

Toy Soldier

By

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CAST LIST

In Court

Linda Britten – The defendant.

Philipa Beach – Linda's lawyer

Soames – The lawyer for the prosecution

The Judge

Jury Spokesperson

The Courtroom Assistant

Members of the Jury

From the Recordings

Bashir Handi – The victim.

Christopher Grange – Linda's lover and senior officer in Iraq

Defence Secretary Runsford

ACT I

SCENE 1

AS AUDIENCE ENTER - SPOTLIGHT ON
HOODED FIGURE KNEELING IN STRESS
POSITION.

BLACK OUT.

(F/X) THE CRISP CLICK OF A
BUTTON FOLLOWED BY THE CRACK AND
HISS OF A LOW QUALITY DIGITAL
RECORDING BEING PLAYED BACK.

FROM THE RECORDING:

A MALE DETAINEE (BASHIR)
BREATHES DEEPLY, IN PAIN.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (LINDA) SPEAKS.

LINDA: (*forceful*) Name?

BASHIR TRIES TO SPLUTTER A
RESPONSE BUT IS INTERRUPTED.

(*forceful*) Stand up. Rank?

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AGAIN BASHIR GOES TO SPEAK BUT
IS INTERRUPTED.

LINDA (CONT): *(forceful)* What is your name?

BASHIR GOES TO SPEAK BUT IS
INTERRUPTED BY THE DULL THUD OF
AN IMPACT. HE GASPS IN WINDED
PAIN.

(shouting) We know who you are. What
is your name? Get down. What is
your rank?

BASHIR: *(spluttering)* I'm tailor. I have
no rank-

LINDA: *(forceful)* Silence. Stand up. Take
off your clothes.

BASHIR: Please.

(F/X) A BATON HITTING A TABLE.

LINDA: Now.

BASHIR SOBS QUIETLY AS (F/X) HE
TAKES OFF HIS CLOTHES.

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LINDA (CONT): Have you ever touched a woman before?

BASHIR: Please.

LINDA: What are these? (*forceful*) Tell me.

BASHIR: Underwear for the woman.

LINDA: You want to smell them?

BASHIR: Please, no.

MUFFLED CRIES.

LINDA: (*close*) Come on, taste them. You
like that? Lick it.

THE MUFFLED CRIES GIVE WAY
TO BASHIR TRYING TO REGAIN HIS
BREATH.

Put them on.

BASHIR: (*crying*) I can't, please. I beg you.

I am husband. I am father. Please-

LINDA: (*interrupting*) Do you see a
headscarf? Am I wearing a burqa? I
am the man. You are the woman. Put
them on.

(F/X) BASHIR PUTS ON THE
UNDERWEAR WHILST CRYING.

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BASHIR: *(quietly)* A'uzu bil-lahi minash
 Shayta-nir-rajeem. (TRANSLATION: I
 seek Allah's protection from Satan
 who is accursed)

LINDA: *(shouting)* Shut up. Get down on the
 floor. You pray to Jesus in here.
 (forceful) Now tell me, name?

BASHIR: I'm not soldier-

LINDA: *(interrupting)* Rank?

BASHIR: Please-

LINDA: *(screaming)* What is your name and
 rank?

(F/X) THE DULL SOUNDS OF HEAVY
THUDS, FOLLOWED BY BASHIR'S
SCREAMS.

(F/X) THE RECORDING STOPS WITH A
CLICK.

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ACT I

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP ON A SMALL COURT ROOM.

LINDA SITS BLANKLY AT THE SMALL
'DOCK' TABLE. BEACH SITS AT HER
DESK. THE JUDGE PRESIDES IN HIS
CHAIR WITH THE COURT ASSISTANT
ON THE NEXT TABLE. SOAMES
STANDS, LEANING AGAINST HIS DESK
AND THE SMALL JURY WATCH FROM
THE WINGS.

THERE IS A SHORT STUNNED
SILENCE.

SOAMES PUSHES HIMSELF INTO THE
ROOM, BREAKING THE TENSION.

SOAMES:

This recording was taken on the day
that prisoner D021, Bashir Handi,
arrived at the Basra Detention
Centre. Can I just confirm that with
the defendant? Miss Britten, is that
your voice on the recording?

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LINDA, QUIET AND UNSTEADY,
SPEAKS UP.

LINDA: Yes sir.

SOAMES: And can you just explain what you
were doing?

LINDA: Standard procedure, softening up
techniques-

SOAMES: Softening up? What do you mean by
that?

LINDA: (*breathing reluctantly*) Umm, you
know, maintaining the shock of, um,
capture.

SOAMES: And why did you do this?

LINDA: We were told it helps in questioning
to, um, getting information and
stuff.

SOAMES: How does making a prisoner wear
women's underwear do that?

LINDA: Sort of humiliation I guess.

SOAMES: And this was standard procedure?

LINDA: If you mean did everyone do it, then
yeah. It was the same for all of
them. Get 'em naked, don't let 'em
sleep, hood 'em, stress
positions...soften 'em up.

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SOAMES: And did you once question this? Did the thought ever cross your mind that it was wrong?

LINDA: I didn't think. I followed orders.

SOAMES: And who gave you those orders?

LINDA DOESN'T RESPOND. HUSHED
MURMERS RUN AROUND THE
COURTROOM.

Miss Britten, can I remind you that you're under oath. Who gave you the order?

LINDA: Look, these were bad guys. They'd been out there shooting our soldiers-

SOAMES: (*interrupting*) Could you answer the question.

LINDA: This had been happening before the day we turned up. It wasn't something new.

SOAMES: So who told you to carry on?

LINDA: Everyone.

SOAMES: They told you to humiliate the detainees?

LINDA: Yes.

SOAMES: To beat them?

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LINDA: When necessary.

SOAMES: Who are they?

LINDA: RMPs, OGAs, everyone who came to that place.

SOAMES: And they all ordered you carry out torture?

LINDA: Not exactly. It was standard procedure.

SOAMES: So it was normal?

LINDA: For there, yeah?

SOAMES: You didn't question it?

LINDA: It's not like working in McDonald's. You obey.

SOAMES: So who was it specifically that made you do it?

LINDA: I've told you.

SOAMES: Who specifically ordered you to kill Bashir Handi?

