

April

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Scene 11: you just have to do your conservative best

anchor let's return to the conversation in the palace

april what do you think of what I'm wearing in the footage by the way?

anchor fine

april what do you mean by that?
respectable?

anchor I'd very much like to get back to exactly what was said
in the palace

tariq aziz actually it's not impossible that she's saying something
through what she's wearing

april you have to take some pleasure in conservatism
you have to dare to be sensitive to its signals
of course I know what I'm wearing isn't fashionable
it wasn't then either
but I think it suits me
I cherish my a-fashionable wardrobe

anchor so it's a statement?

april the pleasure I take from wearing respectable clothes is unquestionably a matter of taste
of taste and elegance
a-fashionable as I said

more conservative and therefore more provocative

anchor room for the a-fashionable?

april room for reticence

tariq aziz room for humility?

april for humility yes
but rather reticence

anchor caution?

april caution certainly
but I'd still rather say 'reticence'
responsibility
sense of service
loyalty
loyalty that includes conscience

anchor and conscience that includes silence?
conscience that includes contrition?

tariq aziz room for obedience

april for obedience even
yes even for obedience!
people don't seem to want to believe this
but that mindset, that attitude to life;
the status quo in other words
also has its story

tariq aziz you sound as if it doesn't already have a voice
you suddenly seem like the aggrieved right
who always claim they have no voice
at the moment conservatism seems to have an awful lot of voice
conservatism is the new political correctness

april but *that* isn't the kind of conservatism I mean
I'm talking about moderate conservatism
at the moment moderate conservatism
is a more adventurous narrative
than political polarization
tempering and memory are the answer
to the chaos that this polarization is driving us to

anchor the conservatism that conserves something?

april the moment comes when you look around and think:
maybe we should conserve a few things

anchor the conservatism that conserves and remembers?

tariq aziz and forgets!
don't forget that conservatism
the conservatism that conserves and forgets

anchor April Glaspie, the status quo as a character?

april you have to dare to address the middle
you have to dare to position yourself there, in that space between polarities
where the forces act on one another
the space where battles are fought
where you're vulnerable, uncertain and human

tariq aziz space for the anonymous middle

april space for the anonymous mediator

anchor for the diplomat

april you have to set yourself against the sensational
and for that you need to do your best
your conservative best

tariq aziz and stymie any revolt, in the head
and in the body?

april discipline and responsibility
that's the work
discipline and responsibility

tariq aziz and how do we achieve the new?

april the question is whether we need the new,
mister minister

tariq aziz there is still a great deal, a very great deal, madam
ambassador that's in need of renewal
a very, very, very great deal!
how do we achieve that?
how do we reach out to the other and to others?

anchor to protest for instance against what's been seen,
said and heard too much and too often before?
what do we do with our distaste for clichés?

what do we do with the emptiness in the words?

april that emptiness has a role
formality has a role

tariq aziz what do we do with rebelliousness?

anchor with the need to speak freely for once?
to wilfully express yourself against all restrictions and
be transparent?

april I don't have those kinds of disputes
not in public

anchor I don't believe that

april the media are so taken with themselves
that they think
that everyone who isn't making confessions all the time
has something to hide
that everyone who doesn't want to see all of the attention
focused on them the whole time are not being themselves
don't get me wrong; I don't want that recognition!
I'm attached to the notion of 'ordinary'

tariq aziz that's something the media can't imagine

april I've always been attached to that
since childhood
my parents wanted an ordinary child

tariq aziz and they had an ordinary child

april no one wants an ordinary child these days,
a thoughtful child
everyone's obsessed with excellence
my parents weren't
in 1942, the year I was born,
there was a war going on
far away it's true
my parents were convinced that thoughtfulness could avert wars

anchor you were your parents' contribution to world peace?

tariq aziz a modest contribution to world peace

april that's actually what they told me!
it's all about what you encourage and what you punish

anchor and what is it like to look back at yourself
in the footage?

