

## **Synopsis - The Terror of Our Ways - Paul Green & Adrian Lord**

The story unfolds over a six month period. Embedded flashbacks give the audience a deeper insight into character and motivation, while increasing tension as the overall narrative arc is revealed.

We begin in Belfast, where Eamon (50s) leaves a toyshop. After giving generously to a beggar, he purchases a Koran at a book store and glances at a newspaper headline about a new UK political party led by a politician with Northern Ireland connections.

Eamon then calls his younger sister in the UK, Angela (40s) who is very distressed. Her student son Liam (17) has converted to Islam and quarrelled with her and his uncle Seamus (Eamon's younger brother, 40s). He's left home to live at the Ahmed family's restaurant where he works part time. Eamon promises to fly over and intervene in this family crisis.

In a small Lancashire town (Nelson) we meet Liam in his temporary lodgings (the restaurant store room). His study of the Koran is interrupted by Fatima Ahmed (17) who worries that her father Mohammed might want him to leave, as the restaurant has been vandalised with racist graffiti. They embrace.

That evening Fatima, is viciously beaten up by teenagers Darren and Martin. They're infuriated that she's named their mate Brian Buckley (18) to the police as a suspect in the vandalism but equally enraged by a recent (so far unspecified) Islamist atrocity in London.

A few days later a distraught Liam walks on the Moors with his friend Ali Ahmed (18) who tries to reassure him that Fatima's attackers will be severely sentenced in court. Liam insists that only Sharia will bring true justice and Muslims should fight to establish it. Ali's taken aback by his vehemence.

Meanwhile Eamon has arrived in the UK. He meets Angela and Seamus in a pub. Seamus is disappointed to find that his brother has stopped drinking and doesn't want to reminisce about the Troubles. However Angela is pleased to learn that Eamon has become a therapist and could rescue Liam.

Later the brothers banter awkwardly about a night club where Seamus's new girlfriend Emilia (Hungarian, early 20s) works as a dancer.

Next morning Liam encourages Ali to fly his drone over the town, scoping out the route of a forthcoming march by the National Alternative Party, an alt.right group of which Buckley is a member. They also overfly the Conference Centre where Simon Sedgefield, leader of the New Consensus Party will hold a pre-election rally. Liam suggests that Ali could weaponise the drone against the NAP but Ali pretends to ignore him. Eamon has been covertly watching them.

As they drive back to the restaurant, Ali grows angry when Liam accuses him of lacking commitment to Islam. They part in silence. Later that night Ali sends a text to break up with his posh white girlfriend Melissa (18).

Next day a nervous Liam meets his uncle in a shabby cafe. He offers to mediate with Angela and asks him how his interest in politics began.

*Flashback - 6 months earlier*

In Angela's modest council house living room Liam watches TV news footage about war in the Middle East while his younger mixed-race half-sister Caitlin (8) plays with her Nintendo. Angela is obviously struggling as a single parent, both financially and emotionally, but wants Liam to succeed with his studies.

However up in his bedroom Liam is more interested in studying on-line conspiracy theory. When he's interrupted by noisy soul music downstairs, he quarrels with his mother and ridicules her hope that her ex-lover DJ Dexter, Caitlin's father, will ever return.

The following day in the college cafe, Ali ridicules Liam's belief in global conspiracy and chats up Melissa, to the annoyance of Brian, who's leafleting for the NAP, while Liam's behaviour suggests he's infatuated with Fatima.

Later at the restaurant, waiting to deliver takeaways, Liam's impressed by Mohammed's charity to a blind customer. At home, he's even more impressed by the Youtube videos of Raphael Klein. They link big government, celebrities, the media and multinational corporations into a global conspiracy. Liam's making notes but Ali is bewildered.

A couple of days later in a college politics lesson, Liam accuses the lecturer Ms Chaffey (30s) of being a mere 'tool of the elite'. At home, when Angela tries to reach out to him, he compares his shambolic family, from which his father Jim has been absent for a decade, with the stable Ahmeds.

Angela now turns to her cowboy builder brother Seamus for support. But he feels college has only aggravated Liam's confusions. Her priority should be finding a new boyfriend.