LINDA: It wasn't a direct order.

SOAMES: But you killed him?

LINDA: He died in my custody.

SOAMES: So you are responsible?

LINDA: No.

SOAMES: Then who made you do it?

LINDA: (*sharp breath, loud outburst*) Nobody and everybody. We all killed him.

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SOAMES IS SILENT AS THE COURT
ERRUPTS IN LOUD PROTESTS AND
SHOUTS.

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ACT I

SCENE 3

A COURT ANTECHAMBER.

LINDA SITS PASSIVELY AT A TABLE
AS BEACH PACES UP AND DOWN
HOLDING A LARGE CASE FOLDER.

BEACH SUDDENLY SLAMS IT DOWN ON
THE TABLE.

SHE TAKES A SERIES OF FRUSTRATED
BREATHS AS SHE STARES AT LINDA
AND PACES AROUND THE TABLE.

LINDA WATCHES, WAITING FOR A
REACTION, AS BEACH COMES TO A
REST OPPOSITE HER.

BEACH: What the hell was that?

LINDA: The truth.

BEACH: This is not what we talked about.
What were you thinking?

LINDA: You told me to tell the truth.

BEACH: With regards to your commanding
officers, about Grange, about things

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that really happened. Not
this...rubbish.

LINDA: What about Grange?

BEACH: That he forced you to do those
things.

LINDA: He didn't make me do anything. I
wanted to do it, to please him.

BEACH: He abused your naivety.

LINDA: I'm not naïve.

BEACH: You were nineteen when you met him.
He was thirty four. That's a whole
lot more experience.

LINDA: I was in love with him.

BEACH: You wanted protection. He offered
you that.

LINDA: I wanted him. He was different,
(trailing off wistfully) really...

BEACH: He's a psychopath. He beat his ex-
wife, he put razor blades in a
prisoner's food.

THERE IS SHORT TENSE SILENCE AS
BEACH LETS THE WORDS SINK IN.

LINDA: He was sweet.

BEACH BREATHES OUT DEEPLY.

BEACH: Okay, this is getting us nowhere.
Neither of us wants you to go to
jail. So let's just start from the
beginning.

LINDA: We going to analyse my childhood
again, work out a good excuse.

BEACH: Something like that.

LINDA: Well, like I told you before, there
ain't anything special.

BEACH: Nothing? Where did you grow up
again?

LINDA: A crappy little town in the middle of
nowhere.

BEACH: And how was your early life?

LINDA: Exactly what you'd expect. School,
boys, church, getting drunk...that's
about it. There wasn't anything else
to do. I watched telly a lot.

BEACH: Did you ever get into trouble?

LINDA: You trying to work out whether I set
fire to ants or kicked the
neighbour's cat? No...nothing. I
was an ordinary teenager. I just
hung out with people.

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BEACH: Which group were you part of?

LINDA: None really. I was friends with everyone. You know, you get to the teenager thing and you start to get into your little groups and stuff, but I was friends with everybody; *(trailing off)* Goths, alternative...

BEACH: So you didn't fit in anywhere exactly.

LINDA: I hung out with anyone, nobody cared, nobody even noticed I was there half the time. I was invisible.

BEACH: And how did that make you feel?

LINDA: Fine. I just went along with it. Much better than being on your own. I had some good times.

BEACH: What about your family?

LINDA: You've met my parents.

BEACH: Only your Mother.

LINDA: Yeah, that makes sense. We don't see much of Dad anymore.

BEACH: I heard about the divorce.

LINDA: That's got nothing to do with me. They were together right up until I left home and a good few years after.

BEACH: I'm not blaming you-

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LINDA: Yeah? Everyone else seems to think
 it's my fault. Because of this,
 because it all came out in the
 newspapers.

BEACH: He was having an affair for sixteen
 years. That must have affected you.

LINDA: I didn't know anything about it.
 Nobody did.

BEACH: But surely it-

LINDA: I didn't come from some broken home.
 We were a family. The only thing
 that broke was Mum's hand when she
 found out. She beat the hell out of
 him, but he just took it, never hit
 her back. He never hit her.

BEACH: Did he hit you?

LINDA: When I asked for it.

BEACH: Was that often?

LINDA: *(defiant)* No. I told you, I was a
 good kid.

 BEACH BREATHES OUT HEAVILY AND
 FALLS BACK ON HER CHAIR.

 A TENSE SILENCE.

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BEACH REARRANGES SOME PAPERS ON
THE TABLE.

BEACH: What did they think of Grange?

LINDA: They hated him. Thought he was only
after one thing.

BEACH: Was he?

LINDA: He was after a lot of things.

BEACH: Do you want to tell me about them?

A SHORT SILENCE.

LINDA: I need to go to the toilet.

BEACH: What did he want you to do?

LINDA: I need the toilet.

LINDA SCRAPES HER CHAIR BACK AND
STANDS UP.

SHE MOVES QUICKLY TO THE DOOR
AND BANGS ON IT WITH CLENCHED
FISTS.

LINDA (CONT): Officer.

BEACH: Did he make you kill Bashir Handi-

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BEACH IS INTERRUPTED BY THE DOOR
BEING OPENED AND LINDA LEAVING.

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ACT I

SCENE 4

THE COURTOOM AS BEFORE.

SOAMES SITS AT HIS DESK WHEREAS

BEACH HAS THE FLOOR.

HUSHED SILENCE.

THE JUDGE BRINGS HIS HAMMER

DOWN.

JUDGE: Ms Britten, can I just remind you
that you are still under oath.

LINDA: Yes, Sir.

JUDGE: Ms Beach, if you'd like to continue
your questions for the defence.

BEACH: Thank you, your honour.

BEACH SHUFFLES HER PAPERS AND

TAKES ONE FROM THE PILE.

Ms Britten, I'm going to read
you a short passage. (*reading*)
[It is] any act by which severe
pain or suffering, whether
physical or mental, is
intentionally inflicted on a
person for such purposes as

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BEACH (CONT): obtaining from him...information
 or a confession, punishing him
 for an act he...has committed or
 is suspected of having
 committed, or intimidating or
 coercing him. (*normal*) Do you
 know what it refers to?

LINDA: Can you say it in English?

BEACH: Have you not heard this before?

