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Dear Albie,

Here is the new draft (as promised in our last letter), and a few notes (as threatened).

We have we think addressed all of your main points, and indeed taken on board your main suggestions. We have recharted Albie's journey, particularly in Maputo (his attitude is no longer illusory optimism, but the revolutionary triumphalism you eloquently described at Heathrow). We have paid more attention to the emotional and physical side both of the character and his journey, and made him less tart and sarcastic. We have we think made good use of the "I .... therefore I ...." trope, and we have gratefully embraced both Comrade Idris (here called Eduardo) and the ANC Leader (which allowed us to dispense with the always unsatisfactory Zuma scene). We have changed Wolfie's name but given him another scene as a compensation, and we have wheeled you across the road. Having eliminated most of the lover scene (see our last but one letter) we have now dispensed with it completely. We have however kept the LSE lecture, though its ending is revised in a way that we hope pleases you.

There is one major suggestion we have not taken on. After considerable discussion with Hilary, we are convinced that to give Albie a present-tense voice over would be seriously to over-egg the conventional pudding. The whole idea of the Jail Diary flashbacks is to represent a kind of unconscious, or certainly unspoken journey for Albie through trauma to recovery. The ironies of the parallels and contrasts between the two situations should provide that assistance through the story - and that contrast between the public and private face - that a good voice over would provide. We have therefore sought to solve those problems which a voice-over clearly would solve, by other means.

On specifics:

p1-2. David thinks he'd misunderstood what you were sending on the constitutional question; his idea then was to contrast a highly technical conversation about precise turns of phrase (part two section three sub-section seven - a) with a nearly naked man watering his plants and then being attacked in a terrorist



outrage. The executive producer was firmly of the view that the scene as written needed to be much more short and suspenseful, so now we have what we hope is a clean and clear relationship between a man who believes in law, in a country at war, who is about to fall victim to a violent illegal act.

p5-6. We have adapted both this scene and Margit (now Lotte's) description to what happened.

p7-11. Thanks for all your points here, which make these scenes sharper, and more intriguing. We have implemented almost all your suggestions: he is less composed before the operation, he has waited 20 years for this, he jokes therefore he is.

p14-5. We hope you enjoy Comrade Eduardo as much as we have.

p16-20. We spent a long time thinking about the Lucia (now Moya) scene. The core of its content is Albie's confidence at the bottom of 18 and top of 19; the core of its form is putting the kissing incident at the end (by which time we will have more than enough hints of their past relationship for the syntax of the situation to be clear) and revealing their past relationship in the subsequent scene with the nurse. This also gives us the opportunity to emphasise the importance of nurses, which carries us neatly into London.

p22-7. David was unable to restrain April and Hilary's enthusiasm for the hedgehogs. We had missed the deafness point which is excellent. We've taken the irritable edge off what was the first and is now the Second Nurse, and we're delighted with "whingers or fiercely independent" (and use it again). We had been using "Samora says" in the sense that one says "Shakespeare says" but in fact we've cut it to making room for shitting and therefore being.

p27-9. Your description of Margit's character, background, appearance and initial state of mind has enabled us to colour in what had been a rather monochrome character. The central events of the scene are the same: her description of the bomb and her response to Albie's request to be "produced". However, by reversing her emotional state at the beginning - as well, frankly, as having a description in our and the actress' head - will make the scene much more vital. And Lotte as a name seems to go with the lipstick.

p34-7. Although we were able to incorporate a number of your notes, we had some difficulties with the psychiatrist. In a nutshell, it's a fairly static, conversational scene that has to cover quite a lot of territory (as it's one of our few chances to get a direct description of Albie's state of mind). It is we guess still too long. So despite strenuous efforts to include



clearly ace little epigrams like the double trauma, we were persuaded to err on the side of (relative) brevity, though we would love to find a home for the ambidextrous joke somewhere.

p38\40\42. We have taken on board your excellent suggestions for the specialist sequence (bingo et al). To have put in a direct Biblical reference at the end of the physiotherapist would be to weaken the impact of standing and then walking therefore amming. Fear not: "And now you walk" will imply "take up thy bed and walk" to anyone who spent any time in a Sunday school.

