

THE GATE WITH CRITICAL ANALYSIS

BY

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A thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
for the degree of
MPHIL (B) IN PLAYWRITING STUDIES

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September 2010

ABSTRACT

The Gate explores conscience and the effect of the reawakening of a long buried guilt. The play focuses on David Rivers, a military research scientist who has developed a method for removing traumatic memories from individuals suffering from combat stress. Sam Evans, a mistreated former research subject, returns suffering from confusing flashes of a removed memory. The play follows David's attempts to rescue himself from a guilt long repressed by restoring Sam's memory. However, the contents of Sam's memory reveal David's true culpability. The play examines the importance of conscience and the potential horror of its absence, and explores how the consequences of a course of action are too unpredictable and far reaching to allow good intent to justify reprehensible means.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Critical Analysis	1
Science plays and <i>The Gate</i> .	3
Memory and Time	10
Politics, Tragedy and Plot	17
<i>The Gate</i> : Play text	24
Bibliography	119

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The Gate grew from an interest in exploring conscience, how an individual can organize his or her mind to live on with a dormant guilt, and the effect on the individual of that guilt waking. From this impulse, the play that emerged tells the story of David Rivers, a brilliant research scientist who has developed a method of curing an individual of traumatic memories. The treatment is being publicized after years of secrecy and David has organized the press release, bringing his daughter Helen, a rookie journalist, to write up the article. David's colleague, Richard Ensbury, informs him that a former research subject who suffered during his work with David has deserted from the army and disappeared, awakening David's long buried guilt over the incident. The subject, Sam, is found suffering from a re-emergence of memory, with the shadows of old memories he no longer has invading his mind, but which he cannot place. Moved by his guilt and Sam's desperation, David agrees to help him. David gradually helps Sam recover his memories assisted by Richard who was the only other who knew of David's abusive methods and who strongly disapproved.

The play follows these events and examines what happens as Sam slowly discovers the memories he has lost and David discovers the full implications of his work. It explores the consciences of these two individuals, already in a delicate balance, and how this delicate balance is thrown when they become fully aware of what they have done.

During this critical analysis of the play I intend to explore the process in three sections. The first will examine the piece as a science play, and consider the process of development and the particular playwriting challenges encountered in that vein. This section focuses largely on handling exposition and the creation and placement of

characters within a scene to handle these challenges. The second section will focus on memory and consider the play's use of time, particularly with regard to activating past events in the present. It will also explore the mining of the play's content to influence its form. The third section will consider the play as a political tragedy, and will focus on the ways in which the play's plot was created and how the political dimension of the play emerged from the process of developing the play's plot.

Science plays and *The Gate*.

While the play is not as explicitly science based as plays such as *Copenhagen* [Michael Frayn, 1998], the laboratory setting, scientist protagonist and central conceit of a hypothetical ‘cure’ threw up several challenges particular to a science play. In exploring the process of the play in this essay, it is useful to explore the relationship of the play to science and how this relationship illuminates wider playwriting ideas and processes.

There seems to be an impulse on the part of the science playwright to call on the audience’s imagination more than is usually done in the theater. Perhaps this formal innovation and experimentation relates to the science playwright’s special problem of exposition: it is not just about getting a story across, but presenting a set of ideas that can be quite complicated to explain [Shepherd-Barr, 2006, p 2]

In her book *Science on Stage*, Kirsten Shepherd-Barr outlines a crucial problem in a science play and one which is pertinent to *The Gate*. The ‘special problem’ is the unique expositional burden that the play must carry if at its heart there is a complicated idea that must be understood and accepted before the action of the play can properly progress. *The Gate* relies on an idea which, while hypothetical, is scientific in nature, potentially complicated and vital to the play. The procedure at the centre of the play and the methods David used to develop it, are loosely based on work alleged to have taken place in Cairo during World War II. Mike Thomson in his *Document* radio programme uncovered evidence that Doctor Alexander Kennedy would combine methods of sensory deprivation and disorientation with hallucinogenic chemicals as interrogation techniques to ‘destroy personal identity,’ interfering with and conditioning the mind and weakening its defenses. [*Document*, BBC Radio 4, broadcast 30/11/2009] The methods of Kennedy were adapted for my purposes in the play, with techniques used to condition the mind for interrogation now being used to disorientate

with the intention of having the mind reject all but the desired memory. This provided me with a route into the hypothetical cure as well as the necessary ethical transgression in David's past. As the play developed I built the idea of a hypothetical cure of trauma based on the idea that traumatic memories could be isolated and destroyed. This seemed to me to strike at the heart of what I wanted to explore in this play and it developed and evolved into fascinating areas and funneled into the global implications of the climax of the play.

The central conceit of the treatment would have to be understood and accepted by the audience early in the play. This is where what Shepherd-Barr refers to as the 'special problem' of the science play must be addressed. In the first draft, a lot of the necessary information is delivered through an early meeting between two old friends and through a newspaper article which is deployed as a device to enable the required aspects to be brought into the dialogue. In this early draft, Richard (whose role changed significantly through the redrafting process) is an old friend of the protagonist and is preparing an article on his friend's new treatment, the details of which are to be made public for the first time.

RICHARD

You're helping people to recover their lives. These boys' futures will be in your hands

DAVID

[Reading from the notes] 'Removing the mental scars'. Nice phrase.

RICHARD

I might change that. You can never remove things can you? They'll always be there. When things have happened they've happened. It's just a question of forgetting.

[Adamthwaite, 1st draft, January 2010]

The passage here is as much as is given early on and the detail comes later (a mistake as it then becomes the subject rather than an established fact) but it points already to a problem in this approach. Richard already knows the procedure because he has documented it already. All we can be given, therefore, is that which David can repeat in his stage business of checking over the article, and in this action we get the enigmatic phrase ‘removing mental scars’ which is the only clue that comes out this early because of the problematic arrangement of which characters know what. The solution lay in the arrangement of characters in the scene, their knowledge at the outset, and the knowledge they *needed to acquire*. In *The Playwright’s Guidebook*, Stuart Spencer describes this as ‘activating’ the information or letting it emerge ‘by the force of a character’s action’ [Spencer, 2002, p25] This character motivation approach to acquisition of knowledge was a crucial part of my solution. The eventual solution also solved another problem inherent in science plays in particular.

The Genius is, though, about two brilliant people – Leo Lehrer and a student, Gilly Brown. This struggle with a dangerous idea – that nuclear science is a profoundly malign pursuit and that for the first time in human history, we must deny ourselves a technological ‘advance’. It was a strange play to write, trying to dramatize the intellectual love affair between two characters light years ahead of their author’s intelligence.

[Brenton, Preface to Plays 2, pxiii]

In his play *The Genius* [Howard Brenton, 1983], Howard Brenton portrays a brilliant scientist who has discovered knowledge that he now wishes in a sense to ‘unknow’ and the prodigious mathematical talent to whom he imparts the knowledge. The problem of exposition discussed earlier is not the pertinent one here (though Brenton handles the scientific exposition brilliantly in a ‘test’ situation in a scene between Leo and Gilly which is as implicitly sexual as it is mathematical). The issue is, as Brenton puts it,

trying to write two characters “light years ahead of their author’s intelligence” and herein lies another issue specific to a science play and which arose in writing *The Gate*. David had to be brilliant. I knew this early in the process and it became more and more apparent as I developed the play. I had invented for the purposes of the play a hypothetical cure for a condition for which the only real-world treatment is extensive (and usually unending) therapy. This had to be convincing but the harder challenge was convincingly portraying its inventor. In some ways, the problem of writing brilliance in a character is linked to the specific problem of scientific exposition in that the brilliance I need to portray is only that which is expressed. Therefore it becomes an issue of framing the expression of such brilliance in such a way as to make it convincing yet understandable and this, like the burden of scientific exposition, I attempted to handle by having the pertinent information expressed for the benefit of a character whose intelligence and knowledge is much closer to our own (as both audience and author). Everything else regarding creating this brilliance in David could be handled with careful character choice, and managing the scenes so that he is never in position where he would realistically impart the body of knowledge that the character must convincingly possess, but his writer has no hope of ever knowing (and therefore can never express)

This conundrum also served to create a nice reversal in the first scene which served as a hint at David’s brilliance (and indeed his arrogance), an illustration of his relationship with Helen, a revelation that the person he is talking to is in fact his daughter, and a reversal of expectation to effect a break of tension for humorous affect:

DAVID

Yes...yes precisely. We need them to experience it fully. In most cases this isn’t a problem because to some extent they are already haunted by it. We need to get the memory completely focused. Following the initial period of encoding the visual memory, the consolidation period, during which it can be modulated and strengthened,

particularly by an emotional response, is governed largely by the amygdale in the storing of the material into the long term memory.

HELEN reaches over and stops the Dictaphone.

HELEN

Dad, what are you doing?

[Adamthwaite, 3rd Draft, August 2010]

This moment is where we first meet David and we are at the start of the play (after a brief memory scene involving Sam). The speech begins as a comprehensible account of the process and as such serves a useful expositional function within the interview format of the scene. It sets out the expected format of the scene in which the necessary information can be given. It then deviates and David moves into a deeper explanation of the principle in a way that will be incomprehensible to most. This intentionally creates a tension within an audience (who will try to follow), which is broken by Helen, who at that point breaks the format, steps out of the interview and reveals herself as David's daughter. Within this moment, we get the required information regarding the treatment, we get a picture of David as brilliant, intellectual and arrogant and we have a reversal of the situation as Helen is revealed as his daughter and controls his flow.

Helen controls the scene and that is important, because David would carry it away from us. Her presence prevents this. The device throughout the scene of using Helen and the interview format to control both the required information and the character relationships helps overcome both the problem of delivering David's brilliance as well as the peculiar expositional issues of a 'science play'. Helen's role in this is crucial in that she provides a receptor for the audience's intake of David's method. Her level of understanding is not far ahead of ours, and her need to know is as great. David can

deviate into tangents but will be reigned in by Helen who needs to understand. As long as she is there AND seeking to understand the complicated ideas herself, then we, as audience, can go along with her.

Bohr Of course I mind what it means.

Heisenberg What it means in language.

Bohr In plain language, yes.

Heisenberg What something means is what it means in mathematics

Bohr You think that so long as the mathematics works out, the sense doesn't matter

Heisenberg Mathematics *is* sense! That's what sense is!

Bohr But in the end, in the end, remember, we have to be able to explain it all to Margrethe!

[Frayn, *Copenhagen*, p67]

In *Copenhagen* [Michael Frayn, 1998], as displayed in this exchange, Michael Frayn has Margrethe fill a similar function. Bohr and Heisenberg are both brilliant physicists discussing complicated matters of which they both share a high understanding. The presence of a third character is vital (although Margrethe is not herself ignorant of such matters) but the need for Margrethe to understand is set up early in the play and as long as she is present, Frayn can have Bohr and Heisenberg talk in a way that is more universally understandable than it would be were it just the two of them. By the characters needing to 'explain it all to Margrethe', Frayn is ensuring that they are also explaining it all to us as audience. In this early scene of *The Gate* (and indeed at

various points later on), Helen serves a similar function. A version of Frayn's solution to the problem serves well, particularly as Helen needs to understand the principles and indeed dramatically, it is her discoveries and journey that bring out the revelations of the plot. In terms of both plot and procedure, Helen's discoveries largely mirror our own as audience. We understand them when she does.

Memory and Time

During a theatre performance there are two ‘time streams’ running simultaneously: *stage time* and *real* (theatre foyer) *time*...The question I always ask is: in how *short* a time can I hope to tell my story. [Ayckbourn, 2002, p21]

In this section of my analysis I am going to examine how time operates in the play. In *The Crafty Art of Playmaking*, Alan Ayckbourn identifies two ‘time streams.’ In relation to *The Gate*, I will discuss the importance of a third shortly. Here however, Ayckbourn asserts that as *short* a time as possible is desirable in both stage and real time. The concern with regard to stage time in *The Gate* was that once David’s action in the play with the awakening of his conscience had been triggered, the need to resolve it would drive the action to its conclusion, as would Sam’s need for help. These driving forces would need to be structured within a time frame which took into account the rhythms of the other events and forces affecting the world of the play (for example Helen’s investigations or tracking down Sam). In this respect, most of the play’s action takes place over the course of about a week, excluding the final denouement scene which takes place a week later.

The ‘third time stream’ in the play, additional to Ayckbourn’s two, is that which is concerned with past events and their relation to, and impact on, the present. The importance of memory grew from my early impulses for the play in terms of exploring conscience. As the play emerged from ‘the conscience impulse’, memory became crucial in both form and content, with the hypothetical procedure at the heart of the play developing from it. The premise of an abused research subject on whom the procedure was pioneered finding shadows of his memory returning and these driving him towards the scientist who removed them emerged soon afterwards and I wanted the concern with memory that is built into this premise to actively influence the form of the play. To this

end I began to experiment with several 'memory scenes' involving the character of Sam which became an important part of the play.

The memory scenes serve as insight into Sam's character which would not otherwise be possible, and they also work as a time device in that they bring into the present that which occurred in the past. Memory in the play and the active quest for its retrieval acts as a conductor which allows the events of the past to impact on the present. Its primary purpose is as an instrument of the plot. The story revolves around and hinges upon the removal, and then restoration of memory. The consequences of this restoration are further revelations that drive the plot to its conclusion. The early memory scenes are designed to set this up and present the problem that needs solving (Sam's mental state), and the material of the problem itself which will become the material of revelation (Sam's memories).

Sam's memories are of several levels in the play. Of surface concern is that level of conscious recollection which is occupied in the memory scenes by Karen. In terms of time, these are recent memories being recalled in the present and serve to fill in the character's situation (because these conscious recollections are of Karen's reaction to and gradual acceptance of Sam's desertion), and from a character point of view to show those parts of the interactions with Karen that Sam most remembers and is fixating on. The other level is of the shadows of memories he can't access; that which was removed from him. He has feelings, emotions and sensations of nausea which seem unconnected to anything he can discern or remember. Added to this is a single image of a girl whom he doesn't recognize. This level of memory plagues him and forms the crucial plot material which is recovered and restored later in the play, the shadows of which are

present from the opening scene. The multiple levels of memory – the conscious (Karen), the disconnected sensual (the nausea he describes) and the recurring image (the girl) are the elements that make up the memory scenes for the purposes of plot and character outlined above.

