones

GIANNI We're all about education

DISMAS: And, er, cooking, well -

GIANNI: Exactly. Regarding internet, I'm still having problems connecting. There were several interjections at this point... (*CHECKING LAPTOP*) No, still nothing. But that, that should be sorted soon. Er... (*CHECKING LAPTOP*) Skip, skip, skip, oh, Marika mentioned another assault against the homeless, a woman this time, that Chora and I must've missed. It made the dailies actually. so uh well done us. That's a massive, actually... Yeh. (*CHECKING LAPTOP*) Skip, skip, skip, and, yeh, you're pretty much caught up... Members started to leave when we, er, moved on to the issue of, well the topic, the arrival of Mister err Ispettore / Michele Cavaletti...

CAVALETTI: Legally, yes, you have a right to be here.

GIANNI BEGINS TYPING.

There is no clergy, no congregation. The parish is closed. The church was decommissioned by the Cardinal Vicar himself, its skeletons exhumed, the building, its valuables, sold to someone who has yet to set foot on site. This is no longer holy ground. No one in this rioni believes anymore but they believe in you and what you do even less. Legally, yes, you are right. There are no grounds on which to evict you. But the riots, the looting, this crucifix problem. These things make you unpopular. It makes life difficult for me.

GIANNI STOPS.

GIANNI: (So what do you suggest?)
CAVALETTI: I suggest you return them their cross.
GIANNI: Imagine the photographs
MARCELLO: Quiet.
DISMAS: Fair enough, right? *(TO MARIKA)* Fair?

MARIKA RAISES HER HAND. SHE'S IGNORED.

SHE PERSISTS.

PAUSE.

MARIKA RAISES HER OTHER HAND. REMAINS IGNORED.

GIANNI: Why wasn't the cross sold with the other valuables?
CAVALETTI: Because it's not, to all intents and purposes, valuable. It's by an obscure Thirteenth Century sculptor generally believed to be crap. The cross and the Christ do not match... It is too big, too graphic for contemporary taste and it shows signs of woodworm.
GIANNI: Why do they want it back?
CAVALETTI: They believe it has powers. Miracles

GIANNI: What kind of miracles?

CAVALETTI: Healing, that kind of thing. Look, you invited me here.

GIANNI: No we didn't.

CAVALETTI: (*TO MARCELLO*) Then who did?

MARIKA GIVES IN. STANDS.

MARIKA: There is absolutely no point in you lot doing what you're doing unless you avoid pissing off the neighbours. Set a date, give them the cross back.

CAVALETTI: Ferragosto. The Assumption. It's the fifteenth, a week away. If they have it before then -

MARIKA: Wednesday then. I'll tell my sister.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 12

THE SQUAT.

PLACARDS LITTER THE SPACE.

ON TOP OF THE TABLE, A LIFE-SIZE CRUCIFIX, CHORA'S DRESS, AND A WIG.

GIANNI AND DISMAS HOLD THE CROSS IN POSITION. MARIKA, ON TOP, DETACHES CHRIST FROM THE CROSS WITH A POWER DRILL.

DOES GIANNI WEAR HIS ROMAN OUTFIT?

MARIKA WEARS A GUY FAWKES MASK, PROTECTING HER FACE FROM WOOD DUST.

SHE CLIMBS DOWN FROM THE CROSS, THE TABLE. LIFTS UP THE MASK LIKE A VISOR. PICKS UP THE DRESS.

GIANNI AND DISMAS LIFT CHRIST FROM THE CROSS.

MARIKA HOLDS OPEN THE DRESS. GIANNI AND DISMAS LOWER CHRIST INTO IT. THEY FINISH.

TOGETHER THEY RETURN CHRIST TO THE CROSS.

GIANNI HOLDS THE CROSS IN POSITION. DISMAS HOLDS CHRIST TO THE CROSS. MARIKA PULLS THE MASK DOWN LIKE A VISOR.

SHE CLIMBS ONTO THE TABLE, THE CROSS. REATTACHES CHRIST TO THE CROSS WITH A POWER DRILL.

SHE FINISHES. CLIMBS BACK OFF. REMOVES THE MASK.

