

ROY

A play by

Peter Wynne-Willson

38 Millward Street
Small Heath
Birmingham
B9 5BA

0121-771-1672

Cast of Characters

In 1990

Gregory -	A black man in his late twenties, living in a flat in Nechells, Birmingham
Cat	A young white woman, whom he has just met.
Tim	Gregory's adopted father. A white man in his late forties.

In 1962

Tommy	A Birmingham newsagent, or his ghost.
Roy	A 19 year old Jamaican.
Prosecution Counsel	
Defence Counsel	
Judge	
Jury Foreman	
Clerk of Court	

Roy was originally commissioned by Big Brum Theatre-in-Education Company, and performed in schools and community venues in 1989-90. The cast was as follows:

Gregory/Roy/The Judge	Michael Aduwali
Cat/Defence	Terina Talbot
Tim/Tommy/Prosecution	Peter Wynne-Willson

Directed by Janice Connolly
Designed by Jane Joyce
Stage Managed by Michael Irvine

The play has since been adapted and performed by the Half Moon YPT [1995] and Merseyside Young People's Theatre [1995]

Writer's note

Oswald Augustus Grey was the last man executed in Birmingham, on 20th November 1962. He was twenty years old. He had been convicted of the murder by shooting of Thomas Bates, a newsagent of Lee Bank Road, Edgbaston. Although the play is based on this true story, and has been extensively researched, it is not intended as a comprehensive reconstruction of the case. It is exploring the case as it is seen by Gregory, whose story is entirely fictional, and so some conjecture has been built around known facts. The words of the trial, however are quoted verbatim, and although information available from the police and the Home Office was limited, it was possible to talk to lawyers, to police and prison officers, and to friends and relatives of people involved in the case.

I am very grateful to the following for help with the research for **Roy**: Phyllis Shields, Claudette Shields, Annette and Norma Hanson, Mrs Silvera, David Henson, Philip Cox QC, His Honour Sir John Owen, His Honour Sir Graham Swanwick, His Honour James Ross, Lady Brenda James, Chief Constable Geoffrey Dear, Detective Chief Superintendent Jim Byrne, Reg Harcourt, Paul Carroll and Tony Mountford, HM Prison Winson Green, J P Adams, Lord Chancellor's Department, Maureen McDermott, Birmingham Housing Department, Monica Foot and Fred Rose, Birmingham Heartlands Ltd, 'Black and in Care', Birmingham Social Services, Rose Griffin, The Howard League, Amnesty International, Clare Short MP, John Patten MP, Lorna Laidlaw, Nancy Stokes, Birmingham Reference Library and Ali Belbin.

[SCENE ONE]

[SONG - SKA VERSION 'YOU'RE NO GOOD']

[THE SOUND OF THE END OF A RECORD, PLAYING ON. LOUDER AND LOUDER AND THEN STOPS. A SHOT. A LOUD THUD.]

[GREGORY'S FLAT. IT IS DARK. GREGORY AND CAT COME IN.]

GREGORY: In you go.

CAT: Shhh!

GREGORY: I am shushing. I've shushed. Look.

CAT: How can I? Where's the switch ?

GREGORY: It was here when I went out. I'm sure I left it on the wall. Is that it ?

[HE 'GROPES' HER]

CAT: No!

GREGORY: Oh well, we'll just have to sit in the dark.

CAT: Where's the switch ?

[LAUGHING, BUT A LITTLE UNEASY]

What kind of way is this to treat a guest ? Where is it ?

[GREG IS RUSHING AROUND, TRYING TO TIDY IN THE DARK]

Greg !

GREGORY: Shh!

CAT: Shh !

GREGORY: What are we shushing for ? There's no-one here. This is my home, remember ?

CAT: You're drunk.

GREGORY: This is my home.

[LIGHTS ON]

Tara !

[IT IS THE LIVING ROOM OF A TOWER BLOCK FLAT, WITH A WORKING SURFACE SEPARATING IT FROM THE KITCHEN. THERE IS A MADE-UP BED, AND THE ROOM IS QUITE CLUTTERED, WITH TV, SOUND AND VIDEO EQUIPMENT. IT IS CLEAN AND TIDY, EXCEPT FOR SCATTERED PAPERS. GREG CONTINUES TO PICK THESE UP.]

CAT: God, I can still smell that lift.

GREGORY: Who says it's the lift ?

CAT: It'd better be !

[SHE LOOKS OUT OF WINDOW]

I used to live round here, you know.

GREGORY: Did you ?

CAT: Yeah, when I was a kid. Somewhere down there. Nechells Green.

GREGORY: It's a good name, isn't it ?

CAT: What's the scaffolding for; are they renovating you ?

GREGORY: No. It's only over the entrance. They put it up when bits started falling off the building. Try and stop them hitting someone.

CAT: It's changed, hasn't it ?

GREGORY: Oh yes. You're in 'Heartlands' now. You've taken a step into our great future.

[PAUSE]

CAT: What's all this stuff?

GREGORY: Nothing.

CAT: Oh ?

GREGORY: No, I mean it's just some research notes on this story. Nothing important.

CAT: I see. You writing a novel then ?

GREGORY: [CLEARING PAPERS AWAY] No.

CAT: What's so secret ? Is it smutty ? I bet you sit up here writing dirty books, don't you ?

GREGORY: I wouldn't need to research that, would I?

CAT: Oh no ?

[SHE IS TEASING HIM]

No, but seriously.

GREGORY: All right, seriously. That's a paper from the day I was born.

CAT: Really ? God, that's brilliant. Where did you get it ?

GREGORY: My father saved it for me.

CAT: Yes ? Can I look ?

[HE MOTIONS 'YES']

November 20th 1962. Twenty-six.

[SHE READS PAPER]

CAT: Jesus. God that's interesting isn't it ?

GREGORY: Fascinating.

CAT: No, this one you've marked.

[SHE READS IT OUT]

'Jamaican hanged for shop murder. Four Birmingham University students stood in silence opposite the main gates of Winson Green Prison,' 1962. It makes you think, doesn't it?

GREGORY: [LAUGHS] Yes. It makes you think.

[HE 'THINKS']

CAT: 'Oswald Augustus Grey, aged 20, of Cannon Hill Road ...'
I've never heard of this at all. It's horrible isn't it.

GREGORY: In a way.

CAT: Was he hanged because he was black then ?

GREGORY: Oh come on, Cat.

CAT: Well..

So this is what your novel is then ?

GREGORY: I am not writing a novel, OK ? I'm finding out about him,
researching about 1962, for some... for a project.

[PAUSE. HE TAKES THE PAPER. CAT IS SNOOPING]

CAT: So ?

GREGORY: So what ?

CAT: Aren't you going to offer me a drink or something ?

GREGORY: Oh yes, of course.

[HE GOES AND FIDGETS IN THE KITCHEN AREA]

Whereabouts do you live now then...Cat ?

CAT: Selly Oak.

GREGORY: Oh yes ?

CAT: Yes.

So did you love her ?

GREGORY: What kind of question is that ?

CAT: I don't know. An important one, I suppose. Well ?

[PAUSE]

GREGORY: Of course I did. All I've got is Gold Label.

CAT: What's that ?

GREGORY: Could we agree not to talk about her, please.

CAT: If that's what you want. But you mustn't bottle it all up.

GREGORY: Listen. She died four days ago. I have been upset...I am upset about it. I will cry and all that, but tonight I'm ...my way of getting through tonight. I'm not heartless or anything.

CAT: Did I say that ?

[SHE PULLS FACE AT DRINK]

So this is Gold Label then ?

GREGORY: It sure is.

[SHE HAS TAKEN OFF HER SHOES. HE TIDIES THEM]

[PAUSE]

CAT: Do you feel funny about me being here, then ?

GREGORY: This is my home. I live here alone, I mean. I'm not that used to people here.

CAT: It's OK, isn't it ? What's the equipment ?

GREGORY: A mix of things.

CAT: What do you do, Greg ?

GREGORY: [LAUGHS] A mix of things. I like to take pictures. You ?

CAT: I make jewellery.

GREGORY: Yes ?

Why were you ... there. Tonight.

CAT: Oh well. She was my tutor, your ... mother.