It was crucial during the writing process to find ways of portraying these memory scenes without disrupting the flow of the rest of the plot, nor causing unnecessary confusion. In the first draft Sam appeared disconnected from everything else, interacting with an image of Karen that disappeared and reappeared as memories of several different interactions. Into this action drifts the image of a little girl, the pivotal shadow of a memory removed. This sets up Sam's project (and later David's project), to discover the source of this. The girl is the integral mystery, and we don't find out her significance until late in the play. The major problem in the first draft was that these memory scenes were not anchored anywhere in space and time. That is, Sam was nowhere when he was recalling them. They were therefore little more than disconnected scenes that filled in several important plot points and introduced two key characters but they were floating separately from the world. The application of these scenes presented problems which were not being addressed in the first draft.

Exploring the role of memory in other plays helped address some of these challenges. In *The Gate* the memories of one character 'invade' the present unbidden. In this respect, the memory device is akin to *Death of a Salesman* [Arthur Miller 1949] in which Miller weaves Willy's memories into present action. The unbidden memory therefore becomes a condition of the character in that the recollection of the memories affect the characters present state and action. It is in this way that Sam's memories

operate but the challenge was in finding a way to facilitate them and realize them in the play. In *Death of a Salesman* [Arthur Miller 1949] Willy drifts into scenes from his memory and engages with the characters in them.

Willy is gradually addressing – physically – a point offstage, speaking through the wall to the kitchen, and his voice has been rising in volume to that of a normal conversation.

WILLY: I been wondering why you polish the car so careful. Ha! Don't leave the hubcaps, boys Get the chamois to the hubcaps. Happy, use newspaper on the windows, it's the easiest thing.

...

Young Biff and Young Happy appear from the direction Willy was addressing.
[Miller, 1988, p143]

Here we see a key way Miller applies the memory device. Before this Willy has been alone in the kitchen and gradually he continues the dialogue with himself until the incident he is recalling is manifested on stage. The scene is transported to the place of Willy's mind. The use of Willy's mental state as the catalyst in conjuring the stage manifestation of the memories proved a useful technique when applied to Sam (though in a slightly adapted fashion) in *The Gate*. I used this idea particularly in the appearances of the image of the girl in moments of distress for the character, as the emotional association conjures her to his mind, but also in the separate 'memory scenes' in which Sam's mood in the present affects the memories of Karen that appear, and which parts he dwelt on. The difficulty for my purposes with the application of memory in *Death of a Salesman* was that in that play Willy visits his memories; he is transported to them. I needed a less active approach for Sam. The memories would need to visit him.

Another play with a particular use of memory of relevance here is *The Steward of Christendom* [Sebastian Barry, 1995] in which Thomas Dunne is alone in his cell in an

asylum. He is, as director of the first production Max Stafford Clarke describes it “re-examining moments from his past...recalling it to himself, neither living it nor talking directly to the audience.” [Roberts & Stafford-Clark, 2007, p186] Characters from his past appear throughout the play and memory scenes are played out with them:

Thomas ...(*Climbs into bed...Pulls the sheet over his face...After a moment.*)
Sleep, sleep, that’s the ticket.

His son, Willie, neat and round comes in and sits on the end of his bed and sings to him Schubert’s Ave Maria. At the end, Thomas looks over the sheet. Willie wears his army uniform.

Hello, child. Are you warm?

Willie It’s cold in the mud, Father.

Thomas I know child. I’m so sorry.

Sunlight grows slowly over the scene, banishing Willie.

[Barry, 1995, p17]

Barry has characters from the past fluidly enter the cell and leave again (in the case of the scene above it is the daylight that dismisses the memory) as the scenes are played out. I hoped to achieve this fluidity in the moments Sam drifts into his memory. The situation is similar in the early scenes of the play in that, like Thomas Dunne, Sam is in isolation and visited by his memories. The differences are many, but the intrusion of memories or apparitions from the past into the character’s present achieved by Barry in this play was an element I hoped to capture and while Sam’s interaction with these figures is much less free and natural than is Thomas’s, it was the appearance of the figures in the *current space* and the fluidity with which they are conjured there that I hoped to utilize in a similar way.

In *The Gate* I wanted Sam's memories to be more fleeting. They are focused not on the details that Willy Loman's are, nor interacted with in the same easy manner of Thomas Dunne's, but are focused on the fleeting lines that Karen has said to him that he is obsessing over and are complicated by the emerging shadows of memories he no longer truly has; the nausea and disconnected images that are plaguing him. Unlike Willy or Thomas therefore, he does not fully engage these memories. They invade, creating a problem for the character in the present while illuminating his current situation for the audience.

KAREN

Trace is coming round later.
You'd best not be here.
I don't want anyone knowing you're home.

SAM

It was the flames
Something happened when I saw the flames.

KAREN

Where are you going to go?

SAM

I need you.

KAREN

I don't want anyone knowing you're home.
You'd best not be here.

SAM

I felt something in my stomach.
Like horror
But there weren't any reason.
It were just the feeling

KAREN

What's the matter with you?
I don't want anyone knowing you're home.

[Adamthwaite, 3rd Draft, August 2010]

The memory scenes in the first draft suffered by being distant from the rest of the play and lacking any sense of space or time, while here, Sam is tied to a place in the present and it recalls one specific moment in his past. In this instance, it is when he returns home to Karen for the first time. Like Thomas Dunne in *The Steward of Christendom*, the character has a place in the present in which the invading memories affect him in his isolation. The disconnected feeling is retained from the first draft, as is the sense that Sam is mired in the trauma which is consuming him as he remembers Karen's words to him.. Anchoring these scenes into Sam's present location, and having each one recalling one particular time eliminated the possible confusion while still retaining the sense of Sam's distress. The repetition of certain lines (such as 'I don't want anyone knowing you're home' in the example above) lends the memory scenes a rhythm distinct from the rest of the play. They are phrases of Karen's that Sam is dwelling on and turning over in his mind.

3/ Politics, Tragedy and Plot

In his essay *The politics beyond the politics*, Howard Barker stresses the political dramatist's obligation to imagination over political position. [Barker, 1989, p48]

The 'obligation' as Barker terms it is to the play itself and though the political dimension undoubtedly emerged, this was not, initially at least, something I consciously sought. In *The Gate* the political dimension and the questions the play asks have emerged as part of a natural consequence of the plot, character and the world of the play. In this section of analysis I will explore the genesis of the plot and how the political dimension emerged from it.

An early supervision meeting with Steve Waters on 29th September 2009 helped direct and focus the early ideas of conscience, responsibility and a returning guilt to tragedy [Waters, 2009] , and then the early work on the play's structure and discovery of the story and plot used a very simple traditional tragic narrative as a starting point:

A man pursues redemption and by the action he takes to this end, destroys himself and everything he set out to save.

This is a standard tragic narrative, reduced to its simplest expression but it was a useful starting point in structuring the plot of the play in its early stages so as best to realize my intentions. Although later other elements would distort this slightly (and the action of Sam and Helen as characters would alter the course of this spine), a form of this journey was retained throughout the process and in the current play, David's action still adheres in some way to this simplified narrative spine.

The flaw, or crack in the character, is really nothing – and need be nothing, but his inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what he perceives to be a challenge to his dignity, his image of his rightful status.
[Miller, 1949a, p4]

In *Tragedy and the Common Man*, Arthur Miller here alludes to what may be called the ‘call to action’ of the tragic protagonist. That which sets his journey in motion and it is a useful insight here, because it depicts it as the first challenge to what Miller terms ‘his image of his rightful status’, the call that must be answered and cannot be ignored is a challenge to our identity. This challenge to David is his guilt, reawakened by a discovery in the first act and involves him seeking out Sam, the victim of the incident which carries the guilt he needs to assuage.

Throughout each draft of the play, the tragic climax involved a personal destruction. This happens first of Helen and was portrayed as a moral collapse. In each draft, Helen was set up early as a deeply ethical character (however else she changed between the drafts this core remained consistent) and would in the climax move to defend her father when he becomes indefensible. It is in this corruption of his daughter that David discovers who he is and this knowledge shakes everything that he is.

Although not dealt with explicitly in the first draft of the play, which as a whole was fairly insular and ignoring of the wider world in which the play takes place, subsequent drafts added a crucial further dimension to this tragic climax. As Sam’s memory is recovered and, unable to face the truth that it reveals, he flees, we have the scene of Helen’s ethical collapse triggering the tragedy on the personal level which is interrupted by the return of Karen who delivers the final crucial revelation:

KAREN

An entire town is obliterated and no one remembers a thing. You are not removing memories Doctor. You are removing conscience.

[Adamthwaite, 3rd Draft, August 2010]

The true consequences of David's action are revealed to him and we have the global tragedy which combines with the personal as Helen even now, and ignoring her father's insistence, refuses to tell a truth that would implicate him. The global and personal combine here to reveal to David who he is and, like Sam he cannot live with the image of himself as a monster. There is a crucial mirror here between Sam and David and it is in the connection between them (the shadow of which lurks underneath the final scene of the play) that the central meaning of the play is buried. Reprehensible horror can and will happen because we implement systems of justification to circumvent our consciences. Once these are removed, and our consciences are fully exposed to our actions (as they are with David and Sam) then there is no way to carry on. We are no longer who we thought we were. The tragic structure helps bring this out as we reach the climax which is at once personal and global and reveals the true connection between Sam and David.

As I began to gather ideas and characters into the germ of the idea that would become the play, I found it useful to define the action of the play. In *How Plays Work*, David Edgar defines action as:

a brief encapsulation of the narrative progression of a play, structured to convey its meaning. [Edgar, 2009, p17]

Defining the action in a short, concise way such as this was a helpful starting point in trying to find the structure and the details of the plot of the play. I would return to this

at various points throughout the development process, refining it and changing it as appropriate as a means to keep the play focused.

A dramatic action consists of a project (usually described in the form of subject, verb and object: someone sets out to do something), followed by a contradiction or reversal (as like as not a clause beginning with the word 'but'). [Edgar, 2009, p25]

The conscience and morality questions at the core of the play and the idea of a scientist with an ethical transgression in his past combined to give me the action of the play, which would serve both as a route in to emplotting the play, but also as a guide throughout the first draft:

A scientist attempts to absolve his guilt over abusive research methods by aiding the recovery of a troubled ex-subject, but his attempts to save him reveal the full consequences of his guilt, which are inescapable.

This was the plot of the play expressed as project/reversal in David Edgar's model for defining dramatic action. It is simple, clear and concise and served me as a tool in creating the first draft and demonstrates how the initial ideas of the play began to find expression in terms of dramatic narrative. The Edgarian 'action' and the loose tragic structure placed the line from which the events of the plot were hung, and both are expressed as an *active* push towards conclusion.

...in truth tragedy implies more optimism in its author than does comedy, and its final result ought to be a reinforcement of the onlooker's brightest opinions of the human animal.

[Miller, 1949a, p7]

The final scene of the play fills in the fates of the principle characters and presents the new status quo following the events of the play. It is also an arguably optimistic scene.

Despite the personal tragedy the scene implies and the horrific global consequences previously revealed, the scene is, and had to be, in some way hopeful.

A look at Miller's own tragedy reveals an example of the way this sense of hope might be achieved. Here it is displayed in Biff, in the 'requiem' scene in *Death of a Salesman* [Miller, 1947]:

BIFF. Charley, the man didn't know who he was.

HAPPY, *Infuriated*. Don't say that!

BIFF. Why don't you come with me Happy?

HAPPY. I'm not licked that easily. I'm staying in this city, I'm gonna beat this racket! *He looks at Biff, his chin set.* The Loman Brothers!

BIFF. I know who I am kid.

[Miller, 1988, p222]

The hope lies in Biff's awareness: 'He didn't know who he was...I know who I am.' Although Happy seems destined to repeat the mistakes of his father we know Biff won't. Miller says that that tragedy always attempts to portray "a world in which that good might have been allowed to express itself instead of succumbing to the evil." [Miller, 1949b, p10-11]. Biff Loman embodies this ideal in this requiem scene. He shows the good 'other way'.

In later drafts of *The Gate*, Karen became the crucial character in achieving this necessary effect in the final scene. In a supervision meeting with Stephanie Dale on 1st March 2010 following the first draft, she relayed to me an adage which she felt might help with the character, that it is 'always the innocent that tell the truth' [Dale, 2010]

and suggested that I should allow Karen, the most ‘innocent’ character to activate the climactic revelation. Her innocence would give the moment more credibility. This also prompted me to experiment with allowing Karen to be the most ‘aware’ character in the final scene of the play and the one from whom the necessary optimism could emerge.

After the carnival, after the removal of the masks, you are precisely who you were before. After the tragedy, you are not certain who you are [Barker, 1989, p17]

In *Fortynine asides for a tragic theatre*, Howard Barker points to the necessarily transformative quality of tragedy and, staying with the final scene I want to examine how I sought to achieve a form of optimism and the transformative potential in the play’s challenge to its audience.

HELEN

It...no, it should be positive I think we should...

KAREN

I don’t like that word. And nor did Sam. It stays out.

HELEN

Look all I was trying to do was to get him sympathy and you know...he *is* a hero.

KAREN

He was a man and that’s the best you can say of him.

[Adamthwaite, 3rd Draft, August 2010]

Attention is deliberately weighted onto this moment because the business of the scene has been Karen making corrections to Helen’s article. This pay-off of expectation gives the moment a particular stress or accent. Karen, the innocent, the character who has achieved a level of understanding and awareness and almost acceptance that no other character has; this character and no other refutes the word hero as it relates to Sam in the final moments of a play which has examined conscience, memory and responsibility

for one's actions and implicitly the mechanisms by which we distance ourselves from guilt. She sees the word as a barrier separating experience and loss from understanding and reality. The scene reconciles David and Sam with a sense of dignity and indeed freedom in their destruction, which is invoked in Karen's evocation of the deserter memorial in the closing lines of the play:

KAREN

There's a statue in Staffordshire with a boy in a blind-fold, his hands tied behind his back. It's called the Shot at Dawn memorial, Sam told me about it. It remembers the deserters who were killed. Those that couldn't continue the fight. When they could no longer face it. Perhaps they got scared...or they no longer believed...they made their escape, or tried to.

You should visit it. For Sam...and for your father.

[Adamthwaite, 3rd Draft, August 2010]

The idea of escape is touted by Karen here, not in relation to an avoidance of conscience or denial of it, but in relation to the freedom found by both David and Sam in facing up to the crimes of their past. Their memories and responsibilities restored and confronted, and the Millerian sense of 'personal dignity' restored. In this can be found the hope necessary for tragedy, but also the transformative enlightenment, the necessity of which both Miller and Barker invoke. These elements are not explicit, but exist 'in the air', in what David Hare describes in political drama as "the interaction" between the moment and "what the audience is thinking" [Hare, 1991, p30]

The analysis in this essay is necessarily selective but the elements covered are intended, taken together, to give a broad picture of how the play was written and what specific challenges it posed which, though specific to this play, resonate into the wider field of playwriting.