Liam and Ali go clubbing, as Ali has set up a double date with Melissa and her friend Karen. It turns sour when Liam repels Karen's drunken advances, nearly risking a confrontation with Brian. Later Ali admits that his increasingly conservative parents would like him to drop Melissa; while Liam says he wants someone 'quiet and serious'.

Liam's now obsessed with increasingly bizarre conspiracy theories and looks for signs everywhere. Distracted on his delivery rounds he crashes his moped.

*Flash-forward*

In another cafe meeting, Liam explains the appeal of Islam. Eamon jokingly probes him to find how far he might be prepared to go - to Syria perhaps? However he later assures Angela that her son has no terrorist ambitions. And Ali's mother Azra (40s) is reassured to learn her son has broken with Melissa. Eamon continues his exploration of Liam's motivations in the next cafe session and asks how he became converted.

*Flash-back three months earlier*

Ali tells Liam that despite the moped accident Liam could still work at the restaurant as a waiter. Later Liam is trying to impress Ali with Raphael Klein's new book which asserts that the global conspiracy is actually controlled by aliens who want to mate with our women and that there's an Islamic element involved. Ali leaves in disgust but furious Liam follows him out and they fight in the street.

Yet Ali takes pity on his friend and they drive around the Moors, trying to resolve their differences. Ali finally convinces Liam that Islam would give him a way out of his fantasies.

As the sun rises, they stop the car and Liam, prompted by Ali, kneels in submission to profess his new faith. A few days later Imam Dr Shaheed (60s) welcomes him to the Mosque.

Angela, raised a Roman Catholic, is soon aware of his conversion and confronts him. He responds by condemning her 'crusader' religion and criticising her drinking binges.

His convictions are reinforced by his growing friendship with Fatima, who challenges him to take on Brian in a college debate about freedom of speech.

In the mean time, Seamus is concerned that Angela is looking to Eamon for help with Liam. To Angela's surprise he seems disturbed by a recent phone conversation with his older brother but deflects the discussion to Angela's upcoming birthday party and the prospects of her getting a new man.

At home Liam criticises Angela for dabbling in fortune telling, while praying for her conversion. In the street his outbursts provoke hostility from local youths.

Events reach crisis point at Angela's party, where Liam is outraged by the 'decadent' music and dancing. He accuses Seamus of pimping Angela to his mates. After a fight with Seamus, he tries to smash up the living room and then exits, leaving the family stunned, to find a refuge at the restaurant - thanks to Ali.

At the college debate, Liam denounces British notions of free speech and democracy. Amid increasing heckling, he proclaims that the UK needs Sharia to purge its corruption, inviting the adoration of Fatima and the enmity of Brian. Ms Chaffey is logging the proceedings.

Two days later, in his car near the Moors Ali has made love to Melissa. Their intimacy is brutally disrupted by the news of a massive bomb blast at the National Film Theatre in London. Ali fears that all UK Muslims are going to be stigmatised but Melissa is more worried about his friendship with Liam, causing tension between them.

Mohammed attends a meeting at the Mosque with Dr Shaheed and two Elders (60 plus) to discuss a bursary for a young man to attend a madrassa. Mohammed proposes Ali for the award, but Shaheed and the Elders reject the idea, citing Ali's secularised behaviour. Shaheed instead suggests Liam (now aka Abdul Aleem) for his zeal, convincing the Elders that Liam is interpreting jihad as a spiritual discipline, not an incitement to violence. Mohammed's objections are overruled.

Overnight the restaurant is daubed with racist graffiti. Next morning Mohammed insists that Ali's affair with Melissa has provoked this, while Ali says that it's a response to the London bombing - or maybe because they've taken in Liam.

*Flash Forward*

Liam is nearly run over by a car that fails to stop at a crossing. In the cafe he tells Eamon that he's afraid of being killed and he's worried that the Ahmeds will ask him to leave. Eamon says that he knows of a safe place where Liam can be relocated

Liam is relieved by this, as Eamon recounts his role in the Troubles, joining the IRA, taking part in missions and finally being jailed in the Maze Prison in Belfast, where he was forced to undergo 'enhanced interrogation', which he compares to the techniques used in Guantanamo Bay. He implies that this has left him with health problems. Liam is profoundly impressed, even inspired. But he refuses to attend Angela's family get-together.