GIANNI AND DISMAS LIFT UP THE MODDED CRUCIFIX SO MARIKA CAN SEE.

PAUSE. OBSERVING.

SHE PICKS UP THE WIG. PUTS IT ON CHRIST'S HEAD.

PAUSE. OBSERVING. CONSIDERING.

DISMAS: Well?

MARIKA: Not exactly subtle, is it?

GIANNI: Change with me?

GIANNI AND MARIKA SWAP PLACES.

PAUSE. CONSIDERING.

GIANNI TAKES MARIKA'S MASK. PUTS IT ON CHRIST.

MARIKA: Oh, yeah, miles better.

DISMAS: Swap swap swap –

DISMAS AND GIANNI SWAP PLACES.

PAUSE. OBSERVING.

Wait one sec.

MARIKA: Dismas –

DISMAS: *(EXITING)* One sec, hang on.

PAUSE.

MARIKA: Do you think they will?

GIANNI: What?

MARIKA: Use this as an excuse –

GIANNI: Yes. Yes I think they will. I think this is distracting. I think that now, after today, they'll forget Mohamed. They'll forget what the Movement was about. I think your sister's lost sight of the bigger picture. She was the first to forget.

MARIKA: Right, well I think you're wrong. I think if your Movement doesn't reject misogyny, rape, all that, you're not staging a revolution, are you? You're staging a change in management. Hear those people outside? I think they think so too.

GIANNI: No. Honestly. Them? They're like Dismas. Thrillseekers. Tourists.

*DISMAS RETURNS WITH A DISPOSABLE CAMERA.
STARTS TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS.*

Do you see?

MARIKA: Dis, give it a rest, yeah?

DISMAS: Wait wait wait. Smile? (*TAKES A PHOTO*) Did you smile? (*TAKES ANOTHER*) This. Looks. *Amazing* –

CHORA ENTERS, CARRYING HER RUCKSACK.

MARIKA: Done?

CHORA: Yeah. (*SMILES.*) Looks alright, doesn't it? Dis. Stop. There'll be enough of that outside. Swap with Marika.

DISMAS AND MARIKA SWAP PLACES.

PAUSE. OBSERVING.

CHORA: Where's the wig from?

MARIKA: The transvestite.

DISMAS: That man in the dress, that tramp –

CHORA: You didn't?

DISMAS: No –

MARIKA: I asked her for it. I also let her in.

CHORA: Good.

MARIKA: People are going to be massively offended by this, aren't they?

CHORA: They shouldn't be, it's what we do. Re-appropriating images. We give them new meaning while repairing the one originally intended. This would've been *the* revolutionary logo, back in the day. We've just updated it. Right –

*CHORA PRODUCES EACH OF THE ITEMS
REFERRED TO FROM HER RUCKSACK.*

There's these

MARIKA: What are they?

CHORA: Bandanas.

MARIKA: They're hideous. And these, in the little bags?

CHORA: Same again. Different ones.

MARIKA: (SNIFFS) They stink.

CHORA: They're soaked in vinegar. Close it. If they do use tear gas, swap bandanas. The vinegar absorbs it. In the mean time, keep that's ealed.

MARIKA: Uh . . . Is that something they're likely to do?

CHORA: Tear gas? They did last time.

DISMAS: It was amazing.

MARIKA: Right. Okay.

CHORA: (TO THE BOYS) You guys won't be at the front, will you, if you're carrying that? No? Cool. Cos, we're low on goggles. Marika? You just keep away from the front, okay? If it kicks off, please, I want you to come back here. That way I don't have to worry . . . Not that I, you know, care. I'll keep a hold of these then –

MARIKA HUGS CHORA.

No no no. No. Don't. Please. Don't do that. Get off.

SHE STOPS.

Dickhead.

MARIKA: You love it.

*CHORA PRODUCES A HOODY AND SHOVES IT TO
MARIKA.*

Err . . . What's this?

CHORA: It's your hoody, it was upstairs.

MARIKA: It's boiling outside.

CHORA: You have to put it on.

MARIKA: Why?

CHORA: You have got way too much skin on show.

MARIKA: You're worse than Nan.

CHORA: No, seriously. Put it on. It's dangerous otherwise, you could get cut.