THE GATE

By John Adamthwaite

Characters

Dr. David Rivers - *Late 40s*
Helen Rivers - *His daughter. Early 20s*
Karen Saunders - *Early 30s*
Dr Richard Ensbury - *Early 40s*
Sam Evans - *Early 30s*
A Girl - *10 years old. (Non-speaking)*

Setting

The action takes place largely within one week and is set in a remote military research laboratory and a disused city warehouse.

A note on memory

Throughout the play various memories appear to Sam, occasionally taking a physical presence on stage. These scenes take place wherever Sam is at that time (in Act 1 and Act 2 scene 1 in the warehouse, thereafter the lab).

Act One Scene One

SAM, alone. He reads from a newspaper

SAM

Disappeared –

The missing soldier...abandoned duty

...returned home.

KAREN appears. A memory

KAREN

Sam?

What are you doing here?

SAM

I couldn't...

This is all I...

I don't know

KAREN

Oh love,

You look terrible

SAM

There's fire

KAREN

Sam?

Get inside. You'll freeze

SAM

I was sick

KAREN

You've been sent home?

SAM

Why weren't they fighting?

KAREN disappears

SAM continues to read from the newspaper

SAM

Evans did not report back from a triumphant raid on a town known to be harboring enemy combatants...

Illegal desertion...dishonour...

KAREN appears. A memory.

KAREN

I have never been more ashamed.

SAM

I'm sorry.

KAREN

What's the matter with you?
Dad has been singing your praises.

SAM

I couldn't help it

KAREN

What's the matter with you?

SAM

I don't know! It's not right.

Nothing's right!

KAREN

Trace is coming round later.
You'd best not be here.
I don't want anyone knowing you're home.

SAM

It was the flames
Something happened when I saw the flames.

KAREN

Where are you going to go?

SAM

I need you.

KAREN

I don't want anyone knowing you're home.
You'd best not be here.

SAM

I felt something in my stomach.
Like horror
But there weren't any reason.
It were just the feeling

KAREN

What's the matter with you?
I don't want anyone knowing you're home.

KAREN disappears.

SAM

I felt something in my stomach.

*SAM glances at the newspaper again and
throws it to the floor.*

*A little GIRL of about ten appears. SAM turns
from her and walks away. He crouches down,
takes a scrap of paper from his pocket, flattens
it out and examines it in the light.*

SAM

To all those who could not go on.
Who lost their nerve, or their belief,
To those who were shot at dawn.

*He gets up, sees the GIRL and they stare at
each other.*

A moment.

The GIRL disappears.

Exit SAM

Act One Scene Two

A laboratory in a military research facility. There is a desk with a computer and several tables. DAVID is stood and HELEN is sat at a table. On the table is a Dictaphone which is running. HELEN also has a notebook in which she is scribbling. The scene opens with DAVID talking animatedly and excitedly gesticulating as he does so.

DAVID

So the memory is fresh. It is firmly in the mind of the individual. The more distant it is the longer it takes. We gather as much sensory information as we can; sights, smells and so on and we use them to recreate the incident in question.

HELEN

Okay, and what does that involve?

DAVID

The specifics vary from case to case but the goal is to enable the individual to immerse themselves in the memory – as if it were actually happening at that time.

HELEN

Like hypnosis?

DAVID

Yes...yes precisely. We need them to experience it fully. In most cases this isn't a problem because to some extent they are already haunted by it. We need to get the memory completely focused. Following the initial period of encoding the visual memory, the consolidation period, during which it can be modulated and strengthened, particularly by an emotional response, is governed largely by the amygdale in the storing of the material into the long term memory.

HELEN reaches over and stops the Dictaphone.

HELEN

Dad, what are you doing?

DAVID

I was trying to explain...

HELEN

I need it in English.

DAVID

But you need to understand the thinking behind it.

HELEN

No, you need to understand the thinking behind it. I need people to know what you're talking about.

DAVID

But how will you understand it if you don't know the principles?

HELEN

It has to be quick, to the point and, crucially, it has to make sense to ordinary people

DAVID

It makes sense to me.

HELEN

You're not ordinary people.

DAVID

However you want it Helen.

HELEN

If only.

Try to keep it simple, that's all. I have an appointment with the media director here in about ten minutes so can we do this quickly please?

DAVID

Media director?

HELEN

I know, of all the things a place like this clearly does not need, you'd think it would be a media director. What is he directing, they never tell anyone anything. Man named McGuire apparently.

DAVID

He runs the place, a DSTL top brass. Answers to MOD HQ.

HELEN

That means he's important doesn't it? I thought it was just going to be generic PR man.

DAVID

He is, but he also controls the purse strings. Odds are you'll get a nicely crafted media friendly statement that says precisely nothing. Here, take this down:

"The groundbreaking work at the facility is dedicated to the well being of British service personnel deployed around the globe." Have you written that down?

HELEN

Dad...

DAVID

Go on...write it, write it. There, I've saved you a meeting.

HELEN

I'm still going.

DAVID

He'll say that. Probably to the letter.

HELEN
Yes but I need to get the real quote. Are you ready to continue?

DAVID
I wasn't ready to stop.

HELEN
Remember, *simple*.

HELEN restarts the Dictaphone.

HELEN
Doctor Rivers.

DAVID
Please, call me David...or Doctor Dave

HELEN stops the Dictaphone.

HELEN
Are you going to take this seriously?

DAVID
All right, all right. I'm sorry. You know you have to get used to this. Not all your interviewees will let you start and stop.

HELEN
Not all my interviewees will be you.

DAVID
I was being simple.

HELEN
I have to get this right, this is a massive opportunity and...

DAVID
Alright, alright. I know. I know. I'll behave myself. I promise.

HELEN restarts the Dictaphone.

HELEN
So then Doctor Rivers...

HELEN flashes a warning look at DAVID who merely smiles back. HELEN checks her notebook before she speaks.

HELEN
The individual is completely immersed in the memory.

DAVID

Yes, that is vital. There can be no distractions and we continue the process until we achieve that.

HELEN

And you need to achieve...what did you call it...isolation of the memory. And that memory is then removed?

DAVID

Correct. It is chemical. Think of it like an anesthetic. It is all a way of inducing a kind of local amnesia.

HELEN

Uh huh. And how is that done?

DAVID

When we can be sure they are living the memory totally, we administer a chemical compound designed to induce permanent amnesia. Because we have localized the area of the mind we require, the affect is also local, and we can draw the problematic memory from the patient. So for example Helen, if you were haunted by a memory of when you staggered home drunk and collapsed in the porch and your father had to hide it all from your mother.

HELEN reaches over and switches off the Dictaphone again

What now?

HELEN

Can we please do this professionally?

DAVID

I haven't seen you in months...

HELEN

Weeks

DAVID

You must have everything you need by now.

HELEN

I don't. I need this to be right.

DAVID

You can take a break can't you?

HELEN

I don't have time I need...

She checks her watch.

DAVID

Do you remember when I gave you that watch? A peace offering when Mum made you cover your hair up because she didn't like the colour you'd had it dyed. She gave me hell for giving you that watch.

HELEN

That broke ages ago. This is a new one.

DAVID

What happened to the little rebel who dyed her hair and marched against everything but marching itself?

HELEN

She grew up Dad. This is a real opportunity for me.

I appreciate your help. I'm sorry.

DAVID

We'll finish when you get back from McGuire. He'll have his statement waiting for you.

HELEN

Alright then. How's Mum?

DAVID

Oh fine, you know...same as ever.

HELEN

I should look in, I haven't been back in god knows how long.

DAVID

Three and a half months.

HELEN

I'll be back in a few weekends time. It's always a bit...you know...

DAVID

I'll keep topping up the glasses at dinner without her noticing. As long as she doesn't see you pouring it she'll drink as much as there is.

HELEN

Thanks. It's always a little bit easier when, you know...

DAVID

You're both sauced.

HELEN

Should I question McGuire, or just let him tell me what he wants?

DAVID

Just be polite and courteous. The MOD want the details of the treatment released so you're not going to have to press him for information. He's going to tell you what they want printed so it couldn't be easier. You nervous?

HELEN

Like I want to be printing what I'm told

DAVID

You're the only one who'll have this. It'll get you a staff job if you do it well.

HELEN

Unearned.

I hate this place. Too much secrecy, too much...I don't know...you only know what they want you to know. The whole place is really, you know, cold.

DAVID

Yes love, they don't let us decorate. A few throws and some drapes could really make this place.

HELEN

You know what I mean. Just a really shit atmosphere.

DAVID

Well when I get a job in a chocolate factory you can interview me there.

HELEN

It's just you working in here?

DAVID

Yes, I'm 'senior' now. I think that means I'm old, but as they can't take me for a walk and shoot me in the head they think its best I take an improved salary and spend my time telling people what to do.

HELEN

Which I bet you love.

DAVID

I've learned to live with it.

RICHARD enters carrying a file under his arm.

DAVID

Splendid, thank you.

RICHARD

I need a word if you've got a moment.

DAVID

Looks like you've been busy.

RICHARD

Julie was away at her mother's so I took the opportunity of the empty house to lock myself away from the world.

DAVID

You should make sure you get some rest at weekends.

RICHARD

It's no problem. Are you busy?

DAVID

Well as a matter of fact I...

RICHARD

Oh, is this your journalist?

HELEN extends her hand which RICHARD shakes.

RICHARD

She looks fairly young.

DAVID

This is Doctor Ensbury. He worked with me on the treatment.

HELEN

Pleased to meet you.

RICHARD

So you're David's choice to carry this story for us?

DAVID

She's my daughter.

RICHARD

What? No, not little...little...

DAVID

Helen.

RICHARD

Helen, Helen of course.

DAVID

You won't remember Richard.

RICHARD

Your Dad brought you to look around years ago.

DAVID

I think you imagined it would be more exciting than it was.
What did you want to speak to me about?

HELEN

It's alright. I have to go and see McGuire anyway.

RICHARD

McGuire?

DAVID

She's going to collect what I expect will be a rather mundane pre-prepared and prepackaged statement.

HELEN gets up to go.

HELEN

How do I look?

DAVID

Professional.

HELEN

Good.

DAVID

Don't worry about him. Just take down what he says and I guarantee it'll be exactly what I told you he would. Word for word.

HELEN

Right. I'll be back soon.

DAVID

What for?

HELEN

I've got to interview you remember? Jesus dad keep up.

DAVID

Hey...I'm sharp. I'm on the ball.

HELEN

It's the place I swear. Seriously, you spend so much time in the middle of nowhere you should go and check in on civilization occasionally to make sure you still recognize it.

DAVID

I go home every weekend.

HELEN

That's not civilization

HELEN leaves. DAVID resumes reading Richard's report which he does throughout the following.

RICHARD

How's she been getting on?

DAVID

She's well...you know, trying to make a go of it on her own down in London. I thought she could use a bit of a hand...you know?

RICHARD

It's a good opportunity for her... It's nice that you were able to give her it.

DAVID

Kate's always been worried about her but she'll be fine. A helping hand to get her started and she'll be on her way.

RICHARD

She's too young.

DAVID

I felt it needed someone fresh.

RICHARD

It's that...Look David...

DAVID

Don't worry, I'll make sure she gives you the credit you're due.

RICHARD

We're trusting her with a lot.

DAVID

Your point?

RICHARD

We're only offering this to one journalist. One exclusive so that we can control the content...if it were my decision I'd have been looking for a track record. I'm sure she's very competent...

DAVID

Then what's the problem?

RICHARD

Okay, okay...its your call.

DAVID

It's not going to take an experienced hand Richard. This way we know what's going out. The MOD silences its critics and shows off the advances they have made in welfare and compassion. We don't need prize winners here. It's all formality.

RICHARD

Do you remember Sam Evans?

Pause

Here.

RICHARD takes out a folded piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to DAVID

The telegraph ran that yesterday.

DAVID unfolds and reads the piece of paper Richard has given him.

One or two of the tabloids had something too.

DAVID

A deserter?

RICHARD

He's still missing. There seems to be some interest in him.

DAVID

Why? What interest do they have in another deserter?

RICHARD

Maybe it's just to remind people to care about a war they've forgotten about. To most its so far away its just a place heroes go to die.

DAVID

And for those that don't die all there is to do is forget. Why are you showing me this.

RICHARD

You know who it is?

DAVID

Yes I know. It says here. But why are you showing me?

RICHARD

Why do you think?

DAVID

I'd almost forgotten about him you know.

RICHARD

I hadn't.

DAVID

You should have.

RICHARD

You always said we helped him. You always said that.

DAVID

And we did. You did, I did. Him and now hundreds of others. Thousands even.

RICHARD

I remember. 'It doesn't matter as long as it does him good in the long run.'

DAVID

Precisely. I stand by that.

RICHARD

And if it didn't?

Pause. DAVID returns to flick through the file Richard gave him.

RICHARD picks up the newspaper cutting from the desk and returns it to his pocket.

DAVID

Richard, they wanted it fast.
The treatment I mean.
We didn't have time to mess about.

RICHARD

You made a decision.

DAVID

I had no choice.

RICHARD

Of course you did and you made it.

DAVID

It needed testing, it was tested and now its working and has been for two years. Richard you need to remember what we were working for.

RICHARD

Perhaps now is the time to be open about this.

DAVID

I think perhaps not. I didn't like it Richard, lord knows I didn't, but I'm not sorry. Look what we achieved. There's nothing to be gained here. You need to move on

RICHARD

What if Evans remembers?

DAVID gets up from his desk.

DAVID

I have to go out for a bit. Tell Helen to wait if she gets back before me.

RICHARD

David? What if he remembers?

DAVID

We took precautions against that Richard. He doesn't remember.

DAVID leaves

Act One Scene Three

SAM alone. He takes a small photo out of his pocket and stares at it.

*GIRL appears. She is on stage throughout.
KAREN appears. A memory.*

KAREN

Are you here Sam?

Sam?

SAM

I'm here.

KAREN

Sammy come home

SAM

I can't.

KAREN

You'll freeze here.

SAM

They'll find me.

KAREN

I'm worried about you. I can take care of you at home.

Sammy love?

Sam?