[SHE CHECKS IT IS OK TO TALK ABOUT HER]

She taught me when I went to college. I was her star pupil... She was very good to me, and we got on dead well, so I kept in touch.

GREGORY: You must be Kathleen, then. That's what Cat stands for is it ?

CAT: [IRISH] Yes it's Kathleen, so it is. That's why I shorten it. Wouldn't you ?

GREGORY: I don't think I would. Not to Cat, anyway.

CAT: What did you think it was short for ?

GREGORY: I didn't think about it.

CAT: Have you got any brothers and sisters ?

GREGORY: You ask a lot of questions, don't you ?

CAT: I want to know all about you.

GREGORY: At this rate, you'll know it all by the morning.

[PAUSE - A BIT OF CLOSENESS]

CAT: It's a bit funny, isn't it ?

GREGORY: In a way. But we're not talking about it, are we ?

CAT: I've never thought about it before, but I suppose funerals are good places to go to pick people up. Catch them with their defences down, see straight through to the emotions,. I'll have to remember that. People don't play games at funerals. They don't pose like they do in clubs and that.

GREGORY: Don't you think ? Me, I think they do just as much. Just different games, different poses. The whole thing's a big game to some people, isn't it ? Look at the dressing up.

[HE PUTS ON A TAPE]

CAT: What've you got the bed in here for ? This is the living room, isn't it ? Haven't you got a bedroom ?

GREGORY: Yes. It's so I can watch telly in bed.

CAT: Really ? God that's disgusting.

[PAUSE]

You going to seduce me then ?

GREGORY: Look, miss. You asked for the drink, didn't you ?

CAT: Is that what you call it?

GREGORY: Yes, well.

[PAUSE]

Perhaps you're right. Someone dying... it brings everything up to the surface. I wouldn't normally invite anyone back here, you know. But today's got this kind of unreal feeling. Or maybe more real than usual. It makes you realise we haven't got so much time, I suppose.

CAT: I don't know, but it sounds like a pretty good chat-up line to me. I expect you hang around the crematorium, don't you, pretending to be a bereaved relative at every service. Then you can sneak into wakes, nick loads of sandwiches, and when you get lucky you can give people that line.

GREGORY: Oh no. How could you tell ?

CAT: Can we do a toast, without me having to drink any of this?

GREGORY: I don't see why not.

CAT: To Mrs Guard. To your mother.

GREGORY: What's left of her.

CAT: Greg !

GREGORY: Sorry. You know, it's my way of

[LONG PAUSE. HE THINKS ABOUT HIS MOTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME. TEARFUL. CAT MOVES OVER AND HUGS HIM]

CAT: What's this music ?

GREGORY: Before your time. The year of my birth. 1962....

[SCENE TWO]

[TOMMY, THE NEWSAGENT, ENTERS]

TOMMY: 1962, I remember it well. Well, I'm hardly likely to forget it, am I ? It was the year I died.

You've got to remember one thing about 1962. People get it wrong, if you ask me. They get confused, because on the surface of it, it sounds like it was in the sixties, doesn't it, with all the miniskirts and the flower people and all that, but it wasn't. No, it was all still black and white. Things was beginning to change round here, big things; the second blitz, I called it. Looking back, the city was being murdered - but I've got to admit, it didn't feel like it, it felt like progress. Every night we'd read in the Mail about the New Birmingham that was rising up. It was a good year to die, all things considered, 'cause I could die with my hopes in one piece. Murder in the name of progress, but we never knew it.

Which brings me on to me. I had a shop, a newsagents, Lee Bank Road, Edgbaston. The road isn't there any more. There's a dual carriageway, and a drive-in Macdonalds. We had a good little routine there, nice customers, not much trouble; a couple of break-ins, but that's only what you'd expect. Little gold-mine it was.

[HE GOES OUT. GREGORY TAKES ON THE PERSON OF ROY]

ROY: I like England, you know. Been here less than three years, but I like it. Birmingham, there was a feeling about this place. Excitement. When I was a small boy, I dreamed of the 'Mother Country'. I got no time for the people here now who dream of back home. Here is where the future is. 1959, I was 17 years old. I came out here with my father, but I not with him any more. You see him kick me out. I should not say anything bad about my own father..... Him beat me hard in the name of kindness, turn me over to the police in the name of God. It was God's will that he turn me in, for taking ten shilling off him. Three month in some nasty centre I did for him,

for my own father. But I will say nothing bad about him now.

Oswald Augustus Grey. People call me Roy. Roy Grey. Living on the National Assistance. It not an easy business to get places to stay here, so I live in different places on different days, I spread myself around my friends. I may not know where I am, it's true, and it's a confusion compared to back home, but I like England, whatever way she treat me.

[END OF SCENE]

[SCENE THREE]

[GREG IS ON HIS OWN, HALF DRESSED. HE HAS A VIDEO CAMERA AND TAPE RECORDER RUNNING, AND HE HAS BEEN RE-ENACTING. IT IS AS IF THE LAST SCENE WERE BEING DONE TO THE CAMERA. THERE ARE MORE SIGNS OF ROY'S STORY ROUND THE FLAT THAN BEFORE. GREG REPLAYS THE TAPE]

TAPE: [Roy's voice] Whatever way she treat meI like England...I like England, whatever way she treat me..

[HE CHANGES TAPE TO MUSIC (SKA) AND MOVES AWAY. DANCES. PICKS UP A LETTER, AND PUTS IT ON THE FLOOR FOR CLOSER INSPECTION]

GREGORY: Home is where the Heartlands is.

[HE PINS THE LETTER ON THE WALL AND STARES AT IT]

[HE SINGS]

[DOORBELL]

Shit.

[HE ANSWERS DOOR, AND CAT COMES IN, GREG FOLLOWING]

CAT: You didn't have to dress up for me, you know.

GREGORY: I didn't realise the time, sorry.

CAT: No, don't apologise. You don't think I'm interested in you for your mind, do you ?

GREGORY: Don't, Cat.

CAT: Ooh dear.

[HE GOES OUT. CAT TAKES IN THE STATE OF THE ROOM]

So what are we going to do tonight then ?

GREGORY: You said we were going to a film.

CAT: It wasn't an order. What's on ?

GREGORY: Don't know.

CAT: Have you got a paper ?

GREGORY: No. Use the telly.

CAT: Hey?

GREGORY: Teletext.

CAT: Ooh.

[HE COMES BACK IN WITH SHIRT ON, AND STARTS TO LOOK THROUGH THINGS. SHE FINDS THE REMOTE CONTROL UNIT, SWITCHES ON TV, AND AT THE SAME TIME READS THE LETTER]

So, they're really knocking you down, then ?

GREGORY: So they say.

CAT: Structural defects ? I thought you said they were clearing the area for that Heartlands thing.

GREGORY: Doesn't make much difference, does it ? Either way, it's a condemned building.

CAT: Oh, come on, Greg, what's the disaster ? I mean it's not a palace, is it ? They'll give you somewhere at least as good.

GREGORY: It's the deja vu. It's all happened before.

CAT: You said this was your first place of your own.

GREGORY: Exactly, it is. And it was then, too.

CAT: Oh yes ? Bloody weirdo.

Everyone except you wants to get out of this place. It's disgusting. Look, it's falling down, that's what this means.

GREGORY: They wanted to then, too. That's the saddest thing of all. The council didn't have to evict a single person. Not one. They just queued up to be put in the concrete.

CAT: You don't have to tell me about that. My parents were here "then", remember. My mum said central heating was something only the Hollywood fillum stars had, and the council said she could have it too. They were bound to want to move.

GREGORY: What's on then ?

CAT: 'Batman' everywhere.

GREGORY: Shall we stay in ?

CAT: Well...

[DOORBELL. GREG WINCES.]

GREGORY: If that's my Dad What does he keep coming for ?

CAT: I'll go.

[SHE LETS IN GREG'S FATHER, TIM]

TIM; Hi, Cat. I didn't think anyone would be in.

GREGORY: We're just about to go out. Why didn't you phone ?

TIM: Wanted to surprise you.

[HE LAUGHS]

So, where are you going ?

CAT: Pictures probably. We were just discussing it. Sit down, Tim.

TIM: Thanks.

GREGORY: Do you want a beer ?

TIM: No thanks, Greg.