MARIKA: Sorry, but um who's the eldest?

CHORA: Really.

MARIKA: *(PUTTING ON THE HOODY) (LOW)* For fuck's sake .

CHORA: *(PASSING TO MARIKA)* Baby wipes . . . Eye drops . . .

MARIKA: Right.

DISMAS: Um –

CHORA: Don't worry, Dis, I've got yours too.

SHE CHUCKS THE SAME TO DISMAS.

DISMAS: Thanks babe.

CHORA: And did you remember your inhaler?

DISMAS: Err . . .

CHORA: *(CHUCKING HIM HIS INHALER)* No. You didn't. Just testing.

DISMAS: Cheers.

CHORA: And Dis, if I see a photo of you on the Guardian tomorrow, throwing a brick through a shop window, like last time, I will hunt you down.

Clear?

DISMAS: Yes Chora.

CHORA: That goes for you too.

MARIKA: Oh like I'm gonna throw a brick at anything.

CHORA: There's a Piazza Italia en route, I know what you're like.

MARIKA: What's that?

CHORA: It's an Italian Topshop?

MARIKA: Oooh.

MARIKA EDGES TOWARDS THE EXIT.

CHORA: Before you go – guys, I know you've heard this already, but for Marika's sake – just in case you should get arrested –

MARIKA OPENS THE DOORS, LETTING IN COLD LIGHT AND NOISE.

Marika?

MARIKA: Ready to take control?

CHORA: (*FOLLOWING*) That's – that's not what we're doing –

THE BOYS FOLLOW.

Do you listen to anything I tell you, ever?

LIGHTS.

SCENE 13

POLICE STATION.

ON THE TABLE A PLASTIC BAG.

CAVALETTI IS WATCHING AN OFF-STAGE TELEVISION.

KNOCKING.

HE SWITCHES OFF THE TV.

CAVALETTI: In.

VAL ENTERS.

VAL: Sir?

CAVALETTI: Romano. Please. Sit. Uh, would you mind locking the door behind you?
I don't want us to be disturbed.

VAL: Sir.

HE LOCKS THE DOOR.

You asked for me?

CAVALETTI: Yes, I did. Tell me, are you certain you sent the evidence regarding the
Jamieson case to the labs?

VAL: *(SITTING)* Yes Sir?

CAVALETTI: It's just it's been two weeks and they've yet to get back to us.

VAL: You know how it is, Sir. This is Italy. Things get lost in the post.

CAVALETTI: Quite. Perhaps you'll be able to help me . . .

HE SWITCHES ON THE TV.

It's just I'm wondering how that same evidence, that dress, ended up on
a life-size likeness of Jesus Christ on TG24? Wait til that man with the

banner . . . Now. Look. Do you see? That's live, by the way, from the squatted church.

VAL: Yes Sir. Well . . . Are you sure it's the same dress?

HE SWITCHES OFF THE TV.

CAVALETTI: Yes. Prior to this stunt a video was uploaded onto YouTube. Not unlike the video preceding last month's riots, it featured Jamieson, this time *unmasked*, recounting a version of the events that led to her seeking our help. It's the same dress.

VAL: In which case, Sir, I can only really speculate. It has been suspected for some time that radical elements have infiltrated the postal system. I did in fact allude to this in my last report? If that *is* the case, it's entirely possible that police post is being intercepted. Perhaps the dress – ?

CAVALETTI: That's enough Romano.

VAL: Yes. Yes of course. I really didn't mean to insult your intelligence. Does – does she name me?

CAVALETTI PRODUCES A GUN FROM THE PLASTIC BAG.

CAVALETTI: No.

VAL: Good –

CAVALETTI: (*AIMING THE GUN AT VAL*) This is yours, I believe?

VAL: What –?

BANG!

BANG! HE SHOOTS VAL TWICE IN THE CHEST.

HE MOVES CLOSER.

BANG!

BANG! AND TWICE IN THE HEAD.

NOISES OFF: KNOCKING, SHOUTING.

CAVALETTI PUTS THE GUN IN HIS MOUTH –

CAVALETTI STOPS. THE KNOCKING STOPS. VAL GETS TO HIS FEET, EXITS.

THE SCENE RESTARTS FROM THE BEGINNING.