SAM

I don't know what's going on.
I still have that feeling
Like I have broken something but no one ever found out.
But I didn't break anything

KAREN

Sammy come home. You'll freeze here.

SAM

If I'm home they know where to find me.

KAREN

I can take care of you.

Then I'll have to go back.

SAM

SAM notices the GIRL and begins to stare at her

It's safer now.
You said so.

KAREN

Not for everyone.

SAM

I'll come and see you.
Everyday.

KAREN

When they know...when they know they won't remember...

SAM

And you come home.
You don't have to stay, just come for a few hours.
Please.

KAREN

They knew they wouldn't remember.

SAM

It's safer now.

KAREN

Not safe. Not for everyone.

SAM

I'll come and see you.
Everyday.
And you come home
You don't have to stay, just come for a few hours.
Please.

KAREN disappears. GIRL remains a moment and stares at SAM

Act One Scene Four

The Lab. An hour or so after act one scene two.

HELEN is sat with her notepad out and her Dictaphone running. RICHARD is sat at David's desk.

RICHARD

We usually get enough environmental clues from interviews which is where we start from. Ideally we would also get what we can from the patient's active history. Where they've served for example which we can get from military records. Then it's about recreating the environment for them, whatever sights, sounds and smells...anything sensory is particularly powerful. And eyewitness testimonies if we can get them, someone else who may have witnessed the event or at least was close to the patient at that time.

HELEN

Okay, I see.
So you build a sort of...like, a system of reminders?

RICHARD

Well put.

HELEN

Thanks. Dad was a bit vague on that.

RICHARD

If you apply the treatment straight after the incident you don't need much of that. It's a question of closing the distance between incident and the memory of it. The sooner after the incident you can treat the memory the better.

HELEN

You're much clearer than Dad. I think he would rather he was writing this.

RICHARD

He likes to be in control.

HELEN

You've noticed that?

RICHARD

Was there anything else?

HELEN

Flicking through her notebook. No. I think I have everything I wanted to ask. Oh, unless you want to tell me exactly what is in that amnesia solution?

RICHARD laughs and takes her cup.

RICHARD

You're determined to get that out of me. Do you want another coffee while you're waiting?

HELEN

No thanks.

Well?

RICHARD

It's protected information.

HELEN

Right. All the secrecy bullshit.

RICHARD

You know, your dad once told me a story about you.

HELEN

Oh god, I don't think I want to hear this.

RICHARD

I don't know how old you would have been. You were almost expelled from school.

HELEN

Oh that.

RICHARD

You'd just walked out of a lesson and refused to go back in.

HELEN

It was the principle. There was this kid, I didn't even like her much but this teacher was giving her such a hard time over something so pointless.

RICHARD

Her hair was too short or something.

HELEN

She'd had it shaved. My school was like that, she'd have been fine if she was clever but because she wasn't going to get great results they...It was only the results that mattered to them. I don't know, it just seemed like bullying to me. It was the principle of it.

RICHARD

Precisely. Precisely. The principle.

HELEN

Well that was a long time ago.

RICHARD

He still talks about it.

HELEN

It was only what's right. And I didn't get expelled.

RICHARD

This is hardly what you had in mind when your father told you he'd got you an exclusive is it?

HELEN

Not exactly.

RICHARD

You'd rather be doing something more...
real.

HELEN

You could tell me what's in your amnesia solution. Come on, you developed it.

RICHARD

Only as tool in your father's treatment. It's all strictly under wraps. We don't want all our secrets in the press.

RICHARD goes to the table, picks up Helen's Dictaphone and switches it off.

He takes the newspaper cutting from his pocket and hands it to HELEN who begins to read it.

RICHARD

What do you make of that?

HELEN

What's to make? A missing soldier. That's common enough surely.

RICHARD

Several papers ran a small piece on him over the weekend. They're keen to get hold of him.

HELEN

So?

RICHARD

It's up to you. If you want a more interesting story and one that you'll find yourself, something more than a press release...
I may have something for you.

RICHARD goes to the computer and searches on it before scribbling something down and passing it to HELEN.

HELEN

What's this?

RICHARD

I doubt he'll be there but you might find something.

HELEN

His number?

RICHARD

The one we have on file yes. He did some work here with us a few years ago. No one else will have that number yet I don't think. You might be able to get something exclusive.

HELEN

Okay, so what am I looking for?

RICHARD

It might be nothing but it could be worth a sniff. If you can get something on that story you'll have a bigger leap up the ladder than the little step this press release will get you.

HELEN

Yes but what am I looking for? I'll need some background here. All you've given me is a phone number and a half arsed column filler about a deserter. I need more to go on than that.

RICHARD

It's up to you to find those things out.
I can't discuss it.

HELEN

Why not?

RICHARD

Why do you think?

HELEN

Right, right. All the bullshit.

RICHARD

Those rules are there for a reason.

HELEN

Yeh, to stop anyone knowing anything that goes on here.

RICHARD

Which is a good reason.
So you're not interested?

HELEN

You haven't given me anything to be interested in. I'm starving. Can you tell Dad I got fed up of waiting? I'll pop back this afternoon.

HELEN gets up and starts to pack her notebook into her bag.

RICHARD

Wait, I might have something for you but I need a promise from you that I am kept out of it.

HELEN

If you tell me something I need a source.

RICHARD

I won't tell you anything that you will attribute to me.

HELEN

There's really something in this isn't there?

RICHARD

If I...if you wandered in here and the computer was on and you saw it...that way no one told you anything.

Pause

Come on, I'm letting you through the secrecy here.

HELEN

I just see whatever this is by accident then?

RICHARD

And my name appears nowhere.

HELEN

Deal.

RICHARD

Then I'm going back to work.

He gets up and, before he leaves turns the monitor around to face Helen.

Good luck with your article.

He leaves. HELEN takes out her notebook and pen and sits at the desk. She begins to copy things down from the monitor.

She stops a moment. Looks closer at something and a look of apprehension crosses her face.

She sits back in thought.

A moment.

DAVID enters.

DAVID

Sorry to keep you waiting love. How was McGuire?

HELEN

Hmm? Oh, he was, you know...

DAVID

How close was I? Have you got it?

HELEN

What?

DAVID

The statement from McGuire? It won't add much to the article but it gives it the official endorsement.

HELEN

Hmmm, yeh.

DAVID

So, shall we get back to work? I think we covered most of what we need to include earlier.

Pause

Helen?

HELEN

Dad, what does it mean with a research subject when you say necessary distress?

DAVID

What?

HELEN

Necessary distress. Is it a phrase you have to use often here?

DAVID

Where did you hear that phrase? Where did that come from?

HELEN

It doesn't matter.

DAVID

I don't...wait, have you been speaking to Richard?

HELEN

I've been following a story

DAVID

But what about the job I got you on this article?

HELEN

One I found myself.
There's this missing soldier...Evans. I got a lead.

DAVID

Evans...You've seen the Evans file? Did Richard show you the Evans file?

HELEN

He was a research subject here.

DAVID

Yes. Yes he was. Four years ago. He came here suffering from PTSD. That's post traumatic....

HELEN

I know what it means.

Brief pause

DAVID

This new story...your lead, it's Richard....Doctor Ensbury. Isn't it? He's your lead.

He looks over at Helen, she doesn't respond.

Evans was *the* key subject in the development of the treatment.
It couldn't have happened without him. We cured him. He was the first person we treated with this.

HELEN

What does 'necessary distress' mean? How did you isolate those memories?

DAVID

Look Helen. This is confidential, I can't talk about this.

HELEN

Dad, how did you isolate those memories?

DAVID

I told you that, we create the environment in the subject's mind that allows them to experience as closely as possible the total immersion in the memory.

HELEN

Then what was distressing?

DAVID

Nothing. Nothing was distressing.

HELEN

Then why use the phrase? It was in your name. You signed it.

DAVID

So Richard did show you the Evans file then.

HELEN

Come on Dad, you're keeping things back from me. You have to tell me.

DAVID

No. No, I have to *not* tell you.

HELEN

What's going on?

DAVID

The things that haunt these boys and girls for life can now disappear. Combat stress, post traumatic stress...all virtually eliminated. That's what's going on.

HELEN

What did you do?

DAVID

It was all necessary!
It was there and it was done and now it is good.

Pause

Helen we were chasing something bigger. Much bigger, beyond anything else. The possibility. We had to follow it and we did. When you see something that you can do...that is technically possible. You have to try it. You have to do it. If you have that ability. That talent and I have it Helen. I have that and I have a duty. A duty to everyone and that duty is to chase it. To try and make it work, whatever it costs me.

HELEN

Dad, what are you talking about?

DAVID

It had to succeed Helen. It had to. And I made it happen.
And so did Sam Evans.
It was all necessary.

David heads towards the door.

HELEN

What was necessary? Dad?

DAVID leaves.

Act Two Scene One

SAM alone. The GIRL appears. SAM remains turned away from her.

KAREN appears. A memory. SAM turns to stare at the GIRL.

It wasn't your fault.
Was it?

KAREN

I...I feel sick.

SAM

Sam...

KAREN

Fire.

SAM

Sam, please.

KAREN

Calling orders: Get the fire out!

SAM

It weren't your fault.

KAREN

Make sure the area is evacuated.

SAM

Was it just orders?

KAREN

It was all going to be sorted out afterwards.

SAM

It weren't your fault.

KAREN

They were all enemies.

SAM

Was it just orders?

KAREN

No one was going to remember.

SAM

KAREN disappears. SAM alone with the GIRL. He forces himself to turn away from her though she remains.

A moment.

KAREN appears. A memory.

KAREN

I don't understand how you could.

SAM

I couldn't.

KAREN

That's not you.

SAM

That's why I'm here. They'll be looking for me.

KAREN

I don't understand.

SAM

They weren't fighting.

KAREN

It wasn't your fault.

SAM once again turns to face the GIRL.

Was it just orders?

SAM

There's a fire.
I feel sick.

KAREN

They were all enemies though?

SAM

I don't know...
I don't know what...

KAREN

It wasn't your fault.

SAM

Get the fire out!
Make sure the area is evacuated.

I'll come back tomorrow.

KAREN

*KAREN disappears. GIRL remains on stage
and moves around to face SAM.*

Who are you?

SAM

Act Two Scene Two

An abandoned warehouse. It is dark and there is small fire in the corner and a pile of blankets on the floor.

KAREN and DAVID are stood. DAVID glances around the place while KAREN watches him.

DAVID

Where is he?

KAREN

I wanted a word first. A lot of people are looking for him. Mostly friends of yours from the MOD.

DAVID

They're nothing to do with me. What I do is independent of them.

KAREN

Well there are people after him anyhow.

DAVID

I understand. I'm here because I have chosen to be, not because I have to be.

KAREN

That's a start.

DAVID

So where is he?

KAREN

He'll be here soon enough.

DAVID

And why here?

KAREN

Why did you come?

DAVID

You agreed to let me see him.

KAREN

Yeh, I know that but why did you want to?

DAVID

I saw the news reports and I remembered him.

KAREN

Because you worked with him

DAVID

He was with us four years ago. How long has he been back here?

KAREN

He arrived here about a month ago. I guess they resorted to pressure from the press when they couldn't track him down. They only leaked the story this week. They're hoping the...you know, the extra interest and pressure will smoke him out.

DAVID

That would be too much effort simply for a case of desertion.

KAREN

Yes. It would be.
So you're here off your own back then?

DAVID

Yes.

KAREN

You're not here to turn him in?

DAVID

No.

KAREN

Or report where you found him?

DAVID

No.

KAREN

Then what *are* you here for?

DAVID

I remembered Sam. I suppose...I suppose I was worried about him. Why did you agree to let me see him if you thought I was going to apprehend him?

KAREN

Someone has to see him soon. It had to be someone and you know him.
He needs help.

Pause.

They told me he was dead you know.
It's a shock doctor, you get a particular kind of shock when a dead man turns up on your doorstep.

DAVID

I can imagine.

KAREN

It made it hard for them when they eventually came knocking. 'You remember your partner Miss Saunders? The one we told you had popped it? Well you haven't seen him recently have you?'

DAVID

Is that why you're here now?

KAREN

He's been staying here. Comes home every now and then but never for more than an hour or two.
He isn't right doctor.

DAVID

Can I see him?

Pause

How about if I give you my word that I will neither turn him in nor tell anyone he is here?

KAREN

He's just waiting around the corner.

KAREN exits.

DAVID glances around the warehouse. He notes holes in the walls and the collection of blankets gathered in the corner.

KAREN re-enters accompanied by SAM.

DAVID extends his hand. SAM does not take it.

DAVID

Hello Sam.
Do you remember me?

SAM

No.

DAVID

My name is David Rivers.

SAM

I'm told we've met. You a doctor?

DAVID

I work for the MOD.

SAM steps away from him and eyes him suspiciously.

SAM

To Karen: You never told me that

KAREN

He's not here to arrest you Sam.

DAVID

I'm a research scientist. Nothing to do with your case.

KAREN

He's here off his own back.

SAM

Yeh? What you doing here?

KAREN

He's come to help you.

SAM

How?

Pause. DAVID glances at KAREN.

KAREN

I'll be waiting just outside okay Sammy love? Just shout if you need me.

KAREN leaves.

DAVID

What is this place?

SAM

Condemned. It'll be coming down in a month or so I reckon.

DAVID

You live here?

SAM

For another month I do. Can't be at home, have to move about at the moment. There've been a few that have called you know? To Karen. Gone to find her. She's turned them all away. Press and official. Said she didn't know where I was. What makes you different I wonder?

DAVID

I'm not selling papers or locking you up.

SAM

You think any of them say that? It's all about helping me. Something about you she believed though.

If you're cold you can move near the fire and there's a chair over there if you want to sit.

Drink?

DAVID

No thanks and I'm fine standing.

SAM

You're here now. May as well be warm.

Sam rummages around in the blankets and finds a bottle and a cup. He pours a drink and takes a sip.

SAM

Only got one cup. We'll be sharing. Here

DAVID

No thank you

SAM

Drink. It isn't going to do any harm that hasn't already been done.

He hands DAVID the cup

DAVID

You don't remember me then?

Pause. SAM takes the cup and takes a drink while he regards DAVID

SAM

No. Can't say I do but now that you're here can I ask you about something?

DAVID

Go ahead.

David gestures with his hand for the drink, which SAM passes to him. Throughout the following dialogue the two pass the cup between them

SAM

I got...there's something not quite right.

DAVID

What's the problem?

SAM
I'm telling you if you let me. I'm trying to tell you.

