

'Off the Wall'

sort of a 'situation comedy drama' thing
by
Anvil Springstien

EPISODE ONE:
'A Bad Attack of The Jimmys'
or 'A Weapons Inspector Calls'.

33 Stratford Grove West. Newcastle upon Tyne. NE6 5BB

mobile: 0788 504 7856
home: 0191 265 2012

e-mail: offthewall@anvil.springstien.co.uk
website: www.anvil.springstien.co.uk

A
Near the Knuckle
Production

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offthewall@anvil.springstien.co.uk

OFF THE WALL.

SYNOPSIS: Briefly... It's 155 ad. (or thereabouts...)

Soldiers Note: We are Roman Auxilliaris comprising a mix of Italians, Gauls, Saxons (and an Aussie who joined the Legion after a spell of 'Walkabout'). We are not concerned that Australia has not been discovered yet. Why did I say that?

Anyway, we are on the extremities of the Empire. The far flung reaches of the known universe. The very edge of civilisation. One might say 'The End of the World'?

But 'We are Legion' 'We are many' but, well, mostly *We are Forgotten.*

We live in a small wooden fort on Hadrians Wall half way btwn **Luguvalium**... (the roman name for Carlisle) and **Tooninium** (the roman name for Newcastle). A small wooden fort called '**Bobadobadinium**'. We wear skirts... It's fuckin' freezing.

On top of all this we have to put up with the Jimmylandiums from north of the wall, who are little more than wode painted unintelligible savages (or so goes the myth) commonly known as 'Jimmys'.

We read 'Viz' and 'The Citizen' and listen to 'BBC Radio Bobadobadinium'. Many of the issues that affect us are similar to those of our modern counterparts in 2006... whenever that is? In fact, they reflect them: Do the Jimmys have WMD? Does Rome recognise 'Hadrians Wall Syndrome'? Can we have a night out in Tooninium next Friday? And hey, what's this fuckin' rash?

Writers Note: Like most squaddies in any army they think they know it all. What they don't know, yet, is that they only exist in the injured and comatosed mind of one of their fellow protagonists. The slow realisation of this situation over 6 episodes leads to some odd and extreme desires to survive. But then most dreams are a bit odd and extreme, aren't they? And everybody wants to survive... *What?*

Well, basically it's all a bit '**Off the Wall!**'

Main Characters:

Marcus Labidius -

Commanding Officer and Prefect of Bobadobadinium. Sarcastic in the way that only a John Bird can be.

Victorinox -

Scribe and Civil Servant to Marcus Labidius. (he has many facets and knows how to take stones out of horses hooves).

Claudius Hippopotamus -

Centurion (Like a Sergeant Major). Ex Legionary having served 24 years. He has one year to go before his pension. Wears an eye patch and acts like Long John Silver.

Auxilliary Howka Charvas -

Soldier. Unfortunately Howka is an idiot. He was recruited locally in the eastern town of Tooninium.

Aux' Clamidia Sharron -

Soldier. (He has many facets too. One of which is that he is a woman. Hiding from the Army... in the Army).

Auxilliary Cassius Cloy -

Soldier. Australian. Went 'walkabout' once and ended up in the Roman Army. He is a bitter man.

THE PERFECT CAST...

HAVING A MAGIC CASTING COUCH PRODUCED THE FOLLOWING CAST FOR THIS EPISODE:

MARCUS LABIDIUS:	JOHN BIRD
VICTORINOX:	TOBY FOSTER
CLAUDIUS HIPPOPOTAMUS:	ANDY PARSONS
CASSIUS CLOY:	STEVE HUGHES
CLAMIDIA SHARRON:	BARBARA NICE
HOWKA CHARVAS:	HOWKA CHARVAS

GUESTS & MINOR PARTS:

SENATOR GUILLIANI:	JOHN FORTUNE
CAMP DAVID:	PAUL FOOT
JULIA HANKIN:	JULIA HANKIN
PADDY MCDEE:	PADDY MCDEE
KATE ADIE:	KATE ADIE
BETTY THE SLAVE:	NINA CONTI

OKAY, THIS'LL NEVER HAPPEN... BUT IT MIGHT MAKE THE READING EASIER WITH A BIT OF CHARACTERISATION IN YOUR HEAD.

EPISODE ONE: 'A BAD ATTACK OF THE JIMMYS'.

OR: 'A WEAPONS INSPECTOR CALLS'.

OPENING CREDITS

We see a shot of an ancient map on a table from above. It is held down by a goblet and a roman baton. A bejewelled and Imperial finger moves slowly from left to right, tracing the position of **Hadrians Wall** from **Luguvalium** (the roman name for Carlisle) in the west, towards **Tooninium** (the roman name for Newcastle) in the east.

As we see the finger moving across the map, Hadrian, the owner of the finger, lazily hums the theme tune to **East Enders**... His finger stops in what is roughly the centre of the map at a small roman outpost which is clearly marked '**Bobadobadinium**'. The finger taps slowly and enquiringly, accompanied by a thoughtful "Hmmm..."

The map starts to burn from the centre, as in **Bonanza**, revealing a **granite wall**. Graffitied on the wall is the Programme Title: '**Off the Wall**'. As this happens we **hear** the first four bars of the **Bonanza theme tune** followed by a pained "**Ouch!**" and the **sounds** of rapid blowing on burnt fingers. This is followed by the word "**Shit!**"

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP TO:

1 EXT. BOBADOBADINIUM ROMAN FORT. HADRIANS WALL. - DAWN. 1

SCENE 1: 'GOOD MORNING, BOBADOBADINIUM!'

EARLY DAWN... CAMERA PANS, SLOWLY, ACROSS A SMALL, BLEAK ROMAN FORT. IT IS DRIZZLING. IT IS VERY QUIET. WE SEE A SENTRY, OBVIOUSLY ASLEEP ON HIS FEET, SUPPORTED BY HIS SPEAR. WE HOLD THIS SHOT. INTO THE SHOT FLUTTERS A COCKEREL. IT LANDS ON THE PARAPET OF THE WALL DIRECTLY BEHIND OUR SNORING SENTRY.

WE MOVE TO A CLOSE-UP OF THE BIRD. IT APPEARS TO CLEAR IT'S THROAT AND BEGINS TO **SCREAM** THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW DAY IN BOBADOBADINIUM. IT'S RALLYING CRY IS CUT SHORT BY A **ROMAN SPEAR** (WHICH IS REALLY CALLED A **JAVELIN.**) LEAVING OUR COCKEREL A 'DOODLE DOO' SHORT.

WE INSTANTLY **HEAR** A DJ'S VOICE (OVER):

PADDY MCDEE (OVER)

Gooord moooornin' Bobadobadinium!

CUT TO:

2 INT. SMALL HUT IN THE FORT - SAME. 2

SCENE 2: 'THE BBC'.

WE SEE A DJ, **PADDY MCDEE** SAT BEHIND A ROUGH WOODEN TABLE. HE HAS A HAND OVER ONE EAR AS HE TALKS INTO A LONG HORIZONTAL PIPE SUSPENDED FROM THE CEILING. HE IS WEARING ROUGH SAXON CLOTHING. TO HIS LEFT ARE **THREE WOMEN SINGERS** IN TOGAS. THEY ARE STANDING IN FRONT OF ANOTHER PIPE WHICH FEEDS INTO PADDY'S. BEHIND PADDY IS A ROUGH SIGN WHICH SAYS: '**BOBADOBADINIUM BROADCASTING COMPANY**'.