GREGORY: Anything ?

TIM: Oh well. A glass of water, please. I'll risk it. Just neat, though, no frogs or anything.

GREGORY: I'll do my best.

TIM: Have you thought of getting one of those filters for the tap. I've got one, now. It's very good.

GREGORY: Yes, we've seen it.

[PAUSE]

[TIM IS LOOKING AT ALL THE BITS OF PAPER, AND RESEARCH MATERIALS, SLIGHTLY DISTRACTED]

CAT: Greg's being evicted.

GREGORY: Re-housed. It's bottled.

TIM: Lovely. Really. How come ?

CAT: They did a survey of the block, and they say the structural defects are too serious for repair to be possible.

TIM: So they're knocking the block down ? Oh well, that's good I expect.

GREGORY: Yes.

TIM: Do you know where you're going ?

GREGORY: There's a public meeting on Thursday. After that, we each get a visit to discuss our individual requirements, they say.

TIM: Perhaps you'll end up a bit nearer to me.

GREGORY: Perhaps yes, it's too early to know, really.

TIM: I had a call from Patty and John. He seems pretty certain that they'll be coming back in the spring.. Oh sorry, Cat. John is Gregory's older brother, he's in the States.

CAT: [SHE KNOWS] Yes.

TIM: But the bad news is, if they come back, it'll be because he's switched to their Scottish wing. In Silicon Glen, wherever that is. So my little dreams of re-uniting the family will have to wait a bit longer. Still, at least its not South Africa.

[HE LAUGHS]

[TO CAT] He's gone a bit strange, I'm afraid. Perhaps with him back in the UK, we can work on him a bit, eh, Gregory ?

GREGORY: [SNAPPY] He's fine.

[GREG GOES OUT]

[PAUSE]

TIM: Well. It's been a funny time to meet, Cat, what with all our ...everything. I don't really feel like we've been properly introduced. What do you do, are you a student?

CAT: No. I make jewellery.

TIM: Oh yes ? Yes of course, Hilary's.... Did you make those then ? That's great. Do you work for a company of some kind, then, or are you -

CAT: I share a workshop with some people in Hockley, and sell from market stalls, mostly.

TIM: Oh well, that's got a lot to recommend it, following everything right through. Good place to be based too, I mean, there is quite a tradition of Birmingham craftspeople, isn't there ?

[PAUSE]

So, how do you think he is ?

CAT: Oh, fine really.

TIM: Good. I'm very glad you've been around these last few weeks, you know, Cat. I mean, it's deceptive, but I know he is much more upset than he lets on. You're just what he needs.

[CAT SMILES]

He's very special to me, Cat. But he was.. I know its a stupid thing to say, but he was very close to his mother.

CAT: It's important to mourn properly, isn't it?

TIM: Oh yes. But it is quite isolated here, and he'd sit and stew. It will have helped him to have a bit of company.

CAT: I hope I'm more than that.

TIM: Sorry, yes, of course.

CAT: What about you ? Do you think you've mourned properly?

TIM: [LAUGHS] I'm a bit older, Cat. Just a bit. Grown a thicker skin.

Well, I'd better let you two get off to the movies.

CAT: You could come along with us, you know.

TIM: I don't think tonight, thanks.

[LOUDER] Well, I'll be off then.

GREGORY: [OFF] See you.

TIM: Nice to, well, meet you properly then, Cat.

[GREG COMES BACK IN. LETS TIM OUT.]

I'll probably see you at the weekend, Greg. Bye.

CAT: Bye.

[HE GOES. CAT GIVES GREG A LOOK.]

GREGORY: He loves calling you "Cat", doesn't he ?

CAT: Listen, he's trying to help. I think he's being really sweet.

It isn't long since your mum died, is it ? He probably needs you. He just doesn't like to say. You're not being very supportive.

GREGORY: I think there's enough people being "supportive" enough without me, Cat.

[PAUSE]

Do you mind if we stay in ?

CAT: Of course not, you know me. What about food ?

[GREG SHRUGS]

I'll go and get a takeaway, shall I ?

GREGORY: Yeah, why not ?

[SCENE FOUR]

ROY: [AS HE TALKS, HE DRINKS A BOTTLE OF GOLD LABEL, GETS OUT A PISTOL]

My father always say the most important thing of all is respect. Respect for your parents, respect for old people, respect for the law, respect for England. Like an old scratch record he repeat respect, respect.

When I was in Jamaica, I kick stones against a trashcan all of one day, and I did my thinking. Roy is like a stray puss, them say. But the places that I stray are the places of friends and family. If I stay with my little brothers one night, next night I go to my aunt, and I play a bottle game with my uncle. No-one except my father ever say that life is all serious, and what he say is shouted, and come with a beating, or sometimes spoken quiet and gentle after a beating. He tell me I am no good, and shame him. Tell me that England will straighten out the crookedness that has got into me. And what is this crookedness ? What is it ? It is that I steal a chicken and the chicken man catch me. And for that crookedness I am sent to borstal. And

no-one come to steal me from out of that place then, and they pluck out my feathers one by one.

So I come to England with just my dad, to straighten out the crookedness. And I have respect for this country, because it is big and has a sound that is louder than I have heard. But each man have only so much respect in him, and if you give it all to these people, you left with nothing for yourself. And here, there are so many English people with respect for themselves and for the others like them. They have nothing left for me.

TOMMY:

[HE IS IN HIS SHOP.]

In my position, as a kind of ghost, sort of thing, I pride myself in having an overview. I keep in touch with the changing times, and I take a particular interest in some aspects of the news. A bugbear of mine, for example, is crime. You look at the papers today, and they act as if violence was a new idea. Now I take exception to that. I'm bound to really. I was shot in 1962. But having said that, the papers then was just the same, and they was no more right. It seems to me, and this is just my personal theory, sort of thing, that 1962 was just another violent year, just the same as this year, and just the same as all the others. We liked to think that everything was going downhill, and that thirty years before had been much better. It seems to me that people stay much the same, and always they like to think that. I don't suppose it's ever been true, then, now or ever.

[GREG WAKES, GETS OUT OF BED. TOMMY EXITS. NIGHTMARE MUSIC, MIXED WITH MUFFLED VOICES, TOMMY'S VOICE SAYING 'WHAT THE BLOODY HELL ARE YOU DOING', 'PUT THAT AWAY', 'YOU'RE DRUNK', AND GREG'S OWN VOICE, 'SHOOT HIM', 'WHAT YOU DOING?', 'BLAST HIM'. MUSIC AND NOISE BUILD UP, GREG MOVES AROUND IN CIRCLES, HOLDS HIS EARS, THE GUN GOES OFF, THE SOUND OF THE SHOT REVERBERATES, GREG FREEZES IN A SILENT SCREAM.]

[SCENE SIX]

[CAT HAS WOKEN SUDDENLY. SHE SWITCHES ON LIGHT]

CAT: What are you doing ?

GREGORY: Nothing. Sorry, go back to sleep.

[CAT GETS UP, AND GOES OVER TO HIM]

CAT: You OK ?

GREGORY: Just couldn't sleep.

CAT: You went out like a light.

[PAUSE]

God, Greg, you're sweating. Are you sure you're OK ?

GREGORY: Yes.

I had a nightmare.

CAT: What about ?

[PAUSE]

Were you thinking about your mum ?

GREGORY: No

CAT: Look, its all right. It's best if you talk about it. It was obviously a bad dream, so it probably meant something. Come on.

[PAUSE]

Was it to do with all this lot...your ...the story on the tapes and everything. Was it about Oswald ?

GREGORY: Roy. His name's Roy.

CAT: Good.

Do you want a cup of tea or something ?

[GREG LAUGHS]

I've got a friend who has nightmares. She says the thing you've got to do is draw a picture of the central image of

the nightmare, put it in a special biscuit tin, and burn it. Exorcise the restless spirits.

GREGORY: Wouldn't it be simpler just to go back to sleep.

CAT: Can you ?

GREGORY: I mean't you.

CAT: Thanks.

So let's exorcise this little dream, shall we ?

GREGORY: I haven't got a biscuit tin. Anyway, I feed mine. They're useful. I'm at my most creative on a bad night. I give myself cheese. My mother used to say it makes you dream.