Over after-supper drinks Angela still believes that Eamon is 'doing his best' for Liam. Seamus is drunk, making inane jokes comparing ISIS and the IRA that embarrass girlfriend Emilia. But she's flattered by Eamon's charm and impressed by the firmness he shows in shutting up Seamus (which he's easily achieved with a whispered reference to long-lost brother in law Jim). Caitlin plays with her present from Uncle Eamon, a toy gun.

Back at Emilia's flat, Eamon helps her to put an unconscious Seamus to bed. In the living room, they drink and Emilia learns that Eamon is a 'freedom fighter'. This resonates with her. She shows him an old photo of a relative who fought and died in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. On a reckless impulse they make love.

Next morning a hung-over Seamus has his suspicions. But Emilia tells him that Eamon urgently needs his help.

Liam has been summoned to meet Eamon outside the cafe. He's surprised to see Uncle Seamus turning up in his rusty van but agrees to get in.

They drive along a country road. Then to Liam's alarm, Eamon snatches his phone and both men overpower him.

They arrive at Seamus's yard, a squalid caravan, a portakabin, a container and assorted building gear. They chain Liam up inside the container. Outside Seamus asks Eamon

directly if Emilia had sex with him, but doesn't argue too hard with Eamon's denial. He agrees to keep guard over Liam.

Eamon walks around the town centre, taking a special interest in the Conference Centre and an empty house nearby.

At the restaurant, an irritated Mohammed asks Ali why Liam hasn't shown up for his evening shift. There's no reply from Liam's phone.

In the container a detuned radio is pumping out white noise. When Eamon enters, Liam insists he will never renounce Islam. Eamon says Liam's simply undergoing some basic military training, before leaving to catch a pre-election TV interview with Simon Sedgefield MP, who has promised a radical solution to terrorism.

In the morning Ali calls at Angela's house, looking for Liam, but is met by a furious outburst from Angela, who now blames the Ahmeds for stealing her son and poisoning his mind. Her anxiety is partly relieved by a call from Eamon, who tells her that he's in the Lake District, taking Liam on a 'camping trip'.

Eamon is actually subjecting Liam to a violent interrogation, pouring scorn on his nephew's amateurish notions of armed struggle. Then, when Liam is at his lowest point, Eamon offers him the chance to join him in a properly weaponised mission against the NAP, enemies of both Islam and Irish Nationalism.

Angela, still anxious, is visited by Detective Constable Naomi Harrison (30s) and social worker Sarah James (40s) enquiring about Liam's whereabouts. They fear he may be in danger. Sarah wants him to join the anti-radicalisation Prevent programme. Angela senses an implied criticism of her parenting and her family, so tells them to leave.

Liam is now grateful for his uncle's apparent support. Eamon then engages with Seamus, who has had Eamon's arms cache hidden in the yard for some years. Seamus is at first reluctant to get involved, especially when Eamon reveals that they will also be targeting Sedgefield as well as the NAP.

After a few drinks, Eamon takes Seamus on a nostalgia trip that morphs into an hypnotic regression. Seamus is made to revisit the night he decided to give brother-in-law Jim a punishment beating for cheating on Angela.

Through brief stylised flashbacks we see Eamon keeping watch as Seamus stakes out the club where comedian Jim performs. Seamus catches him leaving via the stage door. But Seamus completely loses control and gives Jim a fatal blow. Although Seamus disposed of the body while concreting a car park, he's terrified that Eamon might tell their sister and nephew. So compliance with Eamon's demands is inevitable.

Ali suspects that Liam is at Seamus's yard and Fatima wants to go there with him. They tell their parents that they are going to help out at an open day at the Mosque.

Ali and Fatima arrive near the yard and survey it with the drone, catching sight of Liam. But Seamus spots the drone, so Eamon intercepts them with a shotgun when they try to drive off and forces them into the yard.

Fatima is enthralled to learn that Liam is going on a jihadi mission and immediately decides to join him, impressing Eamon with her fervour and passion for martyrdom. Ali fears that they are both caught up in a terrorist *folie a deux*, but also fears for his own life. Taking him aside, Eamon warns him that his only option is to stay behind with Seamus and use the drone for surveillance as the mission progresses. Ali feels compromised but realises he has no choice.