PADDY MCDEE (CON'T)

...I just love the smell of earwax in the morning...

AS HE SAYS THIS HE CUES THE SINGERS FOR THE FOLLOWING **JINGLE** WITH HIS FINGER.

SINGERS

Beee Beee Ceee... Ray dee ohhhhh
Bobadobadinium.

PADDY MCDEE

...Yes it's 5am. It's Friday. It's 155 Anno Domini and you're listening to The Break-Fast Show with me, Paddy McDee, taking you through the morning with all the latest of whatever you're into, whether it's Villa, Drum and Bearskin or the Classics...

CUT AWAY TO:

WE SEE A BRIEF SHOT OF A CENTURION FROM THE WAIST DOWN, MARCHING PURPOSEFULLY ACROSS THE DARK PARADE GROUND, HIS HOBNAILED SANDALS CRUNCH ON THE GRAVEL. HIS HAND ON THE STOCK OF HIS SWORD. (IT'S ACTUALLY CALLED A 'GLADIUS' AND WAS TWO FOOT LONG).

BACK TO SCENE:

PADDY MCDEE (cont'd)

But before all that...

PADDY, AGAIN, CUES UP THE SINGERS.

...let's catch up with the traffic and travel...

SINGERS

Bee Bee Cee Roadwatch!

PADDY MCDEE

...and the traffic on the A69 is, as usual, nonexistent, with the road clear from Luguvalium, the roman name for Carlisle, to Tooninium, the roman name for the Toon. No change in the weather either...

PADDY, YET AGAIN, CUES UP THE SINGERS.

...freezing and overcast.

SINGERS

Beee Beee Ceee... Ray dee ohhhh
Bobadobadinium.

PADDY MCDEE

And what better way to start the day than
by playing the present number I
(pronounced 'eye')... after VIII weeks in
the top X! It's gonna' be a classic, It's
The Beatles with...

PADDY, ONE MORE TIME, CUES UP THE SINGERS.
... 'The Long and Very Straight Road'.

SINGERS

Many times I've been alone and many times
I've cried..... (ETC')

AS WE HEAR THE SONG WE FOLLOW THE PIPES UP TO THE CEILING,
ALONG AND THROUGH THE WALL. (THE SINGERS NOW SOUND LIKE A
TRANSISTOR RADIO) THE PIPE SPLITS INTO MANY, ALL OF THEM
RUNNING OFF IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. WE FOLLOW ONE...

CUT TO:

3 INT. SMALL BARRACKS ROOM - SAME.

3

SCENE 3: 'THE BARRACKS'.

MUSIC (OVER) CONTINUES.

WE SEE THE END OF THE PIPE. IT IS FLARED. IT HAS A GRILL AND
A HINGED COVER TO CONTROL THE VOLUME. WE CONTINUE TO HEAR THE
SONG (OVER). WE PULL AWAY TO REVEAL, IN THE LOW LIGHT, EIGHT
BUNK BEDS (FOUR ON EACH WALL) AND A ROUGH WOODEN TABLE. ON
THE TABLE ARE AN ASSORTMENT OF MUGS, A COPY OF '**VIZ**', AND A
COPY OF '**THE CITIZEN**' NEWSPAPER. THREE OF THE LOWER BEDS ARE
OCCUPIED BY SNORING SOLDIERS.

CUT AWAY TO:

RADIO CONTINUES - (OVER).

WE SEE **ANOTHER BRIEF SHOT** OF A **CENTURION** FROM THE WAIST DOWN,
MARCHING PURPOSEFULLY ACROSS THE DARK PARADE GROUND, HIS
HOBNAILED SANDALS CRUNCH ON THE GRAVEL. HIS HAND ON THE STOCK
OF HIS SWORD.

BACK TO SCENE:

WE PAN AROUND THE ROOM (PAST A DARTBOARD AND A PICTURE OF
RICHARD BURTON AS **THE EMPEROR HADRIAN** COVERED IN DARTS) TILL
WE SEE THE DOOR.

ON THE DOOR IS AN ALLURING POSTER OF **ELIZABETH TAYLOR AS CLEOPATRA**. ON A PLAQUE ABOVE THE DOOR ARE THE WORDS: **WE ARE LEGION, WE ARE MANY**. TO WHICH HAVE BEEN ADDED THE WORDS: **'WE ARE FORGOTTEN'**.

MUSIC (OVER) RISES.

SINGERS (OVER)

...lead me to your doooooor

THE DOOR IS KICKED OPEN WITH A LOUD CRASH. WE SEE THE IMPOSING FIGURE OF **CENTURION CLAUDIUS HIPPOPOTAMUS**.

MUSIC (OVER) FADES TO BACKGROUND.

CLAUDIUS (SHOUTED)

Come on you slovenly lot! Hands off cocks
and on socks! What d'yer say? Eh, lads,
Wadda' yer say!

WE HEAR GENERAL MOANS AND GROANS ABOUT BEING WAKENED IN SUCH A FASHION.

THE THREE AUXILIARIES PULL THEMSELVES TO THE EDGE OF THEIR BUNKS. **AUX' CASSIUS CLOY** - HE'S THE BITTER AUSSIE - LIGHTS A CIGARETTE.

CASSIUS CLOY

I haven't got any socks, Centurion.

CLAUDIUS

Well, you'd look a right Celt wearing
socks with sandals, wouldn't yer. So look
lively. It's mail-day today which means
I've got a copy of 'Trojan Babes' waiting
for me in Tooninium, so Bathhouse, Break
Fast and we'll be off into the Toon. Get
a coupla' lottery tickets. Wadda' ya say,
eh, lads? Wadda' ya say!

HOWKA CHARVAS (THE RETARD)

Aye, Centurion...

CLAUDIUS

Now, c'mon lads... all together or not at
all... and less of the formality, we're
not in the Senate yet! Wadda' ya say eh!

THEY ARE ALL THOROUGHLY SICK OF THIS JOKE - BUT RANK IS RANK.

ALL

Aye, Claudius...

CLAUDIUS

Ha! I love it... Lively now lads

CENTURION CLAUDIUS HIPPOPOTAMUS SLAMS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.
THEY ALL IMMEDIATELY GO BACK TO BED. THERE IS A LONG PAUSE.
THEY ARE ALL LOST IN THEIR THOUGHTS. THE SILENCE IS BROKEN BY
AUXILIARY CASSIUS CLOY, WHO VOICES HIS INTO THE SEMI
DARKNESS:

CASSIUS CLOY (BITTER AUSSIE)

I hate going into Tooninium for the mail.

HOWKA CHARVAS (THE RETARD)

Well, it's better than just (beat)
practising marching in a straight line
day after day...

CASSIUS CLOY

What? But that's what we do when we go
into Tooninium for the mail, yer retard!
Marching in a straight line... all the
way there... and then marching - guess
what Howka? Yer dork! - All the way back
again... in a straight line!

HOWKA CHARVAS

Just as well we practise then, innit!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON (A WOMAN)

Jupitors Piles! Howka man, are you stupid
or what?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Aye, So? What's yer point?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

His point is, Howka...

CASSIUS CLOY

My point is, Howka...

CASSIUS CLOY IS BEYOND EXASPERATION.

Arrrrrrgh! Will someone please wake me up?
This has got to be a dream!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

His point is, Howka, is that what this
place could do with is a bit of action
now and again!

CASSIUS CLOY

I don't know about this place, but I know
what I could do with...