DAVID
Alright. I'm sorry.

Pause

DAVID
Sam?

SAM
It's like, there are times and its not always but sometimes it's like I'm not here.
It's like going somewhere else, feeling like you *are* somewhere else but you don't know
where.
It's...It's like...you feel the sun on the side of your face but you can't see any sun.

Pause

Karen said you were a doctor

DAVID
I'm a research scientist I don't take patients.

SAM
She said you saw me before.
Can help me now?

DAVID does not respond.

SAM
Then what did you come here for?

Pause

DAVID
I wanted you to be alright.

SAM
Well I'm not am I?

*DAVID goes to leave but SAM stands in his
way.*

SAM
Help me.

DAVID
I'm sorry. Excuse me please.

Sit down.

SAM

SAM strides over the blankets, picks one up and with a knife which he takes from his belt, cuts a long strip from the blanket. He ties one end to his wrist then marches over and ties the other around David's.

If you're going I'm going.

SAM

This is insane. I could just untie it.

DAVID

But you won't.

SAM

I'd just retie it, and tighter.

DAVID

Right.

Is there anymore to drink?

SAM

If you're staying

SAM goes to get the bottle and the cup. DAVID, out of necessity follows him.

SAM fills the cup

DAVID

I'm not going to leave.

SAM

I know

DAVID

No, I meant, can't we get rid of this thing? It isn't really necessary is it? If I try to leave I daresay you can catch me.

SAM gestures that they sit.

SAM

Here.

He hands him the cup.

DAVID

I promise I won't try to leave

SAM

So what were you researching with me?

DAVID

It was a post traumatic....it was a combat stress cure.

SAM

That was tested on me?

DAVID

Yes.

You were vital to it.

Pause. SAM is staring at the fire and does not appear to be listening.

Sam?

SAM gets up and realizes he is still tied to David. He unties the blanket from his wrist.

SAM

You're right. I could catch you.

DAVID

Thank you.

DAVID unties his own wrist. SAM moves over towards the fire away from DAVID who gets up, goes to him and hands him the cup.

SAM

It's in operation right now. If you invented it you can help me, 'cos it's do with it isn't it? What's happening now...I'm getting...I don't know how to describe it but you've seen. You've seen I'm not right. You can help me with that.

DAVID

I can't.

Pause. SAM stares at the fire. DAVID looks at the door and moves towards it, but doubles back, remembering his promise. He watches SAM a moment.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

SAM

Did everyone get out?

DAVID

I'm sorry?

SAM

Is everyone out?

Was anyone left in there? Was anyone left?

DAVID

Sam? Sam?

SAM has begun pacing around the room.

SAM

They could be laughing. I feel like they're laughing

DAVID

Sam? Let's get you sat down.

SAM

I don't know where they are. They could be anywhere.

DAVID

Sam? Come on let sit you down. Have a drink.

DAVID goes to SAM to try to help him towards the chair. SAM swings at him, narrowly missing. DAVID backs away.

DAVID

Sam? Can you hear me?

SAM

The smell in the air. The smell in the air.

DAVID

Karen? Karen are you there?

KAREN enters and sees SAM and DAVID.

KAREN

Sam?

DAVID

Ok, can you get round that side? We take an arm each and then help him onto the chair.

SAM

Get the fire out!
Get all the fire out!
They could be trapped inside!

KAREN goes to SAM and places a calming hand upon his shoulder. DAVID takes hold and together they help him onto the chair.

DAVID

Do you have any water?

KAREN

Should be some in the blankets down there unless he's used it all.

DAVID

Can you hold him on your own for a moment?

DAVID gets up and rushes over to the pile of blankets and hunts around, finding a bottle of water. He unscrews the cap the throws water in Sam's face.

DAVID

Are you ok Sam?

SAM

I'm...I don't know.

DAVID

Do you want another drink?

SAM begins to get out of the chair. KAREN and DAVID go to help him. He is a little unsteady on his feet.

SAM

I think I'll go for some air.

SAM leaves..

DAVID

Is he often like that?

KAREN

Sometimes.

They're memories aren't they? When he goes off like that?

DAVID

What makes you think that?

KAREN

They're things that he can't remember mixing with things he can. That's how he described it to me when he wasn't so bad. Because he escaped he is left with the memories and there's something wrong with them.

DAVID

I can treat post traumatic stress easily enough.

KAREN

No. Don't give him the treatment. He needs to understand.

DAVID

It's perfectly safe. Whatever these memories are, they should be easy to target given how prominent they seem to be.

KAREN

But he doesn't want it. Please. This isn't just...like...he's had post traumatic stress before

DAVID

I know.

KAREN

But this isn't like that. There's something else. He...there's the thing you just saw but there's something else he can't describe properly. He told me its something he can feel but he doesn't know why.

Sam's told me about the treatment used for combat stress out there.

DAVID

I was involved in its development. It's based on the targeted removal of memories.

KAREN

It's...just...he seems to...I don't know how to explain it doctor. He came home from the war and he...he wants to remember. That's what he told me.

Can you help him? Please?

DAVID

I have to go.

KAREN

Promise you'll help him. If it was you who developed the cure for combat stress...I mean, you have to help him now 'cos he needs you. He...he needs someone. Someone who knows.

Pause.

They'll catch up with him eventually. Someone will. He can't hide here forever. Please Doctor, he's getting worse.

DAVID takes out a notebook, scribbles something on it and tears the sheet out which he hands it to Karen.

DAVID

Have him phone me on that. I'll see him later this week.

DAVID leaves.

Act Two Scene Two

The Lab. SAM alone.

KAREN appears. A memory.

KAREN

Got another two calls today.
People are looking for you.

SAM

They'll find me.

KAREN

If they all forgot...

SAM

They *need* to find me.

KAREN

If everyone forgot then...God Sammy you need to tell someone.

SAM

They need to find me. I've...

KAREN

It wasn't your fault.

There's someone coming to help you.
You can't go on.
He's coming to help. He's a doctor.

SAM

They weren't fighting.
They weren't.
What difference would it have made if they had been?

KAREN

I'll speak to him first.

SAM

I won't tell him anything.

KAREN

He might be able to help.

SAM

What difference would it make?

KAREN

Sammy you need to tell someone.

It's why they need to find me.

SAM

I'll be here. He wants to help you.
His name is Rivers.

KAREN

I feel sick.

SAM

Sam?

KAREN

I saw the fire...I felt sick.

SAM

It wasn't your fault.
You need to tell someone.

KAREN

KAREN disappears.

SAM alone.

The lab. SAM is stood. He gazes straight ahead of him.

The door opens which snaps SAM into awareness. HELEN enters.

Oh, I'm sorry I...

HELEN

They stare at each other, SAM trying to assess a potential threat.

Who are you?

SAM

Where's Dad?

HELEN

Said he went to get something. You're his daughter then?

SAM

That's right. And you are...?

HELEN

My name's Sam. I'm here to see your Dad. He's just gone to get something.

SAM

HELEN

You said. I'll wait with you, I need to speak to him.

During the following, HELEN surreptitiously takes her Dictaphone from her bag, keeping it out of Sam's sight. She places her bag on the table and slides the Dictaphone behind it out of Sam's view, switching it on as she does so. She takes some chocolate out of her bag to hide the action.

HELEN

I hope you haven't been waiting long. Dad sometimes gets distracted. He's been known to wander off completely lost in thought. My mum once got so angry with him when he came back having been gone ages that he just turned round and walked back out of the door without saying a word. Mum's face was a picture but then she grounded me when I laughed. God that was years ago now. Still seems like yesterday. Chocolate?

SAM

No thanks.

She breaks a piece off and puts the rest in her bag.

HELEN

How long have you been in the army?

SAM

Who says I'm in the army?

HELEN

I can just tell. Er...my Dad...most of the people he works with are in the army.

SAM

Is that right?

HELEN

Well you *are* in the army right?

SAM doesn't respond.

What are you here for?

SAM

Here to see your father.

HELEN

I'd gathered that. What about?

Pause SAM gets up, he slowly wanders about the room looking lost.

Are you okay?

HELEN

They could be laughing.

SAM

What?

HELEN

They look like they're laughing.
The smell...the smell in the air.

SAM

Are...are you okay?

HELEN

Get the fire out.

SAM

There...there's no fire. Look can I get you some water or anything?

HELEN

SAM takes a knife from his belt and is on his guard, looking around as if aware of a threat he cannot see.

Sam?

The GIRL appears beyond HELEN. SAM stares at her, terrified but edging slightly closer.

Who are you?

SAM

I'm...I'm Doctor Rivers' daughter. Helen.

HELEN

Who are you??

SAM

SAM moves closer, the knife outstretched.

Pause.

DAVID enters carrying a file accompanied by RICHARD.

Sam? Richard quickly get some water.

DAVID

RICHARD does so.

It's okay Sam.

SAM doesn't register him. DAVID moves around behind him and puts a hand on his shoulder. RICHARD returns and hands DAVID a glass of water. DAVID, careful to keep a hand on Sam's shoulder, and stood behind him puts the water to Sam's lips and succeeds in giving him a drink. SAM slowly comes back to himself as DAVID helps him to a chair.

Are you okay Sam?

DAVID

I'm...I don't know.

SAM

DAVID hands him the glass.

Drink that. It's only water.

DAVID

Thank you.

SAM

Dad, can I have a word?

HELEN

Not now. Can you wait outside?

DAVID

Can't I stay?

HELEN

I'm busy at the moment.

DAVID

Let her stay David. It'll be good for her to see us working.

RICHARD

Alright, stay over there out of the way.

DAVID

HELEN moves to the edge of the room.

If you could just observe for the moment please Richard. Note anything you feel is useful. I shall indicate anything I feel you should note.

I'm sure I'll know.

RICHARD

RICHARD takes a seat a little way away from Helen.

DAVID

Sam? Take a drink of water.

He does so.

How are you feeling?

SAM

I don't know.

DAVID

Can you describe what you were feeling when I came in.

SAM

I...I don't know. There was...a feeling. And I could see...not very well...it weren't clear.

DAVID

Go on, what could you feel?

SAM

Just something. In my gut. Right here. Sharp.

DAVID gestures to RICHARD to write that down. RICHARD indicates that he already is.

But that was only at the end. There was something before that.
It's a...I don't know what...I felt...
I don't remember.

DAVID

That's okay Sam. Take a sip of water.

SAM

There's a girl. She'll be about ten.

DAVID again gestures to RICHARD. The same response.

DAVID

Who is she?

SAM

I don't know.
It's the only one...the only thing I can see.
The other is just feelings...like I said...in my gut.
But the girl...the girl I can actually see.

DAVID

Okay, can you describe her?

SAM

And there's fire. But that's something else. That's not...that feels different...

DAVID

Did you see it?

SAM

Feel. On my face and on my hands.

But then that's...that's on my last tour. I can see that, I remember that fine.

There was a burning building on the street in town.

We had to get the fires out quickly, the buildings were tightly packed

It would spread.

This is...this is all normal. I remember all this, it was just over a month ago.

And I'm looking at the flames.

And I puke. And then there's the feeling.

DAVID

Okay, so the fire is from recent memory, but there's something else there. Something causing a feeling that doesn't belong.

SAM

Yeh.

DAVID

And the girl. What does she do?

SAM

Just...she just stands there.

DAVID

And that's not the last tour?

SAM

She's...I don't know...no, I would remember her.

There were no children.

Definitely no children. At least there wasn't that.

DAVID

Describe your last tour to me.

SAM

It was when we...when we...

I...I can't

DAVID

You don't remember?

SAM

I can't. I can't describe...I don't want to talk about that.

The GIRL enters. She stares at SAM.

I...I...

He gets up out of his chair and goes to her.

Sam?

DAVID

Who are you...what do you want?

SAM

A moment. SAM is staring at the GIRL. With effort he breaks away from her.

No...no I don't want to know you.
I don't want to know.

DAVID

Sam?

SAM

They could be laughing...

Get the fires out! There may be someone trapped!

They could be laughing...

DAVID grabs the glass of water from the table, puts his hand on Sam's shoulder and puts the glass in Sam's hand. He assists him to drink from it. He then helps him back to his chair.

Sam? Sam look at me.

DAVID

I don't know what's happening..

SAM

Sam. Are you alright? Look at me.

DAVID

I...Doctor I...help me.

SAM

Alright Sam. Take more water.

DAVID

DAVID goes to Richard.

DAVID

We shouldn't continue. That's far enough for today. Take him somewhere to lie down.
To Sam: We're going to finish there for today Sam.

DAVID helps SAM to his feet.

SAM

You will help me doctor?

DAVID

Of course, but for the moment you should go with Doctor Ensbury. You need to rest.
We'll continue tomorrow.

RICHARD

Come with me please Evans.

DAVID

Go with him Sam.

SAM and RICHARD leave.

HELEN

How did you calm him down?

DAVID

It's just a case of introducing any sensation that intrudes into whatever he was living at that time. The touch on the shoulder and the taste of the water was sufficiently alien to him at that moment to bring him back to us. Are you alright?

HELEN

Fine.

DAVID

Do you need help with the article?

HELEN

No I don't. I can manage that on my own.

DAVID

I had a thought actually. It might be particularly effective if you begin by outlining the problem and the media attitude to it in such a way as to demonstrate how what we're doing addresses the concerns of...

HELEN

I can do it on my own thanks.

DAVID

What have you come to ask me?

HELEN

It's...what's wrong with him? Sam I mean.

DAVID

I can't discuss that.

HELEN

When he does that, you know...it's memory isn't it. That's where he is.

DAVID

Yes. Well, they're things he doesn't remember.

HELEN

And he wants to remember them?

DAVID

I think he's afraid of them.

HELEN

So what, he...he's somewhere between remembering and forgetting them. Just in..I don't know, a limbo?

DAVID

Sorry Helen, I can't talk about him with you.

HELEN

Is he here because of what you did four years ago?

DAVID

What do you mean?

HELEN

'It was necessary'. 'It was all necessary.' That's what you said. That's why you've got him here again isn't it?

DAVID

He is here because he needs help.

HELEN

Talk to me Dad. Tell me what you meant.

DAVID

Simply that the treatment was necessary. As you've seen with Sam, you can see the state people get into.

HELEN

Is that it?

DAVID

Certainly. That is what we're fighting with this. That man has seen some awful things.

DAVID goes to leave.

HELEN

Wait.

DAVID

Yes?

HELEN

I just...okay so the treatment is needed. Fair enough I can see that but I've been thinking. You're...well you're tampering with people's minds. How can you know what the effect will be?