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HE SWITCHES OFF THE TV.

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VAL ENTERS.

VAL: Sir?

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I don't want us to be disturbed.

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Jamieson case to the labs?

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It's just I'm wondering how that same evidence, that dress, ended up on a life-size likeness of Jesus Christ on TG24? Wait til that man with the banner . . . Now. Look. Do you see? That's live, by the way, from the squatted church.

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CAVALETTI: Yes. Prior to this stunt a video was uploaded onto YouTube. Not unlike the video preceding last month's riots, it featured Jamieson, this time *unmasked*, recounting a version of the events that led to her seeking our help. It's the same dress.

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CAVALETTI: That's enough Romano.

VAL: Yes. Yes of course. I really didn't mean to insult your intelligence. Does – does she name me?

CAVALETTI PRODUCES A GUN FROM THE PLASTIC BAG.

CAVALETTI: No.

VAL: Good –

CAVALETTI: This gun is yours, I believe?

VAL: What? Oh.

CAVALETTI: The squat.

VAL: Yes. (*HOLDING OUT A HAND FOR HIS GUN*) Thank you.

CAVALETTI: Oh no Romano. Why bother returning it? I'd only have to ask for it back.

VAL: Why would that be, Sir?

CAVALETTI: When you resign tomorrow morning. First thing.

PUTS THE GUN DOWN ON THE TABLE.

That'll be all Romano.

VAL: Yes Sir. Of course Sir. (*RISING*) You realise, however, that this presents our department with a unique opportunity?

CAVALETTI: Excuse me?

VAL: She doesn't name me. Even if she did it'd be her word against mine. Plus I'm assuming my role would be denied? The station can't officially admit to having secret officers and the like. This is Italy. She'd sound delusional if she tried.

CAVALETTI: Your point?

VAL: Is that the only thing we might consider attesting to is that, yes, these are dangerous places where young women are raped all the time. We have have to be seen to act, no? For once, we might have the support we need to shut this squat down. Enough at least. It's in the activist's interests after all. Who knows? This might even open a window to tougher legislation all round. But . . . You're right. I made a mistake. I shouldn't have gotten involved. I was drunk. She tricked me. Etcetera, etcetera. You're quite right. I should indeed hand in my resignation first thing tomorrow morning . . . Before that, I do feel it prudent to inform the man upstairs. Not only of my decision but your invaluable advice. He did after all show a particular interest in undercover operatives like myself.

(TUTS) Such a pity. I think it all made him feel like he was in a Bond film or something. He does enjoy his movies, bless him –

CAVALETTI: Do I assume this was planned?

VAL: Of course not Sir, of course not. I just got a little too involved with the character. It's what they are, aren't they, these squatters? Thieves and rapists and ingrates. *(HOLDING OUT A HAND FOR HIS GUN)* Sir?

PAUSE.

CAVALETTI HANDS VAL HIS GUN.
LIGHTS.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 14

THE STUDIO AND SQUAT, SIMULTANEOUSLY.

DISMAS ENTERS THE SQUAT, SOAKING AND DISORIENTATED. HE HAS JUST BEEN HIT BY A WATER CANNON.

HE COLLAPSES BY THE WASHING MACHINE.

FILMMAKER #1 AND THE ACTOR ENTER THE STUDIO. THE ACTOR HAS A SCRIPT.

A FILM CREW FOLLOW BEHIND THEM – AS FEW AS TWO OR AS MANY AS TWENTY. ALL CARRY RIOT HELMETS.

FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE, FILMMAKER #1 AND ACTOR ARE IN THE STUDIO, WHILE THE FILM CREW STRIKE THE ‘SQUAT’ SET.

NEITHER PARTY ACKNOWLEDGE/INTERACT WITH DISMAS.

FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE, DISMAS IS IN THE SQUAT. HE SEES THE CREW AS RIOT POLICE SHUTTING DOWN THE SQUAT.

ACTOR: So . . . So, let me uh I’ve got this right. The Crucifix Riots are over, pretty much.

FILMMAKER #1: Right.

ACTOR: And Val is involved in that?

FILMMAKER #1: He’s involved in shutting down the squat, yes. Given his insight . . .