LINDA: Never.

BEACH: But, you do understand what it means?

LINDA: I can take a guess.

BEACH: If you wouldn't mind.

LINDA: It's going on about how we shouldn't
 treat detainees badly.

BEACH: Specifically?

LINDA: Like hitting them I guess, feeding
 them properly, that sort of thing.

BEACH: And you've never seen or heard this
 passage before?

LINDA: No, never.

BEACH: Your honour, it comes from the CAT,
 the UN convention against torture.
 This defines torture. Ms Britten,
 are you sure you were never given
 this document?

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LINDA: Positive.

BEACH: Did you receive any other literature about torture, such as the Geneva Conventions?

LINDA: They told us about it.

BEACH: Told you?

LINDA: Yeah, we had a session on it.

BEACH: One session? Did that seem adequate to you?

LINDA: It didn't seem to be that important.

BEACH: To you or to your commanding officers?

LINDA: Both.

BEACH: So would you say you were equipped for Iraq?

LINDA: For fighting, yeah. For what I was doing?...I mean...that wasn't my job.

BEACH: So you're saying that you didn't get any training or support, that you didn't really know what you were doing with them?

LINDA: To start with, I suppose, yeah, but then you get these officers coming in and guys in suits saying, 'well done, this is a great job, keep it up', and

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LINDA (CONT): you think you must be doing something right. After a while it just became normal.

BEACH: So nobody ever told you to stop, nobody ever reprimanded you?

LINDA: Course not. I mean, it was okay because of all the others, the orders coming down. You're in the army, you just do what they say. It's, 'Yes Sir, No Sir.' You don't question it. And what I don't understand is now everyone's saying, 'Well, you should have questioned it.' Who was I supposed to question? Nobody seemed to know what was going on or who was in charge. And anyway, what was I going to say? Why ain't we feeding our enemy champagne and caviar? What the hell do you think they're up to in their camps, huh? I'll tell you what, cutting our people's heads off, burning their bodies and dragging them through the streets of Baghdad, throwing them off bridges. I bet they're not getting tried. It's a war and you're stuck right in the middle

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LINDA (CONT): of it, fighting for our country and
you put one foot back here and you're
thrown in prison and questioned like
you're some sort of criminal. All I
did was follow orders.

BEACH: Who's orders?

LINDA: I told you before. I don't know.
It's not like we had a list of rules
on the back of the cell door. We
just got on with the job.

THE COURTROOM ERUPTS.

THE JUDGE REPEATEDLY HITS THE
DESK WITH HIS HAMMER.

JUDGE: Order. Order.

THE COURTOOM SLOWLY QUIETENS
DOWN.

Miss Britten, this is not helping the
inquiry. Please keep your answers to
the point. Ms Beach, do you have any
more questions?

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BEACH: Not at the moment your honour. I'd like to play another recording from Basra.

JUDGE: Proceed.

BEACH NODS AT THE COURTROOM ASSISTANT WHO PRESSES A BUTTON ON THE COMPUTER.

FROM THE RECORDING:

(F/X) THE CRISP CLICK OF A BUTTON FOLLOWED BY THE CRACK AND HISS OF A LOW QUALITY RECORDING BEING PLAYED BACK.

THE COUGHING AND SPLUTTERING OF BASHIR HANDI.

LINDA: We know you're an insurgent. What is your unit?

BASHIR: *(weak)* No, I said you. I'm tailor.

A QUIET MALE VOICE MUTTERS SOMETHING IN THE BACKGROUND.

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LINDA: *(not to Bashir)* Ok, I'll try. *(to Bashir)* We know your family.

BASHIR CRIES OUT.

Shall we bring your wife here? Would she be disappointed? She'll see what type of man you really are. Did you kill our men?

BASHIR: Please. I don't know. Not my family.

(F/X) A LOUD THUMP FOLLOWED BY THE SOUND OF BASHIR FALLING TO THE FLOOR.

SILENCE.

A LOW ALMOST INDISTINCT WHISPERING IN THE BACKGROUND.

EVENTUALLY, LINDA SPEAKS, BUT AT FIRST SHE STAMMERS AS IF IN SHOCK, SLOWLY GETTING STRONGER.

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LINDA: Where...where are they? We know that
 you're...that you're...Where are the
 others? (*getting louder*) Where are
 they? Where are they? Where is your
 unit? What is your target? We will
 kill you. Where is your unit? You
 want to die? Did you kill our
 soldiers?

(F/X) THE TAPE CLICKS TO A
SILENT STOP.

END OF RECORDING.

THE ASSISTANT PRESSES A BUTTON
ON THE COMPUTER.

BEACH: Do you remember this incident?

LINDA: Yes I do.

BEACH: How long had you been at the camp
 when this took place?

LINDA: I dunno, couple of weeks, I guess.

BEACH: You said earlier that this wasn't
 your job, is that correct?

LINDA: Yeah.

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BEACH: You weren't supposed to be 'softening up' prisoners. What were your duties?

LINDA: Admin. Filing, sending off reports. Paperwork mostly.

BEACH: How did you find yourself in the detention wing?

LINDA: My quarters were being shelled every night. I was really scared so I started hanging out with the RMPS.

BEACH: The military police? Why them?

LINDA: You know, they were fun. They snuck in a load of cheap spirits, I don't know what was in that stuff, and we'd get into the habit of drinking most nights. They were pretty wild.

BEACH: And how did you start working there?

LINDA: They got a lot more prisoners, way more than they could handle, so they asked me to help out.

BEACH: Just like that?

LINDA: Just like that.

BEACH: So it was purely logistical?

LINDA: Uh huh.

BEACH: No other reason?

LINDA: I just said, they were funny.

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BEACH: Could you be more specific? Who were
 'they' precisely?

LINDA: (*hesitant*) A bunch of guys.

BEACH: What were their names?

LINDA: There were loads of soldiers, I can't
 remember all of 'em.

BEACH: Just the 'funny' ones.

LINDA: Well, I guess there was Mel, Sam-

BEACH: (*interrupting*) Could you state their
 full name and rank.

LINDA: Sure, Private Melanie Amble, Lance
 Corporal Samantha Hallam...Freddy,
 Corporal Fred Ivansen...

BEACH: Anyone else?