HOWKA CHARVAS

What's that Cassius, like?

CASSIUS CLOY

A fucking war, Howka, yer moron...
(double beat) A big fucking war.

CASSIUS CLOY FLICKS THE REMAINS OF THE CIGARETTE AT THE DOOR.

SFX: RICOCHET FX.

WE HEAR THE IMMORTAL ONE BAR OF MUSIC FROM '**A FISTFUL OF
DOLLARS**'.

CUT AWAY TO:

THE DOOR. C/U. WE SEE A SHOT OF **THE ELIZABETH TAYLOR POSTER**.
SHE HAS THE (SMOKING) MARKS OF A DIRECT CIGARETTE HIT...
SMACK BANG BTWN THE EYES.

RADIO (OVER) RISES.

PADDY MCDEE (RADIO - OVER)

...you just know it's gonna' be a classic
innit!

CUT TO:

4 INT. THE TENT OF MARCUS LABIDIUS. - MORNING. SAME.

4

SCENE 4: 'MARC' & VIC'.

WE SEE **CAMP PREFECT MARCUS LABIDIUS**. HE HAS JUST BEEN DRESSED IN HIS DAILY MILITARY UNIFORM BY **A BEAUTIFUL SLAVE** (BETTY). HIS TENT IS OPULENT. THE SLAVES ATTEMPT TO LEAVE IS INTERRUPTED BY THE ENTRANCE OF **CAMP CIVIL SERVANT, SLAVE & SCRIBE: VICTORINOX**. LOW IN THE BACKGROUND WE CAN HEAR THE SCRATCHY TRANSISTOR TONES OF PADDY MCDEE AND THE BBC.

MARCUS LABIDIUS (TO SLAVE)

Make that wine and cake for two, please
Betty...

MARCUS NODS IN RECOGNITION OF VICTORINOX AS HE STRAIGHTENS HIS BELT AND SWORD (REMEMBER, IT'S CALLED A 'GLADIUS' AND WAS TWO FOOT LONG).

Not too fattening for you Victorinox?
Nothing like the warm hand of a beautiful
slave and the enjoyment of a good break-
fast in your belly to start the day...
Who knows wether you will be alive to
witness another.

VICTORINOX

Prefect?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Quirks of the fates! The will of the
Gods, the Ides of March, The Hound of the
Baskervilles Victorinox. Anyway... Ah,
break-fast

OUR BEAUTIFUL SLAVE RETURNS BRIEFLY WITH WARM WINE AND HOT
CAKES. MARCUS LABIDIUS RETURNS HIS ATTENTION TO HIS SCRIBE.

...please. Sit. Take a letter to Rome.
Not literally of course, ha! Sorry... Old
joke, I know. Just write it.

MARCUS LABIDIUS THROWS HIMSELF UPON A SUMPTIOUS COUCH AND
ATTACKS HIS GOBLET OF WARM WINE... ENCOURAGING VICTORINOX TO
HELP HIMSELF.

Come. Sit. Ahh, British Breakfast Wine,
Eh! Nothing like it at home... (double
beat) Nothing like it in any of the war
zones that's for sure...

VICTORINOX LOOKS POSITIVELY WORRIED... SCARED, EVEN.

VICTORINOX

Prefect?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Anyway, to the letter!

MARCUS LABIDIUS ADJUST HIS POSITION ON THE COUCH. THINKING.
'Dear Hadrian. (beat) Rome is great, as
is Jupiter etc'.

HE UNKNOWINGLY FIDDLES WITH A PATCH OF TISSUE ON A SHAVING
CUT ON HIS CHIN.

We bleed. We bleed. Oh, how we bleed...

VICTORINOX

You seriously want me to put that in?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Yeah! What's this then? Milk?

VICTORINOX

Very well.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

...but our blood makes Rome strong. And
our sacrifice make her proud. Thus, do
those of us who are about to die salute
you. (beat) This winter we have twice
defeated an army of 80,000 Jimmylandiums
who fought fiercely on the field and were
worthy opponents of Rome, causing her
great injury, great loss... (beat) but
ultimately great vict...

VICTORINOX, THOUGH SCARED, CAN HOLD BACK NO LONGER...

VICTORINOX

Look... hold on a second... I mean I
don't wanna' seem rude but this is the
third letter like this. I mean I thought
the first was some sort of in-joke and
the second, well, all that stuff about a
Secret Weapon... it got me scared.

But I'm petrified now... this is like...
treason. It's *treason*, Marcus Labidius.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

And what exactly is (beat) *treasonable*?

VICTORINOX

This... this whole report. It's a pack
of, forgive me, Prefect - but a pack of
lies! It couldn't be more further away
from the truth...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

And what exactly would you say (beat) is
the truth, Vicki?!

VICTORINOX

The truth is, Marcus Labidius, that we
haven't been at war with the Jimmies for
years! Quite the opposite in fact. The
place is as quiet as the grave... There's
hardly any muggings, and no chariot crime
to speak of... I can't believe I'm saying
this, but it's a real cushy number. Why
only...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Cushy, eh?

VICTORINOX

Yeah, 'Cushy'! Look, Prefect, I'll be
honest with you... this place is so cushy
it's a surprise, what with Rome burning
and the Empire fighting wars on four
fronts, it's a damn surprise we haven't
been recalled and sent to some
godforsaken...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

...corner of the planet where we would
most likely die a slow and horrible
death.

WE PAUSE.

You said; 'Great injury, great loss, but
ultimately...'?

MARCUS LABIDIUS (cont'd)

... 'but ultimately, great victory'.

VICTORINOX

I think 'victories' sounds better? Sorta' plural...

MARCUS AGREES, WITH A FINGER.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

... 'Whilst their new army amasses, we continue to gather important information on the Jimmylandium Secret Weapon which - may we refer you to our previous correspondence - is currently in development. A fearsome weapon that (beat) spouts burning oil from it's mouth like a she-dragon laying waste to all in her way. We now believe this weapon to be battlefield ready in...' oh? Pick a number, Vic'.

VICTORINOX

I don't know? Forty Five days?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

That'll do. 'Fine for weapons and ammo... but anything you could send that would help morale would be great.' Thank an assortment of gods. Rome wasn't built in a day... No, I'm Spartacus etc' etc'. Yours, 'Marcus Labidius'. Bobadin... Dabadon... Badabing...

VICTORINOX

Bobadobadinium.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Whatever... Hadrians Wall. Briton. N.E.6, 5, B.B.'

MARCUS LABIDIUS TAKES A SATISFIED DRAUGHT FROM HIS WINE.

WE HEAR THE BACKGROUND RADIO COME TO THE FORE.

PADDY MCDEE (OVER)

They're gonna love this one in Rome...
It's Gerry and the Pacemakers with:
'Ferry cross the Rubicon'...

WE HEAR THE FIRST BAR FROM THE 'BBC SINGERS'.

SINGERS (OVER)

Life... goes on day, after day....

CUT TO:

5 EXT. ROMAN ROAD. MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - LATER THAT MORNING. 5

SCENE 5: 'A STRAIGHT ROAD THERE'.

WE SEE CENTURION CLAUDIUS HIPPOPOTAMUS AND HIS SQUAD OF AUXILIARIES. THEY ARE MARCHING TO TOONINIUM TO COLLECT THE MAIL. AS THEY MARCH, THEY SING LIKE AMERICAN G.I.'S. AND 'SHUFFLE-STEP' WITH THE BEST OF THEM.