april I'm fine looking at myself
I've always been fine with it
I have self-confidence
I'm calm

tariq aziz in your position anyone would be calm
after all your world is hardly under threat

april that isn't the way my world feels

tariq aziz your certainties *create* your calm, your
humility, your thoughtfulness
your certainties *create* your conservatism
you present it all as a character trait
as the result of a loving upbringing
but it's part of a world view, madam ambassador
that calmness, that reasonableness, that respectability and
virtuousness
(to **anchor**)
just like your so-called objective and independent journalism
all wonderfully and beautifully universal and nuanced
and democratic
and always, truly always to our detriment
how is that possible?
for decades your white institutional calm
has been to our detriment

anchor I'm totally free in the making
of this report
I've never asked anyone for permission

april the best censorship is the self-censorship of someone that believes they're speaking freely

anchor we could claim the same about you two!
I've been here speaking for an hour with a representative of a dictatorial regime
and an ambassador whose government has been compelling her for thirty years
to keep her mouth shut

tariq aziz I've never said that I speak freely

april nor have I

tariq aziz you're the only one here who thinks they're independent

april all of your revelations are so-called

because we let you have them
something that is discussed extensively in the media
is mostly not very important
everything that bears the label 'heated social debate'
is designed to mislead

anchor I am dependent!
yes I know!
on you!
on what you tell me!

tariq aziz we've told you so much
we've told you so much but you didn't take any of it onboard
you didn't take any of it over
for instance we told you that the Kuwaiti
government
in the run-up to the Gulf War
had engaged an American PR agency
and that this PR agency had devised how we Iraqis
could be demonized
by having a nurse at the United Nations claim
that in a Kuwaiti hospital our soldiers
had tossed babies out of incubators

anchor we did report on that

tariq aziz but why didn't you say
that this nurse
was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador
to the United Nations
and who'd been instructed by the PR agency?
we told you

anchor but we did mention that

tariq aziz once
briefly
that's something you should have repeated
if *that* was what you'd repeated endlessly, then would a war even have started?
you don't realise half how dependent you truly are

anchor I'm a responsible journalist

tariq aziz at best you're a liberal journalist

anchor you should watch out with that sort of wording!

tariq aziz an elite journalist

you don't quite dare the total shamelessness
but that's the only difference
though it's only a question of time

april it's only a question of degrees

anchor exactly!

april degrees of shamelessness

anchor and I cherish those degrees, madam
ambassador!
even if it's the very last thing I can do: cherish
the degrees!
maintain them and lay a magnifying glass over them!
enlarge them and fill them with argumentation
fill them with nuance!
fill the degrees with difference!

tariq aziz why don't you still rectify everything?
revisit your mistakes!
extensively and repeatedly
rectify it all
your so-called clean war!
your obsequiousness to the Pentagon!
rectify all your *Breaking News*
Breaking because it did indeed splinter every nuance
Breaking News of which no part was ever corrected
correct it all now!

anchor I'm rectifying it with this report

april you can't rectify it by turning it into fiction!
that's gratuitous and carries no consequences!

tariq aziz that's a great difference between you and us
your rectifications carry no consequences

april and certainly not at all for your career
rectifications only have that effect for us: the public administration
every acknowledgement, every delayed insight
immediately leads to resignation

anchor what exactly did you say to Saddam Hussein?

tariq aziz oh knock it off man!

anchor did you give the Iraqis permission

to invade Kuwait?
were you briefed beforehand?
was there actually a conversation?

april you've seen the footage

anchor was there only a camera moment?
was there only a welcome?
what exactly did you say to Saddam Hussein?

april I can't tell you

anchor nothing can be admitted?

tariq aziz nothing can be admitted
because if anything is admitted there will have to be payment
because if anything is admitted there will have to be compensation

anchor when I see you sitting there in the presidential palace
I think, and still she's counting on it!
she's still counting on someone in the future
who's going concern themselves with her
that someone somewhere will admit something

april can you continue without hope of rehabilitation?

tariq aziz can you continue without the thought
that the grand rectification is still coming?

april I'm always prepared for the possibility that another side
of the story may emerge

tariq aziz because there is *always* another side of the story

april diplomacy is about the correction
of previously made mistakes

anchor in secret

april in secret yes
diplomacy is about the correction of previously made mistakes in secret

tariq aziz isn't it more about again making
those same previously made mistakes?

april about again making previously corrected mistakes

tariq aziz about correcting previously corrected mistakes?

anchor it can be thought about

april what can be thought about?

anchor the rectification
that's a possible opening
the fact that the rectification can be thought about

tariq aziz that's no use to us at all!
that is exactly contrition in silence;
rectifications that are thought about
but not spoken