LINDA: (*hesitant*) There was also...Lance
 Corporal Christopher Grange.

BEACH: Who you were having an affair with.

 THE COURTROOM BREAKS OUT IN
 WHISPERS AND MURMERS.

 THE JUDGE BRINGS HIS HAMMER
 DOWN.

BEACH (CONT): Isn't that true Ms Britten?

LINDA: Yes.

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BEACH: Did the affair start before or after the date of the last recording?

LINDA: Before, but what's that got to do with-

BEACH: (*Interrupting*) Did he ever encourage you to take part in the 'softening up' of detainees, in particular Mr Handi?

LINDA: (*Hesitant*) I...can't remember...I don't think...No, I don't remember him doing that.

BEACH: Were you in love with him?

LINDA: I-

BEACH: (*Interrupting*) Did you want to please him?

LINDA: We were-

BEACH: Do you love him?

LINDA: Yes.

BEACH: Would you try and make him happy?

LINDA: Of course-

BEACH: (*Interrupting*) Did he ask you to do things you didn't agree with?

LINDA: Like what?

BEACH: Torture prisoners.

LINDA: No, he never did that.

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BEACH: Can we play that last recording
again?

THE COURTROOM ASSISTANT NODS AND
PRESSES A BUTTON ON THE
COMPUTER.

FROM THE RECORDING:

(F/X) THE CRISP CLICK OF A
BUTTON FOLLOWED BY THE CRACK AND
HISS OF A LOW QUALITY RECORDING
BEING PLAYED BACK.

THE COUGHING AND SPLUTTERING OF
BASHIR HANDI.

LINDA: We know you're an insurgent. What is
your unit?

BASHIR: (*Weak*) No, I said you. I'm tailor.

A QUIET MALE VOICE MUTTERS
SOMETHING IN THE BACKGROUND.

FROM THE COURTROOM:

BEACH: Stop it there.

THE ASSISTANT STOPS THE
RECORDING.

BEACH (CONT): Can we play back the last ten
seconds and increase the
volume?

THE ASSISTANT NODS AND PRESSES
THE COMPUTER BUTTON.

FROM THE RECORDING:

(F/X) THE CRISP CLICK OF A
BUTTON FOLLOWED BY THE CRACK AND
HISS OF A RECORDING BEING PLAYED
BACK AT A HIGHER VOLUME.

THE HUSKY WHISPER OF A MAN CAN
BE FAINTLY HEARD.

MAN: (*far*) Talk about his family.

Threaten to bring them here.

LINDA: (*not to Bashir*) Ok, I'll try. (*to
Bashir*) We know your family.

FROM THE COURTROOM:

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BEACH: Pause.

THE ASSISTANT STOPS THE
RECORDING.

Can you identify that man Ms Britten?

LINDA: I don't think so.

BEACH: Ok. Can you play from about ten
seconds later, same volume?

THE ASSISTANT FOLLOWS THE
INSTRUCTIONS.

FROM THE RECORDING:

(F/X) THE CRISP CLICK OF A
BUTTON.

LINDA: Did you kill our men?

BASHIR: Please. I don't know. Not my
family.

(F/X) A LOUD THUMP. THE SOUND
OF BASHIR FALLING TO THE FLOOR.
FOLLOWED BY SILENCE.

THE SAME MAN'S VOICE WHISPERING
AGRESSIVELY.

MAN: Listen up Saddam. You're going to die in here. But I know where your family lives and when you're dead I'm going to rape your wife and kill your daughters. Understand me? *(to Linda)* Try now.

LINDA: Where...where are they? We know that you're...that you're...Where are the others? *(getting louder)* Where are they? Where are they? Where is your unit? What is your target? We will kill you. Where is your unit? You want to die? Did you kill our soldiers?

FROM THE COURTROOM:

BEACH: Stop please.

THE ASSISTANT PRESSES THE BUTTON
TO STOP THE RECORDING.

Can you tell us who that was?

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LINDA: I can't remember.
BEACH: Was it Grange?
LINDA: I don't know.
BEACH: Did he make you do it?
LINDA: No.
BEACH: Were you trying to impress him?

SHORT SILENCE

Did he force you to do it?
LINDA: (*quietly*) I don't know who you're talking about.
BEACH: Did he make you kill Bashir Handi?
LINDA: (*strong*) I don't know who you're talking about.
BEACH: Lance Corporal Grange.
LINDA: Then...No.

BLACK OUT.

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ACT I

SCENE 5

A LAWYER'S CHAMBER.

BEACH PACES UP AND DOWN ALONE.

THE DOOR OPENS AND BEACH LOOKS
UP EXPECTANTLY.

SOAMES WALKS IN CARRYING A SMALL
FOLDER.

BEACH: Oh, what are you doing here?

SOAMES: Not going very well, is it?

BEACH: Depends on what you think my goal is?

SOAMES: To pin it on Grange.

BEACH: Hmm. She's not being very co-
operative.

SOAMES: Well she's in love with the man.
What do you expect? Loyalty can take
us where self preservation would
never go.

BEACH: Did you come in here just to annoy
me?

SOAMES: (*laughs*) It's just like being back at
Oxford.

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BEACH: Exactly, you didn't know when you'd outstayed your welcome then either. And on that note, my client is due back at any minute. So if you don't mind...

SOAMES: Well, I guess we'd better get to the point. You might want to take a look at this.

SOAMES HANDS THE FOLDER OVER TO
BEACH.

BEACH HESITATES AND THEN
RELUCTANTLY LOOKS THROUGH IT.

BEACH: (*surprised*) My god, that's it.
(*suspicious*) Why are you giving me
this?

SOAMES: Why did you take this case?

BEACH: To get an acquittal. Why else?

SOAMES: Not to prove her innocence?

BEACH: I don't think she is-

BEACH STOPS HERSELF AND TAKES A
SHARP BREATH.

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BEACH (CONT): I mean, I don't think it's quite that simple.

SOAMES: It never is. After all, this is a big case. Should make your career if you succeed.

BEACH: Exactly, so again, why are you giving me this?

SOAMES: Can't us old Buller boys help each other out from time to time?

BEACH: Those types of favours don't come for free. So what's your angle?