ACTOR: Oh. Okay. Because . . . Actually, can I just . . . Can I just run these lines by you quickly?

FILMMAKER #1: Sure, one sec. Guys? Guys.

THE CREW STOP.

Hard hats. Come on. Health and Safety. You know the rules. A piano lands on your head? We lose money. You get hurt, you go home, cry to mum? It costs this production. Please. We’ve already had one law suit.

THE CREW PUT ON THE RIOT HELMETS.

ACTOR: There was a law suit?

FILMMAKER #1: Mhm. The Anonymous mask? The Guy Fawkes . . . That V for Vendetta whatever. Couple of shots of that went out in the teaser . . .

ACTOR: And?

FILMMAKER #1: And it's a copyrighted image. Apparently. Who knew?

ACTOR: Since when?

FILMMAKER #1: I dunno. Since some crap involving hackers. Had to reshoot that entire sequence. Cost us a bomb. Still. Never mind. Onwards and upwards, right?

ACTOR: Right –

FILMMAKER #1: Lines . . .

ACTOR: Sorry. You're busy. I can –

FILMMAKER #1: No no no. Go on. Tell me what's wrong with the lines –

ACTOR: Oh. Nothing's wrong. Nothing's wrong with the lines. As such. It's the uh my delivery. In a way. It's . . . It's better if I show you.

FILMMAKER #1: Fine by me. Go ahead.

ACTOR: Cool. Um. Give us a sec –

THE ACTOR SKIMS THE SCRIPT. FINDS IT.

Okay. Let me, um . . .

BREATHES IN. HOLDS IT. PREPARING.

BREATHES OUT.

CLEARs THROAT.

So I'll just be me, yeah? You can imagine the other bits.

DISMAS LOOKS AT THE ACTOR, SEES VAL.

FILMMAKER #1: Sure.

DISMAS: Val?

DISMAS WRAPS HIS ARMS AROUND THE WASHING MACHINE. THE CREW STRUGGLE TO LIFT IT –

ACTOR-VAL: You. Get outside. Now. *(AS HIMSELF)* Then *he* says –

DISMAS: No –

FILMMAKER #1: Yeah yeah. Go on –

DISMAS: I'm not letting go –

THE CREW ATTEMPT TO WRENCH DISMAS FROM THE WASHING MACHINE –

You're assaulting me. I'll report you –

ACTOR-VAL: I'm not assaulting you. I'm moving you. And I'm helping you outside. I could arrest you, but, for, I dunno, old time's sake say, I'm not. It's in your benefit that you –

HE SNIFFS –

Is that alcohol – ?

CREW #2 SNIFFS –

CREW #2: *(TO CREW #1)* Is that gas? Have we –?

ACTOR-VAL: Are you drunk –?

DISMAS: No –

CREW #1: *(CROUCHING)* Dunno. Don't think so –

ACTOR-VAL: Have you been drinking? Dismas? You've been drinking this morning haven't you?

CREW #1: Turned it off, didn't I? Look at this –

CREW #2 JOINS CREW #1 NEXT TO DISMAS –

ACTOR-VAL: Look at me, look. You have.

DISMAS: No I haven't.

ACTOR-VAL: You've been drinking this morning.

DISMAS: No I've not.

ACTOR-VAL: You've been drinking –

CREW #2: Mate, this isn't gonna shift.

CREW #1: Nope. No chance –

DISMAS: I've had tea –

ACTOR-VAL: You –

CREW #1: *(TO FILMMAKER)* Mate? Boss?

FILMMAKER #1: What?

CREW #1: There a toolbox anywhere? This ain't gonna shift.

FILMMAKER #1: Chrissake. Where's your supervisor? Um, fuck, there's a . . . There's a toolbox by the exit. I think. Don't ask me what's in it, I don't know I don't care –

CREW #1 EXITS, RETURNS WITH A TOOLBOX. S/HE REACHES IN, PULLS OUT A POLICE BATON.

PAUSE. CONSIDERING.

HANDS IT TO A CREWMATE. TAKES OUT ANOTHER. THIS ACTION REPEATS, AS NECESSARY, DURING THE FOLLOWING, UNTIL ALL THE CREW ARE ARMED WITH BATONS.