CAT: I love the way you say, 'my mother'.

GREGORY: What's wrong with it ?

CAT: You sound like that bloke on 'Rising Damp'.

GREGORY: Thank you.

[PAUSE]

CAT: Tell me about Roy, and your dream.

GREGORY: I saw a gun, and a bullet, and I watched it come out of the end in slow motion, grow in the air, and take this old man's chest away from him, flat against the wall. And I couldn't move, I could hear people shouting to me, and the noise of the shot kept repeating, even after the gun was fired. I couldn't move, I spoke, but I had no voice. I spoke, but no-one could hear me.

CAT: Do you think you're getting too involved in all this, Greg ?

GREGORY: I've got to get involved.

CAT: Obsessed, then. Your Dad said you tend to get a bit obsessed about things.

GREGORY: Oh yes, did he ? Did he say I'd got an obsessive streak, did he ? Like my other streaks. Did he tell you where it came from ? Because of course it couldn't come from

him. Political ideas, a moral sense, manners, intelligence, all those can be taught, but streaks are in the blood. What can we do about Gregory's streaks ? They are beyond our control. They come from elsewhere. We just have to sympathise, and try and help him deal with them.

CAT: He didn't say it like that.

[PAUSE]

That's the first time you've said anything to me about being adopted.

GREGORY: Didn't you know ?

CAT: No, I mean, I just wondered about it. Is it something you think about much ?

GREGORY: Depends what you mean.

CAT: Do you know much about your real parents ?

GREGORY: Real ?

[SHAKES HIS HEAD]

I know nothing. I wanted to find out, years ago, but I wouldn't, because of my mother, it would have killed her, I thought. They changed the law, so now if there is any information about me, I'm allowed to get at it. I suppose I think about it quite a bit. I've got a picture, in here, of a room. It's nothing to do with my blood parents, it's...I've always assumed it is a room in the home - Dr Barnado's. But I was only a few months old when they took me, so God knows if it's a real memory. A big wood-walled room, with dusty pink heavy curtains at one end. That's it. That's what I know. So that's where I'm from.

CAT: Well, no-one remembers being born, do they ?

In some ways it must be quite good. You know you were wanted, don't you. Singled out and specially chosen, kind of thing.

GREGORY: Everybody knows. That's the thing. Everybody knows something about me, everybody thinks they do. I used to have to explain my life story several times a day, or my mother did. Even if it was right to ignore it, you couldn't.

Because everywhere when I was out with her, you could see little brains clicking round ..

'Perhaps she's some kind of social worker, or special teacher, and she's looking after him, or perhaps she's some kind of juvenile probation officer, and he is a troubled child of some kind who needs constant supervision. No, he's the son of the king of some African country, and she is one of the team of paid nannies.. He's too black to be half-caste, so she can't be... wait a minute... oh yes adopted, of course. I wonder why they chose...him'.

I expect when you went out people just went, 'nice little girl with mother', and probably managed not to stare.

Then, of course, there's always the fun of going out on my own. Big pleasure. No problems for people working out how to treat me then. Then I'm just a young black man, and everyone knows all about me; I'm bigger than I look, probably angry, certainly unemployed, unless perhaps I'm a sportsman, and I make trouble, all kinds of trouble, because of this chip I've got. Or perhaps I'm just tragically disadvantaged, let down by the education system, an object of sympathy. Then there's other black people; what do you imagine that feels like ? Me, I just get nervous, because I know nothing. It's called the worst of both worlds. The delights of being a nowhere man.

CAT: It's not your mum and dad's fault, though, is it ?

GREGORY: God, I know that. I never for a moment blamed my mother for anything, never. And I know I would've been worse off if she'd left me in the home, of course. No, I'm talking about the city, the world, probably. No, she cared right through, and I love her...but she couldn't change any of that crap, even her. She couldn't tell me who I am, could she ?

CAT: You don't have to know where you're from to know who you are.

GREGORY: You do.

CAT: I don't think so. Don't treat me like that, Greg. I do know something about this, at least some of it. My parents came over here as well.

GREGORY: As well as who ?

CAT: All I mean is I've never been to Ireland, right, but it's no big thing. I would like to go there, so I follow what you say, and no-one knows about my mum and dad just by looking at me, OK, but I know who I am. That's to do with what I do now, what I think now, which is a million miles away from what even my mum and dad think, right ?

[PAUSE]

What you really wish is that you'd got a black father, isn't it ?

[GREG CHUCKLES]

I'm glad you told me all this, anyway.

GREGORY: I love you, you know.

CAT: You don't even know me. How long have we ... you just know I'm good at being around when you're going through difficulties, which I don't mind doing. But I'm not going to do that forever. You want to love me, you've got to have it the other way round, too.

GREGORY: What way's that ?

CAT: I'm serious.

GREGORY: I know. Sorry.

I love it when you talk assertive.

[SHE 'SLAPS' HIM. HE KISSES HER]

[PAUSE]

I just wish I had a man for my father.

CAT: Oh God that is so stupid. I can't believe you said that.

GREGORY: You don't know anything about it.

CAT: I can't do, if that's what you think.

GREGORY: I just mean, I wish he'd take a stand on things, sometimes. Get angry with me, properly, clear-cut. A kind of discipline.

CAT: You want discipline, I'll swap parents with you any day.

GREGORY: No-one ever talks about being over-positive, but that's the problem. Yes, yes, yes, great, fantastic, well done Gregory. How am I supposed to know what he's thinking?

CAT: Perhaps he is really positive.

GREGORY: I talked to him about you, he says it's 'an excellent thing' that I've found you just now, he thinks you're 'lovely', all the time I'm wondering what he's playing at, what he means, why he disapproves.

CAT: Well, I haven't told my mum and dad about you at all.

GREGORY: Seriously ?

CAT: Yes, seriously. Christ knows what would happen.

GREGORY: They don't like black people ?

CAT: It's not just that. Don't get me wrong, it is that, but it's not just that.

Once, right, I went to an X film with a school friend, and my dad found out. My little brother told him, God love him. He waited in the front room 'til I got back from school, I was fourteen or fifteen, I should think. Over an hour he waited, apparently, sitting there like some emperor or something, and when I came in he fetched me in, stood me in the middle of the room, and walked up and down. He didn't shout at me to begin with, he just quietly asked enough questions to confirm that I was in fact guilty of this terrible crime. Then he twisted round and shouted full in my eyes that I was a disgusting disgrace, I remember that, a disgusting disgrace. Then he made me wait on the mat by the gas fire, while he went out to the shed and collected this old enamel bath, which he filled with cold water, and I had to take off my uniform, stand in this bath in front of my dad, and scrub myself all over with floor soap and a scrubbing brush, with cold water, in the middle of the front room, with my brothers giggling in the hallway, until I was clean. Until he was satisfied that I was clean again. There's a nice moral stand for you - a good old-fashioned bit of discipline, if you want one.

GREGORY: That wasn't what I meant.

CAT: It's all the same. He did that for himself, make himself feel better, it had nothing to do with me. 'Discipline' never does.

GREGORY: All right, so it's not just my father. It's all fathers. Men in general.

CAT: I haven't told you about my mum yet. Don't worry. No she's OK. From what I remember then, she was most bothered about the spilt water in the front room. I'd still swap you mine for yours though.

GREGORY: Mine's dead.

CAT: Now, now.

[PAUSE]

So listen. You got involved with this research, because you're looking for your roots, then ?

GREGORY: I think it's more complicated, but maybe not much.

CAT: He hardly sounds like the ideal role model. This isn't going to end up with you hanging from the light-fitting, is it ? Wouldn't you do better to research your real roots ?

GREGORY: Why shouldn't I be allowed to live a lie like everyone else?

CAT: Ooh dear.

[PAUSE]

Can I do a deal with you Greg. Will you let me join in with all this; I'll make myself useful, with all the digging, and I'll keep telling you you're not a nowhere man, OK ?

[PAUSE]

GREGORY: Why should I believe you ?

CAT: Because I've got an honest face.

[PAUSE]

Will you get back to sleep now, without committing murder later in the night then ?

GREGORY: I might.