SOAMES: To see justice being served-

BEACH: (*interrupting*) Don't give me that. What does it matter to you if Britten's found guilty or not?

SOAMES: Look, we both know that Grange is the better culprit here and the larger the case against him the more we can focus our attack.

BEACH: So Grange is the fall guy?

SOAMES: Grange *is* the bad guy.

A SHORT TENSE SILENCE.

He's going to be convicted either way, but Britten and this dead Iraqi

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SOAMES (CONT): is a test case. We don't like where
 it could lead if she's found guilty.

BEACH: We?

SOAMES: It's no secret that I'm working for
 the Government.

BEACH: And the military?

SOAMES: Look, we both want Britten to be
 declared innocent. We both want
 Grange to take the responsibility.
 We're on the same side, so take my
 advice and let's finish this here and
 now, before it gets out of hand.

SOAMES LEAVES.

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ACT I

SCENE 5

A COURT ANTE CHAMBER.

BEACH SHUFFLES PAPERS

AWKWARDLY, TRYING TO AVOID

LINDA'S GAZE.

BEACH: Linda. We've got to talk about Grange.

LINDA: I've already told you everything. We met, we got together. End of story.

BEACH: If you want me to do my job properly, you're going to have to tell me the truth.

LINDA: That's what I've been doing.

BEACH: I'm sorry Linda, but I don't believe you-

LINDA: (*interrupting*) Are you calling me a liar?

BEACH: No, but I think you're hiding something.

LINDA: Just ask me straight out, won't you.

BEACH: Ok. I've just received your latest medical report.

LINDA: (*worried*) Yeah?

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BEACH: *(breathing out slowly)* When did you
find out?

LINDA: *(hiding her emotion)* For a while.
Couple of months I suppose.

BEACH: And you didn't think it was important
for your lawyer to know?

LINDA: I didn't really think about it. I
just wanted to get everything over
with and then worry about it.

BEACH: I'm not sure it works like that.

LINDA: So what do you want from me?

BEACH: Just the truth.

LINDA BREATHES DEEPLY A FEW
TIMES, HOLDS BACK SOME TEARS AND
STARTS TO RELAY HER STORY.

LINDA: You know, I only joined the army 'cos
there was nothing else. I really
didn't expect to get shipped to a
warzone. I never thought I'd
actually have to fight. When I got
posted to Iraq I couldn't believe it,
I cried for days, really, my mother
too. I'd never even been abroad
before.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

BEACH: Where did you meet Grange?

LINDA: He was already in Wasit when I got there. He's an RMP, but really different. He'd get these crazy ideas and just do them. I mean, he didn't even smoke, but he'd follow me out for a cigarette. He made me laugh a lot, he's got a good sense of humour, very dark, very raunchy.

BEACH: Was that when you became an item?

LINDA: No, I'm not that easy. It wasn't until we transferred to Basra, when our convoy was struck by an IED, a bomb. That's when it really hit me...They were trying to kill me. And I was so afraid, nothing had prepared me. I mean, I froze, solid, couldn't move. I'd have died then and there without him. He was so brave, just came and took care of me, got me safe. I knew I was in love with him then.

BEACH: So what happened when you got to Basra?

LINDA: Well, at first, it was terrible. The place had been left by the Iraqi army

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LINDA (CONT): and there were dead bodies everywhere. It stank. It was really nasty and made me sick, I couldn't stand it. But Chris found this dead cat and put its head on a bottle for fun.

BEACH: He cut the head off?

LINDA: Yeah, I guess so. But it really cheered everyone up. Then someone put sunglasses on it and Chris would put a cigarette in its mouth to make it look like it was smoking. It was funny, so funny. And after that, everything seemed...alright.

BEACH: It sounds psychotic.

LINDA: You've got to be there to understand. If you can't laugh at death, you shouldn't be a soldier. I mean, the whole war was a joke. What we were doing there didn't make any sense, not in the real world anyway. I didn't understand it. Nobody did. But that didn't stop the Mahdi trying to blow the hell out of us. Grange put things in perspective.

BEACH: Sounds like the ideal role model.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

LINDA: He taught me a lot more about active service than I got back in Catterick.

BEACH: So he taught you how to 'take care' of detainees?

LINDA: He taught me a lot of stuff. And not all of it was about the army.

BEACH: Yes, I heard about the photos.

LINDA: Yeah I wish they hadn't got out, but he opened my eyes to a lot of things. I grew up loads in Basra.

BEACH: And that's why you're covering for him?

LINDA: He kept me safe, he protected me. It's not just about dodging bullets and avoiding getting blown up. You can't let it get in your head. Then you're really done for. You've got to stay active, focus on something else. Grange got me through it when I didn't think I could. I'm not just going to let him down now.

BEACH: So you are covering for him?

LINDA: I'm trying to protect myself, my future.

BEACH: (*sighing*) Linda, I've got some bad news.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

LINDA: (*worried*) About my medical results?
BEACH: No, about Grange.
LINDA: Why? What's happened to him?
BEACH: (*breathes out*) He got married.
LINDA: (*shocked*) What?
BEACH: A month ago.
LINDA: (*starting to cry*) Who?
BEACH: Private Melanie Amble.

LINDA STARTS CRYING.

I'm sorry. I just found out.
LINDA: I can't believe it. Mel's a complete
 stoner. Chris hates all that stuff.
 (*hardening*) Are you just trying to
 get me to bad mouth him, huh?
 Feeding me lies so I'll crack?
BEACH: Look at this.

BEACH HANDS OVER A SHEET OF
PAPER.

It's a copy of the certificate. I'm
not lying to you Linda. Grange was.

LINDA BREAKS DOWN IN TEARS.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

ACT II

SCENE 1

AS AUDIENCE ENTERS — A SPOTLIGHT
IS ON A HOODED FIGURE IN A
DIFFERENT STRESS POSITION.

BLACK OUT.

FLOODS UP ON AUDIENCE — LOUD
SOUNDS OF MULTIPLE ANGRY DOGS
BARKING.

BLACK OUT.

SPOTLIGHT ON HOODED FIGURE IN
ANOTHER STRESS POSITION.

BLACK OUT.

A RECORDING STARTS TO PLAY.