IN THIS RAPID TRANSITIONAL SCENE THEY MARCH **INTO** AND **OUT OF** A STATIC SHOT FROM **LEFT TO RIGHT** MOVING AWAY FROM US.

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES

Three, Four...

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES (LOUDER)

THREEFOUR!

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES

Three, Four...

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES (LOUDER)

THREEFOUR!

CLAUDIUS

Marching straight is what we do...

AUXILIARIES

Marching straight is what we do...

CLAUDIUS

We don't stop, not even to poo!

AUXILIARIES

We don't stop, not even to poo!

CLAUDIUS

We march to the Toon to collect the mail...

AUXILIARIES

It's our job and we won't fail!

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES

Three, Four...

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES (LOUDER)

THREEFOUR!

MIX TO:

6 EXT. ROMAN ROAD. MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. - LATER.

6

SCENE 6: 'A STRAIGHT ROAD BACK'.

WE SEE OUR SQUAD OF MERRY MEN RETURNING FROM TOONINIUM (THE ROMAN NAME FOR THE TOON). THE SINGING CONTINUES, SEAMLESSLY, FROM THE LAST SCENE. IN ADDITION TO THEIR NORMAL KIT THEY NOW HAVE **LARGE RED SACKS** OVER THEIR SHOULDERS.

THEY MARCH **INTO** AND **OUT OF** THE SAME STATIC SHOT (SEE PREVIOUS SCENE 5) FROM **RIGHT TO LEFT** MOVING TOWARDS US.

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES

Three, Four...

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES (LOUDER)

THREEFOUR!

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES

Three, Four...

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES (LOUDER)

THREEFOUR!

CLAUDIUS

We've got the mail and we're going home!

AUXILIARIES

There's some for us but most's from Rome!

CLAUDIUS

It's all there in the big red sack!

AUXILIARIES

That big red sack that's on my back!

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES

Three, Four...

CLAUDIUS

One, Two...

AUXILIARIES (LOUDER)

THREEFOUR!

CLAUDIUS

Squad! (2 beats) Halt! (2 beats)
Squad! (2 beats) Down! (beat) Mail!

OUR SQUAD OBEYS THESE BARKED ORDERS LIKE THE MARCHING MACHINE THAT THEY ARE.

Bit of an R.T.A. ahead lads...

HE PULLS A SMALL ORNATE TELESCOPE FROM HIS WAIST AND SURVEYS THE SITUATION AHEAD.

Look lively now lads! Looks like we've got a roman Senator ahead, involved in a bit of an accident?

SENATOR GUILLIANI (OVER)

Actually, Centurion, Senator Guilliani of the Senate Oversight Committee on Weapons Provision, Development & Proliferation...

WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL THAT THE '**ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT**' IS DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THEM, (THE END OF THE TELESCOPE IS NO MORE THAN THREE FEET AWAY FROM THE NOSE OF SENATOR GUILLIANI, WHO, DRINKING WINE, IS SAT ACROSS THE ARCHED BACK OF A MALE SLAVE. A SECOND SLAVE IS HOLDING A BROLLY OVER THE HEAD OF THE SENATOR).

BEHIND THE SENATOR WE SEE ANOTHER SLAVE STRUGGLING WITH A HEAVY LENGTH OF WOOD WHICH HE USES AS A LEVER TO LIFT THE DAMAGED CART.

CLAUDIUS HIPPOPOTAMUS SPRINGS TO ATTENTION.

CLAUDIUS (SHOUTED)

Squad!

OUR SQUAD SPRINGS TO ATTENTION.

General salute (beat) Present... Arms!*

*(SEE **APPENDIX 1** FOR AN EXTRACT FROM **THE ROMAN ARMY INSTRUCTION MANUAL ON THE GENERAL SALUTE.**)

AUXILIARIES

No! - I'm - Spartacus!

SENATOR GUILLIANI RETURNS THE SALUTE IN A TIRED MANNER.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Yes, yes. No, I'm Spartacus...

CLAUDIUS (BARKED)

Centurion Claudius Hippopotamus and The Auxiliary Mail Squad at your service Senator. May we be of assistance to your small entourage?

IN THE BACKGROUND A SLAVE WORKS... WELL, LIKE A SLAVE, STRUGGLING TO REPLACE THE WHEEL OF THE CART.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Well, we're about done here, Centurion... Perhaps one of your men could assist my slave with the spare wheel...

CLAUDIUS

Auxiliary Cassius Cloy!

CASSIUS CLOY

Aye, Claudius!

CASSIUS GOES TO HELP WITH THE SPARE WHEEL.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

But may I say, you seem to be rather under-manned yourself. Bad Campaign, I hear?

CLAUDIUS

Never seen a rash like it, Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Yes, well ...er. (beat) But tell me, how far it is to Bobadin...? Dabadon? Basildon..?

CLAUDIUS

About an hours ride past the next very, very, very slight bend, Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

I see... And how far is the next er, very, very, very slight bend, Centurion?

CLAUDIUS

About an hours ride from here, Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

I see... Two hours, eh?

CUT TO:

HOWKA & CLAMIDIA - 2 SHOT - SAME.

WHILST CASSIUS CLOY ASSISTS WITH THE WHEEL, HOWKA & CLAMIDIA TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR SHORT BREAK BY SITTING AT THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Bit strange? A roman senator visiting us? Don't you think?

HOWKA CHARVAS

No? Clamidia?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Yes, Howka?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Can I ask you something?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Of course Howka? We're friends, aren't we?

HOWKA CHOKES.

HOWKA CHARVAS

Wey Aye!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Well...?

HOWKA CHOKES AGAIN, THEN REGAINS HIS COMPOSURE.

HOWKA CHARVAS

Well... Like, how would I know if I was, like... well, like... Gay, like?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Gay?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Shhhhhhh!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Nothing wrong with being gay, Howk...

HOWKA CHARVAS

Shhhhhhh!

CLAMIDIA SMILES BUT LOWERS HER VOICE.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Fancy the pants off Claudius, do you?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Nah!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Not Cassius, Howka?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Nah!!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Don't tell me... you get excited when you catch a glimpse of my well developed chest muscles, in the bath house?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Ooh, yeah... I mean, Nah! Nah!!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Get turned on when you brush against my firm rounded succulent buttocks?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Ooh, yeah... I mean, Nah!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Howka... believe me, you're not gay... you're just a bit slow.

ENTER CASSIUS AFTER REPAIRING THE WHEEL. HE THROWS A COUPLE OF LARGE SPANNERS INTO ONE OF THE RED MAIL BAGS AND WIPES HIS HANDS WITH AN OILY RAG.

CASSIUS CLOY

'Slow'? Your a total retard mate and no two ways about it... C'mon, Audi Murphy sez it's time to move out...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROMAN ROAD. MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - SAME.

OUR TROOP OF AUXILIARIES ARE READY TO LEAVE:

CLAUDIUS (SHOUTED)

We will endeavor to inform the Camp Prefect, Marcus Labidius, of your impending arrival, Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Thank you Centurion. But I'm sure Marcus Labidius is well aware of my impending arrival. Either way, We'll be right behind you.

CLAUDIUS (SHOUTED)

Squad! Mail... Hup! By the left! (beat) Quick! March! (beat) Left, left, left right left... Auxiliary Clamidia Sharron!

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Aye, Claudius!

CLAUDIUS

Love it! Give us a song, Man, to take us home.