DAVID

We control the effect.

HELEN

But can you ever really know? I just mean fiddling...well even manipulating someone's mind, that's really what you're doing.

DAVID

Everything is a kind mind manipulation though. If I tell you something and you believe me then that would count. As would, say if I convince you something you think to be true isn't. That would also be the case.

HELEN

It's not the same.

DAVID

Would you lie to someone if you thought the lie would help them?

HELEN

I suppose I would.

DAVID

Then that would qualify. Would you withhold something from someone to protect them from it?

HELEN

Yes.

DAVID

And would you help someone forget something that was destroying them?

Pause

It is nothing more nor less than that Helen...what we developed here. And it works. Yes it has to be controlled and you have to know what you're taking, but there's no question of the value. Of the good.

As DAVID passes the table he notices something. He picks up Helen's Dictaphone.

DAVID

This is on.
Helen have you been recording this?

HELEN

I'd forgotten about that.

DAVID

I did not give permission for this to be recorded.

HELEN

I know, it wasn't you I was recording, I...

DAVID

It's on. You have been recording every word I said. I would have been on tape revealing confidential information.

HELEN

Yes but I didn't mean to.
I hoped to get an interview with Sam.

DAVID

And did he give his permission?

A brief pause.

When you begin an interview you have to sit down and negotiate the form and the boundaries otherwise it will be inherently dishonest.

HELEN

Are you telling me how to do everything again?

DAVID

It's a question of ethics Helen, you're an ethical person...

HELEN

I'm sorry, maybe I made a mistake but you can't dictate to me or direct me. I'll do it my own way.

DAVID

You have our session with him on tape.

HELEN

I...well yes I suppose I must do.

DAVID

And lord knows what else.

DAVID puts the Dictaphone in his pocket.

You'll have to use your notes.
When you see Sam Helen, when you see him like you did today...
You see what all this is for.

RICHARD enters

HELEN

But you're not helping him forget now. You're helping him to remember.

RICHARD

It's always about doing whatever they need to be able to cope.

DAVID

Precisely.

RICHARD

I wanted a quick work with Helen.

DAVID

About?

RICHARD

I have the chemical details for the Midazolam solution.

DAVID

You're releasing those?

RICHARD

I have withheld enough but I think an idea of the compound of the amnesia solution...

DAVID

Yes, right you are. I'll leave you to it. Helen, come by again tomorrow and sit in on the session with Sam. You can't record but I think you should see our work with him...you have to appreciate what's a stake here, why we do what we do.

DAVID leaves.

HELEN

You changed your mind on the amnesia solution. Excellent, I'll really be able to put together and impressive looking piece on this article I reckon.

RICHARD

Sit down a moment.

HELEN does so.

RICHARD glances back at the door then hand HELEN a file.

HELEN

Is this the chemical report?

RICHARD

No.

That is the full classified report of the work carried out four years ago on subject 4581v. Sam Evans.

HELEN

You're...you're releasing this?

RICHARD

I think it has to be known. It has to be made right.

Act Two Scene Three

The Lab. SAM alone.

GIRL appears. She holds Sam's gaze. SAM stares at her throughout the scene.

KAREN appears. She is trembling slightly.

KAREN

Sam I...
You've never done that before.
What happened?

Pause

Sam...?
It hurt Sammy.

You're not well.

You are a hero but you're not well.

SAM

Don't say that.

KAREN

We'll get you help.

SAM

I've told you not to say that.

KAREN

I can't stay.
I've...I've got to go.
I'm sorry Sammy. I can't stay now.

KAREN disappears.

The lab. Sam is stood. DAVID has his hand on his shoulder and is offering him a drink of water.

HELEN is sat at the side of the room, she has her notebook out.

DAVID

Take a drink. Just relax. Are you okay?

SAM

Yeh.

DAVID

The girl?

SAM

Yes and...and it was something else. Karen.
It's nothing.

DAVID

Okay. Take a moment if you need it.

Pause

Why did you leave in the middle of a tour of duty?

SAM

Have you ever seen someone die?

DAVID

No. I haven't.

SAM

Now you imagine something for me.

DAVID

No this isn't the...

SAM

I want you to see what I saw.

DAVID

It was part of your job to see those things.

SAM

Not like this

They were...it was just everyone. That's what we were told so that's what they did.

SAM

Unarmed. That's not right. These were my friends and they were killing unarmed people

This is all confidential ok Doc? You can't tell about this stuff.

It's getting worse.

DAVID

Can you picture what it is?

SAM

Yeah. This one is very clear

DAVID

You've seen your colleagues and friends and what they are doing. You are horrified.

SAM

It might have been before. It all blurs.

DAVID

The important thing is that you see it and focus upon it.

SAM

It was the same operation. A town harboring insurgent forces. They were given one weeks notice. A warning. We are coming in.

DAVID

This is the last tour?

SAM

Yes. The last one.

DAVID

Where are those notes from yesterday?

HELEN hands him a file.

Thank you Helen

Ah yes, this one:

'A burning building on the street in town. The buildings were tightly packed'

SAM

Yes.

DAVID

Can you picture it?

SAM

I saw a fire and something happened. I was sick. I puked. But it was only fire. There was nothing else. I don't know why...fire shouldn't do that should it?

There's something else isn't there? It's not the fire that made me puke.

DAVID

Embrace this memory Sam. The memory of the recent tour. Your colleagues and friends. What they were doing. And then the fire.

SAM

It is a building in the centre of the town. The area is evacuated. There is no-one there. It is the same as every other building. There is nothing special and the fire has broken out on the ground floor. I don't know what started it.

DAVID

How close are you?

SAM

It's across the road

DAVID

Did you go closer?

SAM

Yes.

SAM start to walk forward.

DAVID

You're in the town Sam. The buildings are close together. A ground floor fire. You have seen what your colleagues are doing

SAM feels the heat from the fire and puts his hand over his mouth, as if about to throw up. DAVID steps back away from SAM and watches him from the side of the room.

SAM

Did everyone get out?

Is everyone out?

Was anyone left in there? Was anyone left?

SAM moves slowly forward, towards the 'fire'. He put his hand over his mouth and retches. He starts to pull back from it but DAVID grabs hold of him, forcing him to stare forwards.

DAVID

Stick with it. Stick with it, you need to know what's making you sick.

SAM

Struggling to speak now: There's...it's a fire. The remains of a tank. The sides are starting to melt. The heat...I'm getting closer. On the side of the tank...from the inside...three...heads...skulls...melted...melted into the side of the tank...like they're smiling...they could have been laughing...laughing...the smell in the air...not the usual smells...flesh...flesh

SAM fights back more vomit. DAVID takes the glass of water from the table and pours it over SAM's head and helps him back to the chair.

SAM

But it can't be right.

DAVID

Have some water. You need hydration.

SAM

We didn't use any tanks in that operation

DAVID

Drink something Sam

SAM

It was on foot with aerial reconnaissance. The street would have been too narrow for a tank. And the enemy...they never used them either. There were none. Our side or theirs.

DAVID hands SAM his glass and assists him in drinking from it. SAM is shaking slightly.

They could have been laughing. The face shape is the same. Laughing, laughing, screaming.

But there were no tanks. They were in a tank. There were no tanks.

GIRL appears at the far side of the room and stares at SAM. SAM stares back.

SAM

I can't help you...

I can't...

DAVID

Sam?

SAM

Who are you??

SAM leaps up from the chair and backs away from the GIRL. She stares at him.

DAVID

Sam? Do you need more water?

DAVID picks up one of the empty glasses and refills it.

SAM is staring straight ahead at the GIRL.

DAVID

Sam?

SAM

Tanks? When were there tanks?

HELEN

Is he okay?

SAM

They could be laughing.

DAVID gestures HELEN to the cupboard. She hunts around.

HELEN
What am I looking for?

DAVID
Booze.

HELEN finds it and hands it to DAVID who checks it, nods and hands it back to HELEN.

SAM
The girl...who is the girl. I don't...when? When was it?

DAVID
The girl? Okay Sam, it's alright.

SAM
The faces in the fire
How many more faces...and the girl.

DAVID
It's a memory. Your memory.

HELEN pours a drink into a glass. She is about to take it to SAM when DAVID gestures her to stop.

DAVID
Okay Sam. Keep focusing on the girl. Really allow her into your mind.

To Helen: Helen, I'm sorry to do this. I'm just going to leave you here really briefly, I need to pick up witness testimonies.

HELEN
But I...I don't know what to do.

DAVID
Keep as he is for as long as you can. If he becomes too difficult then gently place your hand on his shoulder and give him a sip of the drink.

HELEN
Dad I...

DAVID
I'm sorry Helen, I'll be two minutes. I think...this is a great opportunity, he's almost living it if I can push him now we'll have his memory recovered right now.

HELEN
He needs to rest for God's sake. He's in pain.

DAVID

He's in the moment. He's more receptive to this memory than he ever has been. We can solve this now and get it all done. This can be completely sorted *now*. Please. Keep him there Helen.

DAVID leaves.

HELEN

It's okay Sam. Relax.

HELEN nervously places her hand on Sam's shoulder and lifts the glass to his mouth, letting him taste a sip. The GIRL disappears. She hands SAM the glass.

How are you feeling?

SAM holds out his glass to Helen for a refill. She obliges.

HELEN

Apparently this stuff takes more minds than horror and trauma do. Many more alcoholics than stress cases.
In combat, alcohol is a bigger problem.

SAM

It's the same problem. The mind's fucked before the bottle gets anywhere near it.

HELEN

Good, you're back with us. Are you feeling any better?

SAM

I don't know what better is. Where's Rivers?

HELEN

He went to get some documents which he thinks might help in the next phase.

SAM

This...whatever it was...
The tank.
That's my memory?

HELEN

I think so yes. I don't really know.

SAM

I don't know, I could feel it. Always...I've always been able to feel it.
That and other things.
But now...I can...I don't know, I can see it.
...that was memory that I had...
But I don't have...it was something that was removed.

HELEN

Have you had the treatment since you were last here?

SAM

It's standard. Everyone has it after operations. So you don't have to remember.

HELEN

It's standard? I didn't know that.

So...

Something about this memory returned?

SAM

During my last tour...on the last day before...before I left.

HELEN

And you weren't given the treatment afterwards?

SAM

I didn't go back. I disappeared.

HELEN

Maybe, if it was standard and you didn't get it this time...maybe it needs to be reinforced. Perhaps it needs the repeated application.

HELEN goes to the desk and scribbles a note to herself which she pockets.

HELEN

Sorry.

You know, Dad could give you the treatment. Make you forget again

SAM

I want to know.

Pause. HELEN takes the file Richard gave her from her bag.

HELEN

Do you remember the last time you were here. When Dad treated you the first time?

SAM

No.

HELEN

You don't remember anything?

SAM

Nothing.

Pause.

HELEN

I...I found something Sam, about...well about your time here.
Have you ever worked in interrogation?

SAM

No. Wouldn't want to.

HELEN

When you were last here...

SAM

If you know something I'm supposed to know then tell me.

HELEN

I don't think I can...I mean I shouldn't.

SAM

If you have something you'll tell me.
Please.

HELEN

I...Doctor Ensbury. If he gave it to me he wants it printing, so I suppose...yes, you should see it first.

She hands the file to SAM.

HELEN

It's all in there, everything I know. I...I think you should see it.

Pause. SAM reads. HELEN waits nervously.

Maybe if you see that it'll...you know it'll rekindle something. Help you recover. I think you should see it anyway. I think I was right to show you. Definitely. It's...you had a right to know that I...

SAM waves a hand to silence her.

Pause. SAM reads.

SAM

This is true?

HELEN

Dad had been saying 'it was necessary'. He wouldn't say what, I...well I think that is what he meant.

SAM

It's not...it can't be allowed.

HELEN

I don't think it is.

SAM

The isolation was...it was an interrogation thing?

HELEN

It...it seems so yes.

SAM

The lights...you know maybe I remember a light. I... I don't know...I think I remember a bright ligh.
It's illegal.

HELEN

I just thought maybe it would help you to remember.

He sets the drink down on the table.

A Silence. HELEN is nervously watching SAM.

SAM is stood still. The GIRL appears.

HELEN

Sam if you...

SAM forces himself away from the GIRL and hands the file roughly back to HELEN.

SAM

They...it's all wrong then. All of it.

HELEN

At least some good came.

DAVID enters.

DAVID

Sorry that took a while; it had been re-filed in the archive. I had to track it down all over again.

SAM slowly moves toward DAVID.

HELEN moves between them and places a calming hand on Sam's shoulder.

HELEN

Dad I think we should take a break.

Blackout.

Act Three Scene One

DAVID is sat. He is visibly tired. SAM is stood.

DAVID

It may be you're not ready to know these things. Perhaps we need to step away. Sam, this...whatever it was, was taken from you for a very good reason. You could not cope with this thing in you. It was cut out to free you from it. We freed you. Okay? When you free someone you don't expect them to come and ask to be put back in their cage.

SAM

Depends what they did when they were out of their cage.

DAVID

Whatever this memory is was taken for a very good reason, for your health, for your sanity.

SAM

It was all for my own good was it?

DAVID

Let me reapply the treatment.
Free you completely.
Sam?

The GIRL appears. She stands distant from Sam. He gets up from his chair and begins to cross to her. He stops and stares at her.

Pause

DAVID

What do you say Evans? This can all be cured. You'll be free.

SAM stares at the girl who remains.

SAM

No.
There is no freedom in that.
If you don't know...
If you make that choice...the choice not to know something...

DAVID

This was something that you could not live with Sam. That's why it was removed. That is what all of this has been for.

SAM

You have to know what you've seen...
And what you've done.
Everything you've done...if you don't know about it you're running away.

Then run away!

DAVID

No.

SAM

Pause

You doctor...

SAM

If you had a chance to face something you'd done, would you run from it?

SAM and DAVID stare at each other. The GIRL disappears.

SAM stares at him.

DAVID

Then I have accounts here taken from the time in question. In the initial work we used these accounts to focus your brain onto the one single incident I'm going to try to draw the memory from you in the same way. The image is accompanied by a feeling. Describe it.

Pause

Evans?

DAVID

Yes, a feeling. I told you all that already.

SAM

DAVID picks up the glass of water from the desk and takes it over to SAM

Drink this.

DAVID

SAM looks up at him
DAVID comes closer and SAM grabs his arm.

SAM leaps up, pushes DAVID back into the chair.

I won't drink it.
It's illegal

SAM

Sam?
It's water. Only water

DAVID

It was illegal
All of it was.