FROM THE RECORDING:

(F/X) REPEATED DULL THUDS,
FRANTIC AT FIRST THEN SLOWLY
STOPPING. THE SOUNDS OF QUICK

DEEP BREATHS. FRANTIC MOVEMENTS,
AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE ARE PRESENT.

LINDA: He's not breathing. Something's
wrong.

A QUIET MUFFLED VOICE IN THE
BACKGROUND.

FROM THE COURT:

SOAMES: Stop there.

LIGHTS UP ON COURTROOM AS
BEFORE.

SOAMES HAS THE FLOOR.

Could you play that section again and
increase the volume throughout.

ASSISTANT NODS AND PRESSES THE
BUTTON ON THE COMPUTER.

FROM THE RECORDING:

(F/X) THE CLICK OF THE RECORDING
STARTING.

LINDA: Something's wrong.

GRANGE: *(out of breath)* Check his pulse.

LINDA: Ok. *(controlled breaths)* No, there's
no pulse either. *(quick panicked
breaths)* What are we going to do?

GRANGE: *(fierce)* Grab him.

(F/X) A BODY BEING DRAGGED
ACROSS A CONCRETE FLOOR.

LINDA: What've we done?

GRANGE: *(threatening)* Nothing's happened
here. Get it. This is standard
procedure. So shut your mouth up
about it.

LINDA: But-

GRANGE: We're just finishing off the job our
Government started. No one's going
to give us a medal but no one's going
to say anything. This is how we do
things round here.

LINDA: Really? I'm worried.

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GRANGE: Listen, babe, this happens all the time. It's fine. Trust me.

(F/X) THE SOUND OF THEM KISSING.

(F/X) THE RECORDING CLICKS TO A STOP.

END OF RECORDING:

SOAMES: We've just heard the death of Bashir Handi. I assume, Ms Britten, that you're not going to claim you were alone.

LINDA: No.

SOAMES: And is this the same man as in the previous recordings?

LINDA: Yes.

SOAMES: So now you're trying to tell me that you *do* recognise the voice on the recording.

LINDA: Yes.

SOAMES: And can I ask what spurred this on?

LINDA: I was confused before.

SOAMES: About the recording or the about the incident?

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LINDA: Both.

SOAMES: You seem to be confused about a lot of things. How do we know that you're right about this?

LINDA: I know that voice. I know what happened.

SOAMES: And what did happen?

LINDA: I've told you all this before.

SOAMES: Indulge me.

LINDA: I was questioning D021 about his involvement in an attack on one of our patrols-

SOAMES: (*interrupting*) If you could start right at the beginning, please.

LINDA: Of time?

JUDGE: This is not helping.

SOAMES: Why don't you take it from the day in question.

LINDA: Sure, I remember it pretty well. I hadn't slept the night before and it was getting really hot and dusty during the day-

SOAMES: (*interrupting*) Why hadn't you slept?

LINDA: I hardly ever slept. They had us working shifts all day and all night, and even when I did get a break,

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

LINDA (CONT): I...I mean, have you ever tried to sleep in a prison? The noises, the crying and screaming, it just gets too much. And then there's the constant shelling. One of the buildings had been hit pretty badly and there was concrete dust everywhere. I couldn't breathe right. It was pretty uncomfortable. And that morning I was told of this prisoner who'd been yelling about killing Americans all night. When I turned up they'd already been at him for hours.

SOAMES: And what did you do?

LINDA: The usual. Stripped him down, lots of shouting, stress positions. Dragged him round a bit, but none of it was working, he just kept going on about how he hated us and wanted to kill us, so we decided to use some different techniques.

SOAMES: Can you describe these 'different techniques'?

LINDA: Well, they're not that different, they were like a plan B if the normal

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LINDA (CONT): stuff didn't work. Nothing special,
just tying him up, get the dogs on
him, barking and stuff -

SOAMES: (*interrupting*) Did you strike him?

LINDA: Excuse me?

SOAMES: Did you at any point hit Bashir
Handi?

LINDA: Well, yeah, of course, we had to
restrain him. He was going crazy.

SOAMES: And how did you do that?

LINDA: There are certain parts of the body
you can strike, such as the back of
the leg, the upper arms, the
buttocks-

SOAMES: (*Interrupting*) The head?

LINDA DOESN'T RESPOND.

Did you ever hit the detainee in the
head?

LINDA: No, never.

SOAMES: Do you feel guilty Ms Britten?

LINDA: At the time I didn't, no.

SOAMES: What about looking back?

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LINDA: To be honest, I've never felt guilty because I was following orders, doing what I was supposed to do.

SOAMES: Do you feel sorry about anything at all?

LINDA: Like I said, I was doing what I was told, and when this guy started thrashing out at us, telling us he wants to kill us, that he hates us. No I don't feel bad about it. I was just doing the job I was sent there for.

SOAMES: To kill innocent people.

LINDA: That's what they say now, he's innocent, but that's not what we were told. They were the enemy, all of 'em, why else were they there. They were killing our soldiers, threatening our people, our country. It's war.

SOAMES: So you decided to kill Bashir Handi.

LINDA: It wasn't like that. We didn't intend to kill anyone. I keep having to say this...is no one listening? Am I going crazy? (*determined*) I was following orders.

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SOAMES: Who from?

LINDA: (*taking a deep breath*) Lance Corporal Christopher Grange.

SOAMES: He's the voice on the tape?

LINDA: Yes.

SOAMES: And what was he doing at the time of Mr Handi's death?

LINDA: Inducting me in tactical questioning.

SOAMES: He was your instructor?

LINDA: Yes.

SOAMES: And your lover.

LINDA: At the time, yes.

SOAMES: And I suppose that explains the *confusion* as to who the man was in the earlier recording?

LINDA DOESN'T RESPOND.

Were you lying for Lance Corporal Grange?

LINDA: Not exactly.

SOAMES: You do know that perjury is a very serious offence.

LINDA: I don't even know what that is.

SOAMES: Lying under oath, Ms Britten.

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LINDA: Is that worse than what I'm already charged with?

JUDGE: (*interrupting*) Please answer the question directly Ms Britten.

LINDA: Look, I didn't really think we should do all the stuff we did, but I followed him. I did everything he wanted me to because I didn't want to lose him.

SOAMES: Are you trying to say that Grange ordered you to kill Bashir Handi?