THE SQUAD MARCH OFF INTO THE DISTANCE, IN SYNC' TO THE DULCET TONES OF AUXILIARY CLAMIDIA SHARRON.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON (SUNG)

Ha'One Ha'two, Ha'One two three four.
Well you take the straight road and we'll
take the straight road and we'll be in
Bobadobadinium before you... for me and
the mail squad will never...

MIX TO:

7 INT. THE TENT OF MARCUS LABIDIUS. - APPROX 2 HOURS LATER. 7

SCENE 7: 'OPENING THE MAIL'.

WE SEE THE LAST OF THE RED MAIL BAGS DEPOSITED ON THE DESK OF MARCUS LABIDIUS BY OUR AUXILIARIES WHO STAND TO ATTENTION TO ONE SIDE. VICTORINOX SIFTS THROUGH THE MAIL WHILST MARCUS LABIDIUS - FEET ON THE DESK - TOSSES GRAPES INTO HIS MOUTH AND CASUALLY READS THE LATEST COPY OF **THE CITIZEN**.

VICTORINOX

Spam.... Spam... More Spam...

WE SEE VICTORINOX THROWING TINS OF SPAM OVER HIS SHOULDER.
Yet more Spam... Free Book of Old
Jokes... Oh, somebody called Tom
Champagne sez we've won ten thousand
dinarii!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Rather a lot of mail this month
Centurion?

CLAUDIUS

Four bags from last month, Prefect. Went
to Basildon by mistake.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Ah, yes! The crucified Postmaster! Just
reading about it in the paper. Anything
interesting Victorinox?

VICTORINOX

Mainly Junk-Mail. 'Adopt a Dog', Offas
Dyke Holiday Homes, free sample of 'Rain-
Proof-Your-Wall'...

THEY'VE ALL SEEN THE ADVERT FIVE BILLION TIMES.

ALL

Does exactly what it says on the
Earthenware Pot.

VICTORINOX

...'Enlarge you Penis'?

MARCUS LABIDIUS COUGHS AND GRABS THIS ITEM OF MAIL FROM
VICTORINOX.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

The amount of Spam we get these days is
incredible. Any free porn, Vicki?

VICTORINOX

'Re-Mortgage Your Hovel'... Here's something...?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Anal?

VICTORINOX

Senatorial diktat?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

What is it this time? Kill all the first born ginger males in Luguvalium, the roman name for Carlisle?

VICTORINOX (SHOCKED)

They're sending a Senator to investigate the claim by Prefect Marcus Labidius that the Jimmylandiums are developing Weapons of Mass Destruction...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Well, at least it's not... What!?

VICTORINOX

I don't want to die!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

It's not that serious...

VICTORINOX

Treason? Not that serious?! Look what they done to someone who misdirects the mail!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Just a little over-egging that's all...

VICTORINOX

A little over-egging!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

A little sexing-up that's all...

VICTORINOX

Sexing up!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Oh calm down Victorinox! It'll take him weeks to get here. And do you doubt that I, the great Marcus Labidius will not have thought of something long before the arrival of this... this plonker from Rome...

THE PLONKER FROM ROME ARRIVES.

CLAUDIUS

Present... Arms!

AUXILIARIES

No, I'm, Spartacus!

SENATOR GUILLIANI (OOS)

Yes, yes. No, I'm Spartacus.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Ah... Senator! We've been expecting you...

CUT TO:

8 INT. THE TENT OF MARCUS LABIDIUS. - LATER.

8

SCENE 8: 'THE DOSSIER' & 'THE PLAN'.

WE SEE SENATOR GUILLIANI, MARCUS LABIDIUS AND VICTORINOX.
THEY ARE DRINKING AND EATING.

THEY ARE HEATEDLY DISCUSSING THE COLLECTED REPORTS FROM BOBADOBADINIUM. OUR SENATOR IS TRYING TO IMPRESS JUST HOW WORRIED ROME IS ABOUT THESE NEW WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. ROME IS EQUALLY WORRIED ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF THESE REPORTS.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Let me tell you, this weapon...

SENATOR GUILLIANI SIPS FROM THE HALF-PINT GLASS HE HOLDS.

SENATOR GUILLIANI (cont'd)

What is this again?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

It's what the locals drink before going into battle... 'Dog' I believe it's called.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

'Dog' eh? Anyway, this weapon, if it exists...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Oh, it exists Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

But what proof? Spies? Rumours? What proof?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Well... we have a, er...

VICTORINOX

...a Dossier?

SENATOR GUILLIANI

A Dossier?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Yes. A Dossier.

VICTORINOX

Dossier.

SENATOR GUILLIANI (cont'd)

A 'Dossier'?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

That's what *he* said, a Dossier

VICTORINOX

You said it too!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Yes, but you said it first, and that's what matters.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Enough of this rambling. Where is this Dossier? Can I see it?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Yeah...

VICTORINOX

No!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Well, yes and no. You can see it... It's in that draw, there. But you just can't read it. It's er...

VICTORINOX

Secret!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Military!

MARCUS LABIDIUS (cont'd)

Yes. A Military Secret.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Military Secr... I'm a Senator of the Roman Empire! (beat) For Christs sake!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Who?

VICTORINOX

Who?

SENATOR GUILLIANI (cont'd)

Oh, just some new god. But I'm a Senator! I hold the Baton of Hadrian!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Yes, but not quite (beat) in the Military, you gotta' admit that? See, got you there. And this is so secret that even I am not allowed to read it.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Then who, man?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Just er... Victorinox, here.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

A damn slave?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Ah, yes, that's what I thought (beat) until last week. Turns out...

MARCUS LABIDIUS GOES ALL 'HUSH, HUSH'.
...Military Intelligence.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Military Intelligence?

VICTORINOX

Military Intelligence?

MARCUS LABIDIUS (cont'd)

Special (beat) Forces!

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Special Forces?

VICTORINOX

Special Forces?

VICTORINOX

I'm not in no Special Forces?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

See, deny it the last. Won't crack, not even under *torture!*

MARCUS LABIDIUS EMPHASISES THE WORD 'TORTURE' TO VICTORINOX.

VICTORINOX

You not going to get me to say I'm part of some mythical Special Forces!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Not even if he was to have the *skin peeled from his body this very day.*

VICTORINOX

Centurion Intelligence Agency, Senator. Pleased to make your acquaintance.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

C.I.A.?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Deep Cover, Senator.

VICTORINOX

But getting shallower all the time...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

What we in the business call a 'Light... Sleeper'.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Well, whoever is in charge in this damn place better get the Legion ready to march at dawn. I shall oversee the battle myself. We can't have this threat...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

We er, slight problem, don't quite have a Legion here, Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Don't have a Legion?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Not exactly...

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Well, how many...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Including slaves, chef's and cleaners?
Twenty five.

VICTORINOX

Twenty eight if you include the
prostitutes.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Twenty eight! Well, I... why haven't we
been overu...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Ah, that's the clever bit. Y'see, the
er... the er...

MARCUS LABIDIUS LOOKS TO VICTORINOX FOR HELP.

VICTORINOX

The er... the Jimmy's *think* we have a
Legion here, Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

They think? Why? How? I suppose that's
a...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Military Secret. Yes.

VICTORINOX

Military Secret. Yes.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

But what I can tell you is that this very
night a Special Force of Auxiliary
'Stealth Commandos' will be mailed...
posted...

VICTORINOX

Despatched?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Despatched... to capture the secret weapon or die in the process of it's total destruction.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Special Forces? Stealth Commandos? Whatever next? Well, I never in all my...

