

Two screws loose

written by

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INT. CELL - UNKNOWN. 1990'S

A dim, musky cell. From ceiling to floor covered old, poorly laid concrete. Sand, blood and dirt cover the room. The only thing breaking it up is a heavy, rusted, iron door and a lone figure sitting tied up with a bag covering his head. SEAN (27), a British Journalist, sits breathing rhythmically. His clothes are more sweat and dirt than fabric. He gently rocks, unable to move.

Beat

Suddenly the large door opens with a viscous clunk. A sea of golden sun fills the room as a second man, CORMAC (47), also bound and bloody, is led into the cell by a large man (28). The large man is dressed in the clothes that are unmistakably that of a Taliban fighter. He knocks the man to the ground with the butt of his rifle and shouts something in Arabic.

Cormac takes a moment to compose himself and sit up. A gruff Irish voice emanates from the bag.

CORMAC

Yeh yeh, ye know I cant understand
ye so there's no point in-

The large Taliban fighter kicks Cormac in the stomach. He lets out a winded gasp.

TALIBAN FIGHTER

(In a thick accent)
No talking! Quiet!

He turns around and leaves, the door slamming behind him. A series of locks are heard.

A dry, yet worried, English drawl escapes from Sean's bag.

SEAN

(Whispering)
Mac....Mac...are you ok?

Sean again attempts to regain his composure. He sits up and leans against the wall.

CORMAC

Well I've only been beaten within
an centimeter of my life rather
than the usual inch so-

SEAN

-Shhhhhh Mac come on, quieten down
or they'll come back.

Cormac flails his head around violently, shaking off the bloody sack covering it. His face is bruised, swollen and covered in cuts. He takes a deep breath and lifts his head to the ceiling. He opens his eyes and blinks.

CORMAC

That's better I can actually feckin
breath.

(turning to Sean)

Don't tell me to be quiet Sean
they've just given me hell out
there.

SEAN

-Ok ok I'm sorry, I didn't think.
I'm just bloody scared.

Cormac looks solemnly at Sean. He shakes his head and turns to face the door. He sighs.

CORMAC

Me too.

Beat

Cormac turns to face Sean again, shuffling over as he talks.

CORMAC (CONT'D)

Sean come here, the buggers tied me
too loose again.

Cormac manages to wrestle a hand loose from his bindings behind his back. Sean turns his head to Cormac and extends it knowingly. Cormac uses his free hand to take off the hood. Sean blinks intensely as his eyes adjust to the dim light. His face is also beaten up, encrusted in old dry blood and dirt. Sean's hair and beard are a lot longer and more worn than Cormac's.

SEAN

Thanks.

Cormac and Sean help each other get their hands loose. They both sit with their backs to the wall staring into the distance, massaging their wrists.

SEAN (CONT'D)

What did our good friends ask for
this time?

CORMAC

The usual. Release of prisoners held in Afghanistan and Guantanamo bay, the troops to withdraw from the country, oh and our ransom has gone up another 3 mill. If I'd known I was worth that much I would have kidnapped meself feckin years ago.

SEAN

Shit, that's more than the Times is even worth now.

Sean looks at Cormac with a small smile in the corner of his mouth.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I hope I don't bankrupt them with all this, I need that job when I get home.

Cormac shoots Sean an exhausted but humorous look. The two smile at each other.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Anything else?

CORMAC

Oh and how could I forget. Death to the infidels.

The pair let out a small chuckle which quickly develops into a bloody cough for Cormac. Small flecks of blood splatter the floor. Sean looks worriedly at Cormac.

Silence fills the room. The call to prayer can be heard coming from outside of it, muffled. Sean looks up at the wall to the right of him. On it are markings of lines signifying days.

SEAN

How long have we been here now?

CORMAC

Somewhere between two and four years I reckon'. I've been trying to keep count in me head ever since I got in trouble and they took the chalk away.

They look at each other, despair setting in.

SEAN

You know I've been living with you longer than me and Jill have been together now?

CORMAC

I'd hardly call this livin'.

SEAN

Its funny isn't it? How time fly's when you're having fun?

CORMAC

Yeah...fun...if you've had so much fun where's me ring then you cheap bugger?

SEAN

But of course, lets see shall we...I'm supposed to spend one months wage on it...

Sean acts out searching through his pockets with his limited motion.

SEAN (CONT'D)

...one months wage is nothing times nothing, carry the one, subtract the delivery costs, and yes I think I have it!

Sean pulls a diamond ring out of his pocket and presents it to Cormac. He looks at Cormac smugly. Cormac roles his eyes.

CORMAC

Yeah yeh very funny bey...looks like you'll never make an honest woman out of me.

The ring that Sean is presenting is now a small rock, he looks down at it and throws it to the side.

SEAN

One day. Remember. We've got all the time in the world.

Sean smiles at Cormac. At this comment Cormac looks down rather than making eye contact. He is not smiling.

CORMAC

Sean...there's something I've got to tell ye.

Sean looks at Cormac, worry over his face again.

CORMAC (CONT'D)

I overheard them ye see...they was talkin' about me release...they was talkin' about letting me go Sean.

Sean continues to look at Cormac, wide eyed. He swallows hard. Cormac stares at the ground.

SEAN

I see....
(quietly)
And me?