LINDA: No, of course not. We were never ordered to kill anyone.

SOAMES: Did he force you to torture detainees?

LINDA: No. We didn't torture anyone. We were preparing them for interrogation.

SOAMES: Did he strike the fatal blow to Bashir Handi?

LINDA: No. I did.

SOAMES: Did Grange instruct you to hit him?

LINDA DOESN'T RESPOND.

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SOAMES (CONT): Did he force you to do it? Did
Grange give the order?

LINDA: Yes.

HUSHED MURMERS RUN AROUND THE
COURTROOM.

THE JUDGE BRINGS DOWN HIS
HAMMER.

JUDGE: Order.

SOAMES: Ms Britten. Why should a court
believe that Lance Corporal Grange is
responsible for the death of Bashir
Handi as until now you have been
consistently vague regarding his
involvement?

LINDA: Because...

SOAMES: Because, what?

LINDA: Because I'm pregnant with his child.

SOAMES IS SILENT AS THE CROWD
ERRUPTS IN LOUD PROTESTS AND
SHOUTS.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

ACT II

SCENE 2

A COURT ANTECHAMBER.

BEACH PACES UP AND DOWN
TRIUMPHANTLY.

BEACH: Well done Linda. That's clinched it I think. We've got our case. That animal will be behind bars where he belongs and you'll be free.

LINDA: My child won't have a father.

BEACH: I promise it will be better off not having someone like Christopher Grange as a role model.

LINDA: He was my role model.

BEACH: And look where it got you.

LINDA: It got me out of Iraq alive and sane.

BEACH: He didn't do much for Bashir Handi though, did he? That man was evil. He knowingly tortured and murdered, broke every international convention, and worst of all, purposely corrupted a naïve young soldier to do his dirty work.

LINDA: I told you, I'm not naïve.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

BEACH: Well Grange certainly made you look that way.

LINDA: You talk about Grange as if he's the only reason bad things are happening.

BEACH: In Basra, I think that's true.

LINDA: Then I guess you're the one who's being made to look naïve.

BEACH: Oh really?

LINDA: You think Grange had the authority to give those orders? That he didn't learn those techniques from somewhere other than Google?

BEACH: What exactly are you saying Linda?

LINDA: Chris was following orders, just like me. He even raised an issue with the C.O., but this came from the top. I mean, yeah, he's borderline, you give him an inch and well, he over stepped the mark and they're going to wash their hands with him because of it.

BEACH: Who?

LINDA: The guys who came. The men in suits.

BEACH: Which men?

LINDA: At Basra. I remember it well. Didn't happen every day. We got woken up early one morning. A whole

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

LINDA (CONT): load of helicopters landed in the exercise yard. I've never seen so many top brass in one place. Generals, Majors, the whole lot. And in the middle was this smart looking guy, really nice suit, he didn't walk like a soldier, but was followed by these two bodyguard types. Anyway, he walked round, saw everything, spoke to all of us. He had a smooth voice, like off telly. You know, when you see those politicians on the news avoiding questions, smarmy, sound as if they've never ridden a bike or got into a fight.

BEACH: Did he see it all? The hooding, the stress positions?

LINDA: He saw everything. We didn't change nothing for him. He just walked around, shook hands, smiling, bright white teeth he had. I remember he spoke to me personally. I was standing outside D021's cell. He came up, looked in, saw Bashir naked in his hood and then he spoke to me.

BEACH: And what did he say?

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

LINDA: Well done. Keep up the good work.

BEACH: I can't believe it. You're saying that those techniques were sanctioned by government?

LINDA: I mean, I didn't see anything in writing, but...yeah, that's the impression I got.

BEACH: Why didn't you say something? Why didn't you act?

LINDA: And this is from the person who called me naïve. I was there to serve my country and it doesn't matter if it's a general, a prime minister, a president or a king. We're born to be trained and trained to obey. I did my duty.

BLACK OUT.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

ACT II

SCENE 3

A LAWYER'S CHAMBER.

BEACH SITS QUIETLY.

SOAMES ENTERS, OPENING AND
CLOSING THE DOOR SLOWLY.

SOAMES: Shouldn't you be preparing your
 summing up?

BEACH: What do you want?

SOAMES: Just thought I'd pop by and
 congratulate you on your case. Very
 thorough. I sense an acquittal for
 Linda.

BEACH: *(soft)* Yes, it looks that way.

SOAMES: You don't sound too pleased.

BEACH: I-

SOAMES: *(interrupting)* You're in the top
 flight now. You'll get any client
 you want. You've done it.

BEACH: What've I done?

SOAMES: Excuse me?

BEACH: I took this case for a reason. To get
 answers. To expose the truth. To

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

BEACH (CONT): hold the right people to account and
protect the innocent.

SOAMES: And that's exactly what you're doing
with Linda.

BEACH: But she's guilty. She knew what she
was doing.

SOAMES: Maybe so, but we can't hang everyone.

BEACH: Just Grange.

SOAMES: That man is a psychopath.

BEACH: Made and endorsed by our government.

SOAMES: You don't fight a war with toy guns.

BEACH: You don't kill innocent people with
them either.

SOAMES: Innocent? There's no such thing as
innocence or guilt. There is only
necessity.

BEACH: That's ridic-

SOAMES: *(interrupting)* That's life. You do
what is necessary to get the job
done. Grange knew it. The Generals
knew it. Even the enemy knew it.
(slowly) We all know it, especially
your Ms Britten. She's on our side,
she knows what has to be done.
Grange is our man. So all you have
to do is your bit.

SOAMES LEAVES, SLAMMING THE DOOR
SHUT.

ACT II

SCENE 4

THE COURT ROOM AS BEFORE.

SOAMES WALKS BACK AND FORTH WITH
A FEW PROMPT STEPS.

SOAMES: And there you have it. Private Britten, a soldier stationed at Basra with the responsibility to uphold the law and order of the British Armed Forces. She didn't understand the consequences of her duty and neglected her training and the traditions of this nation. She willfully had an affair, against protocol, which culminated in a relationship with a known manipulator and troublemaker. As we have heard, she felt no remorse for her actions and has even gone so far as to try and justify them, all the time falsifying claims of involvement outside of her own sordid affiliation with Lance Corporal Christopher Grange. Ladies and gentlemen of the

SOAMES (CONT): jury, I believe that through the evidence and testimony of Ms Britten we can see that she was at best naïve and at worst complicit in the unlawful torture and killing of detainee D021, Bashir Handi.