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Marched in disguised as a Mail Squad, just before you arrived from Tooninium, the er, roman name for the er... Toon. Please...

MARCUS LABIDIUS PUTS AN ARM AROUND THE NOW CONFUSED SENATOR AND LEADS HIM AWAY TOWARDS A DOOR-WAY AT THE BACK OF THE TENT.

...let me explain about the plan of attack and introduce you to one of my favourite slaves. Rumanian, you know. Does this relaxation technique with her hands.

AND THEN, TO VICTORINOX:

Tell Centurion Claudius Maximus to report to me before readying 'Delta Force'. Oh, and find Betty. Tell her to bring some oil and those rubber ring things.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Rubber ring things eh? Well, it has been a long journey.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Believe me Senator, it'll completely knock you out.

CUT TO:

9 INT. SMALL BARRACKS ROOM - LATER.

9

SCENE 9: 'THE BIRTH OF DELTA-FORCE'.

WE SEE OUR AUXILIARIES RELAXING AROUND THEIR ROUGH HEWN TABLE
AFTER A HARD DAYS MARCHING.

WE HEAR, LOW IN THE BACKGROUND, THE RADIO.

THEY ARE BENEFITTING FROM THE FRUITS OF THEIR DAYS LABOUR.

HOWKA IS STRUGGLING TO READ FROM A RED-TOP MAGAZINE CALLED
'**AVE**'. THE ARTICLE IS ENTITLED; 'HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE GAY' -
IT IS ONE OF THOSE 'MULTIPLE ANSWER', 'ADD UP THE POINTS'
SORT OF A THING.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON IS OCCUPIED WITH A TERRACOTTA JIGSAW OF A
NAKED 'HELEN OF TROY' IT IS ABOUT TWO THIRDS COMPLETE. ALL
THE PIECES ARE SQUARE AS ITS A ROMAN JIGSAW.

CASSIUS CLOY IS READING THE BACK PAGE OF A BROADSHEET; '**THE
CITIZEN**'. (IT'S A RAG REALLY).

CASSIUS CLOY

I just don't understand you lot...
Marching is not a bloody sport.

IF HE'S SAID THIS ONCE HE'S SAID IT A MILLION TIMES. HE TURNS
TO THE FRONT PAGES TO READ THE NEWS.

HOWKA CHARVAS

Anyway, when in the Bath House with other
men, do you; A) Get bathed? No points. B)
Flick each other with wet towels? Five
points. Or, C) Get an erection. Twenty
five points?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

For the life of me, I can't see where
this bit goes?

CASSIUS CLOY

Ha! Get this... There's a geezer here who
Murdered his Dad and shagged his Mam...?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Romes full of nutters and no mistake!

HOWKA CHARVAS

I'd love to gan to Rome...

CASSIUS CLOY

I wish I could afford to get back to Oz...

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Yeah, yeah... You and your mythical land of Oz! Where are you really from, Cassius? Are you ever gonna' tell us?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Aye, Gan on Cass'?

CASSIUS CLOY

How many times! I tell yer, I was surfing, I wiped out, I banged my head...

HOWKA CHARVAS

How, man! What about this...

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Yeah, you definately banged your head, alright!

HOWKA CHARVAS

...if oot on a picnic with male friends, do you; A) Gan skinny dipping? Five points. B) Play-Wrestle for extended periods? Ten points. Or, C) Get an erection. Twenty five points?

CASSIUS CLOY

Howka man, you don't need a magazine to tell you if your gay or not?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

You wouldn't get me living in Rome... all that hustle and bustle, it's just a rat race that's what it is...

HOWKA CHARVAS

You been to Rome, Clamidia?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Most of last year. You would'nt like it, Howka. Nobody talks to anyone else. You haven't a clue who yer neighbours are...

HOWKA CHARVAS

But we don't know who our neighbours are?

CASSIUS CLOY

That's because we haven't got any neighbours, Howka, you pleb. Hey, look at this... They've increased the reward for that runaway Celtic Princess to 20,000 Sisterces!

HOWKA CHARVAS

Giz a look, Cass'?

CASSIUS CLOY

That would have put you in Rome round about the time she escaped?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Really, I can't remember...

CASSIUS CLOY

It was all over the news?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

I didn't notice...

CASSIUS CLOY

Man! How could you have not...

HOWKA CHARVAS

Sez here, she may be hiding in northern Briton!

CASSIUS AND CLAMIDIA BEGIN TO STARE AT ONE ANOTHER.

CASSIUS CLOY

...noticed? (beat) Look like anyone you know, Howka?

HOWKA CHARVAS

Nah! Looks like a bloke to me?

CASSIUS CLOY

You reckon, eh... Let me look at that description again?

HOWKA HANDS OVER THE PAPER WITH A SIGH.

HOWKA CHARVAS

Ah, but what would the likes of us do with 20,000 Sisterces? Living here on the Wall?

CASSIUS CLOY

Some people could go a long way with that kind of dosh, Howka.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Maybe even as far as a mythical place called 'Oz'...

CASSIUS CLOY

Maybe.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Blood money... that's what it is! And you know it!

CASSIUS CLOY

Maybe.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Thirty pieces of silver!

HOWKA CHARVAS

No, it definately sez Sisterces?

CASSIUS CLOY

Twenty (beat) thousand...

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

She fought for her rights against a powerful invader!

CASSIUS CLOY

She's a terrorist! It says so here!

HOWKA CHARVAS

Well, they'll crucify her when they do catch her.

CASSIUS CLOY

Nah, they'll just take her back to Rome... Have her as a posh slave under house arrest in some posh villa...

HOWKA CHARVAS

Worrrr! You reckon?

CASSIUS CLOY

Sure, mate. Crucifixions too good for the likes of her. Don't you reckon... Clamidia Sharron?

THERE IS A LONG PAUSE. CLAMIDIA & CASSIUS STARE AT ONE ANOTHER. CLAMIDIAS SECRET IS OUT. THE SILENCE IS BROKEN BY HOWKA, WHOSE ATTENTION HAS RETURNED TO HIS MAGAZINE, WHERE HE IS BUSY TOTTING UP HIS SCORE.

HOWKA CHARVAS

Seventy five points? How man. Here's one... If your bedroom door was to slowly open in a sensual manner...

THE BARRACK ROOM DOOR CRASHES OPEN UNDER THE BOOT OF CENTURION CLAUDIUS MAXIMUS.

CLAUDIUS

It's what we've trained for lads it's the culmination of all that hard work

CASSIUS CLOY

Argh! Not more marching in a straight line...

CLAUDIUS

No lads... We (beat) are going (beat) to war! Wadda' ya say lads?

CLAMIDIA JUMPS UP AND GRABS A JAVELIN FROM IT'S RACK ON THE WALL. SHE STARES FEROCIOUSLY AT CASSIUS CLOY, LOOKING EVERY INCH THE FIERCE WARRIOR SHE IS MEANT TO BE.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

A truce then... Till after battle!

CASSIUS JUMPS UP AND, EQUALLY FEROCIOUSLY, GRABS ANOTHER JAVELIN.

CASSIUS CLOY

Till after battle!

HOWKA CHARVAS

What's gannin on?

CLAUDIUS

Wadda' ya say eh, lads? Wadda' ya say!

AUXILIARIES (SHOUTED)

Aye, Claudius!

CLAUDIUS

Okay, synchronise sundials... and I'll tell you exactly what we're going to do.