RETURN WITH THE TOOLBOX MIGHT BE DELAYED TO ACCOMMODATE FEWER CREW MEMBERS.

(TO ACTOR) Continue.

ACTOR-VAL: You drove your car here today, didn't you?

DISMAS: No, I live here. You know that. This is my home –

ACTOR-VAL: You were driving your car . . .

DISMAS: Val, I can't drive. I drank tea –

ACTOR-VAL: (*AS HIMSELF*) This bit's um into radio, it says . . . (*AS VAL*) Sir, there's a young man here, in the church, refusing to move. Possible drunk-driver –

DISMAS: Val –

ACTOR-VAL: You drove your car here this morning. You've had a drink, haven't you?

DISMAS: No –

ACTOR-VAL: Where's your car now . . . Sir?

DISMAS: Val, I . . . I don't have a car. I can't drive. You know that –

ACTOR-VAL: You just told me you had two drinks –

DISMAS: No I didn't –

ACTOR-VAL: You just this second said you had two drinks –

DISMAS: No. I didn't –

ACTOR-VAL: I can smell it on your breath –

DISMAS: What – ?

ACTOR-VAL: You told me you came in a car.

DISMAS: No. No, I didn't.

ACTOR-VAL: How long since you had those drinks?

DISMAS: Val . . . Am I being arrested?

ACTOR-VAL: No. I am making enquiries –

*DISMAS TRIES TO STAND. A CREW MEMBER
PUSHES AND HOLDS HIM DOWN –*

Hey. Hey hey hey. Would you listen to me?

DISMAS: (*STRUGGLING*) Get off me –

ACTOR-VAL: Stop. Stop fighting. Listen to me. Don't go anywhere. Don't think about it. You are being detained at this moment in time –

DISMAS: You stupid fucking –

ACTOR-VAL: What? What did you say?

DISMAS: You stupid fucking rapist cunt –

THE CREW BEAT DISMAS WITH THE BATONS.

EACH TIME DISMAS HOWLS IN PAIN –

FILMMAKER #1: Guys? Guys. Quiet. Please. We're actually trying to work here?

CREW #1: Sorry boss. (*REFERRING TO THE BATONS*) It's the spanners, they –

FILMMAKER #1: I don't care what's causing it, just keep it down. Okay?

CREW #1: Yes boss . . . Sorry boss. (*TO CREWMATE/S*) Okay, quiet this time –

DISMAS IS RENDERED UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

ACTOR: D'you see what I'm getting at?

THE CREW EXIT, DRAGGING DISMAS OFFSTAGE.

FILMMAKER #1: Yes. Yes, completely. That was passionately performed. You came across as uh furious, indignant. Incandescent even. I uh hope that's what you were aiming for?

ACTOR: Oh. Yeah. Yes. Yeah yeah yeah. Sort of. Yes.

FILMMAKER #1: So what is the problem exactly?

THE CREW RETURN.

CREW #1: Three. Two. One. Huuup –

THEY EXIT WITH THE WASHING MACHINE.

ACTOR: It's just that this is the last time we see him. Val I mean. We don't really ever hear his side of the story. We don't see him regret. What he did to

Chora, what he did to all of them, but particularly to Chora. What motivated him? I'm uh struggling with that. Was it the whole double-life thing or . . . I dunno. I dunno.

FILMMAKER #1: That's, um . . . That's –

ACTOR: A toughie. Yeah –

THE CREW RETURN WITH MARIKA. HER HANDS ARE TIED AND HER MOUTH IS TAPED.

FILMMAKER #1: It really is. Um . . . Let me put it this way. Don't you think the line between intimacy and violence is kinda sorta blurry? Like when you hold something precious and valuable and fragile in your hands. You want to own it – don't you, yes – but if you can't, you'll break it. That's the male condition. We can't be trusted with nice, delicate things. At least . . . *(LAUGHING)* that's my condition.

CREW #1: Boss? Where did you want this?

FILMMAKER #1: Just there, where the washing machine was. Cheers.

THE CREW MANOEUVRE MARIKA INTO POSITION. THEY UNTIE HER HANDS. EXIT.

THE FILMMAKER'S PHONE RINGS.