[END OF SCENE]

[BETWEEN THE SCENES WE SEE GREG AND CAT COLLABORATING ON RESEARCH, TIME IS PASSING]

[SCENE SEVEN]

[THE FOLLOWING ARE VERBATIM EXTRACTS FROM THE TRIAL TRANSCRIPT. THE STYLE OF THE LAWYERS IS A PASTICHE OF SIXTIES GENRES. OPENING AS STEED AND MRS GALE FORM 'THE AVENGERS' BECOMING MORE AND MORE STYLISED AND VICIOUS. ROY REMAINS. IT IS AS IF THESE ARE THE FEW ODD MOMENTS IN THE TRIAL THAT DRIFTED INTO HIS CONSCIOUSNESS, WHILE THE REST FLOWED INEXORABLY PAST]

CLERK: Oswald Augustus Grey, is that your name ?

ROY: Yes.

CLERK: You stand charged upon this indictment for that on the 2nd June last you murdered a man by shooting him. As to that, are you guilty or not guilty ?

ROY: Not guilty.

CLERK: Members of the jury, the accused stands charged for that he on the 2nd June last, murdered a man by shooting him. To this indictment, he has pleaded not guilty, and it is your duty, having heard the evidence to say whether he is guilty or not guilty.....

PROSECUTION: May it please your Lordship; members of the jury, in this case I appear for the prosecution, and the defendant is represented by my learned friend.

At 196 Lee Bank Road, Edgbaston, a district which is probably familiar to a good many of you, there is a

house, or there was at this time a house and shop in a row of ordinary terraced dwellings, there was this one little shop which was a newspaper, tobacco and sweet shop, and it seems to have been a pretty busy little business. The shop was run by

DEFENCE: I do want you to remember this. This is a very, very grave charge. It is one of those charges of murder in its form, murder by shooting; murder as decreed to be capital murder for which there is only one punishment. The question of punishment, my Lord will tell you, is not for you. You are to determine

PROSECUTION:the man who stole the gun, five days before the crime, the man who had the gun in his possession on the day of the murder, the man who took the gun and hid it under the wardrobe, the man who told three admittedly false stories, that man is proved beyond peradventure to you.....

DEFENCE: Would you not expect a person who is not a native of this country, but a native of foreign parts, and who comes here and is not among his own people, but in the custody of a police officer to take refuge in a shell more than an Englishman would ? It is entirely

PROSECUTION: ...six days after the crime, when the accused man and eight other coloured men were lined up and appropriately dressed. he has been identified by those four witnesses as having been somebody loitering suspiciously

DEFENCE: ...how many times in your ordinary lives and knowledge of the world have you come across illustrations of really well-known persons and forgotten them ? How many times have you recognised somebody, and then been embarrassed because you found it was not the same chap.....

JUDGE: I am not going to keep you here tonight. You will be able to go to your homes. I want you to understand that on no account should you talk about this. You are the judges. I know you realise that if I had been talking about your case you would be very angry. If anyone talks to you say "I cannot talk about it. I am one of the judges."

ROY: I don't know what happened at the trial. My trial. Truly. My mind was rushing from one thing to another. It was five days altogether. The big thing is, it doesn't seem to

matter to me. Not the words. Down in the lock-up, talk to the lawyers. Up in the stall. Surrounded by dark wooden walls. The jury, twelve white men, sit across the room, and all the time, they look serious, dead serious, trying not to let me see them looking at me. Each in turn, looks at me, like a game, and then pretends he has not looked. One time, I try to guess which will look at me next, and count myself the winner if I guess right. The judge is small and cripple, but still high up, barking down over me. Everything I say, I have to say again, while they try to mix me up. Talking, talking, talking. One person after another, pointing and looking and staring. Mover come up, dressed in a smart suit, and talk a pack of lies how he saw me with the gun, like he knows nothing. The big policeman with the hard head come in his suit too, and smile politely at the jury. Old ladies, old white ladies in little hats, come to say they recognise me at the bus stop, or they don't recognise me at the bus stop. Phyllis come up, with the baby showing much more than before, now, shaking all over. A pretty english girl come up, too scared to speak loud, and she looked right up at my face, like a kitten trapped in a corner. And the lawyers talking and smiling, in their wigs and everything. Strange people in the public benches, with books and bags, not afraid to stare, and my father. He sits there, straight back, like he says, looking like a preacher. The great preacher, who is so holy, who has never stolen no money. Though he steal a wife from another man, he is sitting at my trial, like a second judge. Always the sadness on his face hiding Talking across the room, so much. I can see it now from outside, with Roy Grey carved in wood in his box, with his eyes curved down to the floor, thinking of the dust on the floor.

PROSECUTION: You say he used bad language in Jamaican which we would not understand. Ras-man; is that an insult ?

DEFENCE: Are you sure that 'Thank Your Lucky Stars' does not go on until half past six ?

PROSECUTION: The same shade of skin as that shade there

DEFENCE: Did he seem to be a light Jamaican or a dark Jamaican

PROSECUTION: He is for all practical purposes described as illiterate

DEFENCE: You see a lot of them and you don't take particular notice of them

PROSECUTION: ...and by standard tests his intelligence is subnormal

DEFENCE: ..do you know what it is to tell the truth

PROSECUTION: while in this country he has had no fixed abode

DEFENCE: what shade of brown was this coat, would you say it was nigger brown.....

PROSECUTION: You spend a lot of time in the Bluebell and other clubs

DEFENCE: Did you kick him, were you present when other officers spat at him and pushed

PROSECUTION: Do you understand the question ?

DEFENCE: Could you speak more clearly ?.....

PROSECUTION: If all his three stories are equally false, you can see how he was driven from one to the other; how he is pushed out of one position when the cold wind of truth begins to blow, he turns like a weathercock from one direction to another and tries to find some way out of it, and each story he tells is exposed as false in turn.

DEFENCE: I make no great point, despite what he said himself in the witness box, I make no great point in my submission to you of what happened when he was arrested and was in the police station. This man told you he was ill-treated at the police station. If he was - well, it was very wrong.

PROSECUTION: After all, we are moving in this case in rather a strange world of people who steal guns; people who traffic in guns; people who spend rather aimless lives in sort of nightclubs and dives and coffee bars. People whose abodes shift from place to place, share rooms, sometimes with one person, sometimes with another, and sometimes sleep with a prostitute and sometimes share rooms with other people; people borrowing one another's clothes apparently quite indiscriminately; it is a strange fluctuating life rather near the underworld.

DEFENCE: There is only one verdict here, members of the jury, you can return on this evidence. Consider it and consider it all. I hope you don't think because I have not gone into details, that I am failing to face up to it, or pulling the

wool over your eyes. I am not You regard all the evidence, every word; I hope you will, and when you do you will come to the conclusion that this man is not guilty.

PROSECUTION: Members of the jury, in my submission that evidence as I have endeavoured to outline to you (I hope at not too great a length) is very cogent and compelling evidence and must compel you to the conclusion, however unwelcome it may be, that this man is indeed guilty.

[PAUSE. ROY STANDS.]

CLERK: Members of the jury, are you agreed upon your verdict ?

FOREMAN: We are.

CLERK: Do you find the prisoner, Oswald Augustus Grey, guilty or not guilty ?

FOREMAN: Guilty.

CLERK: You find him guilty. Is that the verdict of you all ?

FOREMAN: Yes.

CLERK: Prisoner at the bar. You stand convicted of capital murder. Have you anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be passed upon you ?

ROY: No.

JUDGE: [PUTTING ON BLACK CAP] Oswald Augustus Grey, the sentence of the court upon you is that you suffer death in the manner authorised by the law, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul.

[INTERVAL]

[SCENE EIGHT]

[GREG IS ALONE. HE IS CAREFULLY ARRANGING THE ROOM FOR A GAME OF TRIVIAL PURSUITS.]

GREGORY: Death in the manner authorised by the law. In the manner authorised by the law. Good old law. And I fervently hope, young man, that this will teach you a lesson.

[TIM AND CAT COME IN. THEY HAVE BEEN FOR A WALK. GREG CONTINUES PREPARING]

TIM: So how come you are so keen to play this game then Greg ?

GREGORY: Research.

CAT: We're doing a video...well a multi-media kind of thing, about this true story from the 60s. 1962. Hasn't Greg told you about it ? I'm helping with the res....we're collaborating on it.

TIM: That's what all this is ?