p46-8. As you suggested, Wolfie\Benny takes the main burden of the political debate. We like very much that after all Albie's personal triumphs, the outside world and the political meaning of the outrage intervenes at this point (and we think it's clarified by cutting the flashback to the writing scene in Jail Diary). We have also taken on your idea that Benny should crack the one-armed bandiet joke (in a doomed attempt to save himself from reference to the "armed struggle"). Our belief is that by doing so we have (a) introduced the joke via another character, (b) made immediately clear (by the reference to Afrikaans) that the joke is not "one-armed bandit" itself but essentially a pun on it, which relates to Albie's own past as well as present history, and (c) encoded the joke as a reference to Albie's ambiguity about his relationship to the revolutionary movement. By juxtaposing the joke with Benny's assumption that Albie plans to "get back to normal", we think we have laid an effective fuse for Albie's quotation of the joke to Melba to be an effective repudiation of that idea (acceptance that he will never be the same) without implying that Albie owns and therefore approves of the joke in its original form. It is in fact now an example of that manipulation and recasting of unpleasant words and phrases that gives rise (as it happens) to the names of both the Whigs and the Tories, the repossession of the word "queer" by militant gays, and of course the words "wet" and "wimp", coined as insults, worn with pride.

By the by, David de Keyser is an excellent casting idea.

p51. David, who has as you know a somewhat puritan cast of mind, thought we should cut the second Eduardo scene. He was overruled.

p59-60. We had certainly missed many tricks on the Melba bath and have enjoyed putting it right.

p65. The reference to "white South Africa" is in Jail Diary: we've snipped it out.

p66-9. We hope you feel, as we do, that "Benny" and the ANC Leader are a considerable improvement on Zuma at this point in the story.



p78. For the reasons described above, we hope to convince you that the drama and humour of this page (and indeed the build-up to it, with all its pleasing back references to the importance of jokes to Albie and his relationship with Melba) is no longer undermined by the implication that Albie initiates and therefore approves of the bandiet joke. The problem with your rewrite - delightful though it is - is that it fatally undermines the rose garden scene. In our version, Albie realises he will never be normal again, Melba reads this as meaning he won't wear the prosthesis and takes it away, Albie then confronts the reality of appearing as a one-armed person before the world, and decides to do so. In your version, the lovely speech does all of that at once, reducing Melba's role, and leaving nowhere for Albie to go.

p80: As implied above, the lover scene didn't work, we now think for a rather obvious reason. We'd been thinking in terms of an architecture of three women: Lucia, Margit, the Lover. In fact, as we developed her, Melba became the third woman (or rather, we realised she always had been). Indeed, much of our thinking about the last third of the play is taken from the idea that, as you say, Melba was in love with you. As this could never be stated, this has not provoked great changes in the dialogue. But the much more expressive bath scene will we are sure encode this possibility in the viewer's mind and substantially deepen the rest of the Melba scenes.

p80-5. The problem with ending the play proper in the rose garden is that it completes one journey but not the other. The wonder of your second story is that the personal and the political come together. It is clear from your book that for all the wry jests about being a wimp, you could not have said what you say in the book about human rights - with the confidence and assurance that you say it - without the experience of the bomb and your recovery from it. For both your playwrights, who have wrestled in their different ways with trying to make a real and organic (as opposed to mechanical) connection between the individual consciousness and the collective, the story you tell in *Soft Vengeance* is - frankly - too great a temptation to resist. Without it, it looks like a man rejecting politics in order to listen to his own voice in a quiet room (or indeed garden). We think you've told a more thrilling story than that, which is of a man whose politics are made three-dimensional by his confrontation with himself.

Where we think you are absolutely right is in thinking that the LSE speech art present does not fully express that aspiration. We think the new last lines of the scene, which connect your recovery with your views on human rights with your resistance to evil in *Jail Diary*, do that job.



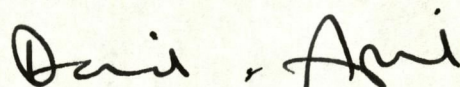
p.87. We are presently ending the play with the run on the beach, the end to both stories. We will of course voice over or caption this, to bring your story up to date.

We were very touched by your kind remarks about the last draft, and your generous commitment to our work on your story. We hope that you are pleased with the changes we've made, and, if not necessarily persuaded by the occasional alternative solution, at least convinced that we are now working with the grain of your book.

This new draft goes simultaneously to you, the director and the two executive producers. It may of course be rejected at this stage; if not, the next set of revisions will be dominated by the director's view. This is not to say that we cannot address any further problems you may have; so please do let us have your response to this draft. You may wish to wait till we get the green, red or amber light from on high: you will certainly be the first to know.

We are slightly worried that you didn't get at least one and possibly both of the last two faxes: could you confirm that this has arrived safely? David is still immured in rehearsals: so it's best to ring April. We get fax messages off 021 414 5998 every three or four days.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David & April". The letters are fluid and connected, with a small flourish at the end.

April and David