CUT TO:

10 INT. SENATOR GUILLIANI'S QUARTERS. - NIGHT.

10

SCENE 10: 'RINGS, RADIO & RELIEF'.

WE SEE - M/S - SENATOR GUILLIANI LYING ON A BED. HIS FACE IS CONTORTED AND PAINED.

WE HOLD THIS SHOT.

HE LOOKS LIKE HE IS ABOUT TO ORGASM.

WITH A LOUD BANG WE BRIEFLY **SEE AND HEAR BETTY - AND ANOTHER SLAVE (CAMP DAVID)**

THEY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY REMOVED THE REMAINING BOOT OF SENATOR GUILLIANI. BETTY GOES TO DISMISS CAMP DAVID.

BETTY

There. Now, you may leave us, Camp David, Whilst I relax the Senator.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Well, er, perhaps Camp er, David would prefer to stay? Maybe watch?

BETTY

As the Senator wishes... and may I be so bold as to say, Senator, a good choice.

WE RETURN TO OUR M/S OF THE SENATOR.

THERE IS A CRACKLING FROM THE RADIO-PIPE-SPEAKER-THING TO HIS LEFT

SENATOR GUILLIANI

I say? Wait a minute. What's that noise?

BETTY

It's the iPipe, Senator. Every room on the camp has one. It's the latest thing. The news is just about to start.

SENATOR GUILLIANI ADJUSTS THE VOLUME TO HIGH.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Might we hear news of the mission?

BETTY

Oh, yes, Senator... I feel sure we will.

SINGERS (OVER)

Beee Beee Ceee... Ray dee ohhhhh
Bobadobadinium.

CUT AWAY TO:

THE BBC STUDIO - SAME.

WE SEE THAT THE STUDIO IS PACKED WITH OUR AUXILIARIES, CLAUDIUS HIPPOPOTAMUS, VICTORINOX, MARCUS LABIDIUS, THE BBC SINGERS, AND OUR DEE-JAY FOR THE EVENING: **JULIA HANKIN** (SOFT SPOKEN BBC GEORDIE). TO ONE SIDE OF JULIA IS OUR SPECIAL GUEST: **KATE ADIE**. KATE WEARS KEVLAR BODY ARMOUR.

JULIA HANKIN

And the big story tonight... the apparent runaway success of the Raid on the Jimmylandium Weapons of Mass Destruction Base, miles behind enemy lines. With us now is award winning Journalist and Broadcaster, Kate Adie. Lucky to have you with us Kate.

KATE ADIE

Lucky to be here, Julia.

JULIA HANKIN

So, Kate, you've just this second got back from the front where you've been embedded with the 101st Stealth Commandos. Now we don't want to go off half cocked, as the post mission intelligence hasn't been analyzed but in your own words...

JULIA CUES UP MARCUS LABIDIUS, WHO, TAPPING A CONDUCTORS BATON, GETS THE REST OF THE STUDIO READY TO ROCK.

...what exactly is it like out there?

MARCUS LABIDIUS RAISES HIS BATON... AND AS HE BRINGS IT DOWN THE WAR BEGINS. AND SO DOES KATE.

WE SEE OUR COLLECTION OF AUXILIARIES AND SLAVES. THEY ARE BANGING BIN-LIDS... TURNING WHEELS WHICH CONNECT TO MOBILES MADE UP OF WEAPONRY THAT CLASH TOGETHER... THEY SHOUT AND SCREAM INTO WEIRD LOOKING IMPLEMENTS.

THE RESULT IS, SURPRISINGLY, THE **SOUNDS OF MODERN WARFARE.**

WE HEAR GUNSHOTS FX - MACHINE GUNS FX - SHELLS SCREAM OVERHEAD FX - MEN CRYING FX - SWORDS CLASHING FX - TANK TRACKS FX.

KATE HAS TO SHOUT TO BE HEARD OVER THE BATTLE. SHE IS INTERRUPTED MORE THAN ONCE BY EXPLOSIONS AND EXACTLY ONCE BY A TYPO IN HER SCRIPT.

KATE ADIE

Well Julia, I am watching literally wave after wave of savage, naked, wode painted Jimmies, their magnificent ginger hair tarred up and afire as they run, suicidally at the small group of Roman Special Forces, our brave Stealth Commandos who, even though heavily outnumbered, completed their mission in destroying the Jimmies Secret Weapon and now fight with the confidence and knowledge that the Dogs...? Dogs? Gods? Gods! Gods are on our side... victory is assured. The Empire is again safe from the Barbarian once more...

KATE IS DOING THE '*I'M ABOUT TO SIGN-OFF*' PAUSE.
...(double beat) Rome wasn't built in a Day, Three Coins in a Fountain, Two Cigarettes in an Ashtray. This is Kate Adie for the BBC. Deep behind enemy lines, Jimmylandium, The Edge of the World. Near Briton.

THE NOISE OF A SHELL SCREAMING OVER AND LANDING NEARBY IS FOLLOWED BY HEIGHTENED BATTLE NOISES AND THE CRIES OF THE DEAD AND INJURED. THIS REACHES A CRESCENDO WHEN IT IS BROUGHT TO AN INSTANT HALT BY THE CONDUCTORS BATON HELD IN THE HAND OF MARCUS LABIDIUS.

SILENCE. (DOUBLE-BEAT).

JULIA HANKIN (SINCERE SHOCK)

Eeeee, Kate, it sounds like hell out there?

KATE ADIE

That's exactly what it's like due North of that Wall, Julia, hell... Hell on Earth...

JULIA HANKIN

Eeee, well, let's try and lighten the mood a little with this cute little number...

SHE CUES THE BBC SINGERS.

...from Frankie Goes To Hollywood...
(beat)

OUR SINGERS START TO BRING IN THE BEAT AS JULIA MAKES HER FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (OVER).

... don't forget, after this it's 'ChartScene' were we'll be finding out if we've got a brand new number one, or...

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. SENATOR GUILLIANI'S QUARTERS. - NIGHT.

JULIA HANKIN (cont'd) (over)

...has the present incumbent managed to hold on to his position for yet another week?

SINGERS (OVER)

When two tribes go to war...

WE SEE SENATOR GUILLIANI M/S - STILL ON THE BED.

WE SEE THE SENATORS FACE CONTORTED BOTH WITH PLEASURE AND THE WARMTH OF VICTORY. HE CLOSSES THE COVER OF THE PIPE.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Oh Betty, we won! Betty! Oh, Betty! We
Won! Ooh... Betty!

THE SENATOR IS RAPIDLY TAKEN BY WHATEVER BETTY IS DOING WITH
THOSE RUBBER RINGS - THROUGH THESE CONTORTIONS HE MANAGES TO
FORCE HIS EYES AND BRIEFLY LOOK DOWN TO HIS GROIN.

SENATOR GUILLIANI (cont'd)

Ooh, Betteeeeeeeeeee! Ooh, Betty... Oh,
Betty... Ooooooh, Bett Oooooh, Camp
David!!!! Arrrrrrrrrrrrgh!!!!

WE SEE THE SENATORS FACE AS HIS EYES ROLL IN HIS HEAD AND, AT
LAST, THE DESIRED EFFECT. HE COLLAPSES. UNCONSCIOUS. SHE
SLAPS HIS FACE TO ENSURE HE IS OUT FOR THE COUNT.

BETTY PULLS BACK THE COVER OF THE iPIPE.

BETTY

Betty to Studio? Betty to Studio? Come in
Studio?