Eamon, Liam and Fatima set off in Ali's car. In town the NAP begin marching through the Asian quarter, past hecklers and a police presence. Inside the Conference Centre Simon Sedgefield is welcomed by his middle-class audience.

As he drives, Eamon outlines his plan. Liam and Fatima will be dropped off at the park, where the NAP march culminates in a rally and speeches from the bandstand. Liam is disturbed because he assumed Eamon would be supporting him, while Fatima cannot understand why Eamon is going to the Conference Centre alone. Eamon explains that Sedgefield is lobbying for an American defence company. Their Dark Galaxy project uses AI-controlled drones to pre-emptively take out suspects on the basis of their internet traffic, specifically Muslims. Fatima respects Eamon's decision but Liam feels Eamon has betrayed him.

Detective Constable Harrison, now aware of Eamon's past, approaches Seamus's yard, backed up by firearms officers.

The NAP marchers arrive at the park. More protesters have gathered and the atmosphere is edgy.

At the yard, Seamus orders Ali to get the drone up - only to see police cars approaching down the narrow lane. He commands Ali to get in the van.

Eamon drops Fatima off at the north entrance to the park. Liam embraces her, and she tells him they will soon be together.

Seamus and Ali are trapped in the lane by police cars ahead and a tractor behind. Seamus nevertheless brandishes his shotgun and demands to be let through.

Liam is dropped off at the south entrance to the park. Eamon shouts words of encouragement but Liam ignores him.

Firearms officers order Seamus to drop the gun and surrender. Instead, Seamus pushes Ali out of the van, still keeping the shotgun trained on him. DC Harrison tries to negotiate in this hostage situation.

On the bandstand at the park, NAP branch chairman Mr Kitley (50s) introduces their election candidate - Brian Buckley, who's cheered loudly by the NAP youth.

Simon Sedgefield also wins a big round of applause, as he promises a hi-tech hub in Nelson that will bring hundreds of jobs, as the result of an international deal that's vital to national security.

Seamus is forcing Ali at gun point to walk back towards the yard. The police hold their fire as DC Harrison tries to focus Seamus on the issue of his nephew's safety.

Eamon has broken into the empty house that he's checked out earlier. Despite intermittent spasms of pain, he prepares his weapons.

In the park, Fatima is struggling to get closer to the bandstand through an increasingly restless throng of protesters. However, Liam is nearer, Brian's speech about the need for 'humane repatriation' echoing in his ears. He reaches for his pistol.

Eamon checks his phone, expecting an update from Seamus about events in the park, but there's no message. So, with the intention of forcing Sedgefield out of the Conference Centre, he calls the police with a fake bomb warning, giving them ten minutes to evacuate the building.



DC Harrison is still attempting to negotiate with Seamus. He threatens to kill Ali but then shoots wildly at the firearms officers, who respond by killing him.

Liam at last has Brian in his sights. But a NAP steward sees him aiming and tackles him. He panics and fires at random. The crowd is in shock and Liam manages to run towards the park exit. But a posse of NAP supporters pursues him.

Sedgefield's speech is interrupted and the audience start leaving the Centre.

On the bandstand Mr Kitley and other NAP speakers have been wounded. Despite Brian's request for calm, there's mass panic.

The NAP crew catch Liam in a tunnel near the park exit. He goes down in a hail of savage blows.

Fatima finally manages to get within range of Brian and prepares to fire, shouting an Islamist slogan. People assume she has a bomb and try to escape. In the chaos, Fatima's bullet goes wide and hits a child. She is suddenly shocked by the cruel reality of what she has done and drops her gun. Despite Brian's appeal to let the police deal with her, a mob seizes her and carry out their own version of justice.

As Sedgefield and his minders enter the Conference Centre car park, Eamon appears. With his assault rifle he takes out the minders and shoots Sedgefield in the knee. Sedgefield begs for mercy and a chance to negotiate. Eamon, kneeling over Sedgefield, replies that he has no time for negotiations, as he's going to die anyway - as IRA martyr Bobby Sands did in the Maze Prison. He pulls the pin on a hand grenade and releases the lever.

A final montage shows police and emergency services gathering at different locations - the yard, bandstand, tunnel and car park. Bodies are covered.

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