JUDGE: Thank you. The case for the defence.

BEACH: Thank you your honour. As we have just heard from the prosecution, there is strong evidence that Linda Britten is guilty of killing Bashir Handi. In fact, she freely admits that she inflicted the fatal blow. But what we must consider is what the difference is between Ms Britten's actions and those of a soldier on the battlefield. When in combat, a soldier can kill at will, insurgents and locals alike. An airstrike can kill hundreds of innocent civilians yet the pilot remains untouched by law. But this doesn't mean that I'm trying to excuse the death of Bashir Handi, or claim that any death in custody is a necessary consequence of war. On the contrary, I'm suggesting

BEACH (CONT): that all deaths in war should be investigated and the orders and decisions that send men and women into the battlefield should be held accountable for the horrific consequences that ensue. Be them on the battlefields, in the air, or in a military detention facility. Linda Britten's crime is that she followed orders, that she trusted in the knowledge and authority of her superiors, that she acted as an obedient soldier and didn't question the atrocities being perpetrated by the highest levels of power both in Iraq and back here in the UK. We have heard how as a nineteen year old recruit she was sent unprepared into the middle of a warzone. She was then drafted into a post that she had no understanding of, no training or guidance. She had to learn one of the most difficult jobs in the armed forces under the extreme conditions of warfare. And rather than provide her with the required training, the

BEACH (CONT): officers in charge decided to leave her at the mercy of a known psychopath. A man with a string of violent criminal convictions, a number of disciplinary actions taken against him, a volatile and manipulative rogue agent. This was to be my client's instructor in prisoner detention, interrogation and tactical questioning techniques, and now we wonder why we have a death on our hands. But it's not just Lance Corporal Grange's deranged ideas of detainee treatment that are at fault. My client is innocent because she was let down by the army as a whole, by the people who sent her to war, by the British government and its allies.

A STARTLED, SHOCKED MURMER
RUSHES AROUND THE ROOM AND
SLOWLY DIES DOWN.

Linda Britten was just following orders given to her by commanding

BEACH (CONT): officers and politicians. All of whom were well aware of what was happening inside the Basra prison. She is no more guilty than a soldier on the battlefield being told to open fire on an unarmed mob. She did not intentionally kill Bashir Handi, nor did she believe that she was abusing his rights or breaking the Geneva Conventions. She was used as a tool by the army and is now being used as a scapegoat for crimes higher up the chain of command. Linda is just the sharp end of a sword whose handle lies back in Westminster. The responsibility for these crimes ultimately lay with the Government for conveying the idea that physical pressure and degradation were appropriate techniques for detainees-

SOAMES: (*interrupting*) Stop this nonsense now. This case is about Grange.

JUDGE: This case is about Ms Britten.

SOAMES: Your honour, Beach has no proof. This is a waste of the court's time.

JUDGE: Overruled. The defence may continue.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

BEACH: Thank you your honour. It's true,
 there is no direct proof. Just the
 recordings, the photos, the videos,
 the testimonies, the destruction and
 the death. Just the war itself. (*She
 takes a breath*) I rest my case.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

ACT II

SCENE 5

THE COURT ROOM AS BEFORE.

BOTH SOAMES AND BEACH ARE
SEATED.

JUDGE: Can the head of the jury please
confirm that you have come to a
verdict?

A JURY MEMBER STANDS.

JURY MEMBER: We have your honour.

JUDGE: Could you please read it to the
court.

JURY MEMBER: The jury finds the defendant, Ms
Linda Britten guilty for dereliction
of duty, perverting the course of
justice and inhumane treatment of a
person in her custody.

THE COURT IS IN UPROAR.

THE JUDGE BRINGS HIS HAMMER DOWN
HARD, SILENCING THE COURT.

JUDGE: Order, order. The jury has found the defendant guilty on all charges and I uphold that decision. And although it was never the aim of this trial to cast shadows of accusations across an already murky case, I now must strongly appeal to the people of Britain to demand answers to the questions that have been asked, to look up the chain of command as well as down, for if this young woman who sits before me is guilty of this crime, if the death of Bashir Handi was at her hands, then it was because they were guided. That responsibility sits with the highest echelons of power, with each of the commanding officers, with every general's order and numerous government directives, the lack of training and the arrogant negligence of our politicians. From Ms Britten right up to the very top, each should be held accountable for the wars, the atrocities and for the murder of an

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JUDGE (CONT): innocent Iraqi civilian, Bashir
Handi.

THE JUDGE BRINGS HIS HAMMER
DOWN.

Court dismissed.

BLACK OUT.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

ACT 2

SCENE 6

BLACKOUT.

SPOTLIGHT ON HOODED FIGURE
(IDEALLY NAKED) WITH ARMS
OUTSTRETCHED AT FORTY-FIVE
DEGREES TO THE BODY. THE FIGURE
HOLDS ELETRICAL WIRES IN HIS
HAND.

(F/X) A RECORDING CLICK STARTS.

(F/X) THE SOUND OF A CELL DOOR
SLIDING OPEN AND THREE PEOPLE
ENTERING.

GRANGE: And this is one of our interrogation
rooms. The bars there are to hang
them up with, keep them standing for
hours on end.

LINDA: As you can see with this prisoner,
D021, detainees are kept hooded, this
is particularly effective when we use
the dogs.

Toy Soldier by Jonathon Crewe

GRANGE: After prisoners have been deprived of
 food and sleep we tend to find them
 far more co-operative.

 A SMOOTH, EDUCATED, MALE VOICE
 BEGINS TO SPEAK.

RUNSFORD: Do you ever strike them?

LINDA: *(breath)* When we have to restrain
 them, sir.

RUNSFORD: Excellent. I've been extremely
 impressed with everything I've seen
 here. You're serving your country
 well. The information we're getting
 from these captives is helping us win
 this war and defeat terrorism across
 the world. You should be proud of
 yourselves. Keep up the good work.

 (F/X) THE TAPE CLICKS TO A STOP.

CURTAIN