CAT: Yeah.

GREGORY: It's your time, after all. And this game is ideal. The Baby Boomer version - it's all questions about the sixties.. Designed by ageing hippies, at a price that only ageing hippies can afford.

[LAUGHS]

Right. You can be pink, I think, and you can be green.

TIM: What about you ? What colour are you ?

GREGORY: I'm just going to be question master. That way I can take more in from the answers.

CAT: It's not exactly fair. If it is all questions about the sixties, its much easier for Tim.

GREGORY: You've been doing all that reading.

CAT: Yeah, but...

TIM: Don't worry, my memory's terrible.

[THEY START PLAYING]

Blue

GREGORY: Broadcasting. Who topped the bill on the final episode of 'Thank Your Lucky Stars' ?

TIM: How am I supposed to know that ? That's impossible. We didn't have a television until 1970.

GREGORY: Guess.

TIM: How can I ? All right, Frankie Howerd.

CAT: It was a music show wasn't it ?

GREGORY: The Beatles. Cat ?

TIM: You see, I told you I'd be hopeless at it.

CAT: Yellow. News.

GREGORY: What actress was found dead on 5th August 1962.

CAT: Marilyn Monroe.

GREGORY: Very good.

CAT: It had to be, didn't it ?

GREGORY: R.P.M. What month might it as well have rained until, according to Carole King's 1962 hit.

CAT: Oh God. [Humming] mm..mm might as well rain until....December.

GREGORY: No. September.

TIM: Now that I would have known. One two three four. Green.

GREGORY: L.T. Lives and times. What did 50 Birmingham women test for the first time in Britain in 1960.

TIM: God knows. Thalidomide.

GREGORY: The pill.

CAT: How come they chose Birmingham women to experiment on ?

GREGORY: No bonuses unless I say.

CAT: Jesus. He loves it. The power.

GREGORY: Come on Cat. How many people were murdered in the A6 incident of 1961.

CAT: One.

GREGORY: Correct

TIM: Good God.

CAT: James Hanratty. It's linked to the case we're researching. He was the only other person hanged in 1962.

GREGORY: In Britain.

CAT: Yeah. That's what the story is, that we're doing. The last man hanged in Birmingham. Roy Grey.

TIM: Oh yes ?

GREGORY: Do you want a drink ?

TIM: Thanks. That sounds interesting. What are you researching for ?

CAT: It depends what we find out, doesn't it ? Do you remember anything about it, Tim?

TIM: I don't think I do. I mean, it rings a vague bell, I think. He shot a newsagent, didn't he ?

CAT: God that's You're the first person I've mentioned it to who's remembered it at all. That's been one of the things I've really noticed. No-one even seems to have made much of it at the time. There's hardly anything in the papers. Greg did you hear that ?

GREGORY: Yes, well Dad always kept in touch with the issues, didn't you ?

TIM: I really don't remember anything else about it.

GREGORY: Cat. It's you to go.

CAT: Orange. For a thingy.

GREGORY: Who strolled to the number five spot with his Rambling Rose in 1962 ?

CAT: No idea. Don't tell me.

TIM: I'm not going to.

CAT: Lonnie Donnegan.

GREGORY: Close. Nat King Cole.

TIM: Orange for me too.

GREGORY: Who sang the 1962 hit, 'Up on the roof' ?

TIM: Now, I know that one. Up on the roof. Kenny ...Lynch.

[HE LAUGHS]

CAT: Kenny Lynch, really ? Was he a singer ? I thought he just played golf.

GREGORY: Great name. Kenny... Lynch. I think I'd change my name.

TIM: Blue.

GREGORY: What product did Tony Blackburn promote from supermarkets in T V commercials.

TIM: I said we didn't have a television until 1970.

GREGORY: He did this later than that.

TIM: Oh well. We didn't watch ITV though.

CAT: Have a guess.

TIM: Fairy Liquid.

GREGORY: The power of advertising.

TIM: Was that right ? I must've absorbed it subconsciously or something. Mild green Fairy Liquid. Yellow. Nightly news.

GREGORY: OK, which 1964 parliamentary candidate stood on the slogan, "If you want a nigger for your neighbour vote Labour." ?

CAT: That's never on there.

GREGORY: I'm the question master.

TIM: I remember this.

CAT: We were reading about it yesterday, it's that councillor in Smethwick. He's cheating.

GREGORY: It was his question.

TIM: No I remember it anyway. Peter Griffiths, his name was, I think. Terrible. We went on a protest.

GREGORY: Of course. I'll give it to you then.

TIM: No. I want to do this properly. Give me another question.

GREGORY: O.K. What was Enoch Powell the minister of from 1960-63 ?

TIM: Health.

GREGORY: Correct.

CAT: So would you say things have changed a lot since then, Tim ?

TIM: Well, I know I'm a bit older.

CAT: No, but about racism. I mean its a bit difficult to imagine that sort of thing, so recently.

GREGORY: You think so ?

CAT: No but so openly, I mean. You see Roy Grey was Jamaican, so we've been doing loads of research about the black community in 1962. Would you say attitudes have changed much.

TIM: Well, yes and no. There was certainly more ignorance.... To be honest we didn't know many black people before we had Greg.

GREGORY: Then you knew one, didn't you ?

[TIM IGNORES]

TIM: What is it you're trying to find out ?

CAT: A whole lot of things. It just seems different. Really bad open racism, for one thing, jobs, houses... But then with this case, right, he was messed about in court and everything, and then he was hanged, but there were no protests at all, except for some students. I mean, no black -

TIM: Was the murder anything to do with the chap's colour ?

CAT: Well, no. Not really. I mean, it's difficult to tell. It looks like it was a panic shooting, you know, and there were other people involved who never got found, right, and we think that drink..

TIM: Besides, if people were angry, you wouldn't read about it in the papers, would you ? Not if no-one was listening to them.

CAT: That's it, I think. There was no voice for the black community. There was nobody really there to offer support at all.

TIM: Anyway. People were hanged then. That was the law. Perhaps there was more respect for the law.

CAT: It's a terrible thought, isn't it ?

TIM: Well, a great many people apparently want to see it come back.

GREGORY: Why not ?

TIM: Because it is a brutal and pointless system, Greg, and because it is a soft option, that's why not. People always want to believe in nice simple solutions to big problems, even if there isn't such a thing. Often the real solutions are a bit more complicated.

[PAUSE]

CAT: It's thanks to you that we're researching this you know ?

TIM: Yes ?

CAT: Yeah. That paper that you gave Greg, from the day he was born. That's where he saw the report of the hanging.

GREGORY: Can we get back to this game, please ? Your throw.

TIM: Orange, again.

GREGORY: Whose 'Right Said Fred' was a 1962 number ten hit ?

TIM: How come they're all 1962 ? Have you fixed it ?

GREGORY: Bernard Cribbins. Cat ?

TIM: Oh come on, you didn't give me a chance.

GREGORY: [GRADUALLY ADOPTING THE TONE OF A CROSS-EXAMINING LAWYER] Did you understand the question? Very well, I shall ask another question. What did Dion call the kind of guy who liked to roam around, in his 1962 song. Which British motor racing driver became world champion in 1962 ? What stand-up comedian was described as an undesirable alien and deported from Britain in 1962. Do you know the meaning of the truth ? I put it to you, Mr Guard, that you cannot answer these questions. Is that right ?

CAT: Greg ! Will you shut it.

GREGORY: Of course, if you say so.

[HE THROWS DOWN QUESTION CARDS AND STORMS OUT. CAT WONDERS ABOUT FOLLOWING HIM, AND DECIDES AGAINST.]

TIM: Oh dear, I'm sorry. It's so difficult when he's like this. Sorry. Sorry.

[PAUSE]

Do you know what's underneath all this, Cat ?

CAT: I don't know. I mean, he's got very involved with this story. It's as if Roy, and all the others are there in his brain all the time, talking. He's collecting things the whole time, playing records from the time, taking

pictures, scribbling. He's even going on about it in his sleep.

[SHE IS EMBARRASSED ABOUT THE IMPLICATION OF THIS]

God knows why he's taking it out on you. I'm sorry.

TIM: There's nothing to apologise for.

CAT: I thought it would help if I joined in with him, but I think he resents it now.