(TO ACTOR) Let's have a look at yesterday's rushes. You are doing a fantastic job. Really. A fantastic job, you'll see. *(ANSWERING)* Shoot.

HE EXITS WITH THE ACTOR. AS HE DOES –

(NO LIGHTING CHANGE.)

SCENE 15

*CHORA ENTERS, MAKING A PHONE CALL.
STRAIGHT TO VOICEMAIL –*

CHORA: This is a message for Signore Cavaletti, formerly of the Italian State Police. We have a new place, a new centre. Call me back for the address. See, we're starting some courses soon. They're free. That's the point, that they're free. Rape Prevention and um Recovery. I just . . . I just thought your daughter might be interested, maybe. It's a safe environment, honestly. Might even do self-defence. They're gonna be really informal anyway, and uh yeah, I'd keep an eye on her . . . So if she is, interested, my number's zero double-seven double-zero, nine double-zero, two double-one.

MARIKA RIPS THE TAPE FROM HER MOUTH.

Oh my God –

CHORA HUGS MARIKA.

MARIKA: See? A physical display of affection. Knew you could do it.

CHORA: Only cos I thought I'd never see you again, you twat. You had to? Didn't you? You had to get there first. Getting arrested was always meant to be my thing, but no, Marika decides she wants the attention . . . Throwing a crucifix through a shop window was an impressive way of doing it, granted, but still.

MARIKA: I got carried away, okay? Plus, actually, you said don't throw bricks.

CHORA: I took life-size depictions of Christ as a given.

MARIKA: He was already in a dress. Your idea –

CHORA: Yes –

MARIKA: You. You did that –

CHORA: Yes. But that had a point. What you did was –

GIANNI ENTERS, CARRYING A BOX FULL OF BELONGINGS. AMONG THEM A POT PLANT.

LIKE THE FILMMAKERS, HE WEARS A BUSINESS SUIT.

GIANNI: Marika? Marika. Hi. Oh my God, you're –

MARIKA: Yeah. *(TO CHORA)* Anyway, thanks for getting me out. With the placards and the showing-off.

CHORA: That's kind of my M.O. You found it then?

MARIKA: Yeah. Yes. *(LOOKING AROUND)* Not sure I like it.

CHORA: Needs work.

MARIKA: Table bed chair?

CHORA: Yes. Exactly. *(TURNING TO GIANNI)* Oh. Cheers for the number.

GIANNI: Cavaletti's?

CHORA: Figured you'd have it.

GIANNI: Chora –

MARIKA: D'you want me to give you a minute or . . . ?

CHORA: Want? No. But maybe you need to.

MARIKA: Cool. Where's Dismas?

CHORA: He's here. Go out that way, turn right, third floor.

MARIKA: Cool. Is he . . . ?

CHORA: Better than he was.

MARIKA: Cool. Okay. Don't you, you know, kill him or anything. Or maybe do?
(TO GIANNI) Preferred your last uniform.

MARIKA EXITS.

PAUSE.

CHORA: You're sister got you the job then?

GIANNI: Yeah.

CHORA: Alessandra or Carla?

GIANNI: Alessandra.

PAUSE.

Do you want me to stay?

CHORA: No. Not a bit. Not even slightly. I want you to leave.

GIANNI: Look I'm not going to help them anymore. Not after what they did. Dismas, your sister . . . We've seen it before, yes, but that was . . . This was last straw –

CHORA: That's not what I meant. It's not us trusting you that's the problem. It's you not trusting us. This thing we have. Almost have. It's delicate. You can't be trusted with it.

GIANNI: Us?

CHORA: Fuck no. This world we're trying to build. Look it's not us trusting you that's the problem, it's you trusting us. You kept me from that room, why, because you thought I wanted him dead, wanted him hurt. Violence was going through your mind, not mine. Your pride was hurt. You wanted revenge. I wanted justice.

GIANNI: I didn't hurt him –

CHORA: Not because you wouldn't, because you couldn't –

GIANNI: I could uh stay and make up for it?

CHORA: No, though, thank you for asking.

GIANNI: The right questions . . .

CHORA: Yeah.

GIANNI: They're not enough now, are they?

CHORA: No, but that's how it starts.

END OF PLAY.