What?

You...
The lights...the drugs...keeping me awake.
I can see the lights in my eyes.

Lights?

And the drugs. In the water. The drugs in the water.

SAM pushes DAVID back and pins him into the chair.

You made me!
You've done this. You did this and it was all illegal.

Sam please

And what?
What are you going to do?

I want to help you.

I won't drink that stuff again

Sam I can help you

You made me.

Then let me help you

The GIRL appears. SAM sees her and moves away from DAVID towards her.

DAVID
Sam?
Sam I'm sorry

Silence

You shouldn't have known that.
Sam?
Evans?

Pause

SAM
They weren't armed.

DAVID
Evans?

*With a great effort Sam tears itself himself
away from the image of the girl to face DAVID*

SAM
They weren't armed doctor

DAVID
You've told me this Sam. You couldn't pull the trigger any more

SAM
I couldn't pull the trigger. I couldn't.

DAVID
That's why you left. That's why you're with me now.

SAM
I saw...
Once I saw, I couldn't...

DAVID
Once you saw what they were doing, yes.

SAM
I came back. I got out.

DAVID
Because you couldn't pull the trigger any more

SAM
I got help. My old commander, a civilian now
In a town by the border
Owed me his life he did...and now we're even.
He got me across...and back, back home

DAVID tentatively offers SAM the water which he accepts.

SAM

You know it's standard now Doc? After an operation your treatment is applied to all of us. No option. I escaped. I didn't get it this time.

DAVID

I can apply it now.

SAM

That was why I left. I didn't *want* it. I wanted to remember, you can't forget doctor. Sometimes you can't because you have to know. You have to know what you have done.

DAVID

What do you mean?

SAM

And it were on orders. All orders... But I remember, I *chose* to remember and now you need to help me because there's more, I know there is more I need to remember...it was you who made us forget. And I wasn't in my right mind, probably 'cos of what you did to me.

DAVID

I'm sorry Evans for what I did to you but the good it is doing, I...I know it's hurt you but ultimately we can help you. I can undo what I did and we'll still have the treatment

SAM

I was doing it!
It was me doing it! Civilians
All of them. They weren't fighting...
Why weren't they fighting?
Because they were not soldiers.
I was looking into their eyes. Some people wouldn't do that. But I did. Each one of them, square in the eyes. The look...it's...
You shouldn't forget that. When I saw what I was doing, I couldn't...I couldn't do the same again, not even to a soldier, with a gun, an enemy.
I looked one in the eye and in the end what was the difference between them and me? I couldn't do anything else.

DAVID

My God.

SAM

Yes...yes...I did it. I killed unarmed people
And now doctor? Now do you want to say it was necessary?
Now was it worth it...what you did to me? You made me doctor. You made me and
now I have to see what you took from me.

DAVID

Let me give you the treatment. You need to forget all this.

SAM

I need to remember!

DAVID

But look at you. You cannot cope with this Sam!

SAM

The look in the eyes of an innocent man...
If I forget that...If I forget that there is nothing left.

...

You made me like this doctor.
I need them now.
I need the faces in the fire
I need the look in those men's eyes.

*DAVID opens his mouth as if to retort but
cannot find the words. He moves away from
SAM and sits in the chair.*

SAM

You have to remember too.
Remember the lights
Remember taking away the rest...the sleep.
And the drugs.
That's what you need to remember.

DAVID

We thought we'd cured you.
You weren't supposed to remember what went on here.

SAM

But I know now.

DAVID

What do you want?

SAM

You can still cure me.

DAVID

But the treatment...you said you didn't...

SAM

I need to know who I was before. I need the rest of my mind back.
Please

...

There is no way to turn around
I have to remember
Everything needs to be remembered, or who will I be?
Who am I if I don't know what I have done?
I only want my mind back.

DAVID

We thought that if we took care of you properly afterwards, if we rehabilitated you correctly then the effect on you would be minimal. It had to be worth a try. It had to be...it was.

SAM

And you still think that? You think that after what I did? I killed civilians doctor.

Pause

DAVID

A mentor of mine when I was much younger quit practical defence science research not long before I started here. The reason he gave was that every man and woman has a key which opens the gates of heaven. The same key opens the gates of hell but he could no longer tell which gate was which. He could not use his key. The risk of hell was worse than the promise of heaven.

DAVID

I thought I was helping you Sam. I really did.

The killing...the eyes of the innocent...they are mine.
Your crimes are mine

SAM

They are my own and you won't take them from me. You have your own.

DAVID

And my own might have caused yours.

SAM

Then undo it!
Help me!

Please.

A moment, then DAVID decisively moves towards the table with the files and papers on it and picks up the file from earlier.

SAM sits down in the chair and nods.

DAVID places his hands on SAM'S shoulder's, relaxing him.

DAVID

Describe the girl to me Sam.

SAM

She'll be about ten years old.

The GIRL appears, instead of staying still, this time she walks towards him.

SAM

She is dark. Her dress is tatty, in a foreign style...Middle Eastern.

DAVID

Really focus on her. Don't fight against it.

The GIRL moves closer to SAM.

SAM

She's clearer than ever.

DAVID

Don't look away.

SAM

I...I don't want to...get me away from here.

DAVID

Stay focused.

DAVID moves behind SAM, grabs his head and focuses him straight ahead.

DAVID

Keep looking.
There's nothing else.
There's only her.

DAVID lets go of his head and moves away from him.

DAVID

Keep focusing on her.
Now, I want you to reach out and touch her.

SAM does so.

SAM

But...but she's not here. She's memory isn't she?

DAVID

A memory yes. But imaginary as well. Because we don't have her fully, you need to allow your imagination to close the gaps.

SAM reaches out and touches the GIRL again.

DAVID

Stay with it.

The GIRL moves away from SAM. It draws him up from his chair as he tentatively follows her.

DAVID

I have accounts here from several of your colleagues about the night that is missing from your memory.

SAM

Will that help?

DAVID

My team and I gathered these the first time I worked with you to help recreate the moment in your mind. They sound pretty routine and there doesn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary but they may jog something. These accounts pushed you sufficiently into the memory to allow us to isolate and remove it four years ago.

DAVID takes out a file and examines a piece of paper from it.

DAVID

This first one is from Sergeant Wright. Familiar?

SAM

I served with him years ago. I don't know what happened to him.

DAVID

Reading: from Sergeant Wallace Wright, transcribed from interview with Doctor Richard Ensbury:

Around that time we were doing a lot of raids. The press had become less supportive of what was going on and the government wanted something tangible so we were conducting raids on targets which would ordinarily only have been monitored. I don't remember anything about the night in question that sets it apart. The records show that it was a room at the back of a hardware store being used as an insurgent arms cache. It was a minor target and we only sent a patrol of five men.

DAVID (CONT.)

Reading: from Private Gareth Anderson, transcribed from interview with Doctor Richard Ensbury:

We got there late. Must have been about midnight. The idea was to be as quiet as possible. We didn't want trouble.

As DAVID speaks, SAM gets up, takes a knife from his belt and begins moving around the room.

It was a small dwelling. Maybe three rooms. Single story. At the front a living area, sleeping area at the rear. There were several houses all exactly the same, packed close in a small street buried between larger buildings.

There was an ally at the rear. We split. Blackwell and Zahir would watch the front from across the way. Private Ryan and myself would go in the front as if on a routine enquiry and keep the occupants talking. Corporal Evans would break in from the ally, taking the rear room where the cache was supposed to be. It was the wrong place in the end. When Evans met us he only said 'Negative target'.

SAM is now on his guard. He is stood alert, knife in hand.

Reading: From private David Ryan, transcribed from interview with Doctor David Rivers:

We got there about midnight. Maybe just after. Corporal Evans in command.

SAM

Zahir and Blackwell, cover from across the street.
Anderson and Ryan, peaceful ingress from the front.

DAVID disappears. SAM alone. A memory.

SAM

Keep it friendly this time Ryan.
We need this to remain peaceful if at all possible.
Should be routine. Off you go.

SAM is now completely in a middle-eastern town over four years ago. He treads quietly as he moves around the space. He reaches his destination, stops and looks about him before crawling under something. At the other side he gets up and looks around confused. He is on his guard, knife at the ready, sensing danger.

The GIRL appears behind him. He hears something. He spins around and stares at her.

A moment.

The GIRL opens her mouth as if to scream. SAM leaps towards her and covers her mouth with his hand and grabs hold of her to restrain her. She struggles to free herself. She almost manages but SAM keeps hold and plunges a knife into her side. He lowers her in silence. SAM drops the knife and begins to fall, DAVID rushes to him and helps him to a chair.

SAM is sat on the chair shaking violently. DAVID is holding him down

DAVID

It's ok Sam. It's ok.

A sound is heard outside the door.

DAVID

It's nothing Sam...it's ok.

SAM leaps up and picks up the knife. He begins pacing the room in a maniacal panic. DAVID backs away towards the cabinet and takes a bottle and a glass out of the cupboard.

DAVID

Drink some of this Sam. It will help...please.

SAM pushes DAVID away from him. He kneels by the GIRL who is lying on the floor.

SAM

I killed her...I killed her...

DAVID

The girl?

SAM

She was...I killed her...Negative target. I...I was a monster even before. Before it all, I was always a monster. I killed her.

DAVID

Sam...you need to take a breath. Allow this time to sink in. You need rest.

SAM

I killed her.

A noise is heard. SAM is alert again, knife in hand.

HELEN bursts into the room speaking as she enters

HELEN

Dad, I don't have long I need to deliver in...

She startles SAM who has his back to the door. He whips round and grabs her, holding the knife to her face

DAVID

Helen! Sam no!

RICHARD arrives in the doorway. He stands transfixed as SAM holds HELEN in the centre of the room.

HELEN

Please...

HELEN bites her lip and remains resolutely silent as SAM slowly brings the knife down in a slow, long cut on the side of her face. She is shaking slightly but does not take her eyes from his

Silence. A moment of stillness in which, following HELEN'S example, DAVID and RICHARD remain silent and still. SAM drops the knife and lets go of HELEN who drops to the floor. He looks down at her, slowly returning to his senses

Pause

DAVID rushes to his daughter. RICHARD rushes to SAM, grabs hold of him and pulls him away from HELEN. SAM struggles and breaks free. RICHARD moves between SAM and HELEN. SAM stares down at HELEN. He is breathing deeply and begins to return to himself. SAM pushes past RICHARD and straight out of the door.

Act Three Scene Two

The Lab, late on a Friday. DAVID is sat at his desk with a newspaper in his hand. HELEN is stood.

DAVID

You overstate. It's...well you have to be more accurate.

HELEN

But I've got down there everything you told me. Which bits did I get wrong?

DAVID

Just that I don't think...I don't think that the tone is appropriate.

HELEN

The tone?

DAVID

I mean what are you celebrating here? Just report it as it is.

HELEN

What am I celebrating?

DAVID

I don't recognize myself in what you have written there. It isn't me.

HELEN

I saw Richard on the way in. He said it was just what they were after.

DAVID

You proved him wrong. He thought you were too young but you gave them exactly what they wanted.

HELEN

He said they'd use me again next time they have anything to put to the press.

DAVID

Here. You shouldn't be without this.

DAVID hands back Helen's Dictaphone.

Pause.

DAVID

I don't like to be portrayed like this.

HELEN

Then what would you prefer? How's this,

She takes out a notebook and flicks through until she finds what she is looking for.

HELEN

Reading: Doctor Rivers, drawing inspiration from sinister wartime interrogation techniques extracted memories from his subject by depriving him of sleep for long periods of time, confusing him with blinding lights and inducing severe distress using a powerful hallucinogenic compound.

She closes the notebook

Though abusive and illegal, we should celebrate Doctor Rivers as a genius and allow him to treat people however the fuck he wants!

Better?

Silence.

DAVID takes the paper from her.

DAVID

Quietly now: If you knew that, then what is this you've written?

HELEN

It's all true isn't it?

DAVID

If you knew about all that, then how can you have written this?

HELEN

Hang on, you can't...

DAVID

This is a deliberate lie. Why have you done this?

HELEN

I...I was doing my job and you can't now decide...I don't have to listen to you of all people about his stuff now.

DAVID

Reading. And the pioneering techniques Rivers developed with his team have heralded a breakthrough which will finally put to rest the question of a soldier's mental wellbeing.

HELEN

Nothing changes that.

DAVID

Reading. The future well being of our soldiers will owe an eternal debt to the work of David Rivers.

HELEN

Well they will, that's true.

DAVID

Reading. The groundbreaking work in development of this treatment done by Rivers and his team represents a gift to our fighting men and women that is long overdue.

HELEN

It is! It is! People need this treatment! They need it and you have given it to them.

DAVID

But it is a lie Helen.

HELEN

Every word is true. You know it is.

DAVID

Then it is a lie of omission. You know something which you have deliberately withheld. You have to live up to your responsibility.

HELEN

Precisely. It would have been irresponsible to release this. It would jeopardize the whole thing and I am not going to do that. People depend on this.

DAVID

Truth Helen! Truth! There can't be anything more than that!

HELEN

How could I print that about you?

DAVID

Your responsibility is not to me.

HELEN

And yours isn't to me but you gave me this job. You shouldn't have but you did. A formality you said, I would be putting out what they wanted me to put out and there it is. Exactly what I was supposed to do.

Pause

DAVID

Helen...I'm sorry

DAVID moves to her and traces down her scar with his finger.

I did this.

He moves away from her.

You have a duty to the truth.

HELEN

This isn't about you! This thing here, all this that you've been doing here and that I've been hired to publicize...

All of this *does not* revolve around you. There is something better here and *that* does need to be protected.

DAVID

Something...anything in fact is only as good as the very worst of it. And it is the worst of it that you are protecting. The worst component of something Helen, that's how it has to be measured.

It is the same with people. The worst thing that you have ever done, whatever that is... That is who you are.

HELEN

That's bollocks.

DAVID chuckles and pours himself another drink.

DAVID

Maybe it is.

HELEN

Should you even have that stuff in the lab?

DAVID

I'm a pioneer remember? You want some?

HELEN

No.
It's what you achieve.

DAVID

What is?

HELEN

The highest result of what you do, the best ...that is the measure of something. You've achieved something wonderful here and if you don't want to admit that anymore then that's fine, but you can't deprive the world of this. *That* would be irresponsible.

You made a mistake that's all. If you are looking at a masterpiece and the only thing you can see is the blemish in the corner then you are a fool.

DAVID

The artist would only see the blemish.