TIM: Listen, he'll be all right. He sometimes gets hung up on things; I've seen him do it before. He'll work it through in no time, whatever it is.

CAT: It's just embarrassing when he makes all those kind of muttered comments. It must really get to you, doesn't it ?

TIM: It's been a very difficult time for him, Cat. A great deal of change, all at once. And he always has had quite a sarcastic streak. I'm immune. I remember, even as a child he had terrible silent moods. I think, probably inevitably, there's a substantial anger in him. No, the important thing for him is that he doesn't succeed in scaring you off.

[HE STARTS PICKING UP THE CARDS]

Have you actually moved in then. Forgive me asking.

CAT: No. Oh no. I'm spending a fair bit of time here but ... I don't like to leave him alone just now in He's hardly leaving the flat at all, himself. It's as if he's scared they'll move in and take it from him. I wish I understood what was going on in his mind.

TIM: Do you think it's to do with his mother.....or me, perhaps, Cat ? Has he said anything to you ?

CAT: Well, I probably shouldn't say this, but the main thing, well, one thing that it seems to be is he's got this thing about Roy, the one who was hanged, being his father, his real father.

TIM: He can't have been.

CAT: Well no, I'm sure, I'm just saying what I ... I mean he seems to want to have him as that to help.. I don't know really, but do you see what I mean ?

TIM: I think I do, yes.

[HE TOUCHES HER SHOULDER]

It's good that you told me that, Cat.

[PAUSE]

It wasn't easy adopting Greg, you know. I know it's frowned on now, of course, trans-racial adoption, and I can understand why. Hilary was very upset, I know when people criticised.....but what they forget is we went well out on a limb to do it. A lot of our friends couldn't understand it at all.

CAT: I can imagine. I'd better go and see what he's doing.

[GREG COMES BACK IN. KISSES CAT.]

GREGORY: The Wanderer. I've got it. The song that Dion called the kind of guy who liked to roam around.

[HE PUTS THE TAPE ON. SINGS LOUDLY ALONG AND VERY POINTEDLY AT TIM. EVENTUALLY CAT SWITCHES IT OFF.]

Shall I tell you what's got into me, father, to help you with your sympathetic discussions ? I am on to you. That's what.

You know this paper ? Did you ever read it ?

TIM: I don't know. I probably glanced through it. Why ?

GREGORY: Why did you save it ?

TIM: Because it was from the day you were born.

GREGORY: Yes but how did you know that ? You had a premonition, did you ? "Oh I'd better save this, because in a few months we're bound to adopt someone who was born on this day" ?

TIM: No, of course not. I see what you mean. No I think I must just have found it later on in a whole pile of papers we'd saved, and noticed the co-incidence, and just thought it would be a nice idea

GREGORY: Oh come on.

TIM: For God's sake it was over twenty years ago.

GREGORY: So apart from everything else you were ahead of your time with saving newspaper, too, were you ? Tim Guard, ecological trend-setter, saving all his newspaper for a rainy day, when he can show off about being green before it was trendy.

TIM: What brought all this on ?

GREGORY: You saved it, didn't you...this paper ? Just this one. Because something interested you in it, nothing to do with me. You made that up because I found it.

TIM: I don't remember. This is ridiculous. I'm sure Cat isn't interested in all this, you know.

CAT: Why does it matter, anyway ?

GREGORY: It matters, because I am on to him, that's why. I know he knows [Jamaican] all about Roy Grey, and I know why. I'm right, aren't I ?

TIM: You've got into a state about it ...

GREGORY: Don't lie to me !

[HE PUSHES HIM]

I know how much you like your little secrets. I know all about those little things you don't think anyone needs to know about you, don't I ? And this is another one. I know you know all about Roy Grey, don't you ? Don't you ?

TIM: All right. Yes, perhaps I do. Now just leave it.

GREGORY: Leave it ?

[HE PUSHES HIM AGAIN]

No, I don't think so, I think it would be best if we could have the whole story now. The whole truth and nothing but the truth or God help you.

[HE IS HOLDING TIM AND SPEAKING STRAIGHT INTO HIS FACE]

CAT: Greg, for Christ's sake.

GREGORY: Tell us about the paper, Tim. Tell us about Roy Grey, there's a good chap. He was one of your little lost causes, wasn't he ? You saved the paper, for your collection of serious issues, so that you could whip yourself about it, and so that you could go on your little protests.

TIM: Is that what you think ? Is that what you think ? No that's not it, no

GREGORY: Well, what's your version then, father ?

TIM: I was on the bloody jury. That is my version. I was on the bloody jury that hanged the man, all right. That's my bloody version, all right ?

CAT: Jesus Christ.

GREGORY: Oh, I see. Now I see. Of course.

TIM: Oh, you do not see, Gregory. But I will tell you, now, I will tell you, if you promise me that you will just listen to me. Just this once properly. Right through.

This is not easy.

GREGORY: Oh well, if it's not

TIM: [SHOUTS] WILL YOU JUST LISTEN!

[HIS SNAPPING IS A SHOCK. GREG SITS. THE ATMOSPHERE CHANGES]

All right ? I'll tell you every bit of what I remember. Beginning to end.

[PAUSE]

I went to the court on a Monday morning, which was the system, I think. I was in a tall cold kind of waiting room with all the jurors, and for each trial the man came in and read out a list of names. We had an interesting few days. I didn't get onto a list any day, from Monday through until Thursday, and each day they sent me home after a couple of hours, but it was interesting, watching people - a real cross-section. Almost all men, of course - you had to be a householder in those days, but a real cross-section. Then on Thursday, I was finally on a list - Court Number Five. It didn't mean anything of course in particular, so off we trooped. I remember being quite excited. The clerk or whoever said it was a biggish case, and we might well find we were held over to next week, but no-one mentioned murder. It wasn't until the charge was actually read out that the truth Capital Murder.

You see, I don't know, you've probably read about this, but they had this Homicide Act in force, yes ? Murder with a gun, murder in the course of a robbery, murder of a police officer or member of the armed forces, were all automatically capital murder, and were the only hanging offences.

So there I was. Five days it took, five days of evidence, and speeches, and all the time I sat and hoped that something would come up to show that he didn't do it, and every now and then, it seemed to swing that way, but then swung back and ..nothing ... And the boy just sat looking down at the floor, all through, while the facts were gone over, slowly and repeated, crucial but strangely in a way irrelevant, and he just let it go on. He never shouted, he never argued, he just stared while his fate was slowly unrolled.

And the things I remember most are the judge - who was kind of bent over, and snapped and frowned like some irritable headmaster, and the boy's father, upright with white hair and a great dignity, and the boy himself, looking so.... just terribly young, and bewildered, entirely bewildered. And me, I felt like everybody was watching me.

In the jury room we had, well ...most of the discussion was very superficial, civilised, everyone keeping their heads, with just the odd few comments coming through from the turmoil that most of us had underneath. There was one man who took on a kind of "life and soul of the jury" role - jollied us all along. There were a good few

jokes about this and that, I remember, and there was one other man who was very angry, really angry on all our behalf, he thought. "What do you expect, I'd do it myself if you give me the rope, they don't understand you see, they must be shown you cant do this, the rules of the jungle don't apply here", all that. I think through the trial I thought I was the only one who didn't want to hang him. Not that he wasn't guilty. In that way the decision was quite easy.

Anyway, I was wrong. One man said it. "He shouldn't be hanged", and when he did, most of them mumbled agreement. I didn't imagine that, they did, most of the people there, thought he shouldn't hang. Can you believe that ? And there was a silence, and the great weight of the fact that we could do nothing hung there over us all. And I said nothing. All through, I said nothing, just put up my hand to vote.

So, the life and soul man agreed to be foreman, and we agreed that he must say "guilty". And when he did we looked at the floor, and someone in the public gallery wailed quietly, and I went out in a daze. No-one said anything to us. No thanks, no sympathy, no anger even. And that was it. It was just a question of going home as if it were all in a day's work.

But please, think about it. What could I do ? I was young too, remember. There just was nothing ...

CAT: You couldn't ask to come off the jury, on moral grounds or something.

[TIM SHRUGS]

TIM: I was very young, Cat. And the truth is he was guilty.

GREGORY: Who was guilty ?