CUT AWAY TO:

THE BBC STUDIO - SAME.

THERE IS MUCH NOISE & CHEERING.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

It's not over yet, Men. We can only hope
and pray...

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Shhhhh! Listen...?

WE HEAR BETTY TRYING TO CONTACT THE STUDIO. IT IS CRACKLY AND
TRANSISTOR LIKE.

BETTY (OVER)

Betty to Studio? Betty to Studio? Come in
Studio?

VICTORINOX

It's her! Thank gods! We hear you Betty.
Go ahead. I say again: Go Ahead...

BACK TO SCENE:

BETTY

Betty to Studio. Mission Accomplished.
Spectrum is Green! The Eagle has Landed!
One Small Step for a Man...

CUT AWAY TO:

THE BBC STUDIO - SAME.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

The war! It's over! We've won!!!!

MUCH CHEERING AND SINGING. PEOPLE HUG ONE ANOTHER. TICKER-
TAPE FALLS FROM THE CEILING.

ALL (SUNG)

We won the war! We won the war! Eee Aye
Addio! We won the war...

THE SINGING DESCENDS INTO CLAPPING.

WE SEE A THREE SHOT WITH JULIA, MARCUS AND VICTORINOX. WE
HEAR ANOTHER 'FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD NUMBER' - 'WAR!'.

JULIA HANKIN

Oops, forgot to change the album!

JULIA RUSHES OFF TO HER DESK.

VICTORINOX

Hannibal couldn't have done better with a
hundred elephants Marcus Labidius! Well
done!

MARCUS LABIDIUS

The words 'Skin' and 'Teeth' seem to be
begging for a toast I think, Victorinox

VICTORINOX

Ladies & Gentlemen, charge your Mushroom
Grog and your Hemp Ale... To Rome!

To Marcus Labidius! And to the words
'Skin', and 'Teeth'!

ALL

'Skin' and 'Teeth'!

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. BOBADOBADINIUM ROMAN FORT. HADRIANS WALL. - MORNING. 11

SCENE 11: 'THE WRAP'.

WE SEE SENATOR GUILLIANI ABOARD HIS CART ALONG WITH HIS
SLAVES. OUR AUXILIARIES ARE STANDING TO ATTENTION AS MARCUS
LABIDIUS AND VICTORINOX WAVE GOODBYE TO THE SENATOR.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

Make no mistake Marcus Labidius, you and
your men have saved the Empire. A fact I
will not be able to emphasise enough in
my report! Oh, and thank you for the
gift...

HE LOOKS TOWARD CAMP DAVID WHO IS SAT NEXT TO SENATOR
GUILLIANI. CAMP DAVID IS SMILING... EXCITED.

THE CART PULLS AWAY. OUR AUXILIARIES, LED BY CENTURION
CLAUDIUS HIPPOPOTAMUS, PRESENT ARMS.

CLAUDIUS

Squad! Present... Arms!

AUXILIARIES

No, I'm, Spartacus!

SENATOR GUILLIANI (OOS)

Yes, yes. No, I'm Spartacus.

MARCUS LABIDIUS (SHOUTED)

Fair speed and good weather Senator.

AND TO THE OTHERS:

MARCUS LABIDIUS (cont'd)

By way of celebration we can all take the day off! Starting... now! Wine, Vicki?

WE SEE MARCUS AND VICTORINOX TURN TO ENTER THE TENT. WE MOVE TO A TWO SHOT OF HOWKA AND CLAMIDIA:

HOWKA CHARVAS

Eeee, the whole of the day off! How man? Where's Cassius gannin'?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Shit!

WE SEE CASSIUS CLOY RUN THROUGH THE GATES OF THE FORT, TOWARDS THE SENATORS CART - IN HIS HANDS IS A COPY OF 'THE CITIZEN'.

CASSIUS CLOY

Senator! Senator!

THE CART COMES TO A HALT.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

What is it? What the devil? Ah... one of our stealth commandos?

CASSIUS CLOY

Senator! I need to speak...

SENATOR GUILLIANI

What is it man?

CASSIUS LOOKS BACK TO CLAMIDIA AND HOWKA, THEN TO THE SENATOR, THEN BACK TO CLAMIDIA.

SENATOR GUILLIANI (cont'd)

Well, man?

CASSIUS CLOY

I need to... Ahhh, shit!

SENATOR GUILLIANI

What?

CASSIUS CLOY

I... I... I just thought... I just thought you might want some reading material... for your journey.

SENATOR GUILLIANI

How thoughtful... But no. Onwards to Rome, driver. Oh you will enjoy Rome, Camp David...

WE RETURN TO A TWO SHOT OF CLAMIDIA AND HOWKA.

HOWKA CHARVAS

What was all that about?

CASSIUS JOINS THEM.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Thanks, Cassius...

CASSIUS CLOY

Ahhh, no worries, Clammy.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

What made you change your mind?

CASSIUS CLOY

Dunno? Maybe Oz *is* a myth? Maybe all this is just one big nightmare and I'll just wake up?

HOWKA CHARVAS

What's gannin' on?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Jupitors piles, Howka! Are you really this stupid!

HOWKA CHARVAS

Aye, so? What's yer point?

CASSIUS CLOY

Do me a favour, Clamidia?

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Anything...

CASSIUS CLOY

Next time we're naked in the bath house...

SO... CLAMIDIA SEE'S THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY FOR CASSIUS' CHANGE OF HEART.

CLAMIDIA SHARRON

Oh, yeah?

CASSIUS CLOY

Just pinch me, mate... real hard!

SHE REALISES SHE WAS MISTAKEN. SHE LEANS OVER AND PLANTS A HUGE KISS ON THE FOREHEAD OF CASSIUS.

HOWKA CHARVAS

Are we all gay then?

CUT TO:

INT. THE TENT OF MARCUS LABIDIUS. - SAME.

MARCUS LABIDIUS AND VICTORINOX ARE POURING THEMSELVES SOME WINE.

MARCUS LABIDIUS

All's well that ends well, eh, Vicki!

VICTORINOX

What's going to happen when he gets to Rome and starts talking about 'Special Forces' and the like?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

Not much chance of that... Camp David'll
keep him straight...

THEY DISCOVER THE GAG AT THE SAME TIME. BOTH BELLY LAUGH,
LOUDLY.

MARCUS LABIDIUS (cont'd)

Anyway, he's just signed the Official
Secrets Act.

VICTORINOX

There's an Official Secrets Act?

MARCUS LABIDIUS

There is now...

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF EPISODE.

APPENDIX 1. EXTRACT FROM ROMAN ARMY INSTRUCTION MANUAL.

ROMAN INSTRUCTION MANUAL (PAGE XXI) THE GENERAL SALUTE:

BEAT I:

EACH SOLDIER WILL THROW THEIR RIGHT HAND DIAGONALLY OUT FROM THEIR SIDES - FIST CLENCHED - PALMS FACING FORWARDS.

BEAT II:

THE OUTSTRETCHED CLENCHED FIST IS BROUGHT UP - SHARPLY - TO THE CENTRE OF THE CHEST.

BEAT III:

THE CLENCHED FIST IS THROWN INTO WHAT PEOPLE FROM THE FUTURE WOULD RECOGNISE AS A 'BLACK POWER' TYPE SALUTE.

THIS IS ALL DONE IN TIME TO THE FOLLOWING '3 BEAT PHRASE' WHICH IS SHOUTED:

"NO - I'M - SPARTACUS!"