HELEN

Maybe, but he doesn't destroy the canvas because of it.

Pause.

Have you heard from Sam?

DAVID

No. Richard is with McGuire and a few others. They've got Karen up there. That's Sam's partner. Officially they're informing her of his disappearance. She's coming through to speak to me afterwards. Richard told me I should hang around for that.

HELEN

Hang around? So you're not working?

DAVID

I tendered my resignation this afternoon.

Pause. HELEN stares at him.

HELEN

What? Why?

DAVID

They politely requested it.
Richard turned the Evans case file over to McGuire yesterday.

HELEN

You lost your job?

DAVID

They felt it was for the best that I went.

HELEN

But what difference does it make if...

DAVID

If it's discovered I'm to be a rogue working outside the institution. It's my crime, not there's.

HELEN

So what now?

DAVID

I think maybe a bit of gardening.

KAREN enters

DAVID

Come in Karen.

KAREN

To Helen: Are you looking for Sam too?

HELEN

No. No of course not.

DAVID

This is my daughter. She was here when Sam disappeared.

Take a seat. DAVID

I'd prefer to stand. KAREN

Drink? DAVID

No. KAREN

Pause.

What do you know? DAVID

I know I'm here.
And I know Sam isn't. KAREN

Well what did they tell you? HELEN

KAREN
They want Sam back obviously. I told them I didn't know where he was. They told me that he'd been here and that he ran away from a meeting with you Doctor.

HELEN
Yes he escaped from here, but he did this to me first.

She shows Karen the scar running down her face.

DAVID
Alright Helen.
To Karen: I'm sorry. The problem Sam was having was to do with the trace of a memory he should no longer have had.

KAREN
I figured. He escaped the treatment.

DAVID
When I helped him recover his memory I'm afraid it distressed him.

KAREN
And that's why he ran?

DAVID
There's something else.

KAREN
They also told me Sam had been here four years ago.

DAVID
What did they tell you?

KAREN
Enough.

Pause.

DAVID
I'm sorry.

KAREN
Don't. I...it's not something I want to hear.

DAVID
It was necessary. At the time it was necessary.

KAREN
No. No it wasn't.
They told me in there they've fired you.

HELEN
He resigned.

KAREN
For what you did to Sam.

DAVID
Yes. I am sorry.

Pause

KAREN sits. DAVID pours her a drink.

On Thursday, before he disappeared...He told me things he shouldn't have been able to remember.

HELEN
Dad I...

DAVID
Helen I need to say this.

HELEN
No it was me. I told him.

DAVID
You did?

HELEN

Richard gave me the records of it and I read them and...and I had to tell him...I thought, you know I thought he had a right to know.

KAREN

He did have the right to know. He had to know everything. He couldn't cope with the gaps. You should have told him yourself doctor.

DAVID

It doesn't matter anymore.

KAREN

You cured his memory eventually?

DAVID

He didn't trust me. I was opening his mind up to something terrible except now he didn't trust me. Imagine trying to discover something about yourself you don't remember, something you know will be bad and then imagine doing that in the presence of...no even controlled, by someone who you don't trust...who you have reason...very good reason not to trust.

HELEN

Sam could trust you. You were helping him. He knew that.

DAVID

No. No he knew what I was.

HELEN

You were his hope, the way he was going to get better.

DAVID

When I first treated Sam four years ago, when he was a guinea pig for us...

HELEN

Don't call him that.

DAVID

He was. He was a lab rat. When he was here we made him live through the worst moments of his life. I kept him focused on it. Surrounded by it. Devoured by it. Twenty four hours a day. No rest from it. No sleep. The worst moment of his life and for two solid weeks he was immersed in it with no escape. The worst moment over and over.

HELEN

Dad it was all for something better. It was wrong but the results. Don't forget the results.

DAVID

I was torturing him Helen!

DAVID lowers his head slightly and endures the silence. HELEN fidgets uncomfortably

A moment of silence.

HELEN

Miss Saunders...Karen. It is horrible it really is what happened to him, what Dad did but...
We mustn't do anything to bring this down now. It would be wrong.
Think of it like Dad said: This is Sam's achievement too. This cure, it belongs to him as well.

KAREN

No! No, no, no I won't have that. Don't you dare implicate Sam in this!

HELEN

But all the good it is doing...

KAREN

The good? What do you imagine is happening?
Did you know the treatment is now routine and mandatory Doctor?
Did you know that?

DAVID

Yes.

KAREN

And how did you feel when you found that out?

HELEN

It's a cure! There are lives being saved, minds salvaged from trauma. They have a right to forget!

KAREN

They have been given a *duty*, an *obligation* to forget. Do you know anything about Sam's last tour?

HELEN

No. No I don't know...

KAREN

How about you doctor?

DAVID

I know a little.

KAREN

Like what?

DAVID

Sam he...
I think something must have happened to him. He was...he was...

KAREN

Killing civilians?

DAVID

That is...yes that's what he said.

KAREN

And he wasn't the only one.

HELEN

Hang on...killing civilians?

KAREN

It was an attack on a town that was harbouring enemy combatants. The town got a warning. One week before and a huge contingent of personnel were gathered on the edge of the town. They were all aware of your cure and they had probably all had it before. The commander reminded the soldiers that everyone in the town had been given a week's warning. Therefore anyone still there after that week when the soldiers arrived was no longer a civilian.

DAVID

My god.

HELEN

That can't be true, no. I don't believe you.

KAREN

If they were there they must have chosen to be there. If they had chosen to be there they were enemies. The soldiers were told to completely remove the enemy threat. They were reminded that they would be properly taken care of when they returned. 'This will be your greatest day and all you will remember will be the glory of it' They knew they wouldn't remember anything and they didn't. None of them have a damn clue what they did. Except for Sam. The deserter. The deserter knows. He chose to remember.

HELEN

They must have been enemies though. They would not have been civilians.

KAREN

And would that be better? Yes they were civilians but what difference would it have made if they weren't? What difference can there be if you don't remember?

DAVID

My god. The gate. The gate was hell and there was no heaven at all.

KAREN

An entire town obliterated and no remembers a thing. You are not removing memories Doctor. You are removing conscience.

HELEN

But if they were fighting back...

KAREN

But they weren't. And if they had been that only matter when you are looking back.
'I killed him because he would have killed me'.

'I killed him because he was dangerous'

'I killed him because he was enemy.'

If you don't remember then there is no 'because'. There is no need to justify anything because you don't need to live with it and you know it so all there is, is what you are ordered to do.

HELEN

But surely in extreme case the cure can still...

KAREN

It is not a cure! It is a fucking weapon!

Pause

HELEN

Look, Miss Saunders I...

KAREN

I'm going home. There're no answers here. Sam escaped. He escaped and he knows.

DAVID

I'm sorry Karen.

KAREN

When he got back, after he deserted, he knew they would come for him. They would take his memory because he knew. He told me everything. It was too dangerous for only one person to know, when they can make you unknow everything.

When it's not voluntary doctor you can't call it a cure anymore.

She leaves.

*Silence. DAVID sits perfectly still in his chair.
HELEN watches him nervously.*

HELEN

Dad?

Pause

DAVID

Were you recording all that?

HELEN

Oh, don't worry about that. No, no of course I wasn't.

DAVID leaps up from his chair.

DAVID

Then why the hell not?

HELEN

I...I...What?

DAVID

Why weren't you recording that? You have a Dictaphone don't you?

HELEN

I...I didn't think that was for printing...I mean, it's not...

DAVID

Here.

DAVID picks up her notepad which she had set on the floor earlier and hands it to her.

DAVID

Take out a pen. Go on, take out a pen!

Trembling slightly Helen does as she is told.

DAVID

Take all this down:

A new procedure to remove the consciences of its troops was fully deployed for the first time last month by Her Majesty's Armed Forces. The procedure based on the removal of memory allows, for the first time ever, a complete freedom from consequence and responsibility.

HELEN

Dad, this is...

DAVID

Personnel on military operations are repeatedly conditioned by their superiors to accept everyone as enemies and to operate machine like efficiency in dispatching them while being constantly assured not only of the good in what they are doing, but also that they will never remember it. The procedure was put to the test last month when a town no fucker will ever hear of again was annihilated to purge it of an enemy threat. The town was told they were coming so the military can confidently claim that none of the dead can possibly have been civilians.

HELEN

You can't say this. You have no proof!

DAVID

Write it!

Analysts confidently predict that the breakthrough will eliminate the factor of human hesitation in modern warfare and allow problem areas to simply be wiped clean so that we can all just start again.

HELEN

This is suicide!

DAVID

When asked about the ethics of the procedure, the inventor of this breakthrough, Doctor David Rivers had this to say 'Fuck them...Fuck them all!!' The good doctor humbly accepts his new title: The Architect of the Massacre!

HELEN throws down her pen and flings her notepad at him.

DAVID

Pick that up.

HELEN

No

DAVID

Pick it up!

HELEN

I won't do it.

DAVID

You have a duty to the truth! This has to be told!

HELEN

No. No it doesn't. I won't do it!

DAVID

How...The barrier that holds back horrible acts doesn't exist anymore. I've opened it. How can you do this? How can you defend it?

HELEN

We...If this is helping them out there we have to let it. We have to do what we can to support them. The bravery of it all. This would undermine all that.

DAVID

Helen?

HELEN

And who's to say it isn't good in the long run? If we're fighting and this cure helps them then how can I take it from them?

DAVID

How can you? My God Helen, how can you say that?

HELEN

Because of...because I have to support them, this is saving people's lives dad. And because I won't let this destroy you. It is good. I know its good. You've cured something incurable and you'll throw it away over this?

DAVID

People are dying!

HELEN

No, not because of the treatment. It is saving people. You are saving people.

DAVID

How can you defend it?

HELEN

Because you are not responsible. You are saving people. And because you'll destroy yourself with this. And Mum...and everything you've worked for. Because I love you Dad, that's why.

DAVID

And even that fact is going to damn me now is it?

HELEN

To *save* you.

DAVID

You don't know the difference anymore.
You have to let this be known Helen, or how could you live with yourself?

HELEN

Because I'm living in the real world.

DAVID

No. No you are not. You grew up didn't you?
Helen...

*DAVID grabs her face and pulls her to him.
He traces the scar down her face with his
finger.*

DAVID

A hundred thousand on the other side of the world means nothing. Nothing at all next to just one in your own family.

HELEN

Dad, no one knows what you did to Sam. You still have your reputation. This is still your cure. We can fight this.

DAVID

I don't know what you're fighting anymore Helen.

Pause

He lets go of her. He looks around and seems momentarily lost, as if he no longer recognizes his surroundings.

DAVID

I'm...
I'm going for a walk.

DAVID moves quickly though purposelessly out of the door.

HELEN finds his coat on the back of his chair.

HELEN

Dad you forgot your coat.
Dad?
DAD!

Blackout.

Act Three Scene Three

A week later. KAREN in the park. HELEN enters with a folder under her arm.

HELEN

Karen! Hi!

Thanks for meeting me. I thought, you know you might want to look this over. They'll run it tomorrow morning.

KAREN

You got the job then? Congratulations.

HELEN

They liked the piece on the treatment so they took me on staff.

HELEN hands KAREN a piece of paper and a pen.

HELEN

Just...you know, feel free to scribble anything you like on there. I'll change anything you want.

KAREN begins reading and scribbling words out. HELEN looks concerned at the amount of correcting KAREN appears to be doing.

HELEN

Is there...is there that much wrong? I didn't want to misrepresent him.

KAREN continues correcting as HELEN sits beside her apprehensively.

I wanted Dad to read it too but I can't get hold of him. I suppose he needs time to think. Do you know, when I was little he once took off for three days without warning. He told Mum when he got back that he needed to work something out. It turned out to be a practical application for chemical hypnosis he developed. He worked for Bristol University then. They'd funded it and he disappeared for a week to work out why they'd bothered. Mum was furious with him.

Karen?

KAREN

Do you want me to do this or not?

HELEN

Sorry. I just...is Sam home?

KAREN

He wasn't living at home anyway was he?

HELEN

No but you know what I mean...

KAREN

No. He's not.

HELEN

Right. Richard's working on a practical civilian use for the treatment...so, you know, there's still some good to come.

KAREN

I saw in the paper that the army still use it.

HELEN

It's a good protection for the troops.

KAREN

Another town on the other side of the world no longer exists, and no one will remember a thing.

HELEN

The end's in sight. I guess they'll all be coming home soon.

KAREN

I guess so. And then they'll go somewhere else. Here.

KAREN hands HELEN the article.

HELEN

Oh it's not as bad as I thought. You've only taken out a few words, it shouldn't take me too long to rewrite this.

KAREN

Most of it was fine.

HELEN

I didn't want to present him as a deserter but more...I don't know, are they still after him?

KAREN

I don't know. I assume so.

HELEN

The last one got jailed for six months. Do you think that'll happen to Sam?

KAREN

No.

HELEN

Well, I hope I have painted him in positive colours here at any rate. Oh, you've crossed out this here...this is positive we should leave this in.

KAREN looks over the bit HELEN points to.

KAREN

No. Take it out.

HELEN

It...no, it should be positive I think we should...

KAREN

I don't like that word. And nor did Sam. It stays out.

HELEN

Look all I was trying to do was to get him sympathy and you know...he *is* a hero.

KAREN

He was a man and that's the best you can say of him.

HELEN

People would really get behind him if we left this in and...you know, maybe they'll pardon him and he won't have to hide.

KAREN

Won't make any difference. Doesn't matter to me if people get behind him. You know, you can say hero over and over again it doesn't get closer to actually meaning anything. All you really mean is a man with a gun and that isn't how I want Sam remembered...it's not how I want to remember him and not what Sam wanted. I want the man without the gun.

HELEN

Remembered?

KAREN

Please just run it with those words taken out Helen. Just, as a favour.

HELEN

But I...

Yes. Of course. Sorry.

KAREN

Thank you.

HELEN

I wanted Dad to look over it too. I guess he'll just have to read it in the paper. Thank you for looking over it for me. I'm still nervous about getting things wrong.

KAREN gets up to leave.

KAREN

There's a statue in Staffordshire of a boy in a blind-fold, his hands tied behind his back. It's called the Shot at Dawn memorial, Sam told me about it. It remembers the deserters who were killed. Those that couldn't continue the fight. When they could no longer face it. Perhaps they got scared...or they no longer believed...

You should visit it. For Sam...and for your father.

KAREN leaves.

*HELEN scribbles out everything in the article.
She takes out her notepad and begins to write.*

Blackout

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