TIM: It was not my fault. I didn't kill the newsagent. I didn't kill the boy.

GREGORY: The 'boy.'

TIM: The man, then, whatever.

GREGORY: So how did you feel. Guilty or not guilty ?

TIM: What do you imagine ? Of course I felt guilty. But that's different.

GREGORY: Of course.

TIM: A different meaning of the word, I mean. I had no choice.

GREGORY: You don't understand at all, do you ? You think you could judge the truth, with all the little pictures in your brain. I've read every word they spoke, and you can't tell a thing. You know nothing.

TIM: You weren't there.

GREGORY: Nor were you. Not in his life. You just listened to your people making speeches. That isn't the point...The point is, you haven't finished your story, have you ? The point is that you did find yourself guilty, didn't you ? You found yourself riddled with guilt, and then a few months later you found yourself at Dr Barnado's making yourself feel better. And that is where I fit into the story, isn't it ? I may not know how I was conceived by my blood parents, but at least I know how I was conceived by you. Conceived out of guilt. Born out of sympathy and pity. let's adopt a victim, adopt a good cause, give one of them a proper chance. Thank you. Thank you so much. It feels good to know for sure.

[HE TAKES A PHOTO OF TIM, PUTS ON ANOTHER TAPE AND MOVES AWAY TO LISTEN TO IT.]

[END OF SCENE]

ROY: I thought I knew what hanging was. It's a group of men come running for you in the night, shouting and spitting. With sticks and whips and maybe guns. Grab you in the back of some truck, and carry you out to an old tree, the famous old tree, that was shown you to scare you when you was a child. And on the old tree, they string you up from a branch with the stained rope, and the little one squeals to be let to swing from your legs, because he never done it before. And they swing and spit and shout, until the swinging stops.

Any black man know what hanging is. But not an English hanging. There are special rules to an English hanging.

[TOMMY COMES BACK ON]

TOMMY: I had a mate once who told me the system they had up at Winson Green. They've got a whole wing for the condemned bloke, all designed to keep them happy and comfortable sort of thing. A whole suite of rooms. Larger than normal cell, with a bigger window, looking out on the wall, larger than normal, for the two blokes who are with them the whole time. Bathroom adjoining, and a screen over a door to the gallows. They play cards a lot, and they have a wireless if they want one, or a gramophone, a bottle of beer and 20 cigarettes a day, even the last day, though you can't get through many by 8 o'clock in the morning. The guards, or warders or whatever aren't allowed to start a conversation, apparently, just answer, and their main job is to watch out for the bloke trying to top himself. No-one must be allowed to cheat the gallows. Goerring, you know, the nazi, poisoned himself in his cell, but they still strung up the corpse, just in case.

[HE GOES OUT]

ROY: When you waiting to die, it funny the thing what come into your head. For me it was the cigarettes, counting. Much of the day I spend working out when is the time for the next of my Pall Mall. Six in the morning, leave me five in the afternoon, and if I can have just the six again in the evening it leave me some for the night, and if I sleep in the night, I can have a quick smoke before the new packet come in the morning.

[CAT COMES IN. THE CONVERSATION IS HESITANT, UNEASILY JOKING]

CAT: What exactly are you doing, Greg ? You're going mad, do you realise that ?

GREGORY: I'm recording. I thought you were going.

CAT: Jesus. Is that how much you care about it ?

GREGORY: I said I don't want you to go. You want me on my knees?

CAT: Why not ? You'd go on your knees if your television was going to walk out on you.

GREGORY: I don't want you to go, all right. If you'd just give me a

[SHE HAS FOUND A NOOSE]

CAT: Christ, Greg, what is this ?

GREGORY: I give up.

CAT: What've you got this for ?

GREGORY: I thought it might come in handy. No noose is bad noose.

CAT: You've got a sick mind.

[PAUSE]

Let me know when you're in your new place. I might come and see you.

GREGORY: I'm not moving.

CAT: Then I'll come and see you buried in the rubble here.

GREGORY: I'm going to drift. It's in my blood, isn't it ?

CAT: I don't know, but I'd be quite happy to have a look at a pint or two.

GREGORY: Now who's sick ?

[SHE PUTS NOOSE OVER HIS HEAD. THEY ARE STILL JOKING, BUT THERE IS A DEFINITE EDGE, AND SOME SEXUAL TENSION]

CAT: You make me so bleeding angry, do you know that ?

GREGORY: Go on then.

[PAUSE]

If you'd just give me longer, I'll have finished all this. I just need a little longer.

CAT: Story of your life.

GREGORY: No, Cat, I need to go further, and then...

CAT: Suddenly you'll notice me, suddenly you'll discover some interest in me ? You'll leap up shouting thankyou for putting up with my obsessions, and looking after my every

[HE BREAKS FREE]

GREGORY: Nobody asked you to be a good samaritan, you know. I didn't realise I was charity work.

CAT: Look at this.

[SHE PICKS UP ONE OF HIS PAPERS]

"Caught between two cultures, lost without a home" You want to find something in common with someone, why don't you look at people who are alive ? What about me?

GREGORY: You don't understand. There's more to it.

CAT: You only think that, because you won't believe that anyone else except you and your frigging Roy could ever have problems

GREGORY: Well why are you going then ?

CAT: Because you're going bloody mental, that's why. Because I have needs, and because I feel used. By you and your dad.

GREGORY: At least you see what I mean about him then.

CAT: I see, I'll tell you what I see...I see a man who thinks about you, tries for you and cares about you, and I see a kind of hate that I just said I feel used, that's all. Because of the lying.

GREGORY: Well.

That's all I really mind about him, you know. I agree with most of what he says, in a way, do you know that. Most of it.

[PAUSE]

If he was just honest.

[PAUSE]

CAT: I don't see what else there is to do. We know as much as we're ever likely to - it isn't going to get you anywhere. It's a sad story, of course it is, I feel it too. I was thinking about it yesterday,.... No, Greg, what you said about the solicitor, having to tell him that the reprieve thing had been turned down, thinking about having to do that, and about his father, torn up by it all...., It's terrible Greg, of course it is, it's terrible that a system can do that to a man of 19. And there was really no-one there to help. But we know all that, there is nothing to be gained from keeping hold.

GREGORY: Yes. I can always blame the system, if you want to keep my father out of it.

That's all I need the time for, Cat. I need to know what it feels like. He must have sat there, in the cell, thinking about it. I need to know who Roy blamed.

CAT: Why, Greg? So you can kill someone, too ?

You can't change what happened.

GREGORY: I heard the first time. OK, I'm sorry.

[PAUSE]

Look, just help me with this one last thing, and we can start together on us.

CAT: You make it sound so romantic.

[GREG OFFERS HER A PIECE OF PAPER. SHE TAKES IT. GREGORY BECOMES ROY]

CAT: [READS] The Home Office gets five applications a week from people volunteering to do the job. More after big cases. But there isn't much romance to it. Weigh the bloke, or woman. Measure the thickness of the neck. Consult the chart, to calculate the distance of the drop, and hope you get it right. If he faints, he can be done sitting. If he shits his trousers, so much the worse. That's why they call us the crap-merchants.

ROY: Gregory, you tell me why they kill me. I ain't no evil man, I ain't no wicked man. Sure I was in the shop. Sure the

old man die. But I can't bring him back. Nor can anyone. They say, I am young, that if I say nothing, I will have nothing to fear, I will get mercy. But the little hangman came round and size me up through the window today, and him going to strap my legs, and tie my neck and strangle the life from me, and he will say nothing, not even to admit to me that him the little hangman. They have told me, that when I go, they cut the rope and drop me through to the pit. Then they take me in a wheelbarrow to the hole they already dug. I have heard them digging. There ain't many people that hear the digging of their own grave. And the two men what do the cutting and the digging and the wheelbarrowing, they get the rest of the day a holiday.

And still he come to say he should have beat me harder. And then him cry.

[GREG LEAVES ROY WHERE HE IS SITTING, AND MOVES TO CAT. HE PUTS A RECORD ON AND THEY DANCE. THE MUSIC STOPS. THEY WATCH TOGETHER AS 'ROY' IS COLLECTED, AND TAKEN THROUGH TO THE GALLOWS. THE THUD OF THE DROP.]