Cormac lifts his head to make eye contact with Sean. He shakes his head slowly from side to side with a grimace across his face. The answer is no.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Well...

Sean clears his throat and gives his head a slight shake.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Congratulations are in order it seems!

Cormac goes back to looking in-between his legs as Sean perks up next to him.

SEAN (CONT'D)

What do people do when they celebrate again? God its been a long time since I've had anything to celebrate. Hmmmm.... I've got it! A cake! That's what people do when they celebrate, they eat cake!

Sean turns to the corner of the room and moves around whilst he creates something. Cormac looks up and tries to peer over Sean's shoulder. Sean turns to reveal a large white cake, with the words written in frosting 'Welcome home mac!'. Cormac beams.

CORMAC

Blimey! Almost looks good enough to eat that Sean.

Cormac pulls a large kitchen knife from behind his back and starts cutting the cake, carefully watching it as he does.

SEAN

I should hope so, special order
from this little cake shop back
home...me and Jill used to go there
all the time...

Sean stares off into the distance for a second, then returns
to the cell.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I'll take you there once we both
get out!

Cormac is eating a slice of the cake, he looks up at Sean and
nods in agreement.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Hmmm cake is good but a little
basic...what can we do to give
this a little class.

Cormac puts his cake down and looks at Sean, still chewing.

CORMAC

Suits! Cor' I haven't worn me
penguin suit since me graduation.

SEAN

You sure it hasn't turned to dust
by now? It must be prehistoric.

Sean looks at Cormac. He's sitting there with a clean tuxedo
on pulling at the fabric with a rye smile.

CORMAC

Looks pretty fresh to me ye cheeky
bugger.

Sean is now sat with a suit on, the pair sit there admiring
themselves.

SEAN

Now surely two gentlemen of such
fine esteem as ourselves deserve a
fitting meal as such.

CORMAC

(through another mouthful
of cake)
Indeedy.

Sean looks around the cell, he stands up. The suit hangs loosely off of his thin body. He stretches and paces around whilst Cormac watches, still chewing.

Sean seemingly pulls a large wooden table from nowhere, scraping it along the floor as he centers it. He pulls a large white tablecloth from the loose hole in his suit wrist, much like a magician or clown. He lays the table cloth neatly on it.

Cormac stands up and walks around the table, examining it. Sean ducks behind the table

CORMAC (CONT'D)

Could do with some food don't ye think'?

Sean pops his head back up with a raised eyebrow and a bowl of fruit in hand. He passes it to Cormac. He continues passing food to Cormac, who positions it neatly. A table full of food stands before them, a banquet.

The two men stand at either end of the table and smile broadly at each other. They take their seats and start putting food on their plates. They start eating.

Orchestral music starts playing lightly in the background. The two look around in gentle surprise with small smiles. They continue eating. Cormac points a chicken leg at Sean as he speaks.

CORMAC (CONT'D)

Do ye reckon' they eat this good in Paris Seany?

Cormac winks.

SEAN

You know I've never been? It does remind me of the spread me and Jill had at our engagement party...god the anchovies were to die for...

Sean lifts his head and drops an anchovy into his mouth from above, closing his eyes and smiling as he does. Cormac enjoys his food.

CORMAC

You'll see er' soon bey, you'll see er' soon.

Cormac continues eating. Sean pauses for a second.

SEAN
 (quietly)
 We'll see...
 (loudly)
 A toast!

Sean slaps his knee.

SEAN (CONT'D)
 That's what's missing! A toast to
 my dear friend Cormac!

Cormac raises an eyebrow to Sean. He gestures around the table as he speaks.

CORMAC
 But we haven't' any booze Sean?

SEAN
 Haven't we?

Sean is sitting at his end of the table. He holds a champagne flute slightly raised. The Taliban fighter who bought Cormac in stands next to Sean, filling his glass from a fancy bottle. He is wearing a waiters suit with slicked back hair. His unkempt beard remains. Cormac chuckles as he sees this.

Cormac gestures to the waiter and grunts. He walks over and fills Cormac's glass.

Sean and Cormac look at each other and raise a glass. They smile.

SEAN (CONT'D)
 Cormac. Mac. You've been with me since day one. Since all this hell broke loose around us. You've kept me sane all these years with your awful jokes and your crude comments. If you were to tell me 4 years ago I would be spending the best part of my twenties with some gruff, fossilized, Irish bastard, I would have dismissed it in a heartbeat-

CORMAC
 -Yer not too bad yerself bey.

The pair chuckle.

SEAN

-But Mac. You're a man any person
would be lucky to be in captivity
with. You're my brother. You're
part of me. I wouldn't have
survived without you.

Sean's smile falters but still remains. Cormac's does the
same.

CORMAC

Sean.

Cormac inhales with a serious look across his face.

CORMAC (CONT'D)

We will see each other again.

A loud series of strikes hit against the metal door of the
cell. Sean is sitting in the cell alone. All the elements of
the celebration have disappeared, as has Cormac. Words in
Arabic are being shouted through the door.

Sean sits on his knees in the center of the room, covered in
dried blood, dirt and sweat as before. His eyes are closed
and hand outstretched, imitating a toast to nobody.

SEAN

(quietly to himself)

Yes we will my friend. I'll see you
soon.

The cell door opens. A sea of blinding light fills the room
and obscures vision in the cell.

CORMAC (O.S.)